



MEETING NOTICE

The Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC)

December 5, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

**Time Check Hall – City Services Center, First Floor, West Entrance
500 15th Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids**



Chair: Seth Gunnerson – Cedar Rapids

Vice Chair: Brenna Fall – Cedar Rapids

TTAC Voting Members: Brad Ketels - Linn County; Randy Burke – Linn County Conservation; Dick Ransom - Hiawatha; Shane Wicks – Fairfax; Kesha Billings & Mike Barkalow - Marion; Scott Pottorff - Ely; Jon Bogert – Palo; Kelli Scott - Robins; Ron Griffith, Nate Kampman, John Witt, Steve Krug, Doug Wilson, Matt Myers, Steve Hershner, & Jason Middlekauff - Cedar Rapids; Tom Pepper - Linn County Trails Association.

TTAC Non-voting Members: Cathy Cutler - Iowa DOT; Darla Hugaboom- FHWA; Eva Steinman - FTA

AGENDA

Roll Call

Public Comment Period

Action/Discussion Items

1. **Approve Minutes from October 8, 2019 – [ATTACHED](#)**
2. **Analysis of Surface Transportation Block Grant/Transportation Alternatives Program Balances – Brandon Whyte – [ATTACHED](#)**
 - *Discussion Item: Staff will make presentation with group discussion to follow.*
3. **Status Report Review – Brandon Whyte – [ATTACHED](#)**
 - *Discussion Item: Staff will make presentation with group discussion to follow.*

Report Items/Member Updates

Next Scheduled Meeting

- *Next TTAC meeting: 2:00pm January 9th, 2020 at Time Check Hall*



**TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TTAC)
MEETING MINUTES
Time Check Hall, First Floor – City Services Center
500 15th Ave SW, Cedar Rapids
Tuesday, October 8, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.**

Member	Present	Absent	Alternate
Seth Gunnerson	X		
Brenna Fall	X		
John Witt	X		
Ron Griffith	X		
Steve Hershner	X		
Jason Middlekauff		X	
Matt Myers	X		
Nate Kampman		X	
Doug Wilson	X		
Scott Pottorff	X		
Shane Wicks	X		
Dick Ransom		X	
Randy Burke	X		
Kesha Billings	X		Jacob Han
Mike Barkalow	X		Darin Andersen
Jon Bogert	X		
Kelli Scott	X		Dax Sundtken
Tom Peffer	X		
Steve Krug	X		

Staff Present: Bill Micheel, Brandon Whyte, Hilary Hershner, & Liz Darnall

Chairperson Gunnerson called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Action/Discussion Items

1. Approve Minutes from June 27, 2019

Jon Bogert moved to approve the minutes from June 27, 2019. Seconded by Randy Burke. The motion carried.

2. Iowa DOT Performance Measures: 2016-2020 Safety Targets (Performance Measure 1)

Bill Micheel shared the Iowa DOT Performance Measures: 2016-2020 Safety Targets (Performance Measure 1). There was a discussion in regards to the number of accidents for a specific target.



John Witt moved to recommend adoption of Iowa DOT's safety targets and performance measures. Seconded by Tom Peffer. The motion carried.

3. Iowa Pavement Management Program (IPMP) Data Discussion

Liz Darnall shared that the Iowa DOT will be collecting pavement condition data on a 4-year cycle inside of a 2-year cycle due to funding concerns. There was discussion on which jurisdictions uses the pavement data and the value of the frequency of when the data is being collected. The discussion also focused on how the data could impact the different jurisdictions when the data collection switches from a 2-year cycle to a 4-year cycle.

Report Items/Member Updates

Matt Meyer shared that there would be a groundbreaking for the Roller Gate at the 16th Avenue SW bridge after this meeting, at 3 P.M.

Darin Andresen shared that a section of Tower Terrace Road between Winslow Road to Lennon Lane has opened.

Jacob Han shared that a new section of the Central Corridor project has as opened up between 13th Street to 19th Street.

Randy Burke shared that Linn County will go out and bid the Morgan Creek project once the City of Cedar Rapids finishes their section.

