

2020 REGIONAL SOLICITATION APPLICATION UPDATE

Public Comment Report



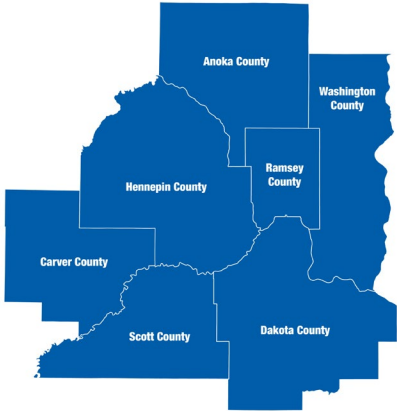
METROPOLITAN
C O U N C I L

November 2019

The Council’s mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region

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Overview

This public comment report summarizes the comments received for the proposed changes to the 2020 Regional Solicitation application. The draft document was released for public comment on September 18, 2019, and comments were accepted through November 8, 2019. During this time, the document was available on the Metropolitan Council’s website and through printed copies as requested.

Eleven commenters, including representatives of partner agencies provided feedback on the draft 2020 Regional Solicitation application. The comments from the 11 partner agencies are referenced in the tables on the following pages by the corresponding number shown below:

| | |
|---|--|
| People engaged | Nearly 900 |
| Communities and interest groups engaged | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minnesota Valley Transit Association (MVTA) – 6 comments 2. The City of Apple Valley – 5 comments 3. Carver County – 4 comments 4. Scott County – 8 comments 5. Washington County – 3 comments 6. East Metro Strong – 4 comments 7. Metro Transit – 3 comments 8. The City of Minneapolis – 9 comments 9. The City of Burnsville – 4 comments 10. Anoka County – 4 comments 11. City of Eagan – 5 comments 12. City of Cottage Grove – 12 comments |
| Methods used | Web announcement and web page notice GovDelivery email announcement Newsletter story Facebook Twitter |
| Comments received through | Email Mail |

This report includes a table, categorized by the Regional Solicitation topic or proposed change, that summarizes each comment received, and for each, identifies the person/organization(s) who made the comment.

The full text of the comment letters received during the public comment period are attached after the summary table.

Comments Related to Modal Funding Ranges and Unique Project Funding

The Regional Solicitation was released for public comment with the following changes proposed related to Modal Funding Ranges, including the creation of a Unique Projects category with a 2.5% funding set-aside for the 2022 Solicitation:

| | Roadways | Transit / TDM | Bicycle / Ped | Total |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Modal Funding Levels | Range of 48%-68% | Range of 22%-32% | Range of 10%-20% | 100% \$180M (Est)* |
| | <u>Range of 46%-65%</u> | <u>Range of 25%-35%</u> | <u>Range of 9%-20%</u> | |
| | Range of \$86M-\$122M | Range of \$40M-\$58M | Range of \$18M-\$36M | |
| | <u>Range of \$83M-\$117M</u> | <u>Range of \$45M-\$63M</u> | <u>Range of \$16M-\$36M</u> | |
| | <u>Midpoint \$100M</u> | <u>Midpoint \$54M</u> | <u>Midpoint \$26M</u> | |

*Includes a 2.5% unique projects set-aside, which amounts to \$4M-\$5M

Comments received on modal funding ranges and unique project funding

| Comment | Comment Summary | Commenter |
|---------|--|-------------|
| 1 | Increase roadway modal category by \$4 million and the bicycle/pedestrian modal category by \$1 million, bringing them back to their traditional proportions. | 2, 3, 4, 10 |
| 2 | Support the proposed additional regional funding to transit, whether through an increase to the modal funding range of transit projects or by over-programming across all modes. | 1, 2, 11 |
| 3 | Eliminate the proposed 2.5% set-aside for the Unique Projects category. | 3 |
| 4 | Supports the creation of the Unique Projects category. | 2, 7 |
| 5 | Redirect the \$5 million proposed for Unique projects to restore roadway and bike/pedestrian amounts; then backfill Unique projects as additional funds become available. | 2 |
| 6 | Recommend that highways receive a minimum of 60% of available funding, consistent with historical levels. | 4 |

