

Active Transportation Work Group

Regional Solicitation Evaluation



April 28, 2025



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Meeting Overview and Objective | 02 |
| Incorporating Active Transportation and federal funding sources into proposed structure | 06 |
| Recommendation on use of Active Transportation funding sources for Regional Solicitation | 18 |
| Next Steps | 20 |
| Information Item: Safe Routes To School | 21 |

Key Items for AT Work Group 2025



Recommend additional active transportation application categories (if any) that should be incorporated into proposed Regional Solicitation structure (March 2025)



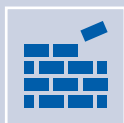
Recommend to TAB how local active transportation and federal funds will be utilized within the overall Regional Solicitation structure (**main objective today**)



Review and recommend project eligibility, scoring criteria, geographic balance, and other project prioritization factors developed by technical partners for active transportation related categories (future meetings)



Review and recommend project funding considerations, like required local match, minimum and maximum award amounts, reserves policy, and total funding for each solicitation (future meetings)



Monitor progress of projects awarded active transportation funding (ongoing)

Active Transportation Program Update



Grant Agreement Status

- First Active Transportation Grant Agreement has been fully executed with the City of Brooklyn Center.
- The City of Fridley approved the Grant Agreement at City Council last week and the agreement will be fully executed within the week.
- 13 more agreements to be executed with grant awardees.

Objective of today's meeting



Today's Discussion

Direction on the preferred way to utilize Active Transportation and federal funding toward related project application categories in the Regional Solicitation Evaluation

- The direction given today will aid technical partners in considering how (or if) to develop independent solicitation details for the active transportation funds and federal pedestrian and bicycling funds

Roles in the Regional Solicitation Evaluation



Multiple Layers of Review

- Special Issue Working Groups have been created with technical stakeholders and established to aid in development of:
 1. Evaluation criteria and scoring measures
 2. Project eligibility requirements
 3. Minimum and maximum project awards
 4. If and how to incorporate geographic considerations
 5. Project applications
- The Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Technical Working Group will provide review and feedback of these topics in their regular bi-monthly meetings
- These recommendations will be reviewed by the Active Transportation Work Group, who will forward their recommendations to the Policymaker Work Group before moving through the TAB/TAC committee review for final action
- Direction given today will allow technical partners to develop solicitation details for federal and active transportation dollars.

Incorporating Active Transportation and federal funding sources into proposed structure



Current Modal+ Hybrid Structure

Safety

Proactive Safety

Reactive Safety

Dynamic and Resilient

Bicycle/ Pedestrian

Regional (RBTN and Grade Separated Barriers)

Local Bicycle Network Gaps and Barriers

Local Pedestrian Network Connections

Non-infrastructure

Transit

Transit Expansion (Including Microtransit)

Arterial Bus Rapid Transit

Transit Customer Experience

Roadway

Complete Streets/ Modernization

Reliability/ Excessive Delays

Bridges / System Resiliency

Environment

EV Charging Infrastructure

TDM

Resiliency

Role of Funding Sources in Solicitation



Regional Solicitation + Active Transportation (AT)

Regional Solicitation has traditionally selected projects for federal funding only.

- Different federal sources, programs and naming conventions have existed since this process began in the 1990s.
- TAB also oversees HSIP solicitation – separate process which is conducted in parallel to Regional Solicitation.

In 2023 legislative session, TAB was given oversight of a portion of regional transportation sales and use tax for Active Transportation purposes.

- A competitive process that *must align with procedures and requirements established for allocation of other sources of funds*.
 - Regional Solicitation is the main source of funding allocated by the TAB – must align.
 - Considering/developing with RSE ensures alignment and meeting statute.
 - Additional criteria must be used for project selection or scoring, per state law.

In May 2024, the Active Transportation Work Group recommended to not hold an active transportation solicitation in 2025 and wait for 2026 to align with Regional Solicitation Evaluation and timing without mixing federal and regional funds.

