

Safe Routes to School Infrastructure

Prioritizing Criteria and Measures

May 8, 2023

Purpose: To fund Safe Route to School infrastructure projects that focus on improving safety around school sites.

Definition: An infrastructure project that is within a two-mile radius and directly benefiting a primary, middle, or high school site.

Examples of Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Projects:

- Sidewalks benefiting people going to the school
- Multiuse trails benefiting people going to the school
- Improved crossings benefiting people going to the school
- Multiple improvements

Scoring:

| Criteria and Measures | Points | % of Total |
|--|--------------|------------|
| 1. Relationship between Safe Routes to School Program Elements | 250 | 21% |
| Measure A - Describe how project addresses 6 Es* of SRTS program | 150 | |
| Measure B – Completion of Safe Routes to School Plan or local plan | 100 | |
| 2. Potential Usage | 250 | 21% |
| Measure A - Average share of student population that bikes or walks | 170 | |
| Measure B - Student population within school's walkshed | 80 | |
| 3. Equity and Affordable Housing | 120 | 10% |
| Measure A – Engagement | 36 | |
| Measure B – Equity population benefits and impacts | 48 | |
| Measure C – Affordable housing access | 36 | |
| 4. Deficiencies and Safety | 350 | 29% |
| Measure A - Barriers overcome or gaps filled | 150 | |
| Measure B - Deficiencies corrected or safety problems addressed | 200 | |
| 5. Risk Assessment/Public Engagement | 130 | 11% |
| Measure A - Risk Assessment Form | 130 | |
| 6. Cost Effectiveness | 100 | 8% |
| Measure A – Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total project cost) | 100 | |
| Total | 1,200 | |

* The 6 Es of Safe Routes to School include Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, Equity, Engagement, and Engineering.

1. Relationship between Safe Routes to School Program Elements (250 Points)

This criterion assesses the program's ability to integrate the Safe Routes to School Program Elements: Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, Equity, Engagement, and Engineering (the 6 Es). NOTE:

Equity is not included in this scoring measure because it is directly addressed in Criteria 3 – Equity and Affordable Housing.

- A. **MEASURE:** Describe how the SRTS program associated with the project addresses or integrates the 6 Es. The response should include examples, collaborations or partnerships, and planned activities in the near-term (within five years) to further illustrate the incorporation of the 6 Es into the SRTS program associated with the project.

MnDOT Safe Routes to School guidance defines these elements as follows:

- **Evaluation** – Evaluation helps understand the underlying issues that need to be addressed and understand how the projects and programs of each of the other five “E’s” can be most effective.
- **Education** – Classes and activities that teach children (and their parents) bicycle, pedestrian and traffic safety skills, the benefits of bicycling and walking, the best routes to get to school, and the positive impacts these activities have on personal health and the environment.
- **Encouragement** – Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
- **Equity** – Assurance that SRTS initiatives benefits all demographic groups, with additional attention toward addressing barriers and ensuring safe and healthy outcomes for lower-income students, students of color, and others that face significant disparities.
- **Engagement** – All Safe Routes to School initiatives should begin by listening to students, families, teachers, and school leaders and working with existing community organizations, and build intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structure.
- **Engineering** – Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails, and bikeways.

RESPONSE (Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words):

SCORING GUIDANCE (150 Points)

The applicant will receive up to 30 points for each of the five sub-measures based on the program’s ability to demonstrate the incorporation of each of the 5 Es through activities completed or to be implemented in the near-term (within five years). Applicants will receive up to the full points for each element at the scorer’s discretion. The project that most meets the intent of each of the sub-measure will receive the maximum points (e.g., 30 points for the project that best meets the engineering element). Remaining projects will receive a portion of the maximum points based on the response. Projects that do not check the box or whose description does not fulfill the intent of the criteria, will receive 0 points.

