

2026 REGIONAL SOLICITATION, ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SOLICITATION & HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Public Comment Report



METROPOLITAN
C O U N C I L

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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Met Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

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Background

The Regional Solicitation is one way the Transportation Advisory Board and Metropolitan Council prioritize and invest in transportation infrastructure and services like roads, bridges, transit routes, bike paths, sidewalks, and electric vehicle charging and programs like travel demand management and active transportation planning. Whether for existing infrastructure or new improvements, projects focus on outcomes from [Imagine 2050 and 2050 Transportation Policy Plan](#) like providing reliable travel times and more travel options, reducing crash-related deaths and serious injuries, and supporting healthy communities.

This report summarizes comments received for the draft applications of the 2026 Regional Solicitation, Active Transportation Solicitation, and Highway Safety Improvement Program Solicitation. The draft application packages were released for public comment on January 23rd. Comments were accepted through February 17, 2026. A virtual public meeting was held on February 10th.

Methods used and people engaged

A variety of methods were used to engage the public including website notices, GovDelivery emails, and social media. In total, 22 comments were received through the online form or via email and letter submission.

- Total comments – 22
- Public comment web page – 294 visits
- Regional Solicitation web page – 495 visits
- GovDelivery email – 4,826 opens; 665 clicks
- Facebook posts – 4,219 views; 22 engagements
- Engage web page – 372 views; 236 visits; 160 contributions

Engagement Themes

Regional Solicitation

Comments on the Regional Solicitation application packages primarily focused on four key topics: Travel Demand Management & Shared Mobility; Community Considerations; Data Availability; and Other Considerations.

Travel Demand Management (TDM) & Shared Mobility

TDM specific comments focused on higher maximum awards and overall larger TDM investments. Comments related to shared mobility, including carshare and bikeshare, looked to the TDM category to align with their project type and requested higher awards and/or requested a Unique Projects type application category to be reincorporated into the Regional Solicitation Structure.

- The competitive TDM application category is designed to support TDM programs; the set aside and maximum award can be revisited for the 2028 Regional Solicitation.
- The Council commits to evaluating the structure and scoring measures before the 2028 Regional Solicitation to determine the best fit for carshare and bikeshare type projects.

Community Considerations

Community Considerations comments and comments regarding community input and engagement on projects broadly supported maintaining the Community Considerations scoring criterion and the three measures at their current total weight of 15% in the Safety application categories and 20% in all other categories. Additional comments emphasized the need to center the communities directly adjacent to the project area.

- The Council commits to review and evaluate the Community Considerations criteria and measures after the 2026 solicitation has concluded. (Typical practice is to evaluate all solicitation measures at the conclusion of a funding process.)

Data Availability

Multiple comments were provided that related to data and maps:

- The Council will update the crash data years to 2021-2025.
- The Council intends to provide a data viewer that compiles all available data layers required to respond to the scoring measures.
- The Council commits to revisiting the Project Information Form after the 2026 Regional Solicitation.

Funding Considerations

Two comments were received on funding considerations, including earlier program year funds for transit projects and funding sub-targets for Bridges.

- Federal funds are not available for earlier program years. As part of the 2026 Regional Solicitation, TAB could consider setting aside 2030/2031 funding that would then be available in the 2028 solicitation to allow for projects that require less lead time.
- Dedicated federal funds for bridges were discontinued 15 years ago but the Council commits to evaluating if a sub-target is warranted after the 2026 Regional Solicitation.

Active Transportation Solicitation

There was broad support to limit barriers to applicants for the Active Transportation funds, including not requiring a financial match.

Comments on the Active Transportation Solicitation scoring, including how Complete Streets policy can apply to agencies without roadway ownership and distances for the Access to Key Destinations criterion.

- The Council recommends changing these two scoring measures to reflect changes requested by the commenters as recommended by the Active Transportation Working Group and Policymaker Working Group.

Future Considerations

Multiple comments were received that requested eligibility for additional project types (corridor planning, programmatic investments), limiting the number of applications submitted to each category, and higher maximum planning awards.

- The Council will complete a full evaluation and make recommendations after the 2026 cycle.

Highway Safety Improvement Program Solicitation

Comments on the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) were largely supportive of the program, including the HSIP Rumble Strip Pilot Program. Comments did request improved alignment between the Regional Solicitation Safety application categories and HSIP program.

- MnDOT and the Council commit to a full evaluation of the pilot program and application process following the 2026 Solicitation.

Comments and Responses

| Commenter | Comment | Response |
|--------------|---|---|
| Scott Eggert | <p>It appears that the following bicycle commuter and recreational trail corridors are missing from Google Earth; 1) Century Ave 36 to White Bear Lake (Century College 694 bridge and commuter corridor to Woodbury)</p> <p>2) County Road E Mahtomedi to Vadnais (Safe Routes to Schools)</p> <p>3) Bruce Vento Trail 694 to Hugo (recreation and commuter corridor)</p> <p>4) Lake Links Trail around White Bear Lake (recreation and commuter corridor connecting communities)</p> | <p>Thank you for reviewing the draft Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) map and providing feedback on corridors and alignments in the White Bear Lake Area. The first three corridors mentioned in your comment (Century Avenue between Highway 36 and White Bear Lake; County Road E between Vadnais Heights and Mahtomedi; Bruce Vento Trail between Interstate 694 and Hugo) are included in the RBTN map published for public comment.</p> <p>The southern portion of the Lake Links Trail between Highway 96 and Stillwater Road is included in the RBTN. Should the respective jurisdictions (the Minnesota Department of Transportation; Cities of White Bear Lake, Dellwood, and Mahtomedi; Washington and Ramsey counties) submit a corridor or alignment for other portions of this trail in the future, the Met Council would consider their proposals against established RBTN criteria.</p> |
| Scott Eggert | <p>Scoring and priorities use be based on</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Usage (number of people, reducing car traffic) 2) Connections (connecting commuter corridors, eliminating gaps) 3) Safety & Risk Management (remove/slow fast traffic and intersections) | <p>Thank you for your suggested scoring criteria and priorities for bicycle facilities.</p> <p>The Regional Bicycle Facilities category scores applications against criteria similar to your suggestions. For connectivity, the applications are scored based on their status in regional bicycle planning tools like the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN), Regional Trails, and Regional Bicycle Barrier Crossings, and how they serve key destinations like schools, grocers, parks, and employment centers. For safety, the applications are scored based on the level of protection the proposed facility provides, the project's location relative to identified safety risks, and the countermeasures used to improve safety for people outside of vehicles. While the application does not specifically score based on usage, the criteria related to RBTN status does approximate some usage priority because population and job density are considered before facilities are included in the RBTN.</p> <p>The Local Bicycle Facilities category also scores applications against criteria similar to your suggestions. For connectivity, the applications are scored based on how they resolve gaps, barriers, or deficiencies in existing facilities, and how they serve key destinations like schools, grocers, parks, and employment centers. For safety, the applications are scored based on the project's location relative to identified safety risks and the countermeasures used to improve safety for people outside of vehicles. For usage, the applications are scored based on MnDOT's Suitability for the Pedestrian and Cycling Environment (SPACE) tool, which provides a score that estimates infrastructure need based on environmental, physical, and demographic factors. The Met Council is currently developing the Pedestrian-Bicycle Demand Estimation Tool to serve a similar purpose as SPACE and, when completed in 2028, that tool may inform future Regional Solicitations.</p> |
| Scott Eggert | Soft or local depending on priorities above | Thank you for your comment. The TAB recommended that no local funding match for the active transportation funded project categories be required. |
| David Lisson | <p>I strongly support improvements to biking and transit infrastructure. I believe improvements in these areas will make healthier cities to live in for everyone and reduce pollution to our environment.</p> <p>As someone who grew up in the suburbs, the inability to get around without a car can be very isolating. Many of the roads there were much wider than necessary and it made it hostile to anyone who wasn't in a car. My mom is in her 60s and has been driving less as she has gotten older which leaves her isolated to her house. She always enjoyed walking but due to the lack of pedestrian facilities nearby and the distance to get to destinations from her neighborhood, she needs to drive to get anywhere. She recently got an electric bike, but due to the limited biking facilities and safety, it is not always a reliable option.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comments supporting bicycle and transit infrastructure. The Met Council's Imagine 2050 plan recognizes the important role multimodal transportation infrastructure plays in the health and safety of our communities. The 2050 Transportation Policy Plan includes a set of policies specifically intended to improve cultural and community connection, provide shaded and comfortable places to walk, bike, and wait for transit, and improve multimodal access in areas with less developed options.</p> <p>This policy, and related policies, are paired with actions that have informed development of this set of Regional Solicitation applications, including new measures in multimodal categories that assess the safety, comfort, and community contexts of these investments.</p> <p>Learn more by reading Policy 13: Reduce Negative Health Impacts at https://imagine2050.metrocouncil.org/read-the-plans/transportation/reduce-negative-health-impacts/.</p> |
| David Lisson | Expansion to the LRT network and reduction of vehicular lanes where they are not needed. | Thank you for your comment. LRT lines, due to the scale and cost of these projects, are typically funded using federal and state sources apart from the Regional Solicitation. The 2026 Regional Solicitation is proposed to invest \$30 million in a new arterial bus rapid transit line. |
| David Lisson | I believe the approach does a good job looking at the right things to reduce dependency on cars in our metro. | Thank you for your supportive comment on the new Solicitation design. |

| Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| David Lisson | I believe by requiring a local match, cities that lack active transportation will not do much to improve in that area since it is difficult for residents who live there to imagine how active transportation can improve their community. Many will see it as a waste of money until enough demand can be created to gain support. | Thank you for your comment. The Transportation Advisory Board recommended that no local funding match be required for the active transportation project categories. |
| Shannon Crabtree | <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft regional solicitation. I appreciate the continued commitment to reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions at a regional scale. I remain concerned that the current \$750,000 cap on competitive Transportation Demand Management projects limits the ability of these programs to reach the scale necessary to achieve the region's stated climate and equity goals.</p> <p>It also places an unfair burden on the organizations and agencies applying. The amount of work required to develop a competitive TDM proposal is significant, yet the potential return is comparatively small when viewed alongside other program categories that have much higher funding ceilings. This mismatch discourages innovation, limits participation from smaller or community-based organizations, and ultimately reduces the pool of projects that could otherwise advance regional climate and equity goals.</p> <p>Reducing VMT and GHG emissions requires projects that operate across multiple communities, integrate with transit, and provide reliable access to non-polluting travel options. Shared mobility plays an essential role in this system. It strengthens transit by improving first mile and last mile connections, extending the reach of fixed route and on demand service, and enabling complete trips that might otherwise require a car. When residents can combine transit with electric carshare, shared bikes, shared scooters, and other zero emission modes, they gain the flexibility and convenience needed to choose non-auto travel more often.</p> <p>For shared mobility to deliver these outcomes at a regional scale, it requires sustained public investment. Truly accessible shared mobility does not function as a purely commercial service. Much like transit, it is a public good that needs ongoing public funding to reach neighborhoods and populations that most need mobility options. Relying on short term or limited funding caps makes it difficult to build and maintain a reliable network, which limits its effectiveness as a tool for VMT reduction and transit support.</p> <p>This is especially important because the people who benefit most from accessible shared mobility are often the same residents who have been disproportionately harmed by the existing transportation system. Communities of concern face higher exposure to air pollution, higher transportation cost burdens, and fewer convenient options for safe and reliable travel. Expanding access to electric vehicles and zero emission shared modes can help reduce localized pollution while addressing long standing gaps in access to jobs, services, and opportunity.</p> <p>A higher funding cap would allow TDM projects to scale to the level required to meaningfully support transit, advance regional climate action, and deliver long overdue mobility benefits to communities of concern. I urge the Council to reconsider the funding limit so that these programs can operate at the scale necessary to achieve the region's goals.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment regarding the maximum award amount available for Travel Demand Management (TDM) projects. TDM strategies in the Regional Solicitation are designed to influence travel behavior through non-infrastructure strategies such as education, outreach, and incentive programs. These activities differ fundamentally from capital investments and are not intended to prioritize funding for infrastructure. Historically, competitive TDM Regional Solicitation applications have rarely approached the previous maximum award amount of \$500,000 in 2024 and prior. The increase to \$750,000 proposed for 2026 is intended to recognize growing project costs while balancing the need for regional balance of investments. This reflects the nature of TDM projects, which typically require smaller budgets compared to infrastructure-based initiatives.</p> <p>Shared mobility has been identified and discussed as a potential gap within the Regional Solicitation framework. This is due in part to the complex structure of shared mobility services, which often involve public-private partnerships. In these arrangements, responsibilities for funding, operations, and oversight are divided among entities with differing goals and levels of authority. These factors make it challenging to incorporate shared mobility projects into existing funding categories.</p> <p>The decision to maintain a lower maximum award for TDM projects is intended to promote competition and ensure that no single application consumes the entire competitive allocation of \$1.2 million. This approach was discussed by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), which agreed to revisit the maximum award amount in 2028 when more funding has been set aside for TDM projects.</p> |
| Ricardo Perez, The Alliance - Blue Line Coalition | It is very important that you consider impacted communities by expanding transit projects; not as victims of the impacts that occur but rather, as co-creators of the solutions to impacts and towards the envisioning process towards shaping people's neighborhoods. | Thank you for the comment. The Community Considerations criteria is focused on the communities surrounding the project area and are meant to assure that the needs of, and benefits to, the populations directly impacted by projects are prioritized. In addition, applicants are asked to provide future engagement plans, with a best practice (high rating) of demonstrating how communities will be included in project decision-making processes. We look forward to seeing applicant responses on the three measures within the Community Considerations criteria. |
| Ricardo Perez, The Alliance - Blue Line Coalition | We should work towards expanding our notion of the window of impacts and mitigations and the historical impacts that have shaped the vulnerability created by policies and practices who either directly or indirectly have a disproportionate impact on specific communities across our region. Specifically, Indigenous, Black, Immigrant communities. Which many times are the riders who are use the infrastructure being planned and developed. | Thank you for the comment. The Community Considerations criteria is focused on the needs of, and benefits to, communities surrounding the project area. Applicants are asked to specifically prioritize benefits to black, Indigenous and people of color, low-income, disabled, youth, and senior populations. In addition, as part of the community data and context measure, applicants should acknowledge and seek to mitigate any past, present or potential harms to community related to the transportation system. We look forward to seeing applicant responses on the three measures within the Community Considerations criteria. |

