

Fisher Insight

KEEPING TAP PROJECTS ON TRACK

How your consultant can help you maximize federal-aid funding for safer, more walkable communities

Would your community benefit from greater walkability, better biking accommodations, and healthier and happier citizens? Making infrastructure upgrades through the federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) could be the answer.

TAP is a federal grant program offered by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to provide funding for a wide range of projects that encourage and enhance non-motorized mobility. It's all about getting people out of their car seats and onto their feet — for their health, for the environment, and for the type of community people increasingly prefer to live in.

But to deliver on that, as the municipal sponsor of federally funded TAP projects, you'll need to navigate the complex web of recordkeeping and reporting requirements, tight design and construction schedules, and specific design standards that must be upheld to pass an auditor's inspection. Otherwise, you risk losing the funding and jeopardizing a project that your community values greatly.

It is therefore critical to have a consultant on your side with expertise handling federal-aid projects. Let's take a deeper dive into TAP requirements and how to partner with your consultant to make your next project a success.



Village of Penn Yan Bike-Ped Connections, TAP project designed by Fisher and constructed in 2019.

HOW TAP PROJECTS BENEFIT YOUR COMMUNITY



SAFETY & PUBLIC HEALTH

MAKE IT EASIER, SAFER, AND MORE FUN FOR PEOPLE TO GET AROUND WITHOUT DRIVING A CAR



CONNECTIVITY

FILL IN THE GAPS DISRUPTING YOUR TRANSPORTATION NETWORK, WHETHER TO CORRECT LEGACY OMISSIONS OR TO ACCOMMODATE NEW DEVELOPMENT



GROWTH

MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY A MORE DESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE, VISIT, WORK, AND PLAY



BUSINESS PERKS

BOOST TOURISM PLUS IMPROMPTU STOPS AT EATERIES, SHOPS, AND CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS



IDENTITY & PRIDE

CREATE A UNIQUE AND AUTHENTIC SENSE OF PLACE THROUGH WAYFINDING, SIGNAGE, AND BRANDING

Understanding TAP

Examples of TAP projects may include on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, improving non-driver access to critical resources and across neighborhoods, recreational trails, school zone safety improvements, and even the transformation of former interstates and divided highways into more inclusive and multi-modal boulevards. Federal TAP dollars get allocated at the state level, and every state has its own way of handling everything from the application process to project recordkeeping, design requirements, inspection/auditing, and timeline.

It's critical to remember TAP is a reimbursement program, so municipal sponsors must initially front the project dollars themselves, and then seek incremental reimbursement as the project progresses. Sponsors typically make monthly reimbursement requests that align with the invoices submitted by the consultant and the contractor throughout the project's design and construction.

Applying for TAP Funding

TAP applications require supplying a project scope, schedule, and cost estimate, among other supporting



Town of Victor Community Connectivity Project, TAP project designed by Fisher and constructed in 2022.

technical documents. All must be sound, practical, and in tune with your state's requirements for federal-aid projects — not only for the benefit of the review, but also to stand up to an audit later.

Bringing TAP Projects to Life

As the graphic above demonstrates, TAP projects benefit communities in many ways, from public safety and health to economic growth and regional pride. But failing to meet any of the state's requirements (from project kickoff all the way through construction and operation) could jeopardize reimbursement and project completion.

To name a few: Design, contract, and construction documents have specific rules on language/content; the project must meet design and construction milestones; environmental tasks and public outreach must be conducted; construction inspection record-keeping has specific requirements; and the facility must perform as intended for its useful life.

As is the case when any public dollars are in play, TAP projects understandably face intense scrutiny from your state's Department of Transportation (DOT), which will conduct regular audits to ensure your project follows all its policies, standards,

timelines, and reporting requirements to a T. If deviations or noncompliance are suspected, TAP funding could get pulled, and you may even be required to pay back any funds you've been reimbursed along the way.

DOT representatives and auditors raise flags for good reasons, such as safety, resiliency, and ensuring the prudent use of public dollars is consistent with the rules and regulations. And you never know when roadblocks outside your control can threaten your ability to stay on schedule.

Here your design consultant plays an important role as your expert advocate in conversations with the DOT. You need someone on your side with broad experience overcoming challenges on a diverse range of federal-aid projects, to work with your DOT's auditors and try to develop a mutually agreeable solution that maintains your funding and moves your project to successful completion.

TAP Projects the Fisher Way

With over 350 federal-aid projects in our portfolio and a perfect record of successfully shepherding projects through the auditing process and maintaining awarded funded, Fisher is a strong partner for your federal-aid project. TAP projects that focus on safety, health, and sustainability are also consistent with our long-established Core Purpose: "Cultivating our gifts to create a legacy of infrastructure that improves quality of life."

Contact us to discuss how our federal-aid experts can help you "TAP" into this opportunity for non-motorized community enhancement funding.



Emily M. Smith, P.E.

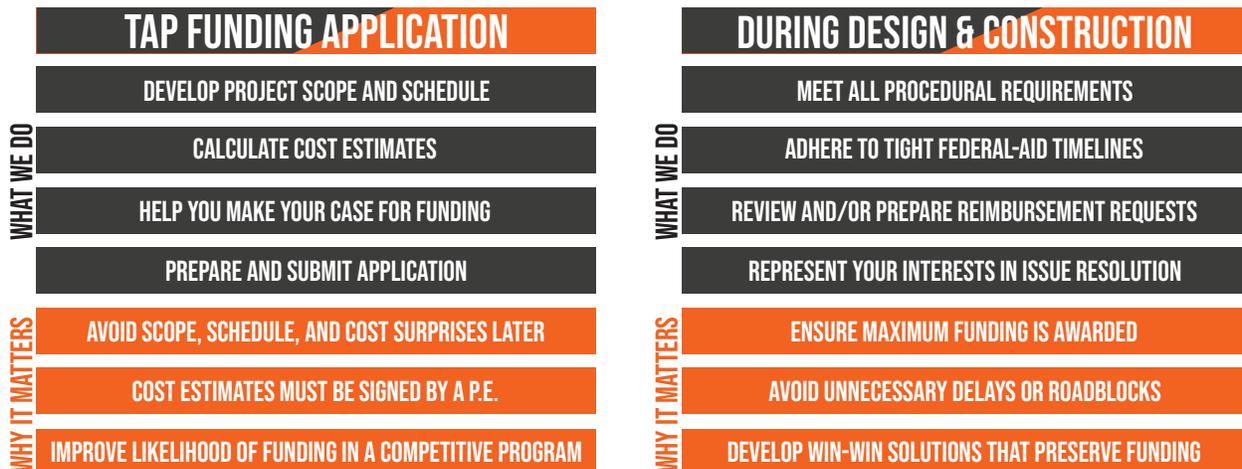
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Connect

KEEP YOUR TAP PROJECTS ON TRACK



GIVE YOUR COMMUNITY A PROJECT TO BE PROUD OF!