



# Community Planning & Permitting

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Date: March 1, 2021

To: Boulder County DRCOG Sub-Regional Forum Policy Advisory Committee

From: Boulder County DRCOG Sub-Regional Technical Advisory Committee

RE: Summary of Sub-Regional TAC Meeting Discussion regarding federal TIP funding Options

## Action Requested

DRCOG staff is asking the Boulder County sub-regional forum's Policy Advisory Committee to make a recommendation on two items: 1) which projects should receive the COVID funding (ranging from 0% to 20% match), and 2) if/how to program the remaining unallocated funding of \$188,000.

## Background

Due to the recent COVID-related federal stimulus funding, plus remaining federal funding and project returns, DRCOG recently began a process to distribute \$55.8M in unallocated federal funding to the metro area communities. In accordance with the adopted 2020-2023 TIP policy, DRCOG is using the regional and sub-regional forums and existing project waitlists from the 2020-2023 TIP to distribute this funding. Of the \$55.8M in available federal funding, approximately \$6.26M is allocated to the Boulder County DRCOG Sub-region, including \$2.8M in COVID-related stimulus funding which, unlike most other federal transportation funding, can be awarded to local agencies without a local match.

As the first step in this process, DRCOG staff reached out to the project sponsors of waitlisted projects in the order shown below with offers of funding, with the following responses (*see project list details on page 4*):

- Boulder County has accepted funding the US 287 BRT Study project
- Lyons has accepted funding for both the US 36 and St Vrain Trail projects
- Boulder has accepted funding for the 30<sup>th</sup> St project

After the Boulder 30<sup>th</sup> St project, \$413k remained in the Boulder County sub-regional funding allocation:

- Longmont declined partial funding for the SH 119 project.
- Boulder declined partial funding for the SH 7 project.
- Longmont accepted full funding for the County Line Rd project.

After the Longmont County Line Rd project, \$188k remained in the Boulder County sub-regional funding target:

- Superior declined partial funding for the Marshall Rd underpass project
- Boulder County declined partial funding for the SH 7 project

In accordance with the DRCOG TIP policy, project sponsors that declined partial funding will remain on the waitlist, in their current order, and be eligible for funding if additional funds become available.

For the second step in the process, DRCOG has left it up to the county sub-regional forums to determine which projects, if any, should receive COVID funding at an increased federal share above the typical 80% federal share, within the program requirements that to be eligible for any COVID funding, projects must include a construction phase, must not be transit operations-only projects, and must be advertised for construction by the end of FY 2022 (9/30/2022). Additionally, increasing the federal COVID funding to a project by more than the available \$188k will require a decrease in the available federal funds for other project(s) given the fixed amount for new federal dollars.

DRCOG staff is asking the Boulder County sub-regional forum's Policy Advisory Committee to make a recommendation on two items: 1) which projects should receive the COVID funding (ranging from 0% to 20% match), and 2) if/how to program the remaining unallocated funding of \$188,000.

To assist this process, the Boulder County sub-regional forum Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewed a list of key questions:

- Which option(s) will help our subregion stretch our dollars the furthest and deliver the most projects?
- Which option(s) help address financial constraints facing communities (small, medium and/or large) within the county?
- Which option(s) address social equity? Geographic fairness perspectives?
- Do any options require our subregion to develop a new scoring system to determine how much covid relief funding each project/agency would receive?
- Which options would accelerate implementation of our projects and/or have the least likelihood of getting bogged down in additional bureaucracy/ paperwork/ agency coordination?

Boulder County staff prepared three scenarios (see attached spreadsheet) to illustrate options for how the COVID funding could be allocated with varied levels of federal share to eligible projects.

The Boulder County DRCOG sub-regional forum's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewed the information provided by DRCOG staff and discussed these scenarios on Feb 18, 2021. With virtually unlimited options for how to allocate this funding, the three scenarios presented were merely intended to be representative, illustrating the spectrum of options available to the Boulder County Forum:

### **Option 1: Funding the most projects**

This option left intact the federal funding that DRCOG had offered to each project sponsor and uses the COVID federal stimulus funding and additional available dollars to achieve as many projects as possible. This option proposes using the remaining unallocated \$188k to offset the local matching requirements for Lyons' US36 project, and no other project sponsor receives less federal funding.

