

Action Transmittal

Transportation Advisory Board



Committee Meeting Date: August 2, 2023

Date: July 27, 2023

Action Transmittal: 2023-43

Release of 2024 Regional Solicitation and Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Solicitations

To: Technical Advisory Committee
From: TAC Funding & Programming Committee
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Requested Action

Release of the 2024 Regional Solicitation and Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP) Solicitation.

Recommended Motion

That the TAC recommend approval of the release of the 2024 Regional Solicitation and Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP) Solicitation with the following changes to the draft Regional Solicitation based on public comments:

- Clarification in the Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities application scoring guidance for Measure 1 specifying that projects not connected to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) “will be awarded 50 points if they are a part of a local system and identified within an adopted county, city, or regional parks implementing agency plan.”
- Rewording of the Unique Projects application to define scalability and adjust the criteria weights to 100% total.
- Rewording of the Bridge application qualifications to reflect changing state-aid bridge eligibility to require a Local Planning Index (LPI) of less than 60 or a National Bridge Inventory (NBI) Appraisal Rating of three or less in one of three categories (deck geometry, approach roadway, and waterway adequacy).
- Replace the phrase “equity population” with “disadvantaged communities” in the Equity and Housing Criterion within each application category.
- Other minor and grammatical edits as shown in the revised document.

Background and Purpose

The Regional Solicitation for Federal Transportation Projects is part of the Metropolitan Council’s federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Historically, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area has selected projects for funding from two federal programs: the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program. However, more funding sources have been created in recent years, including the federal Carbon Reduction Program and the federal PROTECT program. Following completion of the 2022 Regional Solicitation, staff worked with the TAC Funding & Programming Committee, TAC, and TAB on updates to the Regional Solicitation. A draft Solicitation with approved changes was subsequently

released for public review. The attached materials include applications, introduction, forms, and qualifying criteria for the 2024 Regional Solicitation. Approximately \$250 million is expected to be available in this solicitation. Most of the funding is for fiscal years 2028 and 2029. The exceptions are for the travel demand management application, which will solicit about \$1.2 million for 2027 and 2028 and the unique projects application, which will solicit about \$4.0 million for 2027 and 2028.

Simultaneous to the release of the Regional Solicitation is release of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) solicitation. HSIP is a core federal program defined in FAST Act. HSIP is designed to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, including non-state-owned public roads and roads on tribal lands. HSIP requires a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety on all public roads with a focus on performance. MnDOT conducts the HSIP solicitation, and the proposed projects are evaluated by a selection committee comprised of transportation professionals that includes members of the TAC. With guidance from its technical committees and a recommendation from this selection committee, the TAB's role is to approve the Solicitation criteria and selection of projects to be awarded HSIP funds. The draft Metro District program criteria are attached.

Relationship to Regional Policy

TAB develops and issues a Regional Solicitation for transportation funding. The region's Transportation Policy Plan includes transportation safety policies and strategies, and the HSIP solicitation is consistent with that plan.

Staff Analysis

The suggested clarifications and updates to the draft solicitation released for public comment by TAB at its May 18, 2023, meeting are listed below. Note that no clarifications and updates to the HSIP Solicitation are suggested. Yellow-highlighted changes shown in the attachments were made following the public comment period.

- In the Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities application, clarify within the scoring guidance for the RBTN scoring Measure 1 that projects not connected to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) “will be awarded 50 points if they are a part of a local system and identified within an adopted county, city, or regional parks implementing agency plan” (See page 185).
- Unique Projects (See pages 224 – 235):
 - Reword evaluation criterion 1 (Significance) to eliminate reference to “scalability” in favor of focusing on “regional impact.” in Measure A, along with clarification of Measures B and C as rating expandability and newness of approach, respectively.
 - Adjust the five criteria weights to total 100% (they had totaled 101%). This includes a one-point reduction to Significance, a one-point increase to Environmental impacts, and a one-point decrease to Partnerships.
- Bridge Qualification: To keep up with MnDOT State-Aids' updated federal bridge funding eligibility requirements, change the bridge eligibility to require a Local Planning Index (LPI) of less than 60 or a National Bridge Inventory (NBI) Appraisal Rating of three or less in one of three categories (deck geometry, approach roadway, and waterway adequacy). The draft released for public comment retained the previous requirement of NBI Appraisal Rating of 6 or less for rehabilitation and 4 or less for replacement, with no reference to LPI. (See pages 14 and 33).
- Scoring Guidance Document: Prior to release of the application (roughly September 1), staff will produce a reference document focused only on scoring guidance as requested in one public comment.
- In the Equity and Affordable Housing criterion, replace the phrase “equity population” with “disadvantaged communities” (See pages 46 and 51 for an example).

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) was provided the public comments to the draft Regional Solicitation at its July 19, 2023, meeting. After a lengthy discussion, TAB provided direction to forgo



putting the new Active Transportation sales tax funds into the 2024 Regional Solicitation application materials.

Committee Comments and Action

At its July 20, 2023, meeting, the TAC Funding & Programming Committee voted to recommend release of the 2024 Regional Solicitation and Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP) Solicitation with the changes listed above. Note that no changes are being made to the HSIP Solicitation.

Routing

To	Action Requested	Date Completed (Scheduled)
TAC Planning or TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	July 20, 2023
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	<i>August 2, 2023</i>
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Recommend (or Adopt)	<i>August 16, 2023</i>
Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee	Review & Recommend (or Adopt)	<i>August 28, 2023</i>
Metropolitan Council	Review & Recommend (or Adopt)	<i>September 13, 2023</i>