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| | Therefore; funding for projects which can ensure current residents and businesses can stay in place to not only survive projects, but thrive. | |
| Ricardo Perez, The Alliance - Blue Line Coalition | Please ensure that authentic and deep engagement is counted as a top ranking priority in project selection. Without community engagement the projects who impact our region are disconnected from the communities that currently work, live, or own a business a home in those areas. Without equitable engagement; projects should receive less points for funding. | Thank you for your comment. The Community Considerations criterion includes three measures, including one measure on community needs and future engagement. This measure is worth between 5 and 6.6 percent of the total points, depending on the application category. The measure is meant for applicants to consider how community was included in the identification of the project needs and how community will be included in future project engagement. |
| Ricardo Perez, The Alliance - Blue Line Coalition | Any activity that can incentivize collaboration and communication between agencies, people or processes should be incorporated to ensure there aren't any missed opportunities or issues that are not being considered. | Thank you for your comment. The Active Transportation Planning category will expand opportunities for local communities and stakeholders to establish collaborative planning processes to better identify and implement bicycle and pedestrian system needs through future solicitations. Additionally, the TAB has recommended no local match for the Active Transportation Planning, Local Bike Infrastructure, and Pedestrian Infrastructure categories to reduce financial barriers to access these regional funds. |
| Brian C. Martinson | <p>In the Local Bicycle Facilities application criteria and measures, the criterion for "Connections to Key Destinations" to which a bike infrastructure project would connect only considers a 1/2 mile radius of a proposed project. That's the same radius as is used for pedestrian projects. And while that might be mostly appropriate for regional trail projects, for local bike-projects it will exclude from consideration many key destinations that are readily within reach of a proposed local bike project.</p> <p>The average person biking 12mph can cover 3-4 miles in the time the average person can walk a half-mile, making a larger radius of consideration for this scoring criterion more appropriate.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment.</p> <p>The half mile threshold for connections to destinations is vital to measure GHG impacts from funded projects. The source of this number and for our methodology is California Air Resources Board's Clean Mobility Benefits Quantification Methodology (https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/auction-proceeds/Clean_Mobility_QM_FINAL_November2023.pdf, pages 21-25). They used the same credit for bike and pedestrian projects for key destinations within 1/4 mile of facility and for 1/2 mile of a facility. The significant difference in their methodology was for length of trip displaced, .3 miles for pedestrian and 1.5 for bike trips. The key destination distance (1/4 and 1/2 mile) is tied to the credit factors so if we were to increase the distance, we would expect the credit to decrease. We believe this was estimated based on a statistical analysis however we do not have access to that data and would not be able to recreate that analysis at this time for a different distance. We look forward to continually improving these methodologies in the future.</p> <p>Additionally, the proposed scoring for the connections to key destinations measure looks to understand the direct connections a project is addressing. While it is important for tracking purposes to maintain the half mile threshold, for scoring purposes further distances could be considered for the bicycle facilities categories. The Active Transportation Working Group will take up this topic in their next meeting to consider modifications to the scoring measure to consider greater distances for scoring purposes. However, waiting until the 2028 cycle may be prudent given the Council's ongoing work on mapping destinations across the region versus the applicant self-selecting destinations as they must do in the 2026 cycle.</p> |
| Carla Stueve, Hennepin County | We urge TAB to re-establish a bridge investment target to recognize the importance of preserving critical assets that provide connections for people walking, using transit, biking, and driving across major barriers. Bridges are critical for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and information. The table below summarizes the current age and condition of metro county bridges – noting that 24 bridges have an overall condition rating of poor and 13 bridges have weight restrictions. Deferring needed maintenance and preservation presents risk for the region. | Prior to the signing of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) in 2012, there was dedicated federal funding that flowed through the MPO called Bridge Improvement/Replacement (BIR). This funding was approximately \$10 million over the two-year solicitation cycle. While BIR was discontinued in 2012, TAB continued a Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement application category with either a minimum amount of \$10 million or a target of \$10 million per two-year cycle. A Bridge Connections category is proposed in the 2026 Regional Solicitation. However, given the approximately 15 years since the end of dedicated federal bridge funding, uncertainty about the demand each cycle for bridges, and a new overall Regional Solicitation funding organizational set up structured around 2050 TPP goals, a sub-target for Bridge Connections was not prescribed. Higher-level funding targets have been proposed for Safety, Bicycle/Pedestrian, Transit, Roadway, and the Environment. Sub-targets are proposed for a few of the application categories including Arterial Bus Rapid Transit and New Interchanges, but there were regional prioritization studies for the project types which doesn't currently exist for bridges. In addition, local bridges have another significant potential source of competitive funding through the state local bridge bond program, which is not available to other Solicitation categories. |
| Carla Stueve, Hennepin County | <p>Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT) Hennepin County supports TAB's recommendation to award \$30 million through the 2026 Regional Solicitation towards an ABRT Project identified as part of Metro Transit's 2025 ABRT Study.</p> <p>New Market Guarantee</p> | Thank you for your comments in support of the arterial bus rapid transit award and the transit new market guarantee policy. |

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| | Hennepin County is supportive of TAB's recommendation to make at least one award to a Transit Project that provides service to areas outside of Transit Market Areas 1 and 2. | |
| Carla Stueve, Hennepin County | <p>Community Considerations Funding Priority County staff support TAB's recommendation to designate projects receiving a "High" evaluation rating for all three measures as a "funding priority" – acknowledging this is not a funding guarantee.</p> <p>Community Considerations – Criteria Weighting We encourage Met Council staff to conduct a sensitivity analysis with the scoring process and funding scenarios to analyze how the proposed scoring rubric influences ranking.</p> | Thank you for your comment regarding Community Considerations. We commit to collecting feedback from applicants, scorers, and others to evaluate the scoring outcomes and any necessary changes to future solicitations. We will include a sensitivity analysis as well. |
| Carla Stueve, Hennepin County | <p>HSIP Pilot Rumble Strip Set-Aside MnDOT's and TAB's recommendation to designate \$6 million within the 2026 Solicitation for rumble and/or mumble strips is highly supported. The Hennepin County Board recently adopted a Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Action Plan that identified lane departure crashes as a safety focus area. MnDOT is encouraged to continue collaborating with local agencies to reduce fatal and severe crashes. Safety – Crash Dataset for Benefit/Cost Calculation It is recommended that TAB and MnDOT consider using a 5-year timeframe (years 2021-2025) for the Regional Solicitation and HSIP Benefit/Cost Calculation based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This represents the most recent crash information available within the MnCMAT2 database • This timeframe omits 2020 which experienced atypical crash patterns during COVID | Thank you for your comment and support for this HSIP pilot rumble strip set-aside. We recommend that both the Regional Solicitation and HSIP use crash data from 2021-2025 as requested. |
| Carla Stueve, Hennepin County | <p>Hennepin County supports TAB's recommendation to not require a local match for AT. Since the AT Program was recently established for the buildout of multimodal infrastructure, we encourage Met Council staff to engage local agencies to promote awareness of this funding opportunity. Recognizing that metro counties currently receive dedicated funding for active transportation through the Metro Area Sales & Use Tax and Transportation Advancement Account, Hennepin County does not intend to apply for AT funding as part of the 2026 Regional Solicitation. We respectfully request that no applicant restrictions be introduced, as this could lead to unintended consequences if future state legislation alters funding distributions.</p> | Thank you for your comment. There are currently no restrictions on applicants for the active transportation funding categories which is open to local public entities (county, city, tribal government, transit provider, etc.) and non-profit organizations. Met Council staff have been coordinating with regional partners and stakeholders to build awareness for this new funding opportunity for active transportation. Staff will continue to engage with regional partners through a variety of means to ensure communities and organizations are aware of and ready to apply for the new funding this spring. |
| Michael Kaluzniak | <p>Hi, just a simple request. Please consider having a more 'line item' approach to address the needs of e-bikes. As you know, e-bikes continue to grow dramatically in usage. The bike storage containers offered by MetCo are too small for them. Similarly any racks and stair guides should be designed with the e-bikers in mind. Thank you, Michael Kaluzniak</p> | Thank you for your comment. E-bikes are an emerging segment of active transportation. The Met Council is coordinating research and work with regional partners on the topic. As more is understood about the needs and impacts of e-bikes on the regional active transportation system, the Council will consider additional measures in future solicitations to incorporate study findings as they occur. We have also shared this comment with the staff at Metro Transit working on bike parking. |
| Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee | <p>The Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) appreciates the presentation by project staff on January 20, 2026, for the Active Transportation Sales Tax. The BAC welcomes efforts by the Metropolitan Council to direct increased funding towards bicycle-specific infrastructure, and values the ongoing solicitation of public feedback.</p> <p>The BAC requests future allocations for programmatic and equipment uses thereby enabling further avenues of growth in active transportation (e.g., education, cargo bike rentals, winter maintenance, bikeway curb pouring costs and equipment).</p> <p>We look forward to engaging with this funding source in the future.</p> | The Met Council appreciates that the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee took time to hear about the Active Transportation Solicitation and provide comments on the program. The Met Council will continue to evaluate and develop the program, including which elements of projects or what project types are eligible for funding in future solicitations. |