- Evaluation: 0-30 Points
- Education: 0-30 Points
- Encouragement: 0-30 Points
- Engagement: 0-30 Points
- Engineering: 0-30 Points

The highest-scoring application for this measure will be adjusted to receive the full 150 points. Remaining projects will receive a proportionate share of the full points relative to the proportion of the full points assigned to the highest-scoring project. For example, if the application being scored had 100

points and the top project had 200 points, this applicant would receive $(100/200) \times 150$ points or 75 points.

B. **MEASURE:** Confirm that the project is consistent with an adopted Safe Routes to School Plan.

RESPONSE:

- The project, or the issue/barrier being addressed by the project, is specifically named in an adopted Safe Routes to School plan* (100 Points): _____
- The project, while not specifically named, is consistent with an adopted Safe Routes to School plan highlighting at least one of the school(s) to which it is meant to provide access (75 Points):
- The project is identified in a locally adopted transportation/mobility plan or study and would make a safety improvement, reduce traffic or improve air quality at or near a school (50 points):
- _____
- The school(s) in question do not have Safe Routes to School plan(s) (0 Points): _____

*The Minnesota Department of Transportation has a grant award program for [Safe Routes to School Planning](#) but note that a Safe Routes to School Plan does not have to be MnDOT-funded in order to be awarded points.

SCORING GUIDANCE (100 Points)

The applicant will receive 100 points if the project is named in a Safe Routes to School plan and 75 points if it is consistent with an adopted Safe Routes to School plan highlighting at least one of the school(s) to which it is meant to provide access. It will receive 50 points if it is discussed as a school-based project in a locally adopted transportation/mobility plan or study.

2. Potential Usage (250 Points)

This criterion quantifies the project’s potential impact to existing population.

A. **MEASURE:** Average percent of student population that currently bikes, walks, or takes public transit to school, as identified on the Safe Routes to School student travel tally worksheet. Public transit usage does not refer to school buses. Public transit usage should only be considered when the bus route does not have a stop at the school (since these students must walk or bike to get to the school grounds). (170 Points)

RESPONSE:

- Average percent of student population: _____

SCORING GUIDANCE (170 Points)

The applicant with the highest average share of student population that currently bikes, walks, or takes public transportation to school will receive the full points. Remaining projects will receive a proportionate share of the full points. For example, if the application being scored had 15 percent of the students and the top project had 30 points, this applicant would receive $(0.15/0.30) \times 170$ points or 85 points.

- B. **MEASURE:** Population of enrolled students within one mile of the elementary school, middle school, or high school served by the project. Enrollment data from the impacted school(s) must be used in this response.

RESPONSE:

- Student population within one mile of the school: _____

SCORING GUIDANCE (80 Points)

The applicant with the highest student population within one mile of the school will receive the full points. Remaining projects will receive a proportionate share of the full points. For example, if the application being scored had 150 students and the top project had 300 points, this applicant would receive $(150/300) \times 80$ points or 40 points.

3. Equity and Affordable Housing (120 Points)

This criterion addresses the [Council's role in advancing equity](#) by examining how a project directly benefits or impacts (positively and negatively) Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) populations, low-income populations, people with disabilities, youth, older adults, and residents of affordable housing. The criterion evaluates whether the applicant engaged these populations to identify transportation needs and potential solutions and how the project will address these identified needs. The criterion also evaluates a community's overall efforts to implement affordable housing and how the project improves multimodal access to affordable housing.

- A. **MEASURE:** Engagement (0 to 36 points). This measure is a qualitative scoring measure.

A successful project is the result of active engagement of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations, low-income populations, persons with disabilities, youth, older adults, and residents in affordable housing. Engagement should occur prior to and during project development, with the intent to provide direct benefits or solve an expressed transportation issue, while also limiting and mitigating any negative impacts.

