

INTRODUCTION: REGIONAL SOLICITATION FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The Regional Solicitation is a competitive process to award federal transportation funding to projects that meet regional transportation needs. The solicitation is part of the Metropolitan Council's federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The funding program and related rules and requirements are established by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and administered locally through collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

The online application can be accessed at: <https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation.aspx>

Federal Program Overview

As authorized by the most recent federal surface transportation funding act, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, projects will be selected for funding as part of two federal programs: Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program. The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was folded into STBGP in the FAST Act. It is assumed that federal funding will continue to be available in 2026 and 2027, but there is no money set aside at the current time with current federal legislation.

Major Changes for the 2022 Funding Cycle

1. A TAB Working Group developed specific criteria, weighting, measures, and a selection process for unique project requests that was approved by the full TAB.
2. Based on the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, the pedestrian safety measure was updated within the relevant roadway applications.
3. Given the increase in fatalities and serious injury crashes in the region, TAB increased the amount of points allocated to safety within the Roadway Spot Mobility and Safety application category.
4. The Equity and Affordable Housing criterion was updated based on stakeholder feedback. -This modified measure is used in each of the application categories.
5. Purpose statements were added to describe the primary goals of each application type.
6. As part of the Regional Solicitation Before & After Study, Phase 2 (2021), a list of commonly used crash modification factors was created for use in the roadway applications.- Applicants have the option to use these crash modification factors, which are posted on the Metropolitan Council's Regional Solicitation website, under Application Resources.-

Connection to the Regional Policy

The Regional Solicitation process and criteria were overhauled in 2014 to reflect new federal guidance and regional goals. These regional goals were defined through Thrive MSP 2040, the regional development framework for the metropolitan area. The region's long-range transportation plan, the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), was developed to meet federal requirements but also reflect and help implement the regional goals established in Thrive. It is useful to understand the intent behind both Thrive and the TPP to ensure that all projects funded through the Regional Solicitation meet these shared goals. These funds are intended to implement the region's transportation plan and to address local problems identified in required comprehensive plans.

Table 1: Regional Solicitation Connection to Regional Policy

Prioritizing Criteria	Thrive Outcomes	TPP Goals
Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity Livability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Competitive Economy
Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livability Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Competitive Economy
Equity and Housing Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity Livability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Leveraging Transportation Investments to Guide Land Use
Infrastructure Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewardship Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation System Stewardship
Congestion Reduction/Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity Livability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Environment Competitive Economy
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livability Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety and Security
Multimodal Facilities and Existing Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity Equity Livability Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Transportation and Land Use Competitive Economy
Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation System Stewardship
Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation System Stewardship

While there are national goals for the region’s transportation system, including the implementation of a performance-based planning approach to investments, federal legislation requires metropolitan areas to set their own goals. Projects funded through the Regional Solicitation do not need to be specifically named in the TPP because they must prove consistency with regional goals and policies to pass the qualifying review step of the Regional Solicitation process. In addition, the goals of the TPP are strongly reflected in the prioritizing criteria used to select projects shown in the following table.

Modal Categories and Application Categories

As depicted in Figure 1, the applications are grouped into three primary modal categories:

1. Roadways Including Multimodal Elements
2. Transit and Travel Demand Management (TDM) Projects
3. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Each of these modal categories includes three to five application categories for a total of 124 categories. Applicants for the Regional Solicitation will select the appropriate application category for their proposed project based on the mode requiring the largest percentage of cost. For instance, a roadway reconstruction project that includes a new sidewalk would apply under the Roadway Reconstruction/ Modernization application category because the roadway improvements are the largest cost for the project. If an applicant submits a project in the incorrect application category, the application may be disqualified. It is advised that applicants contact Metropolitan Council staff prior to submission if there are any questions about which application category is the most appropriate for their project.

Funding Availability, Minimums, and Maximums

A total of approximately \$180 million in federal funds is anticipated to be available in this solicitation for program years 2026 and 2027. As shown in Table 2, modal funding ranges have been established by TAB, based on historic levels, to give applicants an understanding of the general funding levels available by mode. TAB reserves the right to adjust these modal funding levels depending on the amount and quality of projects submitted. In addition, TAB approved a target to allocate approximately \$10 million to the Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement category, as part of the Roadways Including Multimodal Elements category. Base-level 2026 and 2027 TDM funding for the TMOs and Metro Transit will be taken out of the Transit and TDM category for the next solicitation. Additionally, there is \$1.2 million of TDM funding that is available for 2024 and 2025 for innovative projects from the previous solicitation.

Table 2: Modal Funding Levels*

	Roadways Including Multimodal Elements	Transit and TDM	Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	Total
Modal Funding Levels	Range of 46%-65% Range of \$83M-\$117M Midpoint \$100M	Range of 25%-35% Range of \$45M-\$63M Midpoint \$54M	Range of 9%-20% Range of \$16M-\$36M Midpoint \$26M	100% \$180M (Est)*

* 2.5% (\$4M-\$5M) will be set aside for unique projects out of the total funds available, leaving the remaining funds to be distributed to the above modes within the percentage ranges shown. Amounts shown assume that some level of over programming will occur, but TAB will determine the exact amount as part of project selection.

Within Roadways Including Multimodal Elements, at least one project will be funded from each of the five eligible functional classifications: A-minor arterial augmenters, connectors, expanders, and relievers, as well as non-freeway principal arterials.