Doug Wilson shared that Mount Vernon Rd was going to be paved next week and hopes to have it finished before winter. He also shared that LOST funds increased from \$18 million to \$19 million and the City of Cedar Rapids has paved the trail through Cherry Hill Park.

Adjournment

Doug Wilson moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:30pm. Seconded by Randy Burke. The motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Cannon
Administrative Assistant II



2. Analysis of Surface Transportation Block Grant and Transportation Alternatives Program Balances

Background

The Iowa DOT is implementing a new rule putting a cap on Iowa's Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funding starting on October 1, 2020. In addition, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) made a recommendation to the Corridor MPO to reduce our Surface Transportation Block Grant program (STBG) balance. In reaction, the Policy Board recently directed Corridor MPO staff to generate a historical analysis of Corridor MPO funding trends for capital projects using TAP and STBG funding for the period between Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2014 until the end of FFY2019. Corridor MPO staff has completed this analysis which includes forecasted scenarios for funding expenditures through the end of FFY2023 for both TAP and STBG.

In April of 2018, the Iowa DOT established a new balance accrual rule putting a cap on TAP balances carried by MPO's. This rule is being implemented in conjunction with the shift from the more conventional federal management of TAP funding to the management of TAP funds by the state. The "TAP Balance Accrual Rule" is as follows:

"TAP balance accrual, as tracked on the quarterly reports, will be limited to a maximum of 4 years of funding starting at end of FFY2020."

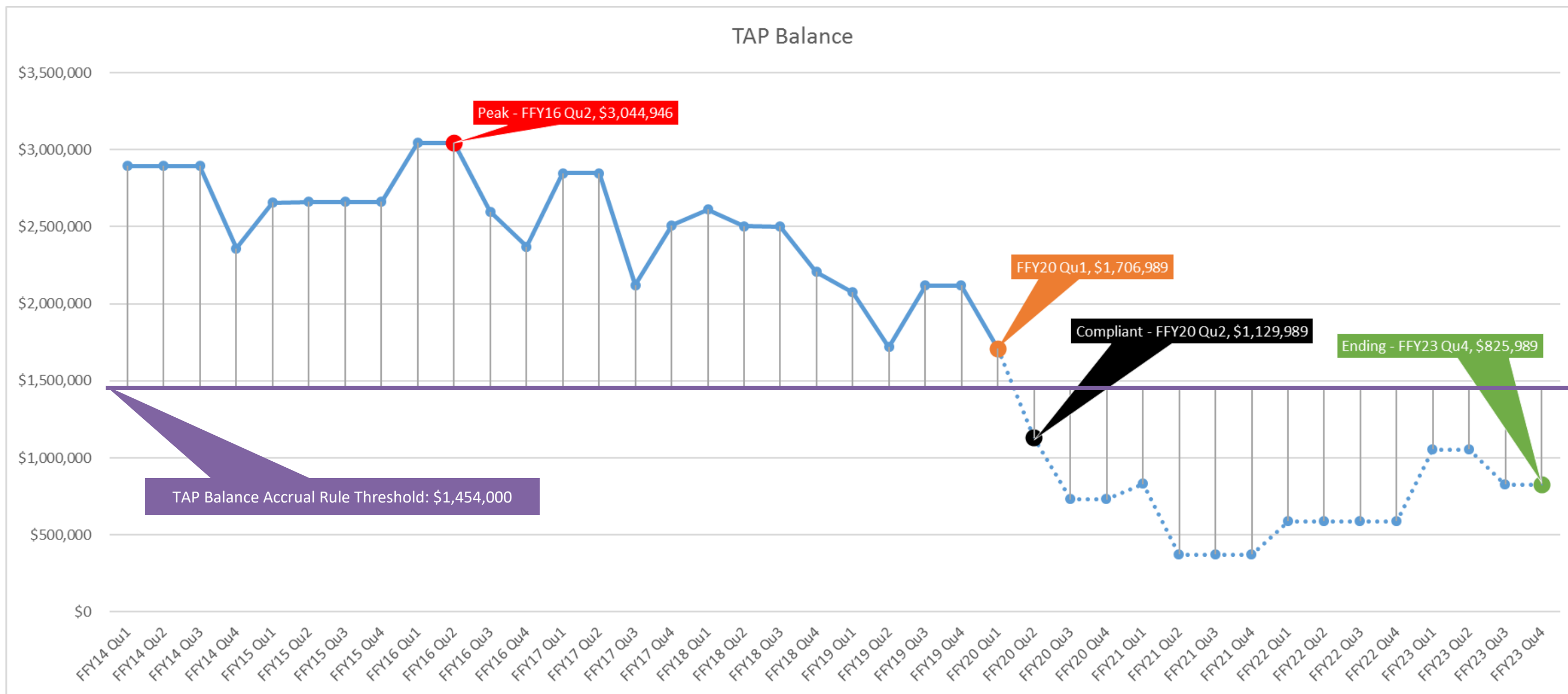
In practice, this means if the Corridor MPO has a balance in excess of the sum of 4 years of TAP funding, this excess funding should be awarded to a project prior to October 1, 2020 so that the TAP balance does not exceed \$1,454,000, which is the sum of 4 years of TAP funding for our region. If the Corridor MPO's balance were out of conformance with this rule all new TAP funds may be frozen until the balance of TAP funds is in conformance with the rule or new or unused TAP funds may potentially be withdrawn from our Corridor MPO altogether.

