

REGIONAL SOLICITATION



A growing, changing region

Every day, our region's residents take nearly 10 million trips – whether by car, bus or train, or by bike or on foot. On weekdays, those trips total nearly 70 million miles.

As the region continues to grow and change, it is vital to support the system that will address people's long-term transportation needs. The Regional Solicitation is a key aspect of how the region prioritizes and funds investments for roads, bridges, transit, bicycle and pedestrian needs. Investments can be for existing infrastructure or new improvements. Projects respond to key outcomes identified through programs, including moving more people more effectively, managing congestion, and improving air quality.

Competitive process for federal funding

The Regional Solicitation is a competitive process where federal funds are allocated to local governments, state agencies, and transit providers to fund regional transportation needs.

The solicitation typically occurs once every two years and awards approximately \$180 million in federal funds. Rules and requirements are established by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the regional Transportation Advisory Board (TAB).

There are two primary programs authorized in federal law:

- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program – a flexible program that includes funding for roadways, bridges, and a variety of pedestrian and bicycle features.
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement – a funding program with a variety of eligible projects specifically addressing congestion and reducing air pollution.

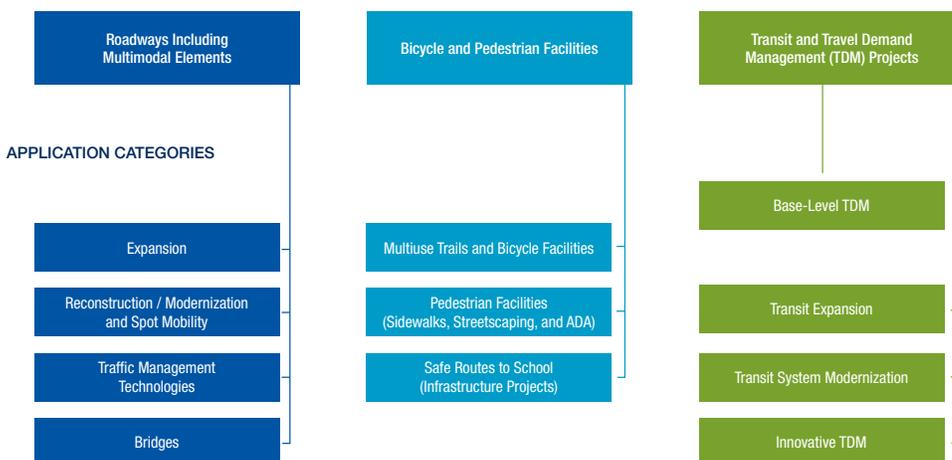
Applications are grouped into three primary categories by mode:

- Roadways, including Multimodal Elements
- Transit and Travel Demand Management Projects
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

The categories and different modes are illustrated in the graphic below.

TAB-APPROVED EVALUATION CATEGORIES (APPROVED 2-26-2014)

MODAL CATEGORIES



10 application categories

Within each mode category are several more specific project categories that are eligible for federal funding through the Regional Solicitation.

- Roadways (including multi-modal elements): expansion, reconstruction and modernization, system management, bridges on major roadways (principal or A-minor arterials, such as state highways or significant county highways)
 - New roadways, lane expansions, new or expanded interchanges
 - Intersection improvements, turn lanes, roundabouts, shoulder improvements
 - Retiming traffic signals, coordinating signals, replacing technology or traffic management centers, coordinating incident management, traveler information
 - Replacing or rehabilitating bridges (more than 20 feet long, meeting age/condition need requirements)
- Transit and Travel Demand Management: expansion, modernization, and travel demand projects
 - New or expanded transit service, vehicles for that service, shelters or stations, park-and-ride facilities
 - Improved boarding areas, real-time signage, passenger waiting facilities with heat or weather protection, new maintenance or support facilities, improved fare collection technology
 - Bikesharing, carsharing, telework strategies, carpooling, parking management, roadway lane management (like MnPASS)
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects
 - Multi-use trails, trail bridges and underpasses, on-street bike lanes
 - Sidewalks, streetscaping, accessibility (ADA) improvements
 - Safe Routes to School projects, including sidewalks, multi-use trails, crossings specifically related to school sites

Funding to align with regional policy, criteria

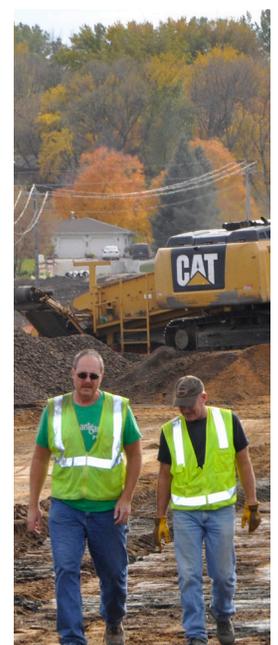
The Metropolitan Council, working with its Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), serves as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Twin Cities region. The Council works with the TAB to allocate federal funds, using an objective, data-driven, and transparent process.

Applications must be consistent with the Council's regional policies. The region's current long-range plan is called *Thrive MSP 2040* and features five regional outcomes: stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. The *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* establishes a more specific transportation policy framework for the region's transportation system.

The TAB establishes evaluation criteria and applications are scored by technical experts representing public agencies across the region. The TAB selects projects to be included in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The Council reviews and concurs with the TAB's selections as part of the TIP.

Evaluation criteria are specific to the categories and type of project request. Among the

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criteria, proposals must address the project's role in the regional transportation system and regional economy, age and condition of the infrastructure, equity and affordable housing, safety, and connections.

Projects support congestion relief, safety, transit advantages

In 2017, 63 projects were selected for federal funding through the 2016 Regional Solicitation process, allocating \$223 million in federal funds in 44 different cities and townships, in all seven counties in the region.

Other features from the 2016 solicitation:

- Two regionwide projects (Travel Behavior Inventory and Metro Transit communication improvements) and a countywide project (Scott County Multimodal Outreach and Marketing Coordinator) not reflected in the city total above
- Six of the seven projects funded in the Roadway Expansion category involve grade separations.
- Five transit expansion projects including a route between Eden Prairie and the Mall of America.
- Eleven multiuse trail and bicycle facilities projects.

Federal funds for projects in local communities

The following agencies within the metro area may apply for funds. Costs for studies, preliminary engineering, design and construction engineering are not eligible.

- Cities
- Counties
- Townships
- State agencies
- Colleges, universities, school districts
- Tribal governments
- Transit providers
- Private nonprofit organizations
- Park districts

For more information

Visit the Regional Solicitation page at metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation.