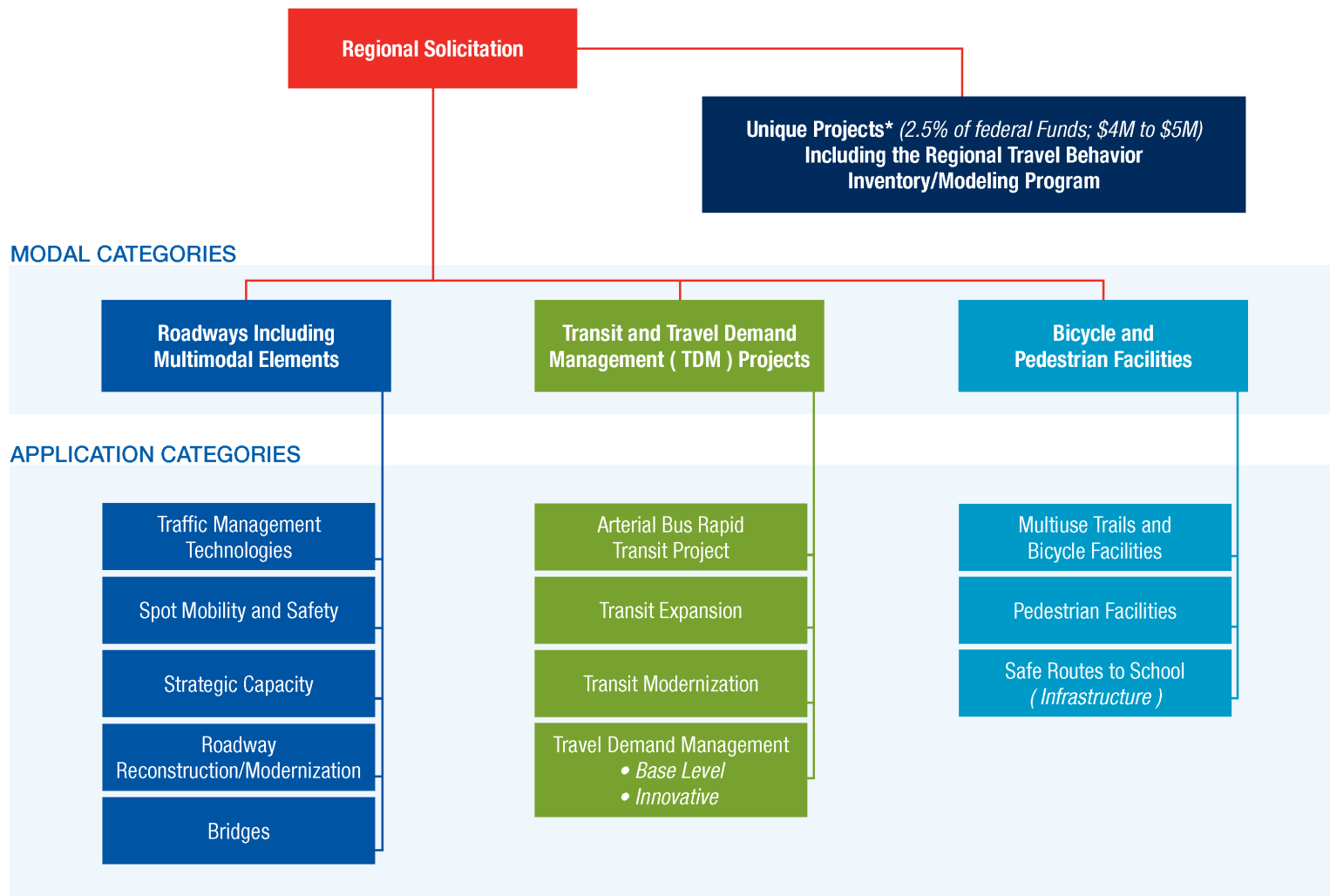
Within the Transit modal category, there is an Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project category. There is also a New Market guarantee to ensure that at least one Transit Expansion or Modernization project is funded that serves areas outside of Transit Market Area 1 and 2 from the Transportation Policy Plan for at least one end of the project. The combined maximum funding amount for bus rapid transit projects funded in the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project, Transit Expansion, and Transit Modernization categories will be \$32,000,000.

Approximately 2.5% of the total available funds available will be set-aside for Unique Projects, including the Travel Behavior Inventory/Regional Travel Model. These 2026 and 2027 funds will be allocated as part of the 2024 Regional Solicitation, closer to project implementation. TAB will first approve a funding level for the Travel Behavior Inventory/Regional Travel Model and then the remaining funds will be considered for any submitted Unique Projects. TAB may elect to fund Unique Projects at an amount lower than 2.5%, depending on the amount and quality of the submittals. .

Figure 1: TAB-Approved Application Categories

REGIONAL SOLICITATION MODAL AND APPLICATION CATEGORIES

SEPTEMBER 2019



*Unique projects are projects that do not fit in the scoring measures for other application categories. TAB will accept applications in the 2022 Solicitation for Unique projects to be funded with federal funds in 2024 and 2025.

Table 3 shows the minimum and maximum federal award for application categories that applicants can apply for as part of the Regional Solicitation. The values do not account for 20 percent local match minimum that applicants must contribute to the project. For unique projects, the minimum award is \$500,000 and the maximum award is the total amount available each funding cycle (approximately \$4,000,000 for the 2020 funding cycle).