- i. Describe any Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations, low-income populations, disabled populations, youth, or older adults within a ½ mile of the proposed project. Describe how these populations relate to regional context. Location of affordable housing will be addressed in Measure C.
- ii. Describe how Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations, low-income populations, persons with disabilities, youth, older adults, and residents in affordable housing were engaged, whether through community planning efforts, project needs identification, or during the project development process.
- iii. Describe the progression of engagement activities in this project. A full response should answer these questions:
 1. What engagement methods and tools were used?
 2. How did you engage specific communities and populations likely to be directly impacted by the project?
 3. What techniques did you use to reach populations traditionally not involved in community engagement related to transportation projects?
 4. How were the project's purpose and need identified?

5. How was the community engaged as the project was developed and designed?
6. How did you provide multiple opportunities for of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations, low-income populations, persons with disabilities, youth, older adults, and residents in affordable housing to engage at different points of project development?
7. How did engagement influence the project plans or recommendations? How did you share back findings with community and re-engage to assess responsiveness of these changes?
8. If applicable, how will NEPA or Title VI regulations will guide engagement activities?

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words):

SCORING GUIDANCE (0 to 36 points)

Each application will be qualitatively scored based on the available points and will receive the number of points awarded.

- B. **MEASURE:** Equity Population Benefits and Impacts (0 to 48 points). This measure is a qualitative scoring measure.

Successful projects are designed to provide direct benefits to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations, low-income populations, persons with disabilities, youth, older adults. All projects must mitigate potential negative benefits as required under federal law. Projects that are designed to provide benefits go beyond the mitigation requirement to proactively provide transportation benefits and solve transportation issues experienced by Equity populations. Benefits to residents of affordable housing are addressed in Measure C.

Describe the project’s benefits to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations, low-income populations, children, people with disabilities, youth, and older adults. Benefits could relate to:

- pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements;
- public health benefits;
- direct access improvements for residents or improved access to destinations such as jobs, school, health care, or other;
- travel time improvements;
- gap closures;
- new transportation services or modal options;
- leveraging of other beneficial projects and investments;
- and/or community connection and cohesion improvements.

This is not an exhaustive list. A full response will support the benefits claimed, identify benefits specific to Equity populations residing or engaged in activities near the project area, identify benefits addressing a transportation issue affecting Equity populations specifically identified through engagement, and substantiate benefits with data.

Acknowledge and describe any negative project impacts to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations, low-income populations, children, people with disabilities, youth, and older

adults. Describe measures to mitigate these impacts. Unidentified or unmitigated negative impacts may result in a reduction in points.

Below is a list of potential negative impacts. This is not an exhaustive list.

- Decreased pedestrian access through sidewalk removal / narrowing, placement of barriers along the walking path, increase in auto-oriented curb cuts, etc.
- Increased speed and/or “cut-through” traffic.
- Removed or diminished safe bicycle access.
- Inclusion of some other barrier to access to jobs and other destinations.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words):

SCORING GUIDANCE (0 to 48 points)

Each application will be qualitatively scored based on the available points and will receive the number of points awarded.

- C. **MEASURE:** Affordable Housing Access (0 to 36 points). This measure is a qualitative scoring measure.

Describe any affordable housing developments—existing, under construction, or planned—within ½ mile of the proposed project. The applicant should note the number of existing subsidized units, which will be provided on the Socio-Economic Conditions map. Applicants can also describe other types of affordable housing (e.g., naturally-occurring affordable housing, manufactured housing) and under construction or planned affordable housing that is within a half mile of the project. If applicable, the applicant can provide self-generated PDF maps to support these additions. Applicants are encouraged to provide a self-generated PDF map describing how a project connects affordable housing residents to destinations (e.g., childcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship).

Describe the project’s benefits to current and future affordable housing residents within ½ mile of the project. Benefits must relate to affordable housing residents. Examples may include:

- specific direct access improvements for residents
- improved access to destinations such as jobs, school, health care or other;
- new transportation services or modal options;
- and/or community connection and cohesion improvements.