Finally, MPO staff has also applied the TAP Balance Accrual Rule to STBG projects to further motivate project completion, better comply with Iowa DOT and FHWA recommendations, and in the possible event that the Iowa DOT applies a similar rule to STBG balances, which is in their purview and has been discussed as a possibility.

TAP Balance

The new TAP Balance Accrual Rule will take effect on October 1, 2020. The current TAP balance is \$2,118,420, which is out of conformance with the TAP Balance Accrual Rule; however, the Corridor MPO is anticipated to comply with the rule by October 1, 2020 when it takes effect. Corridor MPO staff is forecasting based on Project Status Report data provided by member jurisdictions that during the 1st and 2nd Quarters of FFY2020, that Cedar Rapids and Linn County will let several projects which will lower the TAP balance to \$729,989.

Project completion forecasts until the end of the analysis year (FFY2023) indicate our MPO will never be in violation of the TAP Balance Accrual Rule assuming all projects stay on their stated timelines as shown on the TAP Balance Figure on the next page. MPO staff has been sure to allot recent TAP funds to projects believed to be most shovel ready, with the lowest potential for delays.





STBG Balance

The FHWA made a recommendation in the recent Quadrennial Review to lower the STBG balance prior to the next Quadrennial Review in four years. Prior to this review and during this time period, Corridor MPO staff has been, and will continue working with member jurisdictions and project managers to push projects forward with more frequent project reviews, offers of assistance to help with the DOT process, project funding reprioritizations, project sub-phasing, and project defunding where appropriate. Additionally, MPO staff is working through the new LRTP process to better score projects based on project readiness – details will follow as the LRTP reaches draft review.