Table 3: Regional Solicitation Funding Award Minimums and Maximums

Modal Application Categories	Minimum Federal Award	Maximum Federal Award
Roadways Including Multimodal Elements		
• Traffic Management Technologies (Roadway System Management)	\$ 250 500,000	\$3,500,000
• Spot Mobility and Safety	\$1,000,000	\$3,500,000
• Strategic Capacity (Roadway Expansion)	\$1,000,000	\$10,000,000
• Roadway Reconstruction/ Modernization	\$1,000,000	\$7,000,000
• Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement	\$1,000,000	\$7,000,000
Transit and TDM Projects		
• Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project	N/A	\$25,000,000
• Transit Expansion	\$500,000	\$7,000,000
• Transit Modernization	\$500,000	\$7,000,000
• Travel Demand Management (TDM)	\$100,000	\$500,000
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities		
• Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities	\$250,000	\$5,500,000
• Pedestrian Facilities	\$250,000	\$ 4 2,000,000
• Safe Routes to School (Infrastructure Projects)	\$250,000	\$1,000,000

The following pages include definitions, examples, and scoring overviews of each of the application categories.

Roadways Including Multimodal Elements

Traffic Management Technologies

Purpose: To fund traffic technology projects that reduce delay, emissions, and crashes.

Definition: An intelligent transportation system (ITS) or similar projects that primarily benefit roadway users. ~~Traffic Management Technology Roadway System Management~~ projects can include project elements along a single corridor, multiple corridors, or within a specific geographic area such as a downtown area, continuous route (could be more than one roadway) or defined geographic area such as a downtown area. ~~To be eligible, projects must make improvements to at least one A-minor arterial or non-freeway principal arterial. The system management project must make improvements to at least one A-minor arterial or non-freeway principal arterial as part of the project.~~ Projects that are more transit-focused must apply in the Transit Modernization application category.

Examples of Traffic Management ~~Technology~~Technologies Projects:

- Flashing yellow arrow traffic signals
- Traffic signal retiming projects
- Integrated corridor signal coordination
- Traffic signal control system upgrades
- New/replacement detectors
- ~~Passive detectors for bicyclists and pedestrians~~
- ~~Other emerging ITS technologies~~
- ~~New or replacement traffic management centers~~New/replacement traffic mgmt. centers
- ~~Other emerging ITS technologies~~
- ~~New/~~replacement traffic communication
- ~~New/~~replacement ~~closed-circuit television (CCTV)~~ cameras
- ~~New/~~replacement variable message signs ~~and & other traveler information info~~ improvements
- New or replacement detectors
- Incident management coordination
- ~~Vehicle-to-infrastructure~~Vehicle to Infrastructure technology

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	175	16%
Measure A - Functional classification of project	50	
Measure B - Regional Truck Corridor Study Tiers	50	
Measure C - Integration within existing traffic management systems	50	
Measure D - Coordination with other agencies	25	
2. Usage	125	11%
Measure A - Current daily person throughput	85	
Measure B - Forecast 2040 average daily traffic volume	40	
3. Equity and Housing Performance	100	9%
Measure A - Equity engagement	<u>30</u>	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	<u>40</u>	
Measure C - Affordable housing access	<u>30</u>	
4. Infrastructure Age	75	7%
Measure A - Date of construction	75	
5. Congestion Reduction/Air Quality	200	18%

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
Measure A - Vehicle delay reduced	150	
Measure B - Kg of emissions reduced	50	
6. Safety	200	18%
Measure A - Crashes reduced	50	
Measure B – Safety issues in project area	150	
7. Multimodal Elements and Existing Connections	50	5%
Measure A - Transit, bicycle, or pedestrian project elements and connections	50	
8. Risk Assessment	75	7%
Measure A - Risk Assessment Form	75	
9. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%
Measure A – Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total project cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

Spot Mobility and Safety

Purpose: To fund lower-cost, at-grade intersection projects that reduce delay and crashes.

Definition: An at-grade intersection or corridor-level intersection improvement project that focuses on mobility and safety (described as a Regional Mobility project under Spot Mobility in the TPP). New interchanges or projects that add new thru lane capacity (e.g., two-lane to four-lane expansions) should apply in the Strategic Capacity application category. Projects that address mobility and safety at multiple intersections on a corridor are encouraged. However, projects that propose to reconstruct the roadway for the length of the corridor should apply in the Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization application category.

Examples of Spot Mobility and Safety Projects:

- New or extended turn lanes at one or more intersections
- New intersection controls such as roundabouts or traffic signals
- Unsignalized or signalized reduced conflict intersections
- Other innovative/alternative intersection designs such as green t-intersections

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	475	46
Measure A - Congestion within the Project Area, Level of Adjacent Congestion, Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study Priorities, or Congestion Management Safety Plan Opportunity Areas	400	
Measure B - Regional Truck Corridor Study Tiers	75	
2. Equity and Housing Performance	100	9%
Measure A – Equity engagement	30	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	40	
Measure C – Affordable housing access	30	
3. Congestion Reduction/Air Quality	275	25%
Measure A - Vehicle delay reduced	200	
Measure B - Kg of emissions reduced	75	
4. Safety	275	25
Measure A - Crashes reduced	225	
Measure B - Pedestrian Crash Reduction (Proactive)	50	
5. Multimodal Elements and Existing Connections	100	9%
Measure A - Transit, bicycle, or pedestrian project elements & connections	100	
6. Risk Assessment	75	7%
Measure A - Risk Assessment Form	75	
7. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%
Measure A - Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total project cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

Strategic Capacity (Roadway Expansion)

Purpose: To fund regionally significant highway mobility projects, as prioritized in the Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study and the Congestion Management Process (CMP), that reduce delay and crashes and improve multimodal travel options.