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| Aaron Westling, Great Plains Institute | <p>The Great Plains Institute (GPI) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the 2026 Regional and Active Transportation Solicitation application packages. A nonpartisan, nonprofit organization headquartered in Minneapolis, GPI accelerates the transition to net-zero carbon emissions for the benefit of people, the economy, and the environment.</p> <p>GPI recognizes that building vibrant and thriving communities means investing in transportation options beyond personal vehicles. We support initiatives that make shared and active transportation accessible to everyone, fostering healthier lifestyles, reducing congestion, improving street safety, and creating more connected neighborhoods while contributing to our region's climate goals.</p> <p>To support these goals in the Twin Cities metropolitan region, we urge the Metropolitan Council and the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) to prioritize shared mobility projects when allocating federal and regional funding to agencies. Specifically, we urge the TAB to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise the maximum award in the AT planning category from \$200K to allow for thorough planning activities that incorporate community engagement and serve a regional geographic footprint. 2. Support shared mobility as a critical part of the region's transportation system to offer more sustainable and affordable travel options and provide easier intermodal connections, which will benefit both the user and transit operators. 3. Consider bringing back the Unique Projects category to support investment in novel and impactful ideas. <p>Thank you for your consideration and for all your work on this vital funding opportunity.</p> <p>Sincerely, Aaron Westling, Shared Mobility Program Manager, Great Plains Institute</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. The \$200,000 maximum funding award was established during discussions with the local partners on potential planning efforts. At the time these discussions were focused on local system plans and so \$200,000 was agreed to be an adequate amount to meet those needs. However, to better accommodate more regional focused potential plans, the Active Transportation Working Group will discuss and recommend to TAB whether to increase the maximum award to better meet needs of potentially larger planning efforts beyond locally focused system planning.</p> |
| Aaron Westling, Great Plains Institute | <p>"Soft" matches are sufficient.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. The TAB recommended that no local funding match for the active transportation project categories be required.</p> |
| Erin Labaree, Dakota County | <p>RE: Dakota County Comments on the 2026 Regional Solicitation Draft Applications Dakota County appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the 2026 Regional Solicitation draft applications. We recognize the considerable work put into a comprehensive and inclusive process to update the solicitation cycle. Dakota County has detailed concerns below.</p> <p>The Community Considerations criteria is an important component of the application process and should be included in scoring measures. Dakota County, like other public entities, go through a robust engagement process on every project to incorporate the communities' values, needs, and concerns into project development and design. Our local city partners are valuable stakeholders and are fundamental to the engagement and project development process. The Community Consideration score is 20% of the overall score and is disproportionately high given the importance of other measures in each category for a process that is already integral to every project. There is also ambiguity on how the measures will be scored on an objective basis requiring training for both the applicant and scorer. Dakota County recommends the Community Considerations score be reduced to 10 - 15% of the overall category score.</p> <p>Thank you for taking our comments into consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely, Erin Labaree, P.E. Transportation Director/County Engineer</p> | <p>Thank you for your comments. While the Community Considerations measures total 15 or 20 percent for each category, it includes three separate measures, each valued at 5 or 6.7% depending on the application category. Only one measure, Community Need and Future Engagement, evaluates the community engagement component. The other measures, Community Data and Context, evaluate the knowledge and understanding of the community data and context, and Community Benefits evaluates the benefits provided specifically to the impacted community. Met Council staff will do a full evaluation of all scoring measures, including the Community Considerations measures following the 2026 cycle and report back findings to the TAB and technical committees on the findings. TAB will then consider potential changes for the 2028 funding cycle for the Solicitation criteria and measures.</p> |

| Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| Scott County Board of Commissioners | <p>Dear Metropolitan Council and Transportation Advisory Board Members,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the DRAFT 2026 Regional Solicitation Process. As an overarching theme driving all our comments below, it is important to state upfront that the original purpose for regional solicitation is to prioritize and invest Federal funding for Principal and Minor Arterials that efficiently move people and goods long distances across the region. We recognize and support the extensive effort that has gone into this updated solicitation cycle, which has resulted in a few changes the County supports, such as adding more safety categories and reducing the dependence on consultants to do required technical documentation for several applications. While these are changes the County supports, we do have the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed Community Considerations criterion is partly scored on community needs and future community engagement. The draft application material specifically calls out that the term “community” does not include motorists, commuters, truckers or system users who only travel through the area without connection to destinations within it. Excluding input from this segment of the regional population in scoring will disproportionately and negatively impact developing communities. Developing communities do not have traditionally defined neighborhoods adjacent to them. They tend to be highway or transit systems that move through or connect communities. Ignoring input from these regional users of the system and instead only accepting highly localized, location-specific input does not provide a full or equitable scope of voices or benefits. We strongly urge that this narrow definition of “community” in the final application material be revised or deleted. • Community Considerations are also scored on community context. Demographic and socioeconomic data is a consideration in regional investments. However, when reading through the draft application material, it appears to reward applications and ultimately distribute federal funds to projects where it can be demonstrated that historical “harms” have been caused by the transportation system. We strongly oppose rewarding points based on an applicant’s subjective analysis of perceived historic “harms”; “harms” presumably based solely on highly-localized, location-specific input. Scott County would like the USDOT/FHWA to advise the region if this is even consistent with current Federal funding policy. • Community Considerations are important and should remain part of the scoring framework, however we are concerned that the current 20% weight outweighs core technical objectives within each funding category. Community Considerations are primarily narrative-based, rely on applicant-provided information, and are not easily verifiable. As the weight of qualitative, subjective scoring increases, so does the potential influence of narrative strength, reviewer bias, or unverified information relative to measurable performance outcomes. | <p>Thank you for your comments. Met Council staff will do a full evaluation of all scoring measures including the three Community Considerations measures following the 2026 cycle and report back findings to the TAB and technical committees. This could lead to potential changes for the 2028 funding cycle for Community Considerations or any of the other criteria and measures used in the Regional Solicitation.</p> <p>FHWA gives latitude to MPOs in how they allocate federal funds. One of the few requirements is that the projects selected by the MPO must align with the region’s Multimodal Transportation Plan (i.e., the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan). The overall purpose of the Solicitation evaluation and redesign was to ensure that the structure and process for awarding regional federal funds worked to implement the region’s adopted goals, objectives and policies. The three measures within Community Considerations directly align with regional policy.</p> <p>The Community Considerations criterion includes three measures, each of which focuses on a different aspect of working with community. The community data and context measure documents the applicants’ knowledge and understanding of who lives, works and plays near and will be impacted by the proposed project. The measure includes understanding the community demographics, context, key destinations, important community resources and any history of the community related to the transportation system. There is no recommendation or guidance that scorers award points based upon past or current harms, Travelers or commuters passing through a community or project area accrue benefits that are valued through other Solicitation measures including safety, delay and efficiency measures.</p> <p>Qualitative measures do provide measurable and verifiable data and information on the community, The measures document what the applicant knows and understands about the impacted community, how the community will benefit from the project and how they intend to work with community throughout the project. A scoring rubric which indicates some best practices for each measure is included within the Solicitation packet.</p> |
| Scott County Board of Commissioners | <p>It is concerning that the draft Active Transportation solicitation process does not limit the number of applications one community or agency can submit. It is our understanding that the Active Transportation funding was to provide a simplified application process, where small agencies can complete themselves, without hiring consultants. It is also our understanding that the Transportation Advisory Board’s goal is to spread Active Transportation funding awards region-wide. Without a cap, the County is concerned larger agencies with more resources could monopolize the application pool. We recommend a cap of not more than two applications per agency.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. The Active Transportation Working Group has considered this potential issue in past discussions and has made the decision not to limit applications for this solicitation. Applied projects are required to be found in existing programming or planning documents and must be identified for the years 2027, 2028 or 2029. These requirements may limit the amount of project applications any one applicant can submit. As this is the first formal Active Transportation solicitation and demand for the program is not yet known, future solicitations will consider the level of response and public feedback and make changes as recommended by TAB.</p> |

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| Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate | <p>Dear Metropolitan Council,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the draft application processes for transportation funding. Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate (HPHC) submits the following comments on the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Scoring Guide.</p> <p>The language in this document could benefit from consistency in its level of specificity. For instance, the language under "Lane Departure", "Intersections", "Inattentive Driving", and "Speed" is much more specific than that under "Pedestrians," "Bicyclists", and "Trains," with language for the first four including specific strategy examples, and the last three simply reading "Strategies aimed specifically at improving safety" [for pedestrians / for bicyclists / at train crossings].</p> <p>The program might also benefit from requiring that the proposed strategies are "proven to" improve safety, rather than just being "aimed at" improving safety.</p> <p>These issues are particularly relevant under "Intersections," where one strategy includes "other technology enhancements that support enforcement efforts." This is vague, and seems to assume law "enforcement" is the same as "safety," which is not true. Law enforcement-focused traffic interventions intended to improve safety are not always proven to improve safety,¹ and can sometimes have unintended adverse effects.</p> <p>In contrast, interventions that support vehicle electrification and reductions of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (such as through subsidizing public transit and making active transit more accessible) are consistently proven to improve safety and protect public and environmental health, both through reduced collisions and reduced emissions.²</p> <p>For these reasons, we recommend against including "technology enhancements that support enforcement efforts" unless they are consistently proven to improve safety and proven not to create increased adverse impacts, particularly for groups that are often discriminated against by law enforcement. We suggest that the HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) instead prioritize vehicle electrification, and public and active transportation, as proven interventions for accomplishing the stated goals.</p> <p>Thank you for this opportunity to provide public comment. For further comment or clarification, please contact Ava Corey-Gruenes at ava@hpforhc.org.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comments. The focus of the Regional Solicitation Evaluation for the last 2.5 years has been on the federal funds flowing to the MPO and how to best incorporate the new Active Transportation regional sales tax. A full evaluation of the Metro District competitive HSIP Program will take place after the 2026 funding cycle to ensure alignment with current regional and statewide policy. We will consider your comment for the 2028 application cycle as part of a larger HSIP evaluation.</p> |
| Coalition for Clean Transportation | <p>Subject: Public comment for draft applications processes for transportation funding To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>The Coalition for Clean Transportation (CCT) appreciates the inclusion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and understands the need to delay the application process. As a coalition of nine Minnesota climate justice organizations working to eliminate Minnesota's transportation-related climate emissions through the increased adoption and availability of sustainable and equitable electrification options, centering Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and under-resourced communities who disproportionately bear the impact of climate change, air pollution, and experience high rates of mobility injustice - we would be happy to provide input into the criteria for the future EV category. Within the current draft Regional Solicitation, Active Transportation, and Highway Safety Improvement Program solicitation, we know that effective transportation, transit and mobility planning for the Twin Cities region must consider a project's impact to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce individual vehicle miles traveled; ● Continue to improve upon transit customer experience through expansion and definitions of public safety that center communities of color and low wealth communities who have historically been criminalized within mainstream definitions of safety; ● Decenter vehicles that pass through project areas and instead center vulnerable users (bike/ped) safety and those who live, work and play within the communities of proposed projects; ● Ensure projects increase mobility for geographies and communities who disproportionately lack access to reliable transportation ; ● Use design to create placekeeping opportunities that reflect local communities and connect communities (not divide); <p>Consistent language across funding categories supporting the use of proven strategies and/or strategies lifted and supported by impacted communities, especially those historically marginalized by roadway and mobility projects.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. The 2026 Regional Solicitation, as proposed, includes an Environment group of funding categories; the categories are EV Charging Infrastructure (which, as you allude to, will not be selected until 2028) and Travel Demand Management. Remaining categories address several of your points as well. This includes a robust history of funding transit expansion, Arterial Bus Rapid Transit, and transit modernization projects that are proposed to continue along with our bicycle and pedestrian categories. While the Regional Solicitation will continue to fund highway and roadway projects, new interchanges might be the only capacity expansion projects funded; with most of the funding going towards safety and reconstruction-type projects. All project applicants (and expected for the future EV application category) must respond to a Community Considerations criteria and measures. These measures evaluate how the project addresses the needs of people who live, work, and attend school in a project area (i.e., not those that simply travel through the area). These measures include knowledge and understanding of the community data and context, understanding community needs and engaging with community, and demonstrating benefits that accrue directly to the community near and impacted by the project.</p> |