### **Option 2: 100% federal share given to all eligible projects, in order of TIP score until fully utilized**

With this option, the federal stimulus funding would be used to reduce the local matching requirements for eligible projects. The following projects have their local match reduced to \$0:

- Louisville/ Trail Connections
- Nederland/ ADA Improvements
- Louisville/ South Boulder Rd Crossing
- Lyons/ St Vrain Trail

The Lyons/ US 36 Improvements receives the remaining COVID funding (which is exhausted in this project), reducing their local match to 12%. The Superior/US 36 Bikeway project does not receive any increased federal share, due to scoring lower than the Lyons projects. This option does not reduce the local match for the Lafayette/ SH 7 & 119<sup>th</sup> project, on the grounds that this project has had its local match reduced by \$1.8M from Region 4 coronavirus relief funding.

In order to reduce the local match for the projects listed above, in this scenario Longmont's County Road Shoulders project does not receive any federal funding and Boulder's 30<sup>th</sup> St project's federal funding would have to be reduced by \$882k.

**Option 3: Local match is reduced by half on all eligible projects, in order of TIP score until fully utilized**

The following projects have their local match reduced by 50%:

- Louisville/ Trail Connections
- Nederland/ ADA Improvements
- Louisville/ South Boulder Rd Crossing
- Lyons/ St Vrain Trail
- Lyons/ US 36 Improvements
- Superior/ US 36 Bikeway

This option does not reduce the local match for the Lafayette/ SH 7 & 119<sup>th</sup> project, on the grounds that this project has had its local match reduced by \$1.8M from Region 4 coronavirus relief funding.

In order to reduce the local match for the projects listed above, in this scenario Longmont's County Road Shoulders project does not receive any federal funding and Boulder's 30<sup>th</sup> St project's federal funding would have to be reduced by \$517k.

**The Boulder County TAC discussed all three options and came to a consensus to recommend Option 1 to the Boulder County Forum's Policy Advisory Committee**, because it would allow the most projects to move forward and the TAC felt it would be unfair to ask Boulder and Longmont to have federal funding reduced in order to increase the federal funding share provided to other projects. There was recognition of the spirit of the TIP, that local agencies agreed to a financial participation in these projects when applications were submitted. It was agreed that the best use of the remaining \$188k in federal funding would be to reduce Lyons' local match on one of their projects, on the basis that as a small community, this would provide more benefit to Lyons than an option that divides this funding among multiple eligible project sponsors. DRCOG staff also informed the TAC that while Options 2 and 3 work from a financial perspective, completely eliminating the federal funding for the Longmont County Line Road Shoulders project would require Longmont's consent, or would require the Forum to only partially reduce the federal funding for this project and identify an additional reduction in federal funding from another project.

### Subregional Share: Boulder County Forum Waiting List

Subregional Forum	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Funding Request (\$1,000's)	Score (1-3)	Project Activity	Waiting List Ranking
Boulder	Boulder County	US-287 BRT Feasibility and Corridor Safety Study	\$ 250	2.4	Study	1
Boulder	Lyons	US-36 Multimodal Improvements in Lyons	\$ 1,966	2.3	Construction	2
Boulder	Lyons	St. Vrain Trail Extension: Lyons	\$ 1,048	2.3	Construction	3
Boulder	Boulder	30th St. Corridor Improvements: Boulder Creel to Arapahoe	\$ 2,580	2.1	Construction	4
Boulder	Longmont	SH-119 Operational Improvements: Nelson to Pratt	\$ 3,000	2.1	Construction	5
Boulder	Boulder	SH-7 and Arapahoe Bridge Replacement	\$ 4,200	2.0	Construction	6
Boulder	Longmont	County Line Rd. Shoulder Improvements: 17th to SH-66	\$ 225	1.9	Design	7
Boulder	Superior	Marshall Rd. Underpass	\$ 1,440	1.5	Construction	8
Boulder	Boulder County	Multimodal Intersection Improvements: SH-7 and 95th Ave.	\$ 5,200	1.2	Construction	9