



POLICYMAKER WORKING GROUP REGIONAL SOLICITATION

August 20, 2025

Working Group Attendees:

James Hovland; Deb Barber; Glen Johnson; Peter Dugan; Mary Liz Holberg; Brian Martinson; Debbie Goettel; Victor Lake; Toni Carter; Anjuli Cameron; Jon Ulrich; Julie Jeppson, Mark Steffenson.

Other Attendees:

Steve Peterson, Elaine Koutsoukos, Charles Carlson, Joe Barbeau, Cole Hiniker, Amy Vennewitz, Robbie King, Joe Widing, Wendy Duren, Dave Burns (Met Council); Molly Stewart, Lydia Statz (SRF Consulting Group); Paul Oehme (Lakeville); Joe MacPherson (Anoka County); Molly McCartney (MnDOT); Lyssa Leitner (Washington County); Carla Stueve (Hennepin County), Aaron Tag, Molly McCartney (MnDOT).

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

390 Robert St N St Paul, MN 55101; Conference Room 1A

Project Update

Molly Stewart and Steve Peterson provided a recap of the Active Transportation Work Group and noted that technical stakeholders are currently reviewing the draft applications.

Funding Emphasis Areas

Steve Peterson presented proposed funding minimums and maximums and the process for setting funding ranges for the 2026 Solicitation cycle. Members discussed whether to set funding ranges now or wait until after applications were scored. Some concerns were raised about leaving funding ranges open-ended. Suggestions included setting lower minimums for each category and allowing flexibility to allocate the remaining funding to be allocated based on application scores.

Cole Hiniker presented potential funding emphasis areas for consideration, including following historic funding levels, and emphasizing specific outlines such as improving safety and increasing travel options. Member Martinson appreciated the suggestion of allocating funding based on outcomes but suggested reframing the 'reliable travel' goal area to 'access to destinations.'

Some members shared concerns about ensuring specific categories are fully funded. Member Holberg noted that the historic number of applications doesn't necessarily reflect need because agencies have strategically limited their applications. Joe MacPherson and Lyssa Leitner, both members of the Technical Steering Committee, clarified that agencies always face those choices when it comes to funding programs, and Regional Solicitation is no different from other grant programs. The needs always outweigh the total funding available. Lyssa Leitner also noted that it's helpful to have funding ranges set by application category so agencies that are applying know where to focus their efforts based on potential available funding. Joe MacPherson confirmed that ranges that are concise are helpful for applicants.

Members discussed federal funding uncertainty and local match challenges. Peterson noted that the 20 percent local match is a federal requirement, and that the Council won't have complete clarity about the level of funding available until a new Congressional transportation bill is approved in the fall of 2026.

Many agencies have had trouble fully funding projects in the past, but increased funding maximums may help alleviate these challenges.

Overall, the group supported the idea of setting funding ranges prior to the opening of 2026 solicitation. This topic will be discussed with the Technical Steering Committee in September, and feedback will be shared at the next Policymaker Working Group meeting.

Next Steps

The next meeting will again focus on potential funding scenarios for the Regional Solicitation program. The draft application materials are moving through review by technical stakeholders and will be available for review by policymakers later this fall.

The next Policymaker Working Group meeting is scheduled for September 22.