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| Coalition for Clean Transportation | <p>CCT supports the use of Community Considerations Criteria to ensure proposed projects have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engaged the project’s surrounding community; ● Made additional efforts to connect with cultural communities historically left out of planning processes to identify the problem to be solved, co-create the solution the project proposes, and ensures benefits for that/those communities in an effort to repair historic harm; ● Ongoing public engagement and input throughout the project with clear pathways to influence project plans to mitigate harm and secure intended benefits. <p>CCT supports the definition of community outlined in the Community Considerations Criteria that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focuses on “people and groups of people who are adjacent to and/or impacted by the proposed project” and does not focus on “transportation system users who only travel through the area without connecting to destinations within it.” | <p>Thank you for your comment in support of the Community Considerations measures and definition of community. These measures are meant to reflect the Council's goal of an Equitable and Inclusive region and to assure that communities that are near to and impacted by projects are understood, engaged with and included in project decision making processes.</p> |
| Washington County | <p>Regional Solicitation and Active Transportation Applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We appreciate that a project layout is no longer required for the applications but would like clarification on what level of detail is required in the “concept plan”. It would be helpful to include a sample concept plan in the draft application materials for agencies to use as a standard. This will be particularly helpful for agencies who are new to applying to these solicitations. | <p>Thank you for your question. Applicants are being asked to include a "map or concept drawing" to indicate the project location to scorers and Council staff. The term "concept drawing" is meant to enable flexibility in the format of the attachment included with the application (i.e., some applicants may see benefit in a drawing that provides a better representation of what the project may be). Examples from past solicitations have ranged from a project location map with a typical section(s) to 30% design, depending on how far the project is in its development process. We can provide examples from past projects on the Regional Solicitation website.</p> |
| Washington County | <p>We request that the Regional Solicitation and AT Project Information Forms be reviewed and revised to only require information related to identifying a project’s location or information related to scoring criteria. The other information items could be collected from projects that receive funding. Much of the information in the current Form document is not needed to review and score applications and is cumbersome to provide.</p> | <p>Thank you for the comments. The forms document is intended to collect information for MnDOT State-Aid, who administers the projects, and to help in performance measure tracking. We will conduct a review and evaluation of the Forms after the 2026 cycle to see if it can be simplified in any way going into the 2028 cycle.</p> |
| Washington County | <p>Multiple categories required scoring based on excessive delay and reliability maps. The scoring currently does not reflect the information provided in the maps. We understand Met Council is working on updating these maps, but they will be key for agencies to determine what projects they will submit. The sooner these can be updated, the more informed agencies will be on what applications they will submit.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. We are working diligently to update the excessive delay and reliability maps and refresh them with the most recent data.</p> |
| Washington County | <p>There is no scoring guidance provided for many of the measures for medium-high and medium-low ratings. Guidance should either be provided, or the scale should change to just high/medium/low. This issue exists throughout all application categories and many measures.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. The rationale for adding the medium-high and medium-low was to enable scorers to differentiate among projects at a finer level. These ratings are shown without guidance to give scorers an option for "in-between" responses when applicants do not clearly address all elements of the scoring guidance and in part because five levels of guidance which delineate all potential aspects of a response would be difficult to create with distinction.</p> |
| Washington County | <p>We request that RBTN Tier 1 Corridors be scored the same as an alignment. There is no practical difference between an alignment and corridor. It is disappointing that this comment wasn’t already incorporated even though multiple agencies made it during early engagement processes.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment regarding scoring in the Regional Bicycle Facilities category. The proposed scoring guidance rewards projects that have completed more planning and have designated an alignment with an additional 5 points. Designating an alignment indicates commitment from a local plan that gives TAB more certainty that they are funding an agreed upon improvement by all local stakeholders and reduces the possibility of funding multiple alignments in the same corridor over time.</p> <p>We commit to evaluating how this measure affects award outcomes and will collect feedback from applicants, scorers, and others to evaluate any necessary changes to future solicitations.</p> |