Definition: A roadway project that adds thru-lane capacity (described as a Regional Mobility project under Strategic Capacity Enhancements in the TPP). Projects must be located on a non-freeway principal arterial or A-minor arterial functionally classified roadway, consistent with the latest TAB approved functional classification map. However, A-minor connectors cannot be expanded with new thru-lane capacity with these federal funds per regional policy.

Examples of Roadway Expansion Projects:

- New roadways
- Two-lane to four-lane expansions
- Other thru-lane expansions (excludes additions of a continuous center turn lane)
- Four-lane to six-lane expansions
- New interchanges with or without associated frontage roads
- Expanded interchanges with either new ramp movements or added thru lanes
- New bridges, overpasses and underpasses

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	210	19%
Measure A - Congestion within Project Area, Level of Adjacent Congestion, or Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study Priorities	80	
Measure B - Connection to Total Jobs, Manufacturing/Distribution Jobs, and Students	50	
Measure C - Regional Truck Corridor Study Tiers	80	
2. Usage	175	16%
Measure A - Current daily person throughput	110	
Measure B - Forecast 2040 average daily traffic volume	65	
3. Equity and Housing Performance	100	9%
Measure A – Equity engagement	30	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	40	
Measure C – Affordable housing access	30	
4. Infrastructure Age	40	4%
Measure A - Date of construction	40	
5. Congestion Reduction/Air Quality	150	14%
Measure A - Vehicle delay reduced	100	
Measure B - Kg of emissions reduced	50	
6. Safety	150	14%

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
Measure A - Crashes reduced	120	
Measure B - Pedestrian Crash Reduction (Proactive)	30	
7. Multimodal Elements and Existing Connections	100	9%
Measure A - Transit, bicycle, or pedestrian project elements and connections	100	
8. Risk Assessment	75	7%
Measure A- Risk Assessment Form	75	
9. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%
Measure A – Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total project cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization

Purpose: To fund roadway preservation projects that improve infrastructure condition, reduce crashes, and enhance multimodal travel options.

Definition: A roadway project that does not add thru-lane capacity, but reconstructs, reclaims, and/or modernizes a corridor with improved safety, multimodal, or mobility elements (e.g., new turn lanes, traffic signal, or roundabout). Routine maintenance including mill and overlay projects are not eligible. Projects must be located on a non-freeway principal arterial or A-minor arterial functionally classified roadway, consistent with the latest TAB approved functional classification map.

Examples of Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization Projects:

- ~~Intersection improvements, including innovative intersection designs~~
- ~~Alternative intersections such as unsignalized or signalized reduced conflict intersections (one intersection or multiple intersections)~~
- Interchange reconstructions that do not involve new ramp movements or added thru lanes
- ~~Turn lanes~~
- Two-lane to three-lane conversions (with a continuous center turn lane)
- Four-lane to three-lane conversions
- ~~Roundabouts~~
- ~~Addition or replacement of traffic signals~~
- Shoulder improvements
- Strengthening a non-10-ton roadway
- Raised medians, frontage roads, access modifications, or other access management
- Roadway improvements with the addition of multimodal elements
- Roadway improvements that add safety elements
- New alignments that replace an existing alignment and do not expand the number of lanes

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	105	10%
Measure A - Connection to Total Jobs and Manufacturing/ Distribution Jobs	65	
Measure B - Regional Truck Corridor Study Tiers	40	
2. Usage	175	16%
Measure A - Current daily person throughput	110	
Measure B - Forecast 2040 average daily traffic volume	65	
3. Equity and Housing Performance	100	9%
Measure A – Equity engagement	30	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	40	
Measure C – Affordable housing access	30	
4. Infrastructure Age/Condition	175	16%
Measure A - Date of construction	50	
Measure B - Geometric, structural, or infrastructure deficiencies	125	
5. Congestion Reduction/Air Quality	80	7%

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
Measure A - Vehicle delay reduced	50	
Measure B - Kg of emissions reduced	30	
6. Safety	180	16%
Measure A - Crashes reduced	150	
Measure B – Pedestrian Crash Reduction (Proactive)	30	
7. Multimodal Elements and Existing Connections	110	10%
Measure A - Transit, bicycle, or pedestrian project elements and connections	110	
8. Risk Assessment	75	7%
Measure A- Risk Assessment Form	75	
9. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%
Measure A – Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total project cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement

Purpose: To fund preservation and replacement projects for existing bridges to improve infrastructure condition and multimodal travel options.

Definition: A bridge rehabilitation or replacement project (with a clear span of over 20 feet) located on a non-freeway principal arterial or A-minor arterial functionally classified roadway, consistent with the latest TAB-approved functional classification map. Bridge structures that have a separate span for each direction of travel can apply for both spans as part of one application.

The bridge must carry vehicular traffic but may also include accommodations for other modes. Bridges that are exclusively for bicycle or pedestrian traffic must apply under one of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities application categories. Rail-only bridges are not eligible for funding. Completely new bridges, interchanges, or overpasses should apply in the Strategic Capacity Roadway Expansion application category. Examples of Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement Projects:

- Bridge rehabilitation ~~of 20 or more feet~~ with a National Bridge Inventory Condition rating of 6 or less.
- Bridge replacement ~~of 20 or more feet~~ with a National Bridge Inventory Condition rating of 4 or less.