This is not an exhaustive list. A full response will support the benefits claimed, identify benefits specific to residents of affordable housing, identify benefits addressing a transportation issue affecting residents of affordable housing specifically identified through engagement, and substantiate benefits with data.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words):

SCORING GUIDANCE (36 points)

The project that best provides meaningful improvements to access to affordable housing units will receive the full 36 points. Multiple projects may receive the highest possible score of 36 points based on this assessment. Remaining projects will receive a share of the full points at the scorer’s discretion.

- D. **BONUS POINTS (0 TO 25 POINTS ABOVE THE TOTAL CRITERION POINTS):** Those projects that score at least 80% of the maximum total points available through Measures A, B, and C will be awarded bonus points based on the geographic location of the project. These points will be assigned as follows, based on the highest-scoring geography the project contacts:
- 25 points to projects within an Area of Concentrated Poverty
 - 15 points to projects within census tracts with the percent of population in poverty or population of color above the regional average percent
 - 10 points for all other areas

Upload the “Socio-Economic Conditions” map used for this measure.

RESPONSE (Select one, based on the “Socio-Economic Conditions” map):

- Project is located in an Area of Concentrated Poverty:
- Project’s census tracts are above the regional average for population in poverty or population of color (Regional Environmental Justice Area):
- Project located in a census tract that is below the regional average for population in poverty or populations of color (Regional Environmental Justice Area):

SCORING GUIDANCE (0 to 25 Points)

If the applicant receives at least 80% of the available points in Measures A, B, and C (e.g., 96 points for the Bicycle and Pedestrian applications) the project will receive Bonus points as described. If an applicant qualifies for Bonus points it may result in an Equity and Affordable Housing score of more than the total points available.

4. Deficiencies and Safety (350 Points)

This criterion addresses the project’s ability to improve the overall safety of the proposed project area. This includes how the project will overcome physical barriers or system gaps, correct deficiencies, and/or fix a safety problem.

- A. **MEASURE:** Reference the “Project to RBTN Orientation” map generated at the beginning of the application process. Discuss how the project will overcome barriers (i.e., bridge or tunnel), fill gaps, or connects system segments in the pedestrian/bicycle network serving a K-12 school. The applicant should include a description of barriers and gap improvements for the project in context with the existing bicycle or pedestrian network serving the school(s). If the project is crossing or circumventing a barrier (e.g., river, stream, railroad corridor, freeway, or multi-lane

highway), the applicant should describe the magnitude of the barrier (number of lanes, average daily traffic, posted speed, etc.) and how the proposed project will improve travel across or around that barrier. The description should include distance to and condition of the nearest parallel crossing of the barrier, including the presence or absence of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, number of lanes, average daily traffic, and posted speed limit. (150 Points)

RESPONSE (Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words):

Upload the “Project to RBTN Orientation” map.

SCORING GUIDANCE (150 Points)

The applicant will receive up to 150 points if the response shows that the project overcomes a physical barrier or system gap. The project that most meets the intent will receive the maximum points. Remaining projects will receive a portion of the maximum points based on the response. Projects that do not check the box or whose descriptions do not fulfill the intent of the criteria, will receive 0 points.

- B. **MEASURE:** Discuss how the project will correct existing deficiencies or address an identified safety or security problem on the facility or within the project site. Address how these improvements will make bicycling and walking to the school a safer and appealing transportation alternative. Include any available project site-related safety data (e.g., crash data, number of conflict points to be eliminated by the project by type of conflict (bicyclist/pedestrian, bicyclist/vehicle, pedestrian/vehicle, and vehicle/vehicle) to demonstrate the magnitude of the existing safety problem. Where available, use of local crash data for the project length is highly encouraged. If the agency submitting the application has access to MnCMAT, crash data from that system can be used as part of the submittal. Crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians should be reported for the latest available 10-year period. As part of the response, demonstrate that the project improvements will reduce the crash potential and provide a safer environment (by referencing crash reduction factors or safety studies) and/or correct a deficiency. Qualitative data from parent surveys, other internal survey data, or stakeholder engagement supporting the safety/security improvements or deficiencies should also be addressed.