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| Washington County | <p>There is a current requirement that all projects using these funds need to be cleared of snow throughout the winter. While Washington County supports this as a general concept, we do not agree that it should be a qualifying requirement nor is this consistent with requirements of other state funding. The direction from the Active Transportation Policymaker Workgroup has been to ensure that agencies who do not have resources or staff capacity are able to apply and receive these funds. The rest of the qualifying requirements and requirements in the applications were based on this approach. Requiring winter maintenance will disqualify roughly half of the geographic area within Washington County from applying. If Met Council and TAB feel that it is a goal to get more agencies to maintain trails and sidewalks throughout the winter, winter maintenance should be a scoring criterion, not a qualifying criterion. This will allow agencies to change policy and staffing to perform winter maintenance instead of completely disqualifying applications and needlessly restricting the much-needed expansion of our bike and pedestrian network in the Twin Cities.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. One of the priorities considered for these funds is to get regional funding to smaller and new applicants to the regional funding solicitations. This is being accomplished by reducing barriers to projects like eliminating local match requirements, simplifying project applications and streamlining project delivery. As part of their discussions, the Active Transportation Working Group considered ways to meet state statute guidance as part of the original legislation. These discussions related to how to ensure applicants meet the requirement "the ability of a grantee to maintain the active transportation infrastructure following project completion". The Working Group considered various measures to ensure funded facilities are maintained year-round and recommended that this qualifying requirement represent the best way to ensure regionally funded facilities are usable year-round for residents. Applicants may cite a variety of measures to meet this requirement. Additionally, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires public facilities to be accessible year-round. This requirement applies to local governments regardless of how the facility was funded. Winter maintenance is an important consideration for ensuring facilities meet federal accessibility standards and regional goals related to accessibility for people with disabilities. The Minnesota Department of Health has a Sidewalk Snow Clearing Guide that outlines different approaches agencies might take to address this need. https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/physicalactivity/docs/cleaning.pdf</p> |
| Washington County | <p>Regional Bike Trail Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We appreciate the process and engagement that Met Council staff conducted in this round of updates to the RBTN. It was valuable to be able to submit requests for updates and have opportunities to discuss the nuance around those requests ahead of decision making. • As noted in our Regional Solicitation specific comments above, we request that all RBTN Corridors in Washington County be updated to RBTN Alignments (using the corridor centerline). The remaining corridors largely follow the County Highway network and the majority of our existing trails follow these alignments. This update allows the County to be more responsive in selecting projects for funding pursuits as County and local priorities align. | <p>In 2025, the Met Council opened an opportunity for agencies to propose new, or revise existing, Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) corridors and alignments. Since that opportunity, the proposed scoring guidance for the Regional Bicycle Facilities funding category now gives priority to RBTN alignments above RBTN corridors. Due to this slight 5-point advantage to RBTN alignments, the Met Council provided notice of a brief opportunity starting January 12, 2026, and ending February 6, 2026, to convert existing RBTN corridors to designated alignments. Alignments submitted during that time period and meeting criteria described in that notice (https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MNORGMETC/2026/01/12/file_attachments/3519137/RBTN%20Alignment%20Information.pdf) will be considered in time for the 2026 Regional Solicitation. As this request is outside of the official request period and the time available to implement the designations is too short prior to release of the Regional Solicitation, the general request contained in this response is denied. Future potential RBTN alignment designations can be submitted later for review on a case by case basis but will not be considered until after the 2026 Regional Solicitation. Please note that each proposed alignment designation needs to be submitted with a description of the alignment (including route start and end points), a map of the RBTN corridor with proposed alignment shown within, GIS shapefiles for alignments that don't follow roadway centerlines, and references to the adopted bicycle, transportation, and/or regional trail master plans identifying the alignment.</p> |
| Ella Rasp on behalf of Carver County Transit and Mobility Study | <p>Hello, I'm submitting a comment on behalf of the Carver County Transit and Mobility Study team, including Carver County and SouthWest Transit, on the draft application materials for the 2026 Regional Solicitation. Our request to the Metropolitan Council would be to consider broadening the potential program years for funds in the Transit Expansion Category. With the potential to seek funds for microtransit services, which have less intensive capital infrastructure needs to launch new services compared to fixed route bus or BRT services, we would recommend allowing projects to seek funding for program years before 2030 and 2031 in this category, similar to the allowance for Active Transportation projects in 2027, 2028 and 2029. We believe implementing service expansions sooner would benefit riders and prove cost-effective in the long term. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss further and thank you for the opportunity to comment! Thanks, Ella Rasp, AICP Transit Planning Lead, Urban Mobility</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. Funds are awarded four-to-five years in advance because in most cases, project development and addressing federal regulations takes several years. Note that in the application, an applicant can mark earlier years that they would be able to meet, as sometimes earlier money becomes available due to dropped or delayed projects. Your point about micro-transit projects needing less development time is appreciated. This is an issue TAB can consider but would need to withhold some 2030-2031 funding from the 2026 Regional Solicitation and for it to be available in the 2028 Regional Solicitation.</p> |
| David Peterson, City of Saint Paul | <p>We are working with a group of regional partners on a planning effort (regional electrified bikeshare) that crosses jurisdictional boundaries, and on which we will work collaboratively on one study that will cost more than \$200,000. It would save considerable resources to allow our group to submit a joint application for a budget greater than the \$200,000 cap. The current budget cap is too small to fund this planning study. Accessing a total amount greater than \$200,000 would require members of our partnership to submit multiple applications with virtually the same content.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. The \$200,000 maximum funding award was established during discussions with the local partners on potential planning efforts. At the time these discussions were focused on local system plans and so \$200,000 was agreed to be an adequate amount to meet those needs. However, to better accommodate more regional focused potential plans, this issue will be brought to the Active Transportation Working Group to discuss the possibility of increasing the maximum planning grant award to better meet the needs of potentially larger planning efforts beyond locally focused system planning.</p> |
| David Peterson, City of Saint Paul | <p>No match please. There is considerable in-kind support in the engineering and management of studies and projects, in addition to ongoing maintenance costs (which can be quite considerable).</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. The TAB recommended that no local funding match be required for the active transportation funded project categories.</p> |

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| Erin Kayser, City of Saint Paul | <p>The award cap at \$200K discourages regional partners from submitting applications together to cover a wider geographic area, effectively discouraging regional approaches to shared mobility. Additionally, I would like to advocate for bringing back the unique projects category. The limitations on award/requirements/eligibility in the other categories make collaborative work challenging, and joint applications under an 'other' category allow for the most creative and efficient applications (and eventual work).</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. The \$200,000 maximum funding award was established during discussions with the local partners on potential planning efforts. At the time these discussions were focused on local system plans and so \$200,000 was agreed to be an adequate amount to meet those needs. However, to better accommodate more regional focused potential plans, the Active Transportation Working Group will discuss the possibility of increasing the maximum award to better meet needs of potentially larger planning efforts beyond locally focused system planning.</p> |
| Patrick Blaney | <p>To the Metropolitan Council Transportation Advisory Board, I am writing to request that the 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation prioritize two critical gaps in our regional system: Midtown Greenway Extension (Short Line Bridge): Extending the Midtown Greenway over the Mississippi River via the Short Line Bridge is my top priority. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to connect Minneapolis and St. Paul with a high-quality, grade-separated active transportation corridor. Please ensure the solicitation criteria highly value projects that close such major river-crossing gaps. North Metro Employment Connections: We need safer, direct active transportation routes connecting Minneapolis to northern suburban employment centers like New Brighton, Arden Hills, and Shoreview. Current infrastructure makes commuting by bike to these hubs difficult and unsafe. Priority should be given to projects that facilitate regional commuting to these specific northern economic zones. Thank you for your work on this solicitation.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comments on the Active Transportation Solicitation. The Metropolitan Council and Transportation Advisory Board do not assign priority to specific projects. Project sponsors, like city and county governments and parks agencies, submit applications for each project that contain responses to various questions measuring the benefits and impacts of a transportation project. Met Council planning staff and volunteers from partner agencies evaluate these responses and assign scores based on each project's technical merit. Projects are funded based on their score relative to other projects within each application category, like Local Pedestrian Facilities or Local Bicycle Facilities. The scoring in the Active Transportation Solicitation, and in the related Regional Solicitation, generally provide favorable scores to projects that provide high-quality connections across gaps and to employment centers like those you describe.</p> <p>As this also relates to the Regional Solicitation, the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) prioritizes transportation corridors based on criteria that include connectivity to and between major destinations. The RBTN includes established Regional Destinations that include major employment clusters down to the suburban center level. The prioritized RBTN is a key scoring criterion for Regional Solicitation funding.</p> <p>The Midtown Greenway extension concept is currently being analyzed through the Midtown Greenway Trail Expansion Study. The Mississippi River crossing at the Short Line rail bridge is within a highest-priority Tier 1 RBTN corridor, but a specific alignment would not be designated until it is included in a locally adopted plan.</p> |
| Zack Mensinger | <p>Since basically all of our transportation long range planning has a goal of less driving, we need a hard stop on funding that promotes more driving, such as road widening, interchange "improvements", "capacity enhancements", and all euphemisms for building more roads that make driving easier and faster.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. Historically, most projects funded through the Regional Solicitation have not involved roadway expansion. While there are two categories that allow for roadway expansion (Congestion Management Strategies and New Interchanges), the proposed 2026 language makes roadway expansion more difficult than in past years considering Minnesota Statute 161.178, which requires GHG offset investments for any trunk highway lane expansion or interchange. Consistent with our federally required Congestion Management Process, lower cost options such as intersection improvements are prioritized in the scoring over lane expansion projects to address excessive delay and reliability issues.</p> |
| Zack Mensinger | <p>Any project that increases roadway size, width, or road capacity for private cars should be ineligible for funding. This includes projects that "increase capacity" by reworking things like interchanges. The only way these projects should be eligible is if they have a strictly safety focus. Too much of our transportation money goes to those kinds of projects, which completely nullifies the money we spend on transit investments, because for most people, as long as driving alone is the fastest and most convenient way to travel, that's what they'll pick. Since basically all of our transportation long range planning has a goal of less driving, we need a hard stop of funding that promotes more driving.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. Historically, most projects funded through the Regional Solicitation have not involved roadway expansion. While there are two categories that allow for roadway expansion (Congestion Management Strategies and New Interchanges), the proposed 2026 language makes roadway expansion more difficult than in past years considering Minnesota Statute 161.178, which requires GHG offset investments for any trunk highway lane expansion or interchange. Consistent with our federally required Congestion Management Process, lower cost options such as intersection improvements are prioritized in the scoring over lane expansion projects to address excessive delay and reliability issues. Projects which improve safety for all users is also prioritized in the scoring.</p> |
| Zack Mensinger | <p>Similar to above, no project proposing any kind of road widening/expansion should even be eligible for funding, and if still technically eligible, should have a significant penalty in scoring based on widening/capacity expansion.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. Historically, most projects funded through the Regional Solicitation have not involved roadway expansion. While there are two categories that allow for roadway expansion (Congestion Management Strategies and New Interchanges), the proposed 2026 language makes roadway expansion more difficult than in past years considering Minnesota Statute 161.178, which requires GHG offset investments for any trunk highway lane expansion or interchange. Consistent with our federally required Congestion Management Process, lower cost options such as intersection improvements are prioritized in the scoring over lane expansion projects to address excessive delay and reliability issues.</p> |
| Zack Mensinger | <p>No. If we truly want to promote active transport, we should make it as low-barrier as possible to achieve a local match. Something like maintenance alone should be a sufficient match, or other similar things like better/any communication and promotion of active transportation.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. The TAB recommended that no local funding match for the active transportation funded project categories be required. for the active transportation funded project categories.</p> |