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	195	18%
Measure A - Distance to the nearest parallel bridge	100	
Measure B - Connection to Total Jobs, Manufacturing/Distribution Jobs, and post-secondary students	30	
Measure C - Regional Truck Corridor Study tiers	65	
2. Usage	130	12%
Measure A - Current daily person throughput	100	
Measure B - Forecast 2040 average daily traffic volume	30	
3. Equity and Housing Performance	100	9%
Measure A – Equity engagement	30	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	40	
Measure C – Affordable housing access	30	
4. Infrastructure Condition	400	36%
Measure A – National Bridge Inventory Condition	300	
Measure B – Load-Posting	100	
5. Multimodal Elements and Existing Connections	100	9%
Measure A - Transit, bicycle, or pedestrian project elements & connections	100	
6. Risk Assessment	75	7%
Measure A - Risk Assessment Form	75	
7. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%
Measure A - Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project

Definition: An arterial bus rapid transit expansion project that is consistent with the definition in the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP). A new project can include extensions to existing or planned lines. Improvements to existing arterial BRT lines are not eligible and should apply under Transit Modernization. Highway BRT and Dedicated Guideway BRT are eligible in the Transit Expansion and Transit Modernization categories.

Scoring and Project Selection:

The arterial bus rapid transit project will not be evaluated with a scored application. TAB will select the arterial BRT project concurrent with other Regional Solicitation project selections. Background information on the potential arterial BRT lines and the prioritization through Network Next will be provided by Metro Transit along with a funding recommendation for TAB decision-making.

Transit Expansion

Purpose: To fund transit projects that provide new or expanded transit service/facilities with the intent of attracting new transit riders to the system and reducing emissions.

Definition: A transit project that provides new or expanded transit service/facilities with the intent of attracting new transit riders to the system. Expansion projects may also benefit existing or future riders, but the projects will be scored primarily on the ability to attract new riders. Routine facility maintenance and upkeep and fleet replacement is not eligible. Projects that deliver elements of a new arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) line are not eligible, although projects that benefit a wide range of services and users that includes arterial BRT lines may be eligible. If a project includes both expansion and modernization elements, it is the applicant’s discretion to choose which application category the project would best fit. However, an application can be disqualified if it is submitted to the wrong category. It is suggested that applicants contact Council staff for consultation before the application deadline to determine eligibility.

Applications in the Transit Expansion category cannot include the reinstatement of service to routes that were reduced or suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Transit Expansion projects must be proposing expanded service beyond what existed prior to March 2020 service changes.

Examples of Transit Expansion Projects:

- Operating funds for new or expanded transit service
- Transit vehicles for new or expanded service
- Customer facilities along a route for new or expanded service, new transit centers or stations
- Park-and-ride facilities or expansions
- Highway BRT and Dedicated Guideway BRT

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	100	9%
Measure A – Connection to jobs and educational institutions	50	
Measure B – Average number of weekday transit trips connected to the project	50	
2. Usage	350	32%
Measure A – New annual riders	350	
3. Equity and Housing Performance	200	18%
Measure A – Equity engagement	60	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	80	
Measure C – Affordable housing access	60	
4. Emissions Reduction	200	18%
Measure A – Total emissions reduced	200	
5. Multimodal Elements and Existing Connections	100	9%
Measure A – Bicycle and pedestrian elements of the project and connections	100	
6. Risk Assessment	50	5%

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
Measure A – Risk Assessment Form	50	
7. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%
Measure A – Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total project cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

Transit Modernization

Purpose: To fund transit projects that make transit more attractive to existing riders by offering faster travel times between destinations or improving the customer experience.

Definition: A transit project that makes transit more attractive to existing riders by offering faster travel times between destinations or improving the customer experience. Modernization projects may also benefit new or future riders, but the projects will be scored primarily on the benefit to existing riders. Routine facility maintenance and upkeep and fleet replacement is not eligible. Projects that deliver elements of a new arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) line are not eligible, although projects that benefit a wide range of services and users that includes arterial BRT lines may be eligible. Projects associated wholly or in part with new service/facilities intended to attract new transit riders, such as the purchase of new buses or expansion of an existing park-and-ride, should apply in the Transit Expansion application category. If a project includes both expansion and modernization elements, it is the applicant's discretion to choose which application category the project would best fit. Council staff can be consulted before the application deadline to determine a project's eligibility.

Examples of Transit Modernization Projects:

- Improved boarding areas, lighting, or safety and security equipment, real-time signage;
- Passenger waiting facilities, heated facilities or weather protection
- New transit maintenance and support facilities/garages or upgrades to existing facilities
- Intelligent transportation system (ITS) measures that improve reliability and the customer experience on a specific transit route or in a specific area
- Improved fare collection systems
- Multiple eligible improvements along a route
- Highway BRT and Dedicated Guideway BRT

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	100	9%
Measure A – Connection to jobs and educational institutions	50	
Measure B – Average number of weekday transit trips connected to the project	50	
2. Usage	325	30%
Measure A – Total existing annual riders	325	
3. Equity and Housing Performance	175	16%
Measure A – Equity engagement	60	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	80	
Measure C – Affordable housing access	60	
4. Emissions Reduction	50	5%
Measure A – Description of emissions reduced	50	
5. Service and Customer Improvements	200	18%
Measure A – Project improvements for transit users	100	
6. Multimodal Elements and Existing Connections	100	9%

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
Measure A – Bicycle and pedestrian elements of the project and connections	100	
7. Risk Assessment	50	5%
Measure A – Risk Assessment Form	50	
8. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%
Measure A – Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total project cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

Travel Demand Management (TDM)

Purpose: To fund lower-cost, innovative TDM projects that reduce emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in congested corridors.