Minimum and Maximum Awards

The Regional Solicitation was released for public comment with the following changes proposed related to minimum and maximum awards:

| Mode | Application Categories | Minimum Federal Award | Maximum Federal Award |
|-------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Roadways | Traffic Management Technologies | \$250,000 | \$7,000,000 <u>\$3,500,000</u> |
| | <u>Spot Mobility and Safety</u> | <u>\$1,000,000</u> | <u>\$3,500,000</u> |
| | Strategic Capacity (Roadway Expansion) | \$1,000,000 | \$7,000,000 <u>\$10,000,000</u> |
| | Roadway Reconstruction/ Modernization | \$1,000,000 | \$7,000,000 |
| | Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement | \$1,000,000 | \$7,000,000 |
| Transit/TDM | <u>Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project</u> | <u>N/A</u> | \$25,000,000 |
| | Transit Expansion | \$500,000 | \$7,000,000 |
| | Transit Modernization | \$100,000 <u>\$500,000</u> | \$7,000,000 |
| | Travel Demand Management | \$75,000 <u>\$100,000</u> | \$500,000 |
| Bicycle/Ped | Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities | \$250,000 | \$5,500,000 <u>\$4,000,000</u> |
| | Pedestrian Facilities | \$250,000 | \$1,000,000 |
| | Safe Routes to School | \$250,000 | \$1,000,000 |

Comments received on funding minimums and maximums

| Comment | Comment Summary | Commenter |
|---------|---|-----------|
| 7 | The proposed adjustments to the minimum and maximum project awards will have a positive impact. | 10, 12 |
| 8 | The increase to the \$10 M for Roadway Expansion is inconsistent with the other categories – all categories are experiencing inflation. | 8 |
| 9 | One or more projects should be eligible for a \$5.5 million max in the multiuse trail application category. | 2, 8 |
| 10 | Support a \$10 M million maximum for bridge projects. | 4 |

Bridge Funding Category Minimum

The Regional Solicitation was released for public comment with the \$10 million minimum set-aside for the Bridge category in total removed. The maximum award for a bridge project remains at \$7 million. Comment received on bridge funding:

| Comment | Comment Summary | Commenter |
|---------|--|-----------|
| 11 | Support keeping the \$10 million minimum set-aside for the Bridge application category | 4 |

Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Program and Transit New Market Guarantee

The Regional Solicitation was released for public comment with a new “Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Program” with up to \$25 million to fund large-scale regional transit projects and a total bus rapid transit funding maximum of \$32 million across all transit categories. Along with these changes, a “transit new market guarantee” was created to fund at least one project that is outside of Transit Market Areas 1 and 2 for at least one end of the project.

Comments received related to the ABRT program and new market guarantee:

| Comment | Comment Summary | Commenter |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| 12 | The creation of a new category specifically for Arterial Bus Rapid Transit precludes other agencies to compete for these funds. Support a broader interpretation of Bus Rapid Transit, which would allow multiple agencies to compete in this new category. | 1, 4, 5, 9, 11 |
| 13 | Supports the proposed Arterial BRT category. | 6, 7, 8, 12 |
| 14 | The proposed \$25 million maximum for Arterial BRT projects and up to \$7 million for an additional BRT project selected through Transit Expansion of Transit Modernization categories leaves little funding for fixed route services. | 1, 9, 11, 12 |
| 15 | The addition of the Arterial BRT category will reduce funding in other modal categories and limit the ability to improve the A-minor arterial roadway system, which is the primary system used by buses. | 4, 10 |
| 16 | Support creation of a Transit New Market guarantee. | 1, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 |
| 17 | If broader BRT is not feasible, award at least one project in Transit Expansion and at least one project in Transit Modernization to a Suburban Transit Association provider. | 1, 4, 11 |
| 18 | Support limiting BRT funding to ensure other transit projects can still be funded. | 12 |

Long-Term Transit Operations

The Regional Solicitation was released for public comment with the following change in the qualifying requirements: “The applicant must have the capital and operating funds necessary to implement the entire project ~~and commit to continuing the service or facility project beyond the initial three-year funding period for transit operating funds.~~”

Comments received related to long-term transit operations:

| Comment | Comment Summary | Commenter |
|----------------|--|------------------|
| 19 | Reinstate the requirement that transit applicants must demonstrate financial capacity to operate projects beyond the life of awarded projects. | 1, 9 |

Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities Measures

The Regional Solicitation was released for public comment with the two changes related to scoring measures for Multiuse Trail and Bicycle Facilities:

- New Measure: In Measure 4A Deficiencies and Safety, points are awarded based on a project's place in the Regional Bicycle Barrier Crossing Study or status as a Major River Bicycle Barrier Crossing. This includes bonus points for multiple Tier 2 and 3 Crossings.
- Measure 2A Potential Usage: 50 points were shifted to the Potential Usage measure, bringing the measure up to 200 points. In the 2018 Solicitation, 50 points were given for a new measure on snow and ice control. This measure is proposed to be eliminated for 2020 and instead making snow and ice control a qualifying requirement. The 50 points are proposed to be shifted back to Potential Usage as in the 2014 and 2016 Solicitations point distribution.

Comments received related to Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities:

| Comment | Comment Summary | Commenter |
|---------|--|-----------|
| 20 | Revise the new bonus point scoring added to criterion 4A (Deficiencies and Safety). Remove Part 2 scoring and bonus point option. | 3 |
| 21 | Revise and redistribute the 50 additional points proposed for criterion 2A Potential Usage to other measures. This measure of population and employment within 1-mile does not accurately capture facility usage in rural or rural center communities or for bicycle and pedestrian facilities that serve as the primary connection between communities. | 3 |
| 22 | Develop a process to update the RBTN map. | 5, 6 |
| 23 | Give multiuse trails that connect to an existing or future transitway station the full 200 points in the RBTN criteria. | 5,6 |

Roadways and Spot Mobility Categories and Measures

The Regional Solicitation was released for public comment with a new “Spot Mobility” funding category meant to fund low-cost intersection improvement projects. In addition, changes were made to some of the scoring measures within the Roadways categories.

Comments received related to the Roadway categories and measures:

| Comment | Comment Summary | Commenter |
|---------|--|-----------|
| 24 | The Spot Mobility category will be beneficial in allocating funding to small improvement projects that will provide significant value at lower costs | 10 |
| 25 | Support new emphasis given to pedestrian safety. However, 41% of scoring is still related to existing congestion and mitigation, which may counteract potential safety improvements. | 6, 8 |
| 26 | Safety scores based on travel speeds is counter-intuitive and has inverse relationship with crash severity and lacks context sensitivity with new state law allowing cities to set speed limits. | 8 |
| 27 | Consider the addition of negative points for projects that negatively impact non-motorized travel. | 8 |
| 28 | Scoring should be based upon new/improved pedestrian facilities, not for upgrading facilities to ADA standards. | 8 |
| 29 | Measures A and B in the roadway modernization/reconstruction category should both use daily person throughput | 8 |
| 30 | The measures have a continued focus on congestion, vehicle mobility, capacity expansion and highway investment which is counter to regional policy, climate change and greenhouse gas reduction. | 8 |
| 31 | There is a new roadway measure for pedestrian safety, however, most of the measures and points continue to emphasize travel time and congestion displacement. | 8 |

General Comments

The Regional solicitation uses the results of regional studies in some of its scoring criteria and measures.

General comments, including comments on use of these studies and the process

| Comment | Comment Summary | Commenter |
|---------|---|-----------|
| 32 | <p>Completed Council-led studies are used in the scoring criteria, but the results of these studies, in particular the maps, are often out-of-date. With no process to update these maps and rankings to reflect changing demographics, potential projects are unable to be considered for funding.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add an option to allocate points for projects that meet the intent of the study map or used in the scoring criteria, specifically: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Give the at-grade intersection with the highest traffic volumes on Highway 36 the full 80 points from the PAICS and b. Roadways with a heavy commercial vehicle volume of 1,000 should receive the full 80 points from the Truck Freight Corridor study map. 2. Develop a process to update maps and investment rankings prior to each future regional solicitation, specifically including the RBTN map, Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study rankings, and Truck Freight Corridor Study map | 5 |
| 33 | Support inclusion of the Bike Barriers Study results into the scoring | 6 |
| 34 | The 2020 Regional Solicitation process circumvented the role of technical committees | 4, 5 |
| 35 | Support the required completion of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plans. | 12 |



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