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| Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District | 0-5% match seems appropriate and reduces the local burden. This is especially critical to cities that receive little direct AT funding and some agencies, like Three Rivers Park District, whose facilities serve as the backbone of Active Transportation in Suburban Hennepin County, but receive no direct AT funding. | Thank you for your comment. The TAB recommended that no local funding match be required for the active transportation funded project categories. |
| Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District | For either 'bike' funding opportunities under safety reconsider the draft language and scoring as it relates to grade-separated facilities. Projects that provide a grade-separated crossing (especially when recommended by established bicycle guidelines or a safety study) should receive the highest score possible. If a core goal is to serve people of all ages and abilities, grade-separated facilities/crossings should be encouraged and receive the highest score possible as they provide the safest option possible. While consideration for additional time/detour is notable, this category is about safety and safety should be prioritized over additional time/detour length. Further the additional crossing time/distance is likely minimal compared to the safety risks caused by motorists and road design and grade-separating the transportation modes is also safer and more efficient for motorists. Projects that work to make grade-separated crossing more desirable or include measures to prohibit at-grade crossings where there is an identified safety concern should also be prioritized and score high. | Thank you for your comments on improving safety for people bicycling in our region. The "safety improvements for people outside of vehicles" measure in both bicycle funding categories is a qualitative measure that provides for scorer discretion to weigh the trade-offs between directness and grade separation. These considerations can vary by context where users may still need at grade crossings. While the scoring guidance does advise that projects with lengthy detours or elevation changes may not score as well, a project may still score higher if their application clearly justifies the safety purpose of grade separation and how accessibility and directness trade-offs will be mitigated. |
| Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District | Previous federally funded projects end up being 50/50 between local and federal dollars due to the project components not eligible for federal funding. Allowing design costs to be eligible for federal funding would reduce the local cost burden of regionally significant projects. Further, it would improve access to federal funds for entities that may have greater funding limitations, lack in house-expertise and/or do not benefit or receive less benefit from other establish or formula-based transportation funding programs. | Thank you for your comment. While design costs are federally eligible, MnDOT State Aid indicates that including design costs as eligible expenses makes grant oversight and administration more difficult. In addition, the maximum awards in many categories have been increased, hopefully increasing federal participation in the project. |
| Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District | - Community Considerations - if the expectation is that an applicant desiring to receive a high score must address items in the low, med, and high category, it is imperative that the applicant not be unreasonable restrictive with a 300-600 word count. Further, it would be helpful to confirm that not all bullets in each low/med/high category must be addressed to receive that score. For Section B, Community Needs and Future Engagement - in general many of the items in the high category are routinely completed on projects as they are best practices and they are not associated with a formal policy or agreement. Three Rivers recommends that language be added that demonstrates a commitment to the desired outcomes and/or demonstration via historic practices without the need for a formal Board/Council approval. Further, it would be helpful to include specific examples, so applicants better understand each bullet (i.e. what does commitment to financial opportunity for local businesses and contractor mean?). In lieu of an advisory committee charter, a multi-agency project team should be acceptable. For Section C, Community Benefits - there are restrictions which prohibit federal funds from being used for non-transportation purposes. As such, it may not be appropriate to prioritize projects that incorporate art, greenspace, other community-influenced elements directly into a project as these may be more challenging for smaller entities or entities with limited funding or funding that must be used for specific purposes. | Thank you for your comment. Applicants do not have to address every bullet point under "low," "medium," or "high" to get that score. The examples are meant to assist applicants and scorers in where to bucket responses. The word counts are meant to streamline responses and reduce the burden on volunteer scorers in assessing applications. |
| Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District | - As noted in the draft materials, it is imperative that the high injury maps be made available via an interactive application as they are not readable at their current scale, where there is overlap, and without labels. - MnDOT's SPACE tool interactive mapping is difficult to use as you cannot easily the road map or aerial imagery under the SPACE hexagons. Additionally, the info box denoting the 'score' often covers the line work - the combination of these two things makes it difficult to confirm the linework is accurate and reflects the project appropriately. | We are working to have the high injury maps included in the interactive viewer for applicants and recognize the importance of this format. The MnDOT SPACE tool does allow the user to toggle off the SPACE scored hexagons layer while drawing. This can be accomplished by clicking the "map layers" icon which looks like a stack of three sheets of paper, then toggling the eye icon on the "SPACE scored hexagons" layer in the list that appears. The score window can also be docked or undocked to the side of the page by pressing the icon that looks like a window with a sidebar; this should allow space to navigate the map display without the score window overlapping the drawn shapes. |
| Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District | - For AT Local Bicycle Facilities, requiring or prioritizing applicants with a Complete Street Policy puts agency's like Three Rivers at a disadvantage as it does not have jurisdictional control or responsibilities for roads/public right-of-way even though its regional trail system serves as the backbone of the Active Transportation Network in Suburban Hennepin County. It is appreciated that a narrative can be submitted in lieu of a plan. It would also be appreciated if the scoring guidance could recognize that it is not appropriate for every potential applicant to have a complete street policy and therefore, an agency without jurisdictional control or responsibilities of public roadways/ROW should not be unfairly viewed upon for not having a complete streets policy as it does not necessarily reflect an agency's priorities or practices. | Thank you for your comment. The complete streets scoring measure is a required measure identified by state statute. Understanding that applicants may be from agencies without roadway jurisdiction or other organizations, this measure is only receiving 5% of the total score to ensure this does not make applications non-competitive due solely to this reality. Additionally, applicants without jurisdiction can identify policies or practices in place in which the proposed project would be located in and identify ways an agency or organization supports complete streets practices with programming or projects. The scoring guidance language will be reviewed and edited to ensure applicants without jurisdictional authority are not penalized for this. |