RESPONSE: (Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words):

SCORING GUIDANCE (200 Points)

The applicant will receive points as demonstrated below, based on the magnitude of the deficiencies or safety issues and the quality of the improvements, as addressed in the response. The scorer will first place each project into one of the two categories below based on whether or not crash data or other qualitative data is cited as part of the response. Improvements that are supported by crash reduction factors, safety studies, survey data, and/or stakeholder engagement will be scored highest. The project with the most extensive improvements will receive the full points for each category below. Remaining projects will receive a share of the full points at the scorer’s discretion.

- For applicants that provide actual bicycle and pedestrian crash data to demonstrate the magnitude of the existing safety problem only. Applicant also demonstrates that the project will reduce the crash potential and provide a safer environment and/or correct a deficiency, supported by crash reduction factors, safety studies, survey data, and/or stakeholder engagement. The project that will reduce the most crashes will receive 200 points. The other projects in this category will receive a proportionate share between 101 and 200 points (i.e., a project that reduces one-half of the crashes of the top project would receive 150 points): 101 to

200 Points

For applicants that do not provide actual bicycle and pedestrian crash data. Note, the applicant must still demonstrate the project's ability to reduce the risk for bicycle and pedestrian crashes with the reduction of modal conflict points (bike/pedestrian, bike/car, pedestrian/car, and vehicle/vehicle), safety improvements that address these modal conflicts, or the project's ability to correct deficiencies. The top project will receive 100 points while other projects will receive a portion of the 100 points based on the quality of the project and response: 0 to 100 Points.

5. Public Engagement/Risk Assessment (130 Points)

This criterion measures the planned public engagement, the number of risks associated with the project, and the steps already completed in the project development process. These steps are outlined in the checklist in the required Risk Assessment.

- A. **MEASURE:** Applications involving construction must complete the Risk Assessment. This checklist includes activities completed to-date, as well as an assessment of risks (e.g., right-of-way acquisition, proximity to historic properties, etc.).

RESPONSE (Complete Risk Assessment):

Please check those that apply and fill in anticipated completion dates for all projects
 New/expanded transit service projects will receive full credit for items 2-5 but must fill out item 1.
 Transit vehicle purchases will receive full credit.

1. Public Involvement (48 Percent of Points)

Projects that have been through a public process with residents and other interested public entities are more likely than others to be successful. The project applicant must indicate that events and/or targeted outreach (e.g., surveys and other web-based input) were held to help identify the transportation problem, how the potential solution was selected instead of other options, and the public involvement completed to date on the project. The focus of this section is on the *opportunity for public input* as opposed to the quality of input. NOTE: A written response is required and failure to respond will result in zero points.

100% Multiple types of targeted outreach efforts (such as meetings or online/mail outreach) specific to this project with the general public and partner agencies have been used to help identify the project need.

50% At least one meeting specific to this project with the general public has been used to help identify the project need.

50% At least online/mail outreach effort specific to this project with the general public has been used to help identify the project need.

25% No meeting or outreach specific to the project was conducted, but the project was identified through meetings and/or outreach related to a larger planning effort.

0% No outreach has led to the selection of this project.

RESPONSE (Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words). Describe the type(s) of outreach selected for this project (i.e., online or in-person meetings, surveys, demonstration projects), the

method(s) used to announce outreach opportunities, and how many people participated. Include any public website links to outreach opportunities.

2. Layout (16 Percent of Points)

Layout includes proposed geometrics and existing and proposed right-of-way boundaries. A basic layout should include a base map (north arrow; scale; legend;* city and/or county limits; existing ROW, labeled; existing signals;* and bridge numbers*) and design data (proposed alignments; bike and/or roadway lane widths; shoulder width;* proposed signals;* and proposed ROW). An aerial photograph with a line showing the project’s termini does not suffice and will be awarded zero points.

