



TECHNICAL STEERING COMMITTEE REGIONAL SOLICITATION

October 28, 2025

Steering Committee Attendees:

Paul Oehme, Molly McCartney, Joe MacPherson, Danny McCullough, Jim Kosulchar, Chris Hartzell, Patrick Boylan, Reuben Collins, Innocent Eyoh, Doran Cote, Jillian Linnell, Kathleen Mayell, Madeline Dahlheimer, Molly McCartney

Other Attendees:

Steve Peterson, Elaine Koutsoukos, Cole Hiniker, Joe Barbeau, Charles Carlson, Joe Widing, Bethany Brandt-Sargent, David Burns, Jonathan Ehrlich, Steve Elmer, Jed Hanson, Robbie King, David Vessel, Cameron Kolbeck, Wendy Duren (Met Council), Theresa Cain (Metro Transit), Carla Stueve (Hennepin County), Erin Laberee (Dakota County), Molly Stewart, Lydia Statz (SRF Consulting Group)

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Virtual

Meeting Summary

Chair Paul Oehme welcomed participants and set the stage for discussion. Molly Stewart provided updates from previous meetings, and Member Kosluchar mentioned that the Funding and Programming Committee (October 16) had similar conversations to topics on the group's agenda today regarding Arterial Bus Rapid Transit maximums and Community Considerations weighting.

Active Transportation Solicitation Timing

The Active Transportation Work Group had requested technical input on the timing of upcoming solicitations, noting three main options: annually, biennially current with Regional Solicitation, and biennially on the off years. The program will solicit for projects in 2026 concurrent with Regional Solicitation, but the recommendation could impact the timing of future cycles.

Member Dahlheimer expressed no strong opinion on timing but emphasized the need for consistency and raised concerns about all scoring happening simultaneously if the processes are concurrent. Dahlheimer also noted that if projects cannot apply for both federal and local funds, an off-year cycle becomes more attractive.

Member Collins agreed with that perspective, highlighting the heavy staff effort required for applications and leaning toward staggering cycles to spread workload more evenly. Member Oehme supported a biennial off-cycle approach to reduce workload, and Member McCullough (via chat) echoed support for an off-cycle schedule.

Cole Hiniker also expressed concern that an off-cycle solicitation could create timing challenges for TAB. Member MacPherson suggested an offset schedule within the same year, which Steve Peterson said would require further discussion with TAC/TAB.

The group recommended that Active Transportation project solicitations occur in 2026, then biennially in 2027, 2029, etc.

Qualifying Requirements

The group then discussed a potential qualifying requirement that projects would only be eligible to apply for one application category, regardless of funding source. Member Mayell asked whether these qualifying requirements would apply on a staggered cycle. Steve Peterson clarified that this would likely only apply in 2026 to prevent applicants from flooding the process. If the Active Transportation Sales Tax application categories are off cycle from the Federal Regional Solicitation application categories, then applications would be able to apply for one application category in each separate solicitation. So, applicants would be able to apply for the Regional Bike Facilities in 2028 (Federal) and Local Bike Facilities in 2027 or 2029 (Active Transportation) if the solicitations are off cycle. If the solicitations are at the same time, then applicants would have to choose one or the other. It was also noted that applicants would only be able to receive funding from one funding source (Federal or Active Transportation).

Member Kosluchar raised the idea of a pre-application process for Met Council to review qualifying requirements, which Steve Peterson noted is common among peer MPOs but would require detailed planning. Member Oehme questioned whether it was too late to implement such a process, and Steve Peterson indicated that any pre-application step would likely need to be informal to meet the 2026 timeline.

Member Collins supported limiting applications to one per roadway segment.

Cole Hiniker asked for clarification that applicants cannot receive local funds if they already have federal funding, which Steve Peterson confirmed would need to be explicitly written.

GHG Offsets

The group then discussed a proposed approach to handling the GHG offsets of proposed State highway expansion projects. Two major options include Met Council “owning” all offsets for funded projects, or only a share of the offsets proportional to TAB funding. Steve Peterson shared that a Met Council retroactive analysis suggests each Solicitation cycle could produce enough offsets to fund one interchange project, though proportional offsets would be more complex.

Member McCartney noted the lack of clear direction on offsets. Member Dahlheimer said she leaned toward a proportional share approach but asked about timing, to which Steve Peterson responded that TAB would address this in December since it affects qualifying requirements. Member Kosluchar highlighted bookkeeping challenges for smaller cities with the more complex proportional approach.

The group recommended changing the qualifying requirement to reflect a proportional share approach, with Met Council receiving offsets proportional to the TAB-funded share of the total project costs.

Community Considerations

The group then discussed the Community Considerations criteria which is currently proposed to be 20% of the total scoring of all applications. Major points of discussion included a potential funding guarantee for high scoring projects, as well as the proposed weighing of these criteria.

The Community Considerations work group recently conducted a test which scored and ranked previously submitted projects against the proposed criteria to understand any potential challenges. Member MacPherson shared his experiences writing and scoring test applications, noting difficulty in achieving high scores across all categories.

Steve Peterson clarified that the proposed “funding priority” guarantees funding for projects scoring high on all three criteria only if they are not already in line for funding.

Member Mayell reflected on a test application for Northside Greenway, which did not score high in all areas, and questioned the value of the guarantee, but supported consistent 20% weighting across all categories. Joe Barbeau emphasized that the difficulty in achieving high-high-high is intentional to reward transformative projects. Elaine Koutsoukos warned that overly difficult scoring could dilute points.

Member MacPherson recommended adjusting category weightings, such as reducing safety to 10%, which Member Eyoh opposed, suggesting 15% as a minimum.

Member Dahlheimer proposed splitting the second criterion and modeling it after the AT planning application.

Member MacPherson supported that approach, noting that most projects are unlikely to fully engage with the community at this stage.

The group did not make a formal recommendation but noted the need for policymaker input on this topic.

Specific Criteria

The group then had the opportunity to discuss specific criteria or measures of the draft applications.

Member Oehme questioned why correctable crash history accounts for only 5% in the Reactive Safety category. Molly Stewart noted that the measure was reduced to balance with the points awarded for expected crash reduction and improvements for people outside of vehicles.

Member MacPherson advocated increasing the weight for correctable crash history, supported by Member Kosluchar, who noted overlap with expected reduction.

Member Dahlheimer requested weighting Tier 1 Regional Bicycle Transportation Network projects the same as Regional Trails, seconded by Member McCullough. Both noted this scoring framework had been suggested in the Bicycle/Pedestrian Special Issue Working Group.

Member Collins asked about scoring RBTN corridors lower than RBTN alignments, and Cole Hiniker explained that corridors typically reflect more advanced planning. Member Collins expressed concern that agencies were not made aware of this distinction in advance as it differs from the 2024 application scoring.

Next Steps

- First Package of Action Items – Oct-Nov
 - TAC November 5
 - TAC Planning November 13
 - TAB November 19
- Public outreach on funding targets begins
- Policymaker Working Group – November 19
- Second Package of Action Items to Release for Public Comment– Nov/Dec
 - TAC Planning November 13
 - TAC Funding and Programming November 20
 - TAC December 3
 - TAB December 17
 - Nov TAC Planning (info), Nov F&P, Dec TAC, Dec TAB
- Public outreach on the entire application package begins
- Call for projects – Spring 2026
- Project selection – End of 2026