



# Active Transportation Working Group

Meeting #6



June 27, 2024

# Agenda for Meeting 6



## Agenda:

1. Meeting 5 recap and debrief TAB meeting feedback (Glen Johnson, Chair)
2. 2025 Active Transportation Solicitation (Joe Widing)
  - a) Discussion: Revisit previous discussions
  - b) Roll call vote
3. Revisit 2024 Regional Solicitation active transportation funding projects (Steve Peterson)
  - a) Discussion: TAB feedback and funding 3 additional projects
  - b) Roll call vote
4. Grant management overview (Joe Widing)
  1. TAB management of pilot grant funds – policy considerations
  2. Comparing federal, state and Council requirements for grantees for program year policy
5. Next steps

# Active Transportation Funding Priorities/Principles



## What are the values for the Active Transportation funding?

Summary of values and priorities for new AT funding solicitation based on previous discussions

1. Maximize potential mode-shift toward active forms of transportation to support state VMT and GHG reduction goals.
2. Simple application and project development process.
3. Applicant eligibility should consider other new funding sources for certain jurisdictions.
4. Funds should be used on their own and not be tied up with federal funding.
5. Limit matching fund amount required or waive completely from program.
6. Fund more diverse types of bike projects beyond multiuse trails and other big-ticket projects like grade separations.
7. Focus on more systematic improvements to improve the active transportation system as a whole in the region.
8. Consider funding bike projects beyond the RBTN or regional bike trails.
  - a. Local connections to RBTN or local networks to make improvements on a wider scale.
9. Do not limit funding to just new infrastructure projects. Need to consider planning, operational and other project types as well.

# 2025 AT Solicitation Discussion (1)



## Potential 2025 AT Solicitation Timeline

- Summer/Fall 2024: Design solicitation eligibility, scoring measures, funding amount to be awarded, application materials, meet legislative requirements
  - 2025 Solicitation would likely need to be very similar to current Reg. Sol. Active Transportation application categories with “tweaks”
    - Could also consider the MnDOT AT program as well for inspiration
    - 2026 and ongoing could deviate more from Regional Solicitation with more time to work out details
  - Draft Application requires TAB/TAC review and approval process (2 mo. min)
- Late 2024/Early 2025: Application released for 30 days
- Winter/Spring 2025 Scoring
- TAB selection by May/June goal
- 2025 AT application work concurrent with full 2026 Solicitation evaluation/design work
- Potentially \$30M-\$35M to award based on remaining 2023/24 revenue and anticipated 2025 sales tax revenue

# 2025 AT Solicitation Discussion (2)

## Pros for 2025 Solicitation

- Allows for more applicants to consider applying for non-federal AT funding
  - 2024 applicants not aware regional AT funding would be included when deciding to apply
  - Small cities might have considered applying for non-federal funds
- Spends more funding, more quickly vs. waiting one more year
- AT Solicitation could better incorporate legislative requirements than did 2024

## Cons for 2025 Solicitation

- Will take focus away from work group tasks
  - Creating 2026 AT Solicitation
  - 2024 RS AT funds grant implementation
- Will not have time to learn lessons from 2024 grant pilot
- Will not have time to set up a fully new solicitation process
  - Will likely modify existing applications (RS or MnDOT)
- May not see new project applications from previous Regional Solicitation
- Adds another competitive application cycle for local partners

# 2025 AT Solicitation Discussion (3)

## Specific Decisions that would need to be made prior to a 2025 Solicitation

- Applicant and project eligibility – types of projects that are eligible and application categories, types of applicants that are eligible
- Funding parameters – overall funding allocation, funding range per application category, funding min/max for application categories, match requirements
- Criteria prioritization - percentage of points allocated to criteria such as safety, access, gaps and barriers, usage (reflecting TAB goals) for each application category
- Scoring measures – establish scoring measures for each criteria
- Grant administration needs – how should Council administer grants (will need to be discussed for 2024 pilot but will not be able to take lessons learned for 2025)
  - Questions such as program year and scope changes expectations, design or environmental review, DBE expectations
  - Staff meeting with MnDOT and Council LPA staff to learn more on other types of grant administration



# 2025 AT Solicitation

## Roll Call Motion

1. To hold a 2025 Solicitation for Active Transportation projects with AT Sales Tax Revenue.

If yes,

2. Ask staff to prepare a schedule and decision-making timeline for solicitation parameters identified on the previous slide to be decided on by the TAB at a later date.



# 2024 Regional Solicitation AT Funding

## Revisit additional AT funding discussion given TAB feedback

### TAB Feedback

At their previous meetings, TAB discussed funding scenarios and expressed interest in funding additional pedestrian and bike projects with a focus on increasing safety investments.

Request: Fund three additional 2024 RS projects with AT sales tax funding. No other changes to previously voted on motion.

- One more multiuse trail project
- Two more Safe Routes to School projects
- Additional ~\$3M in funding – increase to \$18.7M total in AT funding

Roll call vote to increase funding for 2024 RS projects





# 2024 Regional Solicitation AT Funding



## Updated Motion

1. To distribute up to ~~\$15 million~~ \$19 million in regional sales tax funds for Regional Solicitation Active Transportation projects.
2. To select at least one project from each active transportation category in the Regional Solicitation (Multiuse Trails, Pedestrian and Safe Routes to School).
3. To select from smaller projects which requested less than \$2 million funding.
4. To select from projects which can begin their projects early, either in 2025 or 2026. Projects must award a construction contract by the end of 2026.
5. To select projects that can meet the additional legislative requirements.
6. That the highest scoring Regional Solicitation applications will receive priority for Active Transportation funding.
7. That selected projects will be required to still meet the 20% local match for Regional Solicitation projects.
8. That selected projects provide a geographic balance in the region.

# Grant Management

## Policy Level Grant Management Considerations

Need to set direction on key items for grant management of pilot projects. Over the next few months, we will be going through each of these topic areas by reviewing and comparing how different process currently handle these topics.

1. Program year – how should projects be kept on schedule? **(today's topic)**
2. Grant disbursements and eligible costs
3. Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE)/Labor Force Programs
4. Environmental Impact Review
5. Project Plans, Scope Change, and Documentation
6. Right-of-Way Acquisition process and documentation
7. Other topics that should be added to this list?



# Comparing Program Year Policies

## Federal/RS - FHWA

- Must have a program year in the Transportation Improvement Program
- Must have all federal documentation approved by April 1 of the program year
  - Environmental review
  - ROW certification
  - All other required docs
- Program year extensions
  - Only one extension allowed
  - Submit request to TAB

## State – MnDOT AT

- No program year needs to be identified
  - Projects must have MnDOT project number with construction dates
- Projects must begin construction within 2 years of funding
  - Grant agreement expires 2 years after this period or when project is completed – delays may be approved within this time frame but not after

## Met Council

- No program year needs to be identified
- Projects must be completed within an identified Project Activity Period in the grant agreement
  - Agreement may be extended up to one year
- Grantees required to submit semi annual progress reports and meet with Council staff on request

# Next Steps



Meeting schedule moving forward

- Revert to every other month as other Regional Solicitation Evaluation Work Groups or stick to monthly meetings

July AT Work Group will continue discussions on grant management policies and prepare recommendations for policy level grant management guidance for pilot



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# 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.*