Definition: Travel demand management (TDM) provides residents/commuters of the Twin Cities Metro Area with greater choices and options regarding how to travel in and throughout the region. Projects should reduce the congestion and emissions during the peak period. Similar to past Regional Solicitations, base-level TDM funding for the Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs) and Metro Transit will be not part of the competitive process.

Examples of TDM Projects:

- Bikesharing
- Carsharing
- Telework strategies
- Carpooling
- Parking management
- Managed lane components

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	200	18%
Measure A - Ability to capitalize on existing regional transportation facilities and resources	200	
2. Usage	100	9%
Measure A – Users	100	
3. Equity and Housing Performance	150	14%
Measure A – Equity engagement	45	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	60	
Measure C – Affordable housing access	45	
4. Congestion Reduction/Air Quality	300	27%
Measure A - Congested roadways in project area	150	
Measure B - VMT reduced	150	
5. Innovation	200	18%
Measure A - Project innovations and geographic expansion	200	
6. Risk Assessment	50	5%
Measure A - Technical capacity of applicant's organization	25	
Measure B - Continuation of project after initial federal funds are expended	25	
7. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%
Measure A – Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities

Purpose: To fund multiuse trail and bicycle facilities that increase the availability and attractiveness of bicycling, walking, or rolling by improving safety; reducing or eliminating user barriers; and improving the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN).

Definition: A project that benefits bicyclists (or bicyclists and other non-motorized users). All projects must have a transportation purpose (i.e., connecting people to destinations). A facility may serve both a transportation purpose and a recreational purpose. Multiuse trail bridges or underpasses should apply in this application category instead of the Pedestrian Facilities application category given the nature of the users and the higher maximum award amount. Routine maintenance activities on a multiuse trail or bicycle facility are not eligible for funding. As defined by the FHWA, examples of routine maintenance activities include shrub and brush removal or minor drainage improvements. In order to be eligible for funding, reconstruction projects must be replacing a facility at the end of its useful life or include improvements to the facility (e.g., ADA, safety, other deficiencies). Resurfacing of a facility is eligible only if other improvements to the facility are also included in the proposed project.

Examples of Multiuse Trail and Bicycle Facility Projects:

- Multiuse trails
- Trail bridges/underpasses
- On-street bike lanes
- Filling multiple gaps, improving multiple crossings, or making other similar improvements along a trail corridor

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	200	18%
Measure A - Identify location of project relative to Regional Bicycle Transportation Network	200	
2. Potential Usage	200	18%
Measure A - Existing population and employment within 1 mile	200	
3. Equity and Housing Performance	120	11%
Measure A – Equity engagement	36	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	48	
Measure C – Affordable housing access	36	
4. Deficiencies and Safety	250	23%
Measure A – Gaps closed/barriers removed and/or continuity between jurisdictions improved by the project	100	
Measure B - Deficiencies corrected or safety problems addressed	150	
5. Multimodal Facilities and Existing Connections	100	9%
Measure A - Transit or pedestrian elements and connections	100	
6. Risk Assessment/Public Engagement	130	12%
Measure A - Risk Assessment Form	130	
7. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%
Measure A – Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

Pedestrian Facilities (Sidewalks, Streetscaping, and ADA)

Purpose: To fund pedestrian facility projects that focus on increasing the availability and attractiveness of walking or rolling by improving safety and removing gaps in the system.

Definition: A project that primarily benefits pedestrians as opposed to multiple types of non-motorized users. Most non-motorized projects should apply in the Multiuse Trail and Bicycle Facilities application category. All projects must relate to surface transportation. A facility may serve both a transportation purpose and a recreational purpose; a facility that connects people to recreational destinations may be considered to have a transportation purpose. Multiuse trail bridges or underpasses should apply in the Multiuse Trail and Bicycle Facilities application category instead of this application category given the nature of the users and the higher maximum awards. Routine maintenance activities on a pedestrian facility are not eligible for funding. As defined by the FHWA, examples of routine maintenance activities include shrub and brush removal or minor drainage improvements. In order to be eligible for funding, reconstruction projects must be replacing a facility at the end of its useful life or include improvements to the facility (e.g., ADA, safety, other deficiencies). Resurfacing of a facility is eligible only if other improvements to the facility are also included in the proposed project.

Examples of Pedestrian Facility Projects:

- Sidewalks
- Streetscaping
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements
- Making similar improvements in a concentrated geographic area, such as sidewalk gap closure throughout a defined neighborhood or downtown area

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	150	14%
Measure A - Connection to Jobs and Educational Institutions	150	
2. Potential Usage	150	14%
Measure A - Existing population within ½ mile	150	
3. Equity and Housing Performance	120	11%
Measure A – Equity engagement	36	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	48	
Measure C – Affordable housing access	36	
4. Deficiencies and Safety	300	27%
Measure A - Barriers overcome or gaps filled	120	
Measure B - Deficiencies corrected or safety problems addressed	180	
5. Multimodal Facilities and Existing Connections	150	14%
Measure A - Transit or bicycle elements of the project and connections	150	
6. Risk Assessment/Public Engagement	130	12%
Measure A - Risk Assessment Form	130	
7. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
Measure A – Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total project cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

Safe Routes to School (Infrastructure Projects)

Purpose: To fund Safe Route to School infrastructure projects that focus on improving safety around school sites.