*If applicable

100% Layout approved by the applicant and all impacted jurisdictions (i.e., cities/counties/MnDOT. If a MnDOT trunk highway is impacted, approval by MnDOT must have occurred to receive full points. **A PDF of the layout must be attached along with letters from each jurisdiction to receive points.**

100% A layout does not apply (signal replacement/signal timing, stand-alone streetscaping, minor intersection improvements). Applicants that are not certain whether a layout is required should contact Colleen Brown at MnDOT Metro State Aid – colleen.brown@state.mn.us.

75% For projects where MnDOT trunk highways are impacted and a MnDOT Staff Approved layout is required. Layout approved by the applicant and all impacted local jurisdictions (i.e., cities/counties), and layout review and approval by MnDOT is pending. **A PDF of the layout must be attached along with letters from each jurisdiction to receive points.**

50% Layout completed but not approved by all jurisdictions. **A PDF of the layout must be attached to receive points.**

25% Layout has been started but is not complete. **A PDF of the layout must be attached to receive points.**

0% Layout has not been started

3. Review of Section 106 Historic Resources (10 Percent of Points)

100% No known historic properties eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places are located in the project area, and project is not located on an identified historic bridge

100% There are historical/archeological properties present but determination of “no historic properties affected” is anticipated.

80% Historic/archeological property impacted; determination of “no adverse effect” anticipated

40% Historic/archeological property impacted; determination of “adverse effect”

anticipated

0% Unsure if there are any historic/archaeological properties in the project area.

Project is located on an identified historic bridge:

4. Right-of-Way (16 Percent of Points)

100% Right-of-way, permanent or temporary easements, and MnDOT agreement/limited-use permit either not required or all have been acquired

50% Right-of-way, permanent or temporary easements, and/or MnDOT agreement/limited-use permit required - plat, legal descriptions, or official map complete

25% Right-of-way, permanent or temporary easements, and/or MnDOT agreement/limited-use permit required - parcels identified

0% Right-of-way, permanent or temporary easements, and/or MnDOT agreement/limited-use permit required - parcels not all identified

5. Railroad Involvement (10 Percent of Points)

100% No railroad involvement on project or railroad Right-of-Way agreement is executed (include signature page, if applicable)

50% Railroad Right-of-Way Agreement required; negotiations have begun

0% Railroad Right-of-Way Agreement required; negotiations have not begun.

Anticipated date or date of executed Agreement _____

SCORING GUIDANCE (85 Points)

The applicant with the most points on the Risk Assessment (more points equate to less project risk) will receive the full points for the measure. Remaining projects will receive a proportionate share of the full points. For example, if the application being scored had 40 points and the top project had 70 points, this applicant would receive $(40/70) * 85$ points or 49 points.

6. Cost Effectiveness (100 Points)

This criterion will assess the project’s cost effectiveness based on the total TAB-eligible project cost and total points awarded in the previous five criteria.

A. **MEASURE:** This measure will calculate the cost effectiveness of the project. Metropolitan Council staff will divide the number of points awarded in the previous criteria by the TAB-eligible project cost (not including noise walls).

- Cost effectiveness = total number of points awarded in previous criteria/total TAB-eligible project cost (not including noise walls)

RESPONSE: (This measure will be calculated after the scores for the other measures are tabulated by the Scoring Committee):

- Total Project Cost (entered in Project Cost Form): _____ (automatically calculated)

- Enter amount of Noise Walls: _____
- Points Awarded in Previous Criteria: _____ (entered by Metropolitan Council staff)

SCORING GUIDANCE (100 Points)

The applicant with the most points (i.e., the benefits) per dollar will receive the full points for the measure. Remaining projects will receive a proportionate share of the full points. For example, if the top project received .0005 points per dollar and the application being scored received .00025 points per dollar, this applicant would receive $(.00025/.0005) \times 100$ points or 50 points.

The scorer for this measure will also complete a reasonableness check of the total project cost that is used for this measure. The scorer may follow up with the applicant to clarify any questions. Up to 50 percent of points awarded for this measure can be deducted if the scorer does not believe that the cost estimate is reasonable.

TOTAL: 1,200 POINTS