

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee meeting date: April 13, 2026

For the Metropolitan Council: April 22, 2026

Business Item: 2026-68

Release of 2026 Regional Solicitation, Active Transportation Solicitation, and Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Solicitations

District(s), member(s):	All
Policy/legal reference:	TAB Action
Staff prepared/presented:	Amy Vennewitz, Director (651-602-1058) Steve Peterson, Senior Manager (651-602-1819) Bethany Brandt-Sargent, Manager (651-602-1725) Joe Barbeau, Planning Analyst (651-602-1705)
Division/department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)/Transportation Planning

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council accept the public comment report and approve the release of the 2026 Regional Solicitation, Active Transportation Solicitation, and Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP) Solicitations.

Background

The Regional Solicitation is part of the Metropolitan Council's federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The Council embarked on a Regional Solicitation redesign, called the Regional Solicitation Evaluation, to align the Regional Solicitation with Imagine 2050 and the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan. Approximately \$240 million of federal funds is expected to be available starting with a call for projects as soon as next month.

The proposed action also includes the Active Transportation Solicitation, which will select projects from the portion of the regional sales tax dedicated to active transportation projects. Approximately \$50 million is expected to be available from this solicitation for bicycle, pedestrian, and active transportation planning projects.

The third program covered under this action is the release of Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) solicitation. HSIP is designed to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, including roads on tribal lands. MnDOT conducts the competitive HSIP solicitation for MnDOT Metro District, and the proposed projects are scored by a technical committee comprised of transportation professionals.

Following the Regional Solicitation Evaluation process, a draft of all three solicitations was subsequently released for public review. The attached materials include a public comments report.

The Council's role is to approve the three solicitations based on a recommendation from the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). Councilmember involvement included a survey at the start of the project, policymaker workshop (December 2024), and updates to the Transportation Committee. CM Barber, CM Chamblis, CM Cameron, and CM Carter also served alongside TAB

members on the Policy Work Group, which met 14 times over the past 2.5 years. TAB Chair Jim Hovland served as chair of the Policy Work Group, with CM Barber serving as Vice Chair.

The attached Regional Solicitation includes the 11 applications, criteria, and associated weightings. Also attached are the Active Transportation solicitation (three applications) and the HSIP solicitation (three applications).

TAB received 57 comments during the recent public comment period and has recommended some minor changes to the applications to address these public comments. The comments came from 22 unique commentors including individuals, local governments, and non-profit organizations. Comments on the Regional Solicitation application packages primarily focused on four key topics: Travel Demand Management (TDM), shared mobility, community considerations, and data availability.

Following the public comment period, the following changes are recommended by TAB and reflected in the attached materials:

- The crash years used in the Regional Solicitation safety applications and HSIP applications are changed from 2020-2024 to 2021-2025.
- The Active Transportation's Complete Streets scoring criterion is changed to add "Agencies or organizations without roadway ownership or jurisdiction may include the community's local ordinance or policy where the project is located and describe how the project would support advancing complete streets in this community."
- The Access to Key Destinations scoring criterion in Active Transportation's Local Bicycle Facilities application and Regional Solicitation's Regional Bicycle Facilities application is changed to add the following language: "Applicants may identify additional destinations up to one mile from the project location but will need to demonstrate that these destinations have a continuous bicycle facility connection, existing or planned, that provides safe access from the project location. These destinations must be clearly marked outside of the one-half mile buffer."
- Inclusion of language allowing for use of TAB discretion on Active Transportation funding in project selection.

Rationale

The Regional Solicitation is a key responsibility of the TAB and the Council. Through this process, federal funds are directed to a variety of locally initiated projects that meet regional transportation goals. The Regional Solicitation is part of the Metropolitan Council's federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The agreed upon process for allocating federal funds through the Regional Solicitation is documented in a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and MnDOT.

The Minnesota Legislature directs a portion of the regional sales and use tax to active transportation projects, which support walking, biking, and rolling for transportation. TAB developed an Active Transportation Solicitation to help in project ranking and selection.

Thrive lens analysis

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. This action promotes the goals articulated in Imagine 2050 and the objectives and policies identified in the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan. For example, the Regional Bicycle Facilities funding category is grouped under the "Our region is dynamic and resilient" Imagine 2050 goal.

Funding

The 2026 Regional Solicitation will be funded with approximately \$240 million in federal funds. Local sponsors match the federal funds at a minimum of 20 percent. The Active Transportation Solicitation will be funded with approximately \$50 million in regional sales tax funds and requires

no local match. The 2026 HSIP Solicitation will be funded with approximately \$30 million in federal Highway Safety Improvement Program funds and requires a local match of at least 10 percent.

Small business inclusion

There are no direct impacts to small business contracting with the proposed action. Future project solicitations stemming from this proposed action will be reviewed for small business contracting opportunities prior to solicitation.