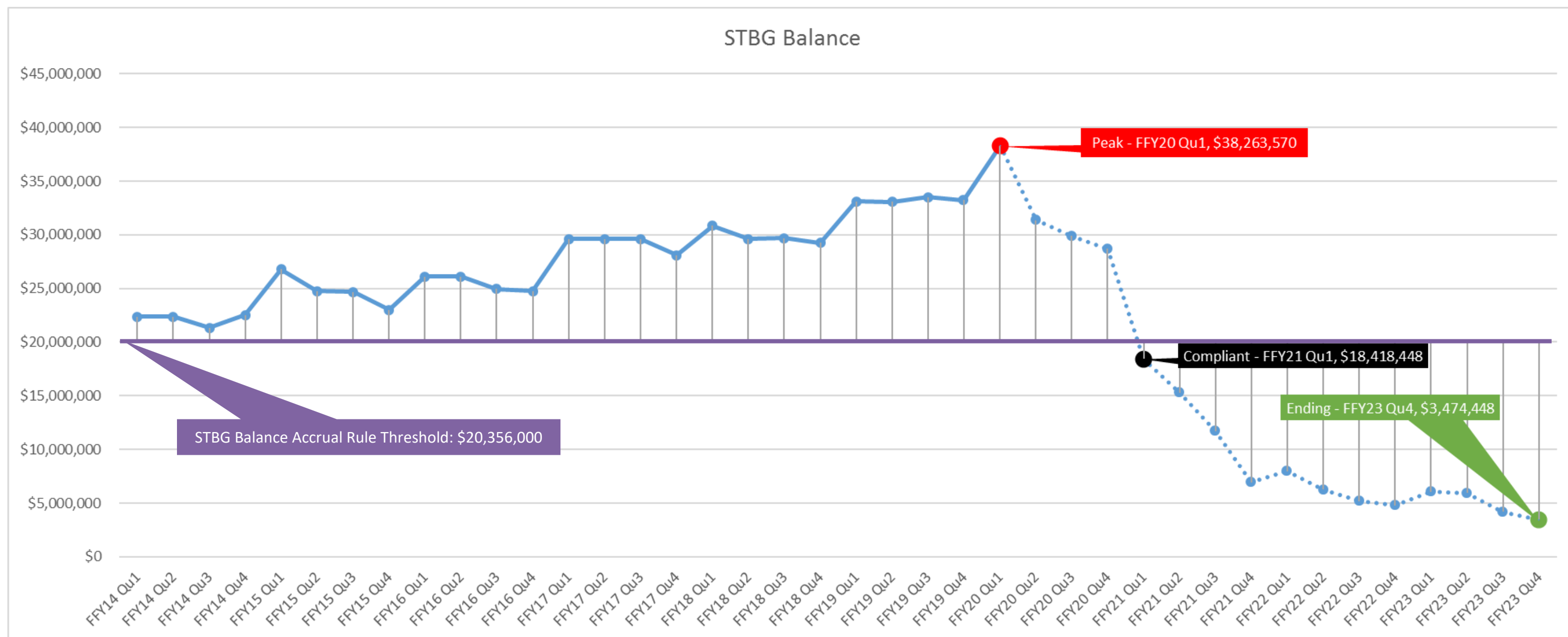
The STBG Balance Chart on the next page demonstrates that the Corridor MPO is currently at the expected peak of our STBG balance or \$38,263,570 (Q1 FFY20). This is \$17,907,570 over the potential STBG Balance Accrual Rule if the rule were to be put in place. Our target is \$20,356,000. Iowa DOT indicates this is one of, if not, the highest excess in the state.

Staff believes that the Corridor MPO will be below this target threshold at the close of the 1st Quarter of FFY2021 when our balance reaches \$18,418,448. Reductions in the balance will occur with many projects but largely from funds allocated to the CeMar Trail and Tower Terrace Road. If expectations are correct, the Corridor MPO will reach its target two and a half years prior to the next Iowa DOT and FWHA Quadrennial Review, fulfilling the recommendation issued by FHWA.

Finally, future project forecasts until the end of the analysis year (FFY2023) indicate our MPO will never be in violation of a potential STBG Balance Accrual Rule going forward.

Next Steps

MPO staff will continue cooperating with jurisdictions and the Iowa DOT to push project completion timelines forward with project reviews, assistance with the DOT process, project funding reprioritization, project sub-phasing, and project defunding where appropriate. Additionally, MPO staff is working through the new LRTP process to better score projects based on project readiness and other creative concepts to advance project development – details will follow as the LRTP reaches draft review. Finally, MPO staff is committed to keeping the Policy Board, Executive Committee, and TTAC up-to-date with status report updates on individual projects and STBG/TAP balance forecasting.





3. Status Report Review

Background

Every August the MPO requests Status Reports for all MPO funded projects – projects receiving Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG) or Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds. The Iowa DOT and the MPO Policy Board require this practice as a condition of funds being awarded. Status Reports allow Policy Board members and the Iowa DOT to track project development ensuring funds are being spent in a timely manner.