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| <p>Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District</p> | <p>Corridor planning efforts should be a qualified project/funding request. I'm not sure how we missed that in our review of the draft materials especially since we had staff participation in some of the work groups. Until your presentations today, we understood that corridor planning would be an eligible project and strongly advocate that it should be.</p> <p>Often system wide plans are vague and lack the level of detail necessarily to move a project from idea/concept to design/construction. A corridor plan is that missing piece. It includes engagement from the broader community and those most impacted by a potential project, is the first step in taking a line on a map (search corridor/idea) and determining the appropriate route and facility type, it lays out high level design so private property impacts, typical cross sections, and cost estimates can be accurately established, and best scopes out potential projects for future AT design and construction funding. Typically, 'lines' on a comprehensive map are not adequate to move a project forward from an idea to a project – the corridor plan is the essential and missing step and should be eligible for AT Planning funding.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. The policymakers did consider this aspect for the planning category but in the first solicitation with this new category wanted to focus the funding on active transportation system planning to help communities without such plans in place. One of their key considerations was broadening potential applicants in the region who would be in a position to apply for funding in the future. This consideration combined with the unknown nature of the demand for planning funding led to limiting the eligibility in 2026 to system plans and comprehensive planning support. As we look to future solicitations, it may make sense to support corridor planning as well as you note it can be a key aspect to getting some projects ready to be implemented.</p> |
| <p>Elizabeth Wrigley-Field</p> | <p>I'm very excited about expanding active transportation options in the Twin Cities metro! I am raising a young child very close to I-94 and, as we start to think about kindergarten, I am seeing how many of the great schools in Minneapolis and St Paul are directly adjacent to a freeway (or, sometimes, very close to two freeways). But I know from my professional life as a population health researcher how important it is to limit young kids' exposure to air pollution. There are so many different reasons to encourage active transportation, but children's health is a very big one that is close to my heart.</p> <p>I wanted to write in support of making a broader set of programs potentially eligible for funding. Specifically, two programs that I think can make a big difference to who cycling is accessible to: learn to ride programs and e-bike bike share programs. I learned to ride in my 30s through the "Learn 2 Ride" program that Cycles for Change used to offer, before they lost their funding. This was an absolutely wonderful program that changed my life. I really wanted to be able to ride a bike but I'd never learned in childhood, and it's really hard to learn as an adult! I am not sure that I ever would've learned without that program, which dramatically expanded my options for getting around town. I also think these programs are important for equity. I am white, but everyone else in the class with me was either African-American or a Black immigrant. Learn-to-ride programs can make biking infrastructure that already exists more equitable.</p> <p>I am also struck by how many people I know have had their lives absolutely changed by having an e-bike. (I'm in a slightly different situation myself because I don't have a garage--I'd get an e-bike in a heartbeat if I had any safe place to store it.) They say it radically expands their sense of what counts as being in their own neighborhood / what distances they don't need to drive to, and that it's especially wonderful for their kids (who have a much better time on a bike than being stuck in a car seat). We should take this personal testimony seriously and want as many people as possible to try out this mode of transport and see if it's for them. I honestly can't think of a better low-hanging fruit for increasing active transport than letting more people experience this mode for themselves. We should do whatever we can to encourage that, I think!</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment about adult learn-to-ride and ebike bikeshare programs. These types of programs have been funded by the Regional Solicitation in previous cycles either under TDM or Unique Projects categories. The TDM category of the Regional Solicitation is designed to influence travel behavior through non-infrastructure strategies such as education, outreach, and incentive programs of which adult learn to ride projects could be considered. To reach goals regarding streamlining and simplifying the Regional Solicitation process the Transportation Advisory Board decided to not include the Unique Projects category.</p> <p>In developing the first active transportation solicitation, the TAB needed to focus on building a new process to be ready for 2026. This unfortunately did not have capacity to address more unique project types like safety training, learn to ride or other programming projects. The Active Transportation Working Group has identified these types of projects to be considered for eligibility in future solicitations. However, opportunities for bikeshare project types are eligible for funding in the local bicycle facilities category for infrastructure and active transportation planning category for planning projects.</p> |
| <p>Elizabeth Wrigley-Field</p> | <p>I support flexibility (including soft matches where that makes sense) in order to be able to fund programs run by smaller organizations and areas that might have limited fundraising capacity but the ability to reach communities that would not otherwise be well included. That said, I support having mechanisms to force localities to put more money toward active transport, too. This is an area where I would have a lot of deference to the judgment of the people on your end seeing what this looks like in practice.</p> | <p>Thank you for your comment. One of the considerations for the new source of funding was how to encourage smaller communities and those with fewer resources to apply for regional funding to build out the active transportation system in the region. For many local communities active transportation investments are only possible as part of larger roadway corridor projects, this new source of funding may open up new options for projects to be implemented independently. However, no local match being required may mean fewer total projects can be funded from regional sources.</p> |

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| Joo Hee Pomplun | Community Considerations is an essential consideration across all funding categories of the Regional Solicitation, Active Transportation, and Highway Safety Improvement Program. The cost-benefit analysis of all roadway and mobility projects is as diverse as the communities how live, play and work in project areas as well as users of the roadways and facilities. The planners and engineers of these projects often do not live, work, or play in their proposed project areas, some may not even travel through the project areas. I was at a hearing where a North Minneapolis resident heard a project staff express both fear of the community and desire to minimize any time in the North Minneapolis community during a Blue Line Extension meeting. Comments like these build a distrust of project teams, their intentions, and their care (or lack of) for the communities who have live with the projects. Community Considerations are intended to improve relationships between projects and community, to elevate the expertise of those who live with the "problem" the project is addressing and know the best solutions that work for them, and to mitigate the potential of further harm to communities vulnerable to displacement, harm, and lost opportunity. | Thank you for the comment in support of the Community Considerations criteria. The Community Considerations measures are meant to assure projects supported with regional funding consider: the applicants' knowledge and understanding of the impacted/adjacent communities; that the project need was identified with community and that community will be engaged throughout the process in project decision-making; and that the project benefits are specific to the adjacent/impacted communities. We look forward to seeing applicant responses on the three measures within the Community Considerations criteria. |
| Kathleen Mayell, Minneapolis Public Works | Future: aligning HSIP approach with Safety Projects applications We support the addition of new traffic safety-focused categories in the Regional Solicitation process. These new categories do have some differences from the HSIP application, which is largely unchanged from last solicitation. For the 2028 solicitation, we recommend that MnDOT and the Met Council work to better align these applications to generate the best safety projects and to make the applications as understandable and easy as possible for applicants. | Thank you for your comment and support of the safety direction for this next round of the solicitation. We will share your comments with MnDOT, as they are the agency primarily responsible for the HSIP solicitation design, and work with them on improving the alignment between HSIP and the Regional Solicitation for future solicitations. |
| Kathleen Mayell, Minneapolis Public Works | Support for Community Considerations We support the recommendations for Community Considerations criteria, measures, and point totals across all application categories. Community Considerations is important for advancing regional goals. We recognize that these criteria have been significantly updated since the last Solicitation and appreciate that the Council will evaluate the criteria after this Solicitation. | Thank you for your comment and support for the Community Considerations criteria and measures. The Council will collect feedback from applicants, scorers, and others to analyze and evaluate the impacts of the measures on project scoring and make recommendations for any necessary changes to future solicitations. |
| Kathleen Mayell, Minneapolis Public Works | Request for increase in the maximum Transportation Demand Management (TDM) award to \$1 million In the last Regional Solicitation, carshare and bikeshare proposals could apply in the Unique Projects category, which had a maximum award of \$4 million. With the Unique Projects category eliminated, capital investments in shared mobility are only eligible in the TDM category. The current max award in the TDM category is \$750,000, which is unduly restrictive for potential capital investments in carshare and bikeshare. There was a carshare proposal in each of 2022 and 2024 Regional Solicitations that significantly exceeded \$750,000 (\$1.44 mil in 2022 and \$1.4 mil in 2024). Mobility hubs may also apply in the TDM category and there were mobility hub applications for \$1.6 mil in 2022 and \$1.2 mil in 2024. Carshare and bikeshare support regional goals and plans. The 2050 Transportation Policy Plan includes these directly related actions: • 21G. Continue to explore and support shared mobility options across different modes and platforms to allow for more flexible and affordable travel and reduce the need for vehicles in a household. Prioritize investments in shared mobility that support regional goals and objectives. Explore providing regional shared e-bike and e-scooter services to provide first- and last-mile options for users to connect to their origins and destinations. • 31E: Support the expansion of access to bicycle systems, including... shared bicycle programs. To better provide the opportunity to potentially support capital investments in carshare and bikeshare, we recommend that the max award in the TDM category be increased to \$1 million. If desired, this max award could be restricted solely for applications for capital investments in shared mobility. We recognize that the baseline funding available in the TDM category is relatively limited and in line with the category before the Unique Projects category was eliminated and shared mobility capital investments were expected to apply in TDM. That said, increasing the max award would allow the TAB and Met Council to consider larger applications in the final balancing across categories. | Thank you for your comment regarding the maximum award amount available for Travel Demand Management (TDM) projects to support shared mobility options. These types of programs have been funded by the Regional Solicitation in previous cycles under Unique Projects. To reach goals regarding streamlining and simplifying the Regional Solicitation process the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) decided to not include the Unique Projects category in the 2026 solicitation. The TDM category of the Regional Solicitation is designed to influence travel behavior through non-infrastructure strategies such as education, outreach, and incentive programs. These activities differ fundamentally from capital investments, and this category is not intended to prioritize funding for infrastructure. Historically, competitive TDM Regional Solicitation applications have rarely approached the previous maximum award amount of \$500,000 in 2024 and prior. The increase to \$750,000 proposed for 2026 is intended to recognize growing project costs while balancing the need for regional balance of investments across all categories. This maximum reflects the nature of TDM projects, which typically require smaller budgets compared to infrastructure-based initiatives. Shared mobility has been identified and discussed as a potential gap within the Regional Solicitation framework. This is due in part to the complex structure of shared mobility services, which often involve public-private partnerships. In these arrangements, responsibilities for funding, operations, and oversight are divided among entities with differing goals and levels of authority. These factors make it challenging to incorporate shared mobility projects into the funding categories. The decision to maintain a lower maximum award for TDM projects is intended to promote competition and ensure that no single application consumes the entire competitive allocation of \$1.2 million. This approach was discussed by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), which agreed to revisit the maximum award amount in 2028 when more funding may be set-aside for TDM projects. |



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