

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: July 10, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: July 26, 2023

Business Item: 2023-147

Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Funding Allocation Options for FY 2025-2027

District(s), Member(s): 4 – Barber; 12 – Vento

Policy/Legal Reference: TAB Action

Staff Prepared/Presented: Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director, Finance & Planning (651-602-1508)
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Division/Department: Transportation / Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to award \$14,518,800 of regional Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) funding for fiscal years 2025 through 2027 along with \$2,481,200 in 2026 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program funding to the Carver County Highway 5 Lake Minnewashta & Arboretum and Washington County CR 19A/100th Street projects from the 2022 Regional Solicitation cycle.

Background

The 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) established the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) funding program to help make surface transportation more resilient to natural hazards, including climate change, flooding, and extreme weather events through support of resilience improvements. From this, MnDOT provided some of its funds to the Metropolitan Council and TAB, as shown in Table 1. MnDOT anticipates that this funding program will continue beyond the end of IIJA with funding levels for 2028 and beyond being similar to 2027 levels (approximately \$3.5M per year).

Table 1: PROTECT Funding Allocations to the Metropolitan Council and TAB

| Year | PROTECT Funding |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| 2025 | \$6,278,400 |
| 2026 | \$4,708,800 |
| 2027 | \$3,531,600 |
| 2028-2029 | 2024 Regional Solicitation Cycle |
| 2030-2031 | 2026 Regional Solicitation Cycle |

Unlike the other federal funding programs used in the Regional Solicitation, PROTECT typically funds specific elements within a larger project instead of the entire project. This is due to the

program's strict and narrow eligibility that includes, but is not limited to, storm sewer, ponding, erosion control, retaining walls, and lifting/realigning transportation infrastructure out of floodplains.

Based on PROTECT program constraints, Council staff developed options for the total PROTECT funds available for 2025-2027, which is \$14,518,800. TAB unanimously selected to use the funding and \$2,481,200 of STBG Program funds available in 2026 on the two new projects shown in Table 2. The projects were selected because they were the highest-scoring unfunded projects in their respective funding categories in the 2022 Regional Solicitation and contain significant PROTECT-eligible elements. These projects will be amended into the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at a later date.

Table 2: 2022 Regional Solicitation Next Unfunded Projects List from Each of the Two Application Categories with Eligible Project Elements

| Application Category | Project | Eligible Elements | PROTECT Eligible Costs | Total Federal Request |
|------------------------|--|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strategic Capacity | Carver County Highway 5 Lake Minnewashta and Arboretum Access and Mobility Project | Raising roadway out of the floodplain & reconnecting aquatic habitats | \$10,000,000 | \$10,000,000 |
| Roadway Reconstruction | Washington County CR 19A/100 th Street Realignment | Storm sewer | \$7,000,000 | \$7,000,000 |
| Totals | | | | \$17,000,000 |

Rationale

Distribution of federal funding is a key responsibility of the TAB. Through the Regional Solicitation process, federal funds are directed to a variety of locally initiated projects that meet regional transportation needs. The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) supports using the PROTECT funding to fund additional eligible projects from the 2022 Regional Solicitation. The Regional Solicitation is part of the Metropolitan Council's federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Following identification of projects for federal funding by the TAB, the Council may concur with project selection or return the item to TAB for reconsideration.

Thrive Lens Analysis

This action promotes *sustainability* by using federal funds to construct projects that are resilient to natural hazards.

Funding

The projects are fully funded with federal, state, and local funds.