Currently the Corridor MPO has one of the highest STBG balances in the state. In a previous Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Iowa DOT review it was recommended that the MPO cut this balance and further that no project development process last longer than three years for STBG projects and two years for TAP projects. It was recommended that the Policy Board act to defund any project exceeding these time limits. The MPO Policy Board has opted to review these projects. MPO staff with the corporation of local jurisdictions has acted to reprioritize projects where possible or defund projects that no longer seem viable. Prior to MPO Policy Board review of projects a review of the current status of projects with the TTAC will be conducted with an aim to inform and develop possible solutions to expedite project development.

Finally, In April of 2018, the Iowa DOT established a new balance accrual rule putting a cap on TAP balances carried by MPO's. This rule is being implemented in conjunction with the shift from the more conventional federal management of TAP funding to the management of TAP funds by the state. The "TAP Balance Accrual Rule" is as follows:

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In practice, this means if the Corridor MPO has a balance in excess of the sum of four years of TAP funding, this excess funding should be awarded to a project prior to October 1, 2020 so that the TAP balance does not exceed \$1,454,000, which is the sum of 4 years of TAP funding for our region. If the Corridor MPO's balance were out of conformance with this rule all new TAP funds may be frozen until the balance of TAP funds is in conformance with the rule or new or unused TAP funds may potentially be withdrawn from our Corridor MPO altogether.

Additionally, MPO staff has also applied the TAP Balance Accrual Rule to STBG projects to further motivate project completion, better comply with Iowa DOT and FHWA recommendations, and in the possible event that the Iowa DOT applies a similar rule to STBG balances, which is in their purview and has been discussed as a possibility.

MPO Project Status Report Review

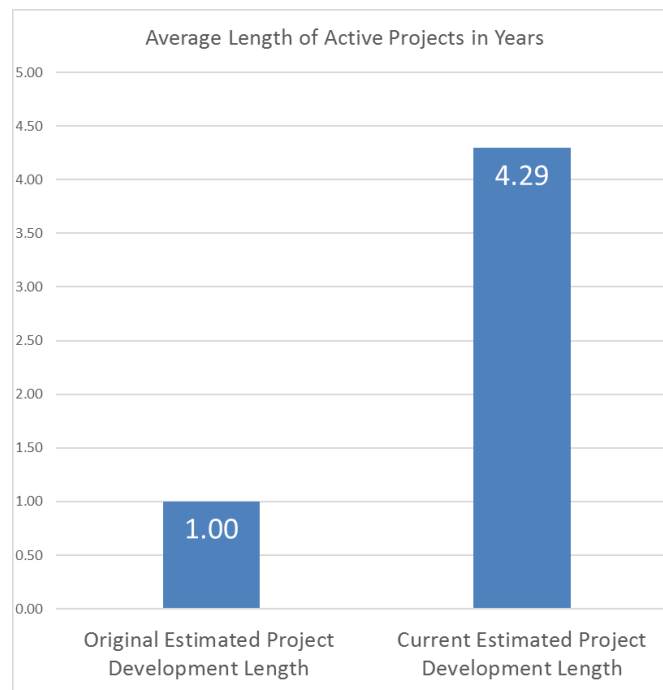
The review of individual projects has occurred with local jurisdictions prior to this review. As such, this review will focus on aggregate trends and issues rather than looking at issues unique to individual projects.



Current Project Length

The Iowa DOT has indicated that STBG funded projects should reach letting in less than three years from the time that their last federal funding is available; TAP projects should reach letting within two years. This means that if a STBG project is awarded funding in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 (October 1st, 2019) it needs to reach letting before FFY 2023 (October 1st, 2022). When jurisdictions apply for funding with the MPO they provide an estimated time of project development, this timeline is reviewed by TTAC and is used by MPO staff as the original timeline for project development completion. On each annual status report, the jurisdictions are asked to update this time. This information is then used to estimate the current timeline for project development completion (the letting date).

