MN Valley Transit Authority

Regional Mobility Connections Program

Regional Solicitation - Transit and TDM Projects

ID: R-2026-05112

Mindy Plewacki

Requested: $600,000

Status Initial Review

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What application category are you applying for.*

Travel Demand Management

General Information

Organization Name: MN Valley Transit Authority

▼ Organization Information

Organization Name	MN Valley Transit Authority
Legal Name	MN Valley Transit Authority
Street Address	100 E Hwy 13
Street Address 2	
City	Burnsville
County	Dakota
State	Minnesota
Country	United States of America
ZIP Code	55337

▼ Contact Information

Contact	Full Name	Email	Phone
Primary Grant Contact	Mindy Plewacki	mplewacki@mvta.com	763-237-5032
Authorized User	Jack Hennen	jhennen@mvta.com	763-237-5032
Grant Administration			
Developer 1			
Developer 2			

▼ Project Information

Project Name*
Regional Mobility Connections Program

Select Primary county where project is located*
Dakota

Cities or Townships where the Project is located*
Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Prior Lake, Rosemount, Savage, Shakopee

Jurisdictional Agency (if different than applicant):

Brief project description. Include location, road name, type of improvement, etc. Limit of 400 words*

In 2022, the Metropolitan Council Regional Solicitation program funded MVTA's first Transit Connection Specialist position to expand transportation demand management (TDM) efforts throughout Dakota and Scott Counties. The position was created to address a common challenge facing transit agencies: transportation services cannot provide their full community benefit if residents, employers, schools, and community organizations are unaware of available options or lack the knowledge, confidence, or individualized assistance needed to use them. Rather than creating new transportation services, Transit Connection Specialists help people understand and use the transportation network that already exists.

Since implementation, the Transit Connection Specialist program has demonstrated strong demand and measurable success. The success of the initial investment demonstrated that personalized mobility assistance fills a critical gap between transportation services and the people they are intended to serve. The position serves as a direct link between the community and the transportation network, helping individuals understand available transit services, navigate trip planning, access travel training resources, and identify alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel. The program also supports employers, schools, community organizations, and local governments seeking to expand transportation options for the people they serve.

In 2025 alone, the program conducted 50 outreach events, provided more than 60 hours of community engagement, and directly connected with approximately 1,000 people across the region. Outreach activities included employer engagement, school partnerships, community events, travel training, rider education, and targeted outreach to populations facing transportation barriers. These efforts increased awareness of available transportation options, strengthened community partnerships, and helped convert transportation investments into transportation use.

The success of the original position has revealed both the effectiveness of the model and the growing demand for additional outreach capacity. This project will expand the program from one Transit Connection Specialist to two Transit Connection Specialists and one Business Intelligence/Transit Analyst. The expanded team will allow MVTA to provide dedicated outreach across both Dakota and Scott Counties while strengthening data collection, performance measurement, and program evaluation.

By building on a proven Regional Solicitation investment, the project will help more residents access existing transportation services, maximize the value of public transportation investments already in place, support regional goals related to mobility, equity, congestion reduction, and greenhouse gas emissions, and ensure that transportation services are fully utilized by the communities they are intended to serve.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Description*

Expand MVTA's Transportation Demand Management program through the addition of two Transit Connection Specialists and one Business Intelligence/Transit Analyst position to provide personalized mobility navigation, travel training, transportation education, and performance analysis throughout Dakota and Scott Counties.

Lead Agency*	Minnesota Valley Transit Authority
ZIP Code where majority of work is being performed*	55337
Identify the Transit Market Areas that the project serves*	Suburban

Project Lifetime (useful life of the project)*	3
Mobility Hubs Modes included:	Microtransit, Traditional transit
If traditional transit is included, provide annual estimated ridership increase*	2000
For Shared Mobility Programs Only:	

For Park-and-Ride and Transit Station Projects Only

Approximate begin construction date (mo/yr):	
Approximate end construction date (mo/yr):	

Project Funding

Are you applying for competitive funds from another source(s) to implement this project?*

No

Grant Request Amount, US$*	$600,000.00
Project Total: $*	$750,000.00

Match Amount: $ (Minimum of 20% of the project total for federally funded projects; no match for Active Transportation regional sales tax-funded projects)

Match Amount:	$150,000.00

Match Percentage (Minimum of 20% for federally funded projects, no match required for Active Transportation Sales Tax-funded projects)

Match percentage:	20%

Source of Match Funds (For federally funded projects, a minimum of 20% of the total project cost must come from non-federal sources; additional match funds over the 20% minimum can come from other federal sources)

Source of Match Funds*	MVTA operating budget
Please check the years that are feasible for your program.*	2028 (All projects), 2029 (All projects), 2030 (Federal projects)

Active Transportation applications will need to complete the Total Project Cost Worksheet (attach this worksheet in the application documents) AND also complete the Fluxx Budget tool below (Click on the Edit button in the "What is the grant amount requested for each activity?")

To provide the required budget information, complete the Total Project Cost Worksheet and then upload into the Documents section. Refer to the Total Project Cost Instructions for instructions on what to submit in Fluxx.

Read and Complete the Total Project Cost Worksheet Instruction and fill out the worksheet. After you have completed the worksheet then enter the costs from the Grant Request Amount column into Fluxx Budget Tool. You will need to enter all line items with associated costs, but only from the **Grant Request Amount column**.

- If you have “Other Bicycle and Pedestrian Elements” in your budget, you will be required to provide a description of the line item by replacing the Line Item text with your description.
- There is no local match. Therefore, it is possible your Total Project Cost will be equal to the Grant Request Amount. However, if your Total Project Cost exceeds the maximum award for the category, the entire cost must be identified in the Total Project Cost Worksheet.

The information entered into Fluxx should match your budget included in the attachments. This is how you will make claims against your grant award.

To provide the required budget information, complete the Total Project Cost Worksheet and then upload into the Documents section. Refer to the Total Project Cost Instructions for instructions on what to submit in Fluxx.

One of the federal funding sources is Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT). Please describe which specific elements of your project and associated costs out of the Total TAB-Eligible Costs are eligible to receive PROTECT funds.

This project