



Potential Changes to 2024 Regional Solicitation

TAC Funding & Programming Committee



March 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.

Connection to Policy

Prioritizing Criteria	Thrive Outcomes	TPP Goals
Role in the Regional Transportation System & Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity Livability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Competitive Economy
Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livability Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Competitive Economy
Equity and Housing Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity Livability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Leveraging Transportation Investments to Guide Land Use
Infrastructure Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewardship Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation System Stewardship
Congestion Reduction/Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity Livability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Environment Competitive Economy
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livability Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety and Security
Multimodal Facilities and Existing Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity Equity Livability Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Transportation and Land Use Competitive Economy
Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation System Stewardship

#1: Safety Criteria Weighing

Increase points for safety measures?

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

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

1. 50 points each to crash reduction and “Safety Issues in Project Area” in Traffic Management Technologies
2. 50 points for crash reduction and 50 pedestrian safety and in Spot Mobility/Safety, Strategic Capacity, and Reconstruction/Modernization
3. 50 points each for Barriers Overcome and Deficiencies Corrected in Bike/Ped categories

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

TAC COMMENTS: Members emphasized that this would be a “step in the right direction” for 2024. Some favored adding points for the bike/ped qualitative safety scores (#3). There was also concern about the reduction in the pedestrian safety increase from the original staff recommendation (#2)

#2: 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.

TAC COMMENTS: Concern was expressed about whether agency priorities could disadvantage applicants not on committees and take the focus off regional strategies in favor of votes for specific projects.

#3: 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 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.

TAC COMMENTS: Members did not provide definitive direction on whether to allow ties to be broken, though they did suggest that overprogramming and categorical funding targets could be used to navigate tied scores.

#4: 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.

TAC COMMENTS: None.



#5: 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.

TAC COMMENTS: Given the effort made to create this rule there was concern about making a change for the short term.

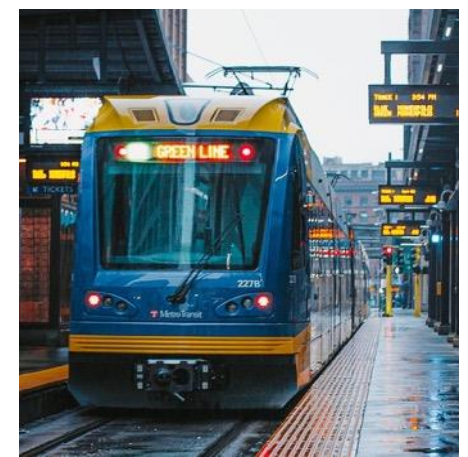
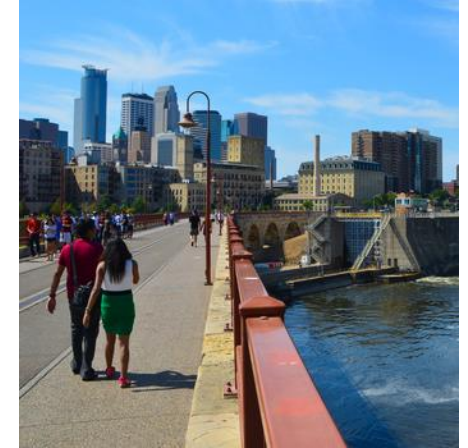
#6 Bridges

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: Regardless of whether the On-System Bridge program continues, expand eligibility downward for other federally-aid eligible bridges (i.e., On-System Brides) for the 2024 cycle. This expanded eligibility would include Major and Minor Collectors and B-Minors for urban areas and the same list minus Minor Collectors for rural areas.

TAC COMMENTS: Members were comfortable with the approach.



#7 Minimum Point Value



Establishing a Cutoff Point?

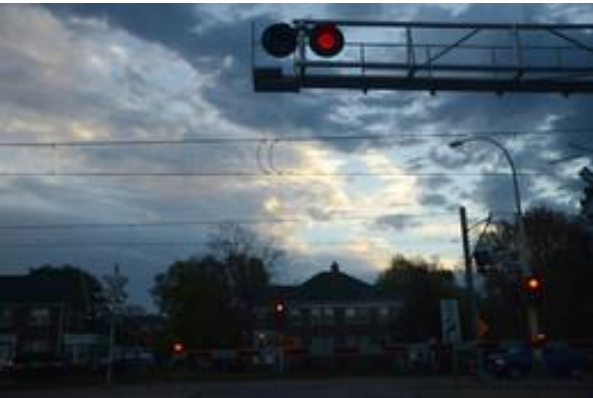
Some participants note the variation between the lower-ranking project scores that receive funding leading to the question of whether some funding categories essentially have lower standards for funding.

Staff cautions that for various reasons, it is nearly impossible to use scores to compare projects across categories.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: No Change for 2024. A determination of a sound way to determine minimum threshold(s) that allow for consistency across categories, if even possible, would likely need the time allotted in the Regional Solicitation Evaluation.

TAC COMMENTS: Expressed agreement with F&P that outliers, along with the number of applications submitted, can lead to inconsistent scoring ranges by category. It was suggested that rather than points thresholds, cut lines could favor performances measures not being met.

#8 Regional Bicycle Transportation Network Administrative Adjustments



RBTN

Council staff will have 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. Administrative adjustments include:

- Alignment designations within existing RBTN corridors
- Minor extensions up to one-half mile long that provide missing connections to RBTN alignments, regional trails, or regional destinations
- Minor alignment or corridor centerline shifts to within one-quarter mile of the initial alignment/centerline in core cities or to within one-half mile of initial alignment/centerline outside core cities and that continue to serve regional destinations served by the initial alignment

#9 Federal Minimum and Maximum Awards

Modal Application Categories:	Min Fed Award	Max Fed Award
Roadways Including Multimodal Elements		
• Traffic Management Technologies	\$250,000	\$3,500,000
• Spot Mobility and Safety	\$1,000,000	\$3,500,000
• Strategic Capacity	\$1,000,000	\$10,000,000
• Roadway Reconstruction/ Modernization	\$1,000,000	\$7,000,000
• Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement	\$1,000,000	\$7,000,000
Transit and TDM Projects		
• Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project	N/A	\$25,000,000
• Transit Expansion	\$500,000	\$7,000,000
• Transit Modernization	\$500,000	\$7,000,000
• Travel Demand Management (TDM)	\$100,000	\$500,000
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities		
• Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities	\$250,000	\$5,500,000
• Pedestrian Facilities	\$250,000	\$1,000,000
• Safe Routes to School	\$250,000	\$1,000,000
Unique Projects	\$500,000	\$4,000,000



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