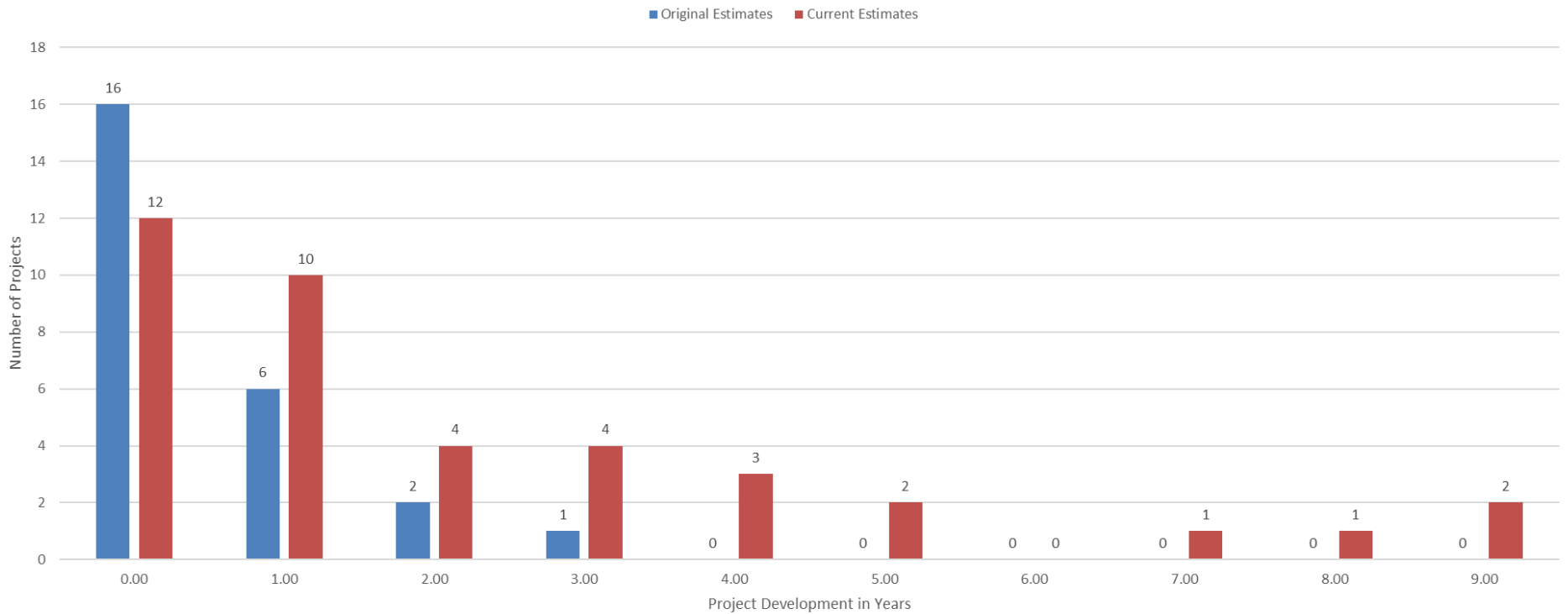
The current average for on-going projects is 4.29 years. The original estimate is 1.0 years (see the below figure) For road projects the current average is 8.25 years; for trail projects 3.08 years. Currently many of our MPO projects would violate the DOT guidelines of three years and two years respectively.



Finally, too many of our newer projects are listing very short project development timelines often less than one year. Data show that project development timelines less than one year only occur for transit rolling stock projects. The chart on the next page illustrates original versus currently estimated project development timelines. Given data trends, the original project development estimates likely need to be lengthened, while efforts made to advance development faster.



