



Potential Changes to 2024 Regional Solicitation

TAC Funding & Programming Committee



February 2023

2024 Regional Solicitation

Milestones

- Draft Regional Solicitation application action item to F&P: April 2023
- Public comment period: May/June 2023
- Open application period: late September/October-December 2023
- Scoring and appeals: January-March 2024
- Funding scenarios: April-July 2024
- TAB project selection: July 2024

Advanced timeline assumes minimal changes to the application to enable greater focus on Regional Solicitation Evaluation, which will start this summer.

#1: Criteria / Measure Weighing

Increase points for safety and/or emissions measures?

The Regional Solicitation survey included comments about increasing the score weighting of safety and emissions categories.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR SAFETY: Increase the safety scoring by 100 points for Roadway categories (excluding Bridges, which do not have a safety measure).

- 100 points to “Safety Issues in Project Area” in Traffic Management Technologies
- 50 points each to pedestrian safety and crash reduction in Spot Mobility/Safety, Strategic Capacity, and Reconstruction/Modernization

This would result in four categories having 1,200-point totals and the rest having 1,100 points.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR EMISSIONS: No change for emissions as we wait for the Regional Transportation and Climate Change Multimodal Measures process to conclude and incorporate into 2026 cycle.

#2: Funding Ranges

Funding Outside of the Ranges

In 2022, TAB funded the Bicycle/Pedestrian mode above its funding range. This concerned some members, though it is not against policy.

“...modal funding ranges have been established by TAB, based on historic levels, to give applicants an understanding of the general funding levels available by mode. TAB reserves the right to adjust these modal funding levels depending on the amount and quality of projects submitted.”

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: No change. The above rule provides flexibility in case unforeseen circumstances occur. The general topic of modal funding ranges and funding distribution will be discussed as part of the Regional Solicitation Evaluation.



#3: Agency Priorities



Consideration of Agency Priorities

- County feedback included interest in including consideration of high-priority projects from individual sponsors.
- STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Consider this during the Regional Solicitation Evaluation. This conversation and any potential implementation are likely to take several months.

#4: Tied Scores



Breaking Ties?

- Currently, there is no rule one way or the other on tied scores. While TAB has historically been unwilling to break ties, tie-breaking could provide an opportunity to achieve other objectives.
- STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Out of 1,100 points, scores are not precise enough to say that the two projects provide exactly the same benefit to the region. Staff recommends the flexibility to fund one of two tied projects if that helps with another objective such as modal distribution or geographic distribution.

#5: Scoring Appeals

Logistics/Process

The Regional Solicitation language provides minimal direction to scoring appeals. This has created confusion for Funding & Programming Committee members in deciding upon appeals.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: To ensure fairness, a more defined process should be created during the Regional Solicitation Evaluation. For the 2024 cycle, staff recommends the following rules:

- Provide a response letter to applicants with the committee's determination and allow for one meeting with the scoring chair, Council staff, and the applicant.
- Following the appeal deadline, no new information/rationales should be provided by the applicant.



#6: Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Rule



Apply for / Receive From Two Sources?

Historically applicants have been allowed to apply to the Regional Solicitation and HSIP Solicitation but can only accept money from one of the two programs.

“Projects may apply for both the Regional Solicitation and the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), but projects can only be awarded funds from one of the two programs.”

In 2022, staff proposed funding projects with funds from each solicitation. This was not received well by TAB members.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Continue to allow application to both solicitations and keep the existing rule as written.

#7: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Limit



Is the Bus Rapid Transit Limit Needed?

The below rule was established along with the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT) funding program.

Within the Transit modal category, there is an Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project category. There is also a New Market guarantee to ensure that at least one Transit Expansion or Modernization project is funded that serves areas outside of Transit Market Area 1 and 2 from the Transportation Policy Plan for at least one end of the project. The combined maximum funding amount for bus rapid transit projects funded in the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project, Transit Expansion, and Transit Modernization categories will be \$32,000,000.”

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Because funding amounts can lead to rigidity, staff suggests basing this on the number of projects, i.e., requiring that at least two projects not directly tied to BRT projects are funded.

#8: Trail and Sidewalk Maintenance

Removing Snow and Ice

Currently applicants are required to state that they will maintain facilities by removing snow. However, this does not apply to other categories, as should be done under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Winter maintenance should be required for all facilities, including trails/sidewalks funded under the roadways categories.



#9 Regional Bicycle Transportation Network Administrative Modifications



RBTN

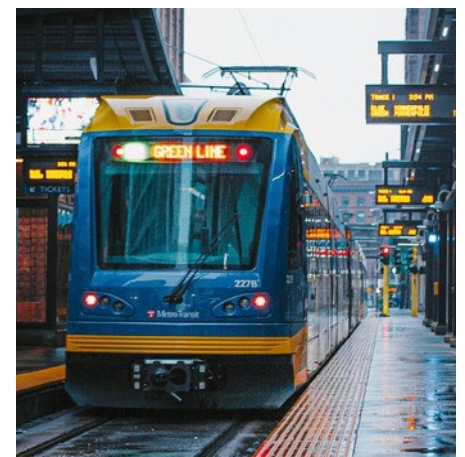
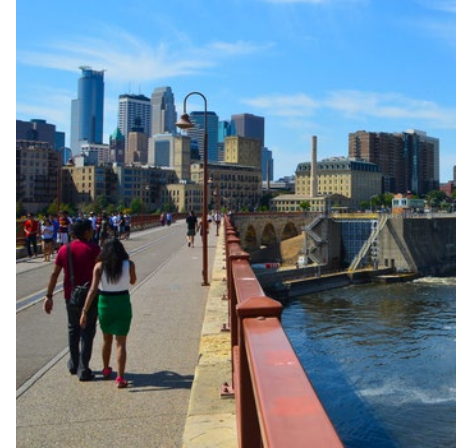
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Council staff should allow for an open period (minimum of 3 weeks) to receive requests for administrative adjustments; eligible adjustments will be limited to specific categories and considered based on RBTN guiding principles as was done for Regional Solicitations prior to 2022.

#10 Bridges

Target Funding

Current Bridge target is \$10M. MnDOT has indicated that we should not assume that the new On-System Bridge program will continue since the funding came from a general fund transfer.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: In case the On-System Bridge program continues, expand eligibility for bridges to all federally-aid eligible bridges (i.e., On-System Brides) for the 2024 cycle.





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