Options for Active Transportation Funding



Previous TAB feedback on AT funds

- Keep projects from being federalized – ensure federal-funded projects and AT-funded projects are separate and to not comingle funds on projects
- Simplified/streamlined application
- Simplified/streamlined scoring measures
- Design application/process to encourage more jurisdictions to apply and compete for funding
- Consider how new regional funding source can support regional partners equitably
- Expand support to more projects beyond regionally identified networks (**proposed structure - local bike and pedestrian categories**)
- Consider funding diverse project types beyond infrastructure (**proposed structure - non-infrastructure category**)

Options for Active Transportation Funding

Options to differentiate federal and AT funds within RS structure

1. By application category

- Federal funds – Regional (RBTN, regional trails and Regional Bike Barriers)
- AT funds – Local Bicycle Network Gaps and Barriers, Local Pedestrian Network Connections, Non-infrastructure
- ***Could create a separate active transportation solicitation**

2. By project funding request amount

- Federal funds – larger project requests
- AT funds – smaller project requests
- AT funds – non-infrastructure (generally smaller requests compared to infrastructure projects)
- ***Could create a separate active transportation solicitation**

3. By selected project scoring results

- Federal funds – lower scoring selected projects
- AT funds – higher scoring selected projects
- AT funds – Non-infrastructure (certain planning projects could be federally funded, quick-build or other project types would need to use AT funds)
- ***Could not create a separate active transportation solicitation**

Technical Partner Feedback

Key Technical Considerations

4/23 Bicycle-Pedestrian Planning Technical Working Group

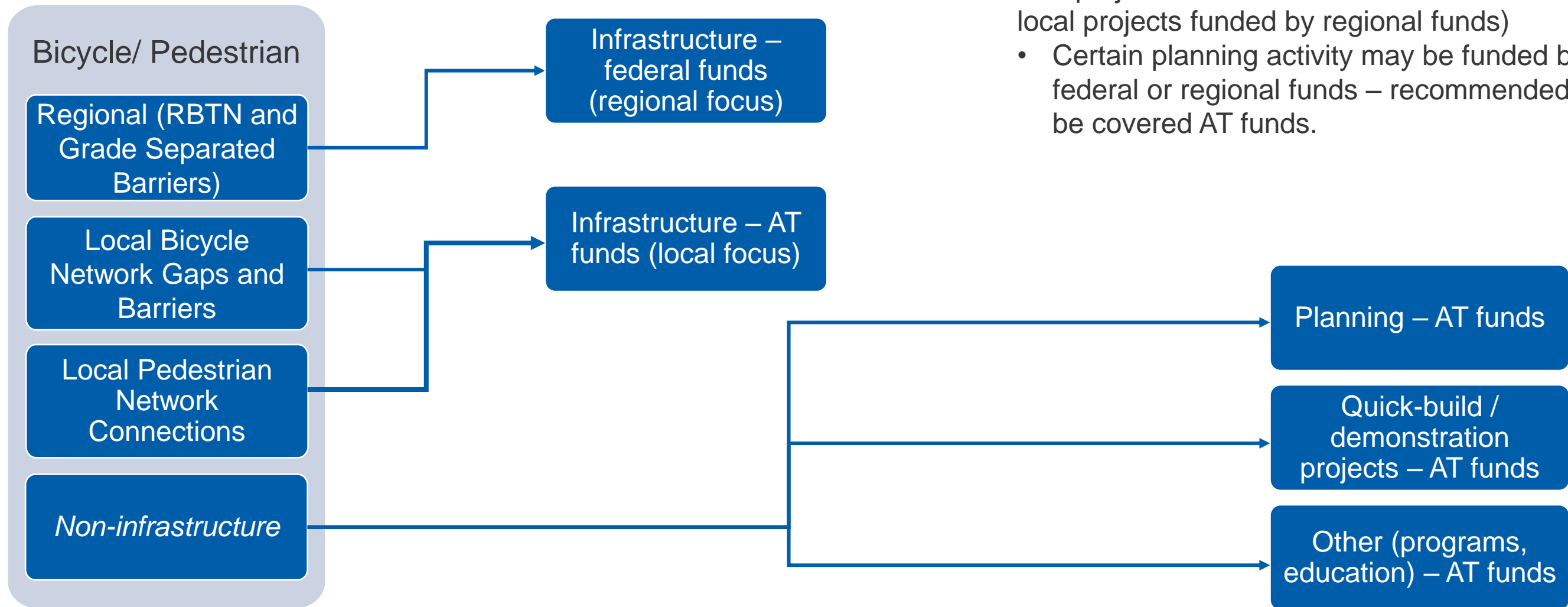
- Splitting by category would allow for the clearest separation of funding sources (federal funds for regionally identified projects and AT funding for locally identified projects).
- Splitting the funding sources by project funding request size would ensure that any small projects would not be federalized. (splitting by project cost)