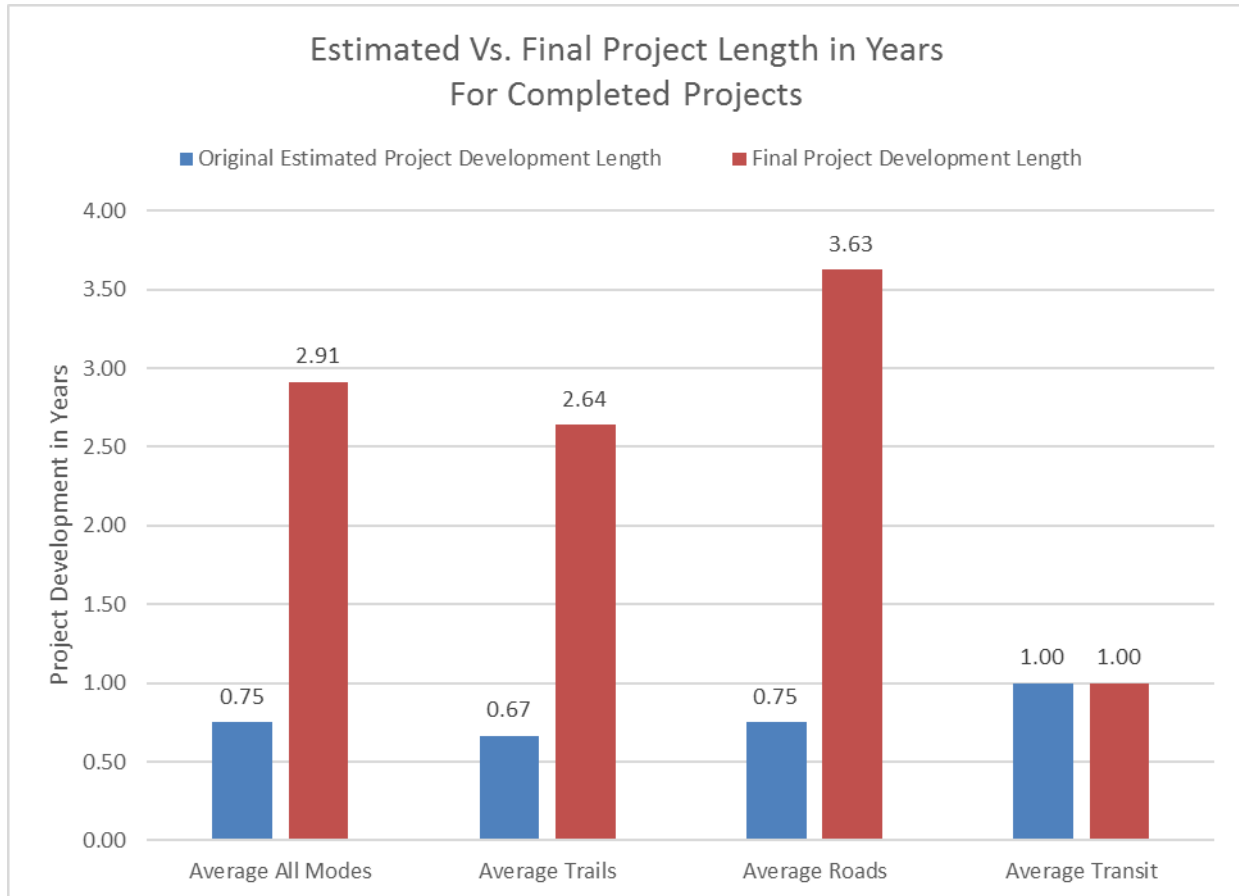
Original Vs. Currently Estimated Project Development Length





Completed Project Length

Regarding completed projects for the last four years (2016 to 2019), the data is slightly better but still not within compliance of DOT guidelines. The all project average for completed projects in years (development only) is 2.91, trails are 2.64, roads are 3.63, and transit is 1.0 years. While the average in the original estimates were .75, .67, .75 and 1.0 respectively. This data is shown in the below illustration.



Project cost over and underruns

Another issue of concern are project cost over and underruns. Cost overruns are a concern for the MPO because they can cause significant project delays if additional funding requests are required. Project underruns while possessing clear advantages are a concern because they tieup unneeded MPO funding for many years during project development and during the project closure process. An example is a recently completed project that was under budget by an approximate \$268,000 in federal aid. The project development only took a year but the project closure process was 2.5 years. The average project closure process takes 3.5 years. However, MPO staff is working with the DOT to expedite this process. Finally, once this closure process is complete it generally takes six months to a year to return the money to the competitive TIP process. After that the money may be awarded to a project in any year of the TIP, meaning it could wait another one to four years before it can be spent again. During this entire time inflation is eroding at value of this funding. And finally, this underrun money is being counted against the STBG/TAP balance thresholds the entire time.