Definition: An infrastructure project that is within a two-mile radius and directly benefiting a primary, middle, or high school site.

Examples of Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Projects:

- Sidewalks benefiting people going to the school
- Multiuse trails benefiting people going to the school
- Improved crossings benefiting people going to the school
- Multiple improvements

Scoring:

Criteria and Measures	Points	% of Total Points
1. Relationship between Safe Routes to School Program Elements	250	23%
Measure A - Describe how project addresses 5-6 Es* of SRTS program	170	
Measure B – Completion of Safe Routes to School Plan or local plan	80	
2. Potential Usage	250	23%
Measure A - Average share of student population that bikes or walks	170	
Measure B - Student population within school's walkshed	80	
3. Equity and Housing Performance	120	11%
Measure A – Equity engagement	36	
Measure B - Equity population benefits and impacts	48	
Measure C – Affordable housing access	36	
4. Deficiencies and Safety	250	23%
Measure A - Barriers overcome or gaps filled	100	
Measure B - Deficiencies corrected or safety problems addressed	150	
5. Risk Assessment/Public Engagement	130	12%
Measure A - Public engagement process	45	
Measure B - Risk Assessment Form	85	
6. Cost Effectiveness	100	9%
Measure A – Cost effectiveness (total points awarded/total project cost)	100	
Total	1,100	

* ~~The [5-6](#) Es of Safe Routes to School include Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, Equity, Engagement, and Engineering of Safe Routes to School include Evaluation, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, and Enforcement.~~

Project applicants can also “bundle” two or more projects together, but they must either be:

- Projects located along the same corridor (e.g., filling multiple trail gaps along a trail corridor or projects at stops/stations along a transit route)
- Similar improvements within a defined neighborhood or downtown area (e.g., adding benches along the sidewalks in a downtown area)

Traffic management technologies projects are exempt from the bundling rules.

Bundling of independent projects that are not related to one another as described above are not allowed. For eligible bundled projects, when doing scoring of multiple locations, an average will be used for geographically based measures.

Applicants are encouraged to contact TAB Coordinator Elaine Koutsoukos at Elaine.koutsoukos@metc.state.mn.us if they have questions regarding project bundling.

General Process and Rules

1. Project sponsors must incur the cost of the project prior to repayment. Costs become eligible for reimbursement only after a project has been approved by MnDOT State-Aid and the appropriate USDOT modal agency.
2. Projects may apply for both the Regional Solicitation and the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), but projects can only be awarded funds from one of the two programs.
3. Projects selected to receive federal funding through this solicitation will be programmed in the regional TIP in years 2026 and 2027, taking into consideration the applicant’s request and the TAB’s balancing of available funds.
4. The fundable amount of a project is based on the original submittal. TAB must approve any significant change in the scope or cost of an approved project as described in TAB’s Scope Change Policy. <http://www.metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation/Regional-Scope-Change-Policy.aspx>
5. **A project will be removed from the program if it does not meet its program year.** The program year aligns with the state fiscal year. For example, if the project is programmed for 2026 in the TIP, the project program year begins July 1, 2025, and ends June 30, 2026. Projects selected from this solicitation will be programmed in 2026 and 2027. The Regional Program Year Policy outlines the process to request a one-time program year extension. [http://www.metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation/TAB-Regional-Program-Year-Policy-\(PDF-154-KB\).aspx](http://www.metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation/TAB-Regional-Program-Year-Policy-(PDF-154-KB).aspx)
6. Applicants for transit projects should be aware of the schedule and associated time lag for receiving federal funds for transit vehicle and transit operating projects. Applicants are encouraged to contact Michael Hochhalter at the Metropolitan Council Michael.hochhalter@metc.state.mn.us or 651-602-1961 for more details on selecting a preferred program year as part of the application given this time lag.
7. Transit projects will be given an opportunity to have their ridership projections reviewed by Council staff prior to submittal in order to determine whether the scoring methodology is sound. Any applicant wanting to have an optional review should submit draft ridership information to the TAB Coordinator two weeks prior to the application deadline.
8. The announcement of funding availability is posted on the Metropolitan Council website and emailed to local stakeholders.

