



TECHNICAL STEERING COMMITTEE REGIONAL SOLICITATION

September 4, 2025

Steering Committee Attendees:

Paul Oehme, Molly McCartney, Joe MacPherson, Danny McCullough, Gina Mitteco, Jim Kosulchar, Chris Hartzell, Patrick Boylan, Reuben Collins, Jeni Hager, Lyssa Leitner, Matt Fyten, Innocent Eyoh, Aaron Tag, Jillian Linnell

Other Attendees:

Steve Peterson, Elaine Koutsoukos, Amy Vennewitz, Cole Hiniker, Joe Barbeau, Charles Carlson, Joe Widing, Jonathan Ehrlich, Dave Burns, Jed Hanson, Wendy Duren (Met Council), Jason Pieper (Hennepin County), Allison Bell (Bellwether Consulting), Molly Stewart, Lydia Statz (SRF Consulting Group)

12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Metropolitan Council, Conference Room 1A

Policymaker Working Group Update

The meeting opened with a brief update on the August Policymaker Working Group meeting. A few Technical Steering Committee members were present at that meeting and emphasized the value of having a clear and focused understanding of expected funding across categories. This clarity, they noted, would help streamline planning and align expectations more effectively. The Policymakers requested feedback and recommendations from technical staff to help develop recommendations.

Funding Options

The group discussed potential options for setting funding targets for the 2026 solicitation. Member Collins voiced strong support for using specific targets rather than ranges, arguing that ranges tend to complicate the process, while targets offer both structure and flexibility. Other members agreed. Member Leitner added that if ranges were to be used, they should reflect the actual number of projects rather than just percentages. Member Kosluchar suggested connecting funding targets back to the overarching goals of the plan, reinforcing the need for strategic alignment.

The group then discussed funding targets for the categories. Member Leitner mentioned that the Policymaker Working Group had considered lowering Regional Bicycle Facilities funding due to additional sales tax revenue, but the group generally agreed that sales tax funding should be additive—not a replacement for the federal money. Interchange projects were also discussed, with the consensus being that while they aren't treated as a set-aside, their funding could be reallocated to other roadway projects if no eligible interchange proposals are submitted. TAB retains discretion to reject projects it deems unworthy of funding.

Member Linnell noted that Metro Transit continues to operate under the assumption that the ABRT set-aside remains intact.

Member Kosluchar returned to the theme of safety, advocating for increased funding in that category to better reflect the TPP priorities and past TAB priorities. He proposed increasing the safety category from \$30 million to \$40 million by reallocating funds from the Roadway category. Member Leitner suggested that if application volume or quality doesn't support the shift, the funding could revert. Other members agreed with adding this language.

The group leaned toward presenting funding as specific targets, with flexibility to adjust by up to two projects, rather than using broad ranges. Member Collins emphasized the importance of entering the process with a clear funding strategy, even acknowledging the political nature of the decision-making. Ultimately, the group agreed to present two options to the Policymaker Working Group: maintaining the targets as shown or increasing safety funding to \$40 million.

Community Considerations

The meeting then turned to community considerations, led by a presentation from Allison Bell. She highlighted how applications offer a deeper look into engagement efforts. Member Boylan noted that engagement for comprehensive plans tends to be high-level and wondered how these engagement efforts work with the new proposed criteria. Amy Vennewitz clarified that engagement at this stage is less about project scope and more about understanding community needs essentially why a project is necessary and how that need was identified. Member Collins expressed concern about including engagement in the process, not because it lacks importance, but because it can lead agencies to overpromise. Member Kosulchar emphasized that engagement requirements must ensure equity between city and county applicants, noting that county applicants may have access to more resources. There was also discussion about offering a funding guarantee for projects that score exceptionally well.

In the Active Transportation Planning category, it was suggested that while engagement may not be a scoring factor now, funding should be available to support future engagement that could improve scores down the line.

Qualifying Requirements

Finally, the group reviewed qualifying requirements. The topic of project greenhouse gas (GHG) offsets sparked several questions. As proposed, TAB can use offsets to achieve net neutrality, but each offset is single-use and not available to local agencies. Charles Carlson noted there are many questions still to be worked out, including whether TAB owns the entire offset or just the proportion it funded. Member McCartney explained that MnDOT is still working through the details but recommended that the Met Council claim the 7-county offset early in the process. Jonathan Ehrlich clarified that offsets must balance specific projects subject to legislation, and that Met Council will review them before sending to MnDOT's technical committee for a 90-day review prior to TIP inclusion.

Additional qualifying criteria issues were raised, including simplifying winter maintenance requirements and clarifying when letters of support are necessary. The group agreed that such letters should only be required when cost-sharing is involved, and not in cases where an agency has no financial or right-of-way stake in a project.

Next Steps

- Policymaker Working Group – September 22
- TAC – October 1
- Technical Steering Committee – October 7
- TAC Planning – October 9
- TAC Funding & Programming – October 16