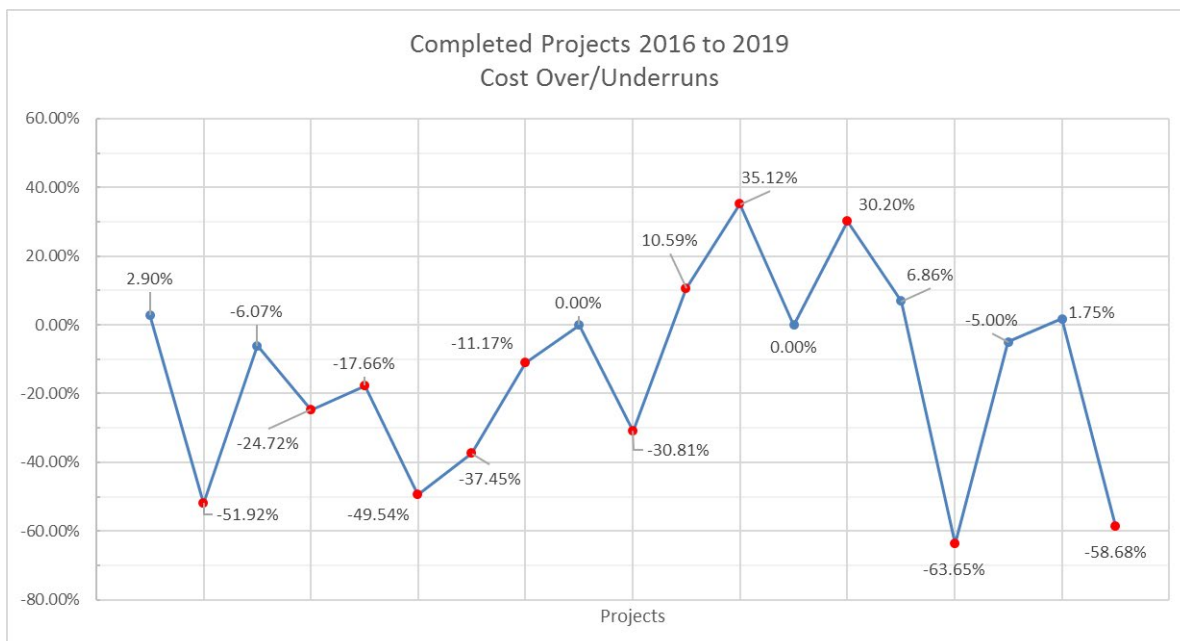
The MPO Policy Board has approved a plus or minus of 10 percent from the original cost estimate to the final cost of a project. It is understood that accurate cost estimates can be difficult so early in the design process. Current project cost over/underruns are represented in the below table and are acceptable. Note, an outlier project has been removed; with the outlier included the all mode and road averages are much higher.

Current Projects	Percent over/under
Average All Modes	6.49%
Average Trails	5.96%
Average Roads	8.50%
Average Transit	0.00%

All completed projects are significantly lower than expected resulting in cost underruns and the issues discussed on the previous page. These averages are illustrated in the below chart.

Current Projects	Percent over/under
Average All Modes	-23.12%
Average Trails	-26.05%
Average Roads	-20.66%
Average Transit	-5.00%

Looking at completed projects, in the below chart, there is a high variance that is lost when looking at the averages. These variances reflect a comment from the DOT indicating issues with cost estimates at our MPO.





Solutions

MPO staff is requesting input from TTAC members on how best to address these issues and advance project completion on time and within an acceptable range of the original cost estimate. We recognize that TTAC members have a different perspective than MPO or DOT staff. Issues and solutions that may be apparent to TTAC members may not be clear to those not directly completing the project development process.

MPO staff will receive training regarding the project development process in a more in-depth manner to better assist jurisdictions and the Iowa DOT.

Finally, MPO staff will continue cooperating with jurisdictions and the Iowa DOT to push project completion timelines forward with project reviews, assistance with the DOT process, project funding reprioritization, project sub-phasing, and project defunding where appropriate. Additionally, MPO staff is working through the new LRTP process to better score projects based on project readiness and other creative concepts to advance project development – details will follow as the LRTP reaches draft review. Finally, MPO staff is committed to keeping the Policy Board, Executive Committee, and TTAC up-to-date with status report updates on individual projects and STBG/TAP balance forecasting.