9. The applicant must show that the project meets all of the qualifying requirements of the appropriate application category to be eligible to be scored and ranked against other projects. Applicants whose projects are disqualified may appeal and participate in the review and determination of eligibility at the Technical Advisory Committee Funding & Programming (TAC F&P) Committee meeting.
10. A set of prioritizing criteria with a range of points assigned is provided for each application category. The applicant must respond directly to each prioritizing criterion in order for it to be scored and receive points. Projects are scored based on how well the response meets the requirements of the prioritizing criteria and, in some cases, how well the responses compare to those of other qualifying applications in the same project application category.
11. Members of the TAC F&P or other designees will evaluate the applications and prepare a ranked list of projects by application category based on a total score of all the prioritizing criteria. The TAC will forward the ranked list of projects with funding options to TAB. TAB may develop its own funding proposals. TAB will then recommend a list of projects to be included in the region's TIP and the Metropolitan Council concurs. TAB submits the Draft TIP to the Metropolitan Council for concurrence.
12. TAB may or may not choose to fund at least one project from each application category.
13. Scoring committees have the option to recommend a deviation from the approved scoring guidance if a rationale for the deviation is provided to the TAC Funding and Programming Committee.
14. For many of the quantitative measures in the Regional Solicitation, the scoring guidance gives the top project 100% of the points and the remaining projects a proportionate share of the full points. If there is a high-scoring outlier on a particular measure, the TAC F&P Chair, TAB Coordinator, and Council staff will need to approve the scorer will have the option to prorating the other scores based on the second highest scoring project instead of the top project or similar approach.
- ~~15. TAB will only fund a roadway or bridge project on a roadway that is spaced at least 3.5 miles away from the center point of another funded project on the same roadway (only applies to two separate applications selected in the same solicitation).~~
- ~~16. TAB will not fund more than one transit capital project in a transitway corridor (only applies to two separate applications selected in the same solicitation).~~
- ~~15. TAB will not fund more than one bicycle or pedestrian facility project in the same corridor (only applies to two separate applications selected in the same solicitation). For trails, a funded project may be on the same trail facility as another funded project as long as the two projects serve different users and destinations. TAB will not fund more than one project in the same application category that is immediately adjacent to another submitted project on the same corridor (only applies to two separate applications selected in the same solicitation). For example, an applicant cannot break up the project into two separate applications to increase their funding award in the same solicitation cycle.~~
- ~~17-16. As a first step to better engage with Minnesota's Tribal Nations, a map of the selected projects will be distributed to the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) so that project sponsors will have ample time to coordinate on projects that potentially impacted culturally sensitive land. MIAC is also adding a query function to its website to help identify the overlap of projects areas and culturally sensitive land. Project sponsors may want to inquire about their project locations early in the project development process. Additional coordination between the MPO and Tribal Nations is expected in other areas of the MPO's work.~~

Project Schedule

To be updated

Contacts

For general questions about the Regional Solicitation, please contact:

Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB Coordinator, Elaine.Koutsoukos@metc.state.mn.us

To request special accommodation for submitting Regional Solicitation applications, please email webteam@metc.state.mn.us.

Technical Assistance Contacts

Table 5 provides contacts for technical assistance in providing necessary data in order to address various prioritizing criteria. Before contacting any technical expert below, please use existing local sources. Local experts in many cases are the appropriate contact for much of the data needed to respond to criteria. In some instances, it may take five or more workdays to provide the requested data. Please request data as soon as possible.

Table 5. Technical Assistance Contacts

Subject	Name	Agency	Email	Phone Number
General	Elaine Koutsoukos	TAB	Elaine.koutsoukos@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1717
	Joe Barbeau	Met Council	Joseph.barbeau@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1705
Traffic Volumes				
Freeways (Realtime / Hourly)	Jason Junge	MnDOT	Jason.Junge@state.mn.us	(651) 234-7875
AADT	Christy Prentice	MnDOT	Christy.prentice@state.mn.us	(651) 366-3844
	Gene Hicks	MnDOT	Gene.hicks@state.mn.us	(651) 366-3856
Heavy Commercial	John Hackett	MnDOT	John.Hackett@state.mn.us	(651) 366-3851
2040 Projections	Jonathan Ehrlich	Met Council	Jonathan.ehrlich@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1408
	Jim Henrickson	MnDOT	jim.henricksen@state.mn.us	
Synchro	Kevin Sommers	MnDOT	Kevin.Sommers@state.mn.us	(651) 234-7844
Crashes	Cherzon Riley	MnDOT	Cherzon.riley@state.mn.us	(612) 322-1080
Freeway Management	Terry Haukom	MnDOT	Terry.haukom@state.mn.us	(651) 234-7980
Trunk Highway Traffic Signals				
Signal Operations	Mike Fairbanks	MnDOT	Mike.Fairbanks@state.mn.us	(651) 234-7819
Signal/Lighting Design	Greg Kern	MnDOT	Gregory.kern@sate.mn.us	(651) 234-7877

Subject	Name	Agency	Email	Phone Number
State Aid Standards	Colleen Brown	MnDOT	Colleen.brown@state.mn.us	(651) 234-7779
Bikeway/Walkway Standards	Mackenzie Turner Bargaen	MnDOT	Mackenzie.turnerbargaen@state.mn.us	(651) 234-7879
Interchange Approvals	Michael Corbett	MnDOT	Michael.J.Corbett@state.mn.us	(651) 234-7793
Safe Routes to School	Dave Cowan	MnDOT	Dave.Cowan@state.mn.us	(651) 366-4180
Regional Bicycle Transportation Network and Bicycle Barriers	Steve Elmer	Met Council	Steven.elmer@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1756
Housing	Hilary Lovelace	Met Council	hilary.lovelace@metc.state.mn.us	(651)-602-1555
Equity Measures	Heidi Schallberg	Met Council	Heidi.schallberg@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1721
Demographics by TAZ	Dennis Farmer	Met Council	Dennis.farmer@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1552
Transit Ridership	Daniel Pena	Met Council	daniel.pena@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1721
Transit Funding Timeline	Michael Hochhalter	Met Council	Michael.hochhalter@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1961
Emissions Data	Dennis Farmer	Met Council	Dennis.farmer@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1552
Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study	Steve Peterson	Met Council	Steven.peterson@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1819
Regional Truck Highway Corridor Study	Steve Elmer	Met Council	Steven.elmer@metc.state.mn.us	(651) 602-1756
Congestion Management Safety Plan	Michael Corbett	MnDOT	Michael.J.Corbett@state.mn.us	(651) 234-7793
MnDOT support letter	Molly McCartney	MnDOT	molly.mccartney@state.mn.us	(651) 234-7789