4/25 Special Issue Work Group Workshop

- Dedicating federal funding toward RBTN build out would meet the original goals of the regional network. (splitting by project category)
- One of the goals of new AT funds is to open process for smaller communities – reserving AT funds for smaller sized projects (splitting by project cost) would allow for AT solicitation to fund projects for smaller community types.
- Important that separate AT Solicitation is a simpler application that can be used for AT funds to allow for new applicants to apply.
- No clear consensus on preferred option, splitting funding by project application category or by funding request size both have merit and would allow for separate Active Transportation Solicitation.



Potential Use of Active Transportation Funds – Option #1



If split by application category (i.e. regionally ID'd projects funded with federal funds and local projects funded by regional funds)

- Certain planning activity may be funded by federal or regional funds – recommended to be covered AT funds.

Potential Use of Active Transportation Funds – Option #1

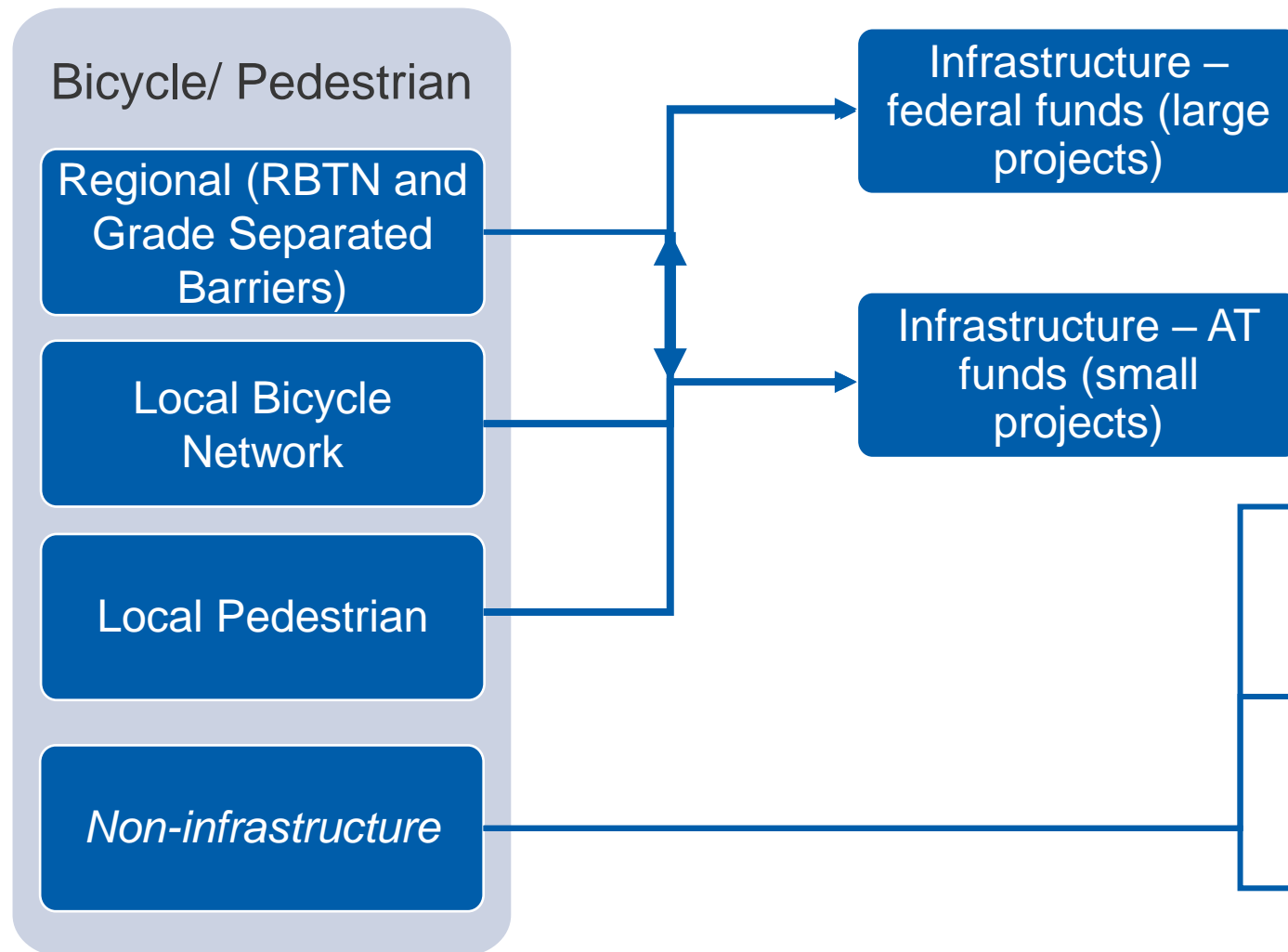
Pros

- Allows for flexibility on potential separate applications, solicitation timing and local match for active transportation funds.
- Allows for separate scoring criteria to be applied to categories solely funded by AT funds and federal funds.
- Allows for clear distinction between federal and AT funded projects.
- Focuses federal funds for regionally identified networks and barriers; AT funding focused on locally identified networks and priorities.
- Gives applicants certainty on the source of funding prior to application.

Cons

- Could federalize smaller projects on the RBTN.
- Could restrict possible bike project types from pursuing AT funds as they'd be directed to apply for federal funds.

Potential Use of Active Transportation Funds – Option #2



If split by funding range (i.e. larger projects funded by federal funds and smaller projects funded by regional funds)

- Certain planning activity may be funded by federal or regional funds – recommended to be covered AT funds.

Planning – large plans - federal funds?

Planning – small plans - AT Funds?

Quick-build / demonstration projects – AT funds

Other (programs, education) – AT funds

Potential Use of Active Transportation Funds – Option #2

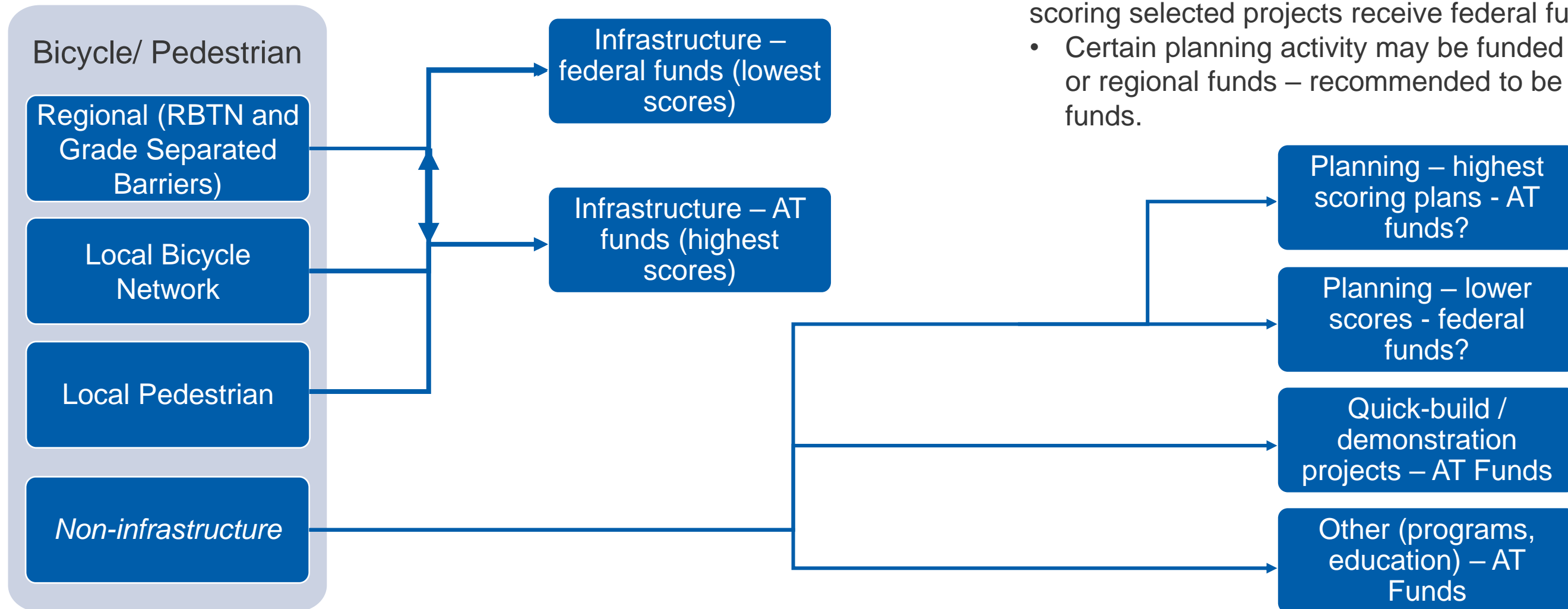
Pros

- Allows flexibility to apply different funding for selected projects from each category.
- Allows for flexibility on potential separate solicitation for active transportation funds.
- Avoids federalizing any small projects.
 - Smaller projects for all categories would be funded by active transportation funds.
- Concept utilized for selected 2024 Regional Solicitation projects for active transportation funding.
- Could lead to a larger number of small projects being selected each cycle.

Cons

- Require scoring criteria to include federal and active transportation requirements for all bicycle/pedestrian categories. (more complicated scoring criteria)
- Would not allow local partners to choose which funding source to apply for (decision based on project size).
- May lead to more complicated application if considering both federal and AT funding.
- Reduced flexibility for active transportation solicitation on timing (i.e., a separate AT solicitation at a different time).

Potential Use of Active Transportation Funds – Option #3



If split by project scoring (i.e., highest scoring selected projects can receive regional funding and lower scoring selected projects receive federal funding)

- Certain planning activity may be funded by federal or regional funds – recommended to be covered AT funds.

Potential Use of Active Transportation Funds – Option #3

Pros

- Concept utilized for selected 2024 Regional Solicitation projects for active transportation funding.
- Used as a reward for highest scoring projects. (federal requirements and process considered less desirable for local partners than regional AT funding)

Cons

- Could federalize smaller projects that are selected but do not score at the top.
- Would not allow local partners to choose which funding source to apply for (decision based on project score).
- May lead to more complicated application that covers needs for both federal and regional funding.
- May not distribute regional funding equitably.
- Could complicate scoring considerations.
- Reduced flexibility for active transportation solicitation timing and local match
- Not recommended by staff

Discussion and Recommendation

Recommendation on use of Active Transportation funding sources for Regional Solicitation



Recommendation on Use of Active Transportation Funding Sources

Option #1 - Categories

- Separate federal and active transportation funds by Bicycle and Pedestrian categories
- Federal funds will be used for projects that apply in the Regional category
- Active transportation funds will be used for projects that apply in the local bike, pedestrian and non-infrastructure categories

Option #2 - Funding

- Separate federal and active transportation funds by project funding request
- Large projects would be funded with federal funds
- Small projects would be funded with active transportation funds (including non-infrastructure)
- The funding level delineation would be determined later

Option #3 - Scoring

- Separate federal and active transportation funds by project scoring
- Highest scoring selected projects would receive active transportation funds
- Remaining selected projects would receive federal funding
- Funding splits would be determined by selected projects scoring

Next steps



Next steps:

1. Technical details to be developed with technical working groups
 - Workshop #1: 4/25/25
 - Workshop #2: 5/30/25
2. Next TAB AT Work Group meeting
 - Will send out a scheduling poll for June
3. Future items to be discussed:
 - Review and direction on technical items to be developed with Special Interest Working Groups and technical partners
 - Direction on Active Transportation Solicitation timing/relationship to overall Regional Solicitation
 - Local match requirements
 - Geographic considerations

Information Item: Safe Routes to School



What is Safe Routes to School?

Not just sidewalks or bike lanes by schools

- Comprehensive program and process to encourage and support kids to walk or bike to school; involves schools, parents, kids, community, local government
- Both infrastructure and non-infrastructure activities are integral for successful programs
- Uses 6 Es framework
 - Engagement
 - Equity
 - Engineering
 - Encouragement
 - Education
 - Evaluation

Education: Walk! Bike! Fun! Curriculum for Minnesota students to teach safe behaviors and bike skills

Encouragement: Participation in Walk and Bike to School days, along with regular opportunities like walking school buses or bike trains

Evaluation: Measuring how kids get to school to track effectiveness; standard tallies for schools to use



Top/bottom: MNDOT SRTS



Pedbikeimages.org/Dan Burden



Federal funding history

Funding for infrastructure & non-infrastructure

- 1998 – Two federally-funded pilot programs through USDOT (Marin County, CA & Arlington, MA)
- 2005 – Safe Routes to School national program created with dedicated funding through 2012; \$1.15 billion in that time
- 2012 – MAP-21 folded Safe Routes to School into Transportation Alternatives Program as an eligible activity; no longer a separate funding program



State role with Safe Routes to School

Lead for previous federal and current state programs

- Overall strategic planning for the state and provides local support and resources, training, and technical assistance
- Every state was required to have a full-time Safe Routes coordinator; MnDOT retained this role
- Ran previous federal funding program in MN, does for current state funds
- Example: Golden Snow Boot Award for Winter Walk to School Day events



MNSafeRoutesToSchool.org

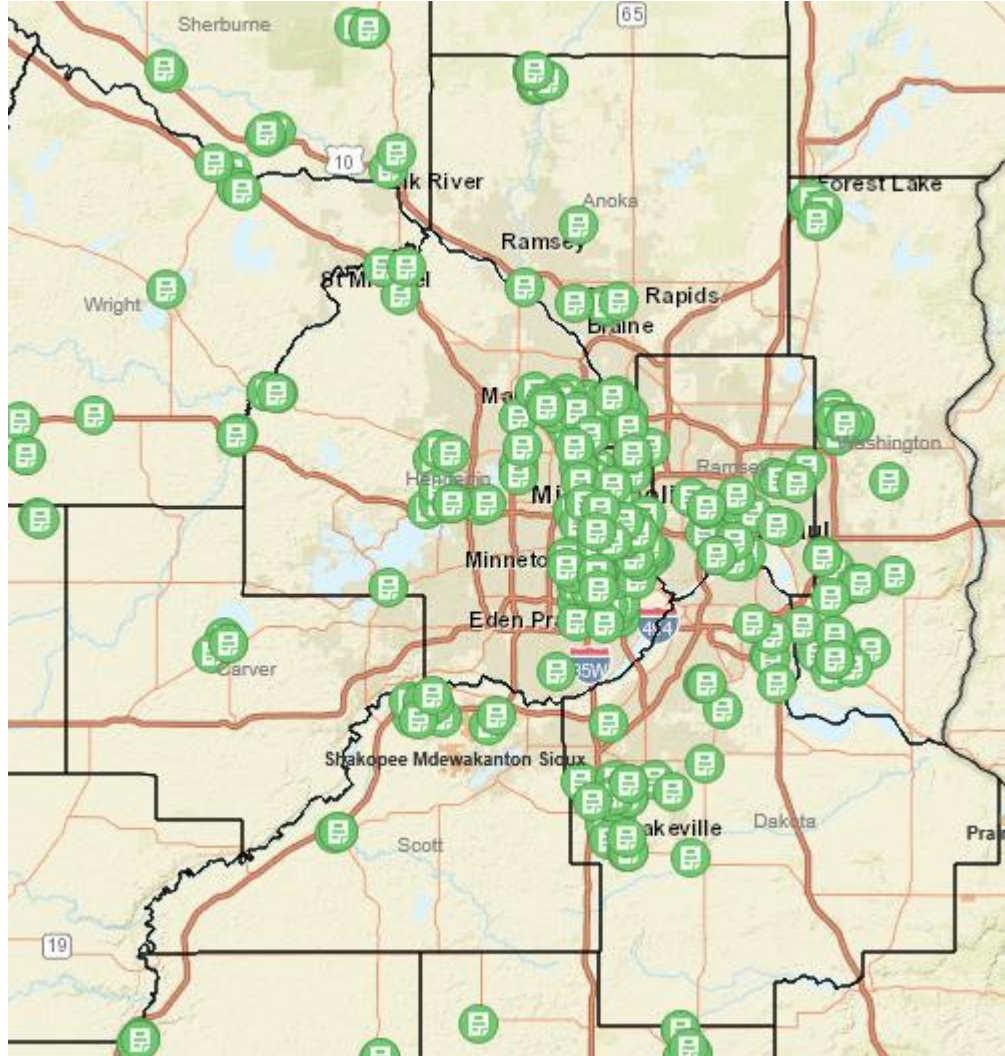
Don't Hibernate, Participate!

Winter Walk Day is Feb. 5th!



For more information, visit: www.mnsaferoutestoschool.org

MnDOT-funded plans in the region



<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/saferoutes/srts-in-mn.html>

Visualizing Safe Routes to School in Minnesota map

Layers include:

MnDOT funded planning assistance

Demonstration projects

MnDOT funded infrastructure projects

MnDOT funded local coordinators

Bike fleets

The graphic shown is only for MnDOT-funded planning assistance in the metro.

Safe Routes to School and the Regional Solicitation

Added in 2013 from federal changes in MAP-21

- Added to Transportation Alternatives application as one of five categories for that 2013 solicitation
- With 2014 Regional Solicitation structure changes, Safe Routes to School became a separate application category within Bike/Ped

Safe Routes scoring specifics in Regional Solicitation

- 2013 – How the project is part of a program that considers/incorporates the Es (not just engineering)
- 2014 on – Also average percent students who walk/bike to school (using school tallies), student population w/in a mile
- Funded projects required to do surveys after implementation for the national center
- Projects also evaluated on criteria similar to other categories, not school-specific

Changes in funding and feedback

2013 to now

- MnDOT directed Met Council to ensure at least 15% of Transportation Alternatives Program funds went to Safe Routes to Schools projects; no longer a requirement
- Since 2013, state funds for this work in addition to federal eligibility
- Also eligible for Safe Streets and Roads for All federal discretionary grants, Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) funds through MDH

Feedback in 2025

- Proposed as a question in consideration of desire to simplify and previous applicant unfamiliarity with the holistic intent of SRTS
- **Regional Solicitation Evaluation Technical Steering Committee** favored combining SRTS as an eligible activity in ped and bike categories rather than a standalone SRTS category
- **Bike Ped Planning Work Group** - new scoring criteria should include schools so that SRTS infrastructure projects can compete well

Questions for non-infrastructure SRTS

Considerations for future consideration

- Non-infrastructure: What, if any, funding gaps are there for this work? Has MnDOT's funding met needs, or could AT funds accelerate this work?
- Non-infrastructure: Would there be any repercussions with MnDOT's state funding if the metro funded this work through Active Transportation funds? i.e. would they restrict state funds to greater MN only

Regional AT Legislative Language

Relevant Session Law Language

(a) Sales tax revenue allocated to the Transportation Advisory Board under subdivision 2, clause (1), is for grants to support active transportation within the metropolitan area.

(b) The Transportation Advisory Board must establish eligibility requirements and a selection process to provide the grant awards. The process must include: solicitation; evaluation and prioritization, including technical review, scoring, and ranking; project selection; and award of funds. To the extent practicable and subject to paragraph (c), the process must align with procedures and requirements established for allocation of other sources of funds.

(c) The selection process must include criteria and prioritization of projects based on:

- (1) the project's inclusion in a municipal or regional nonmotorized transportation system plan;*
- (2) the extent to which policies or practices of the political subdivision encourage and promote complete streets planning, design, and construction;*
- (3) the extent to which the project supports connections between communities and to key destinations within a community;*
- (4) identified barriers or deficiencies in the nonmotorized transportation system;*
- (5) identified safety or health benefits;*
- (6) geographic equity in project benefits, with an emphasis on communities that are historically and currently underrepresented in local or regional planning; and*
- (7) the ability of a grantee to maintain the active transportation infrastructure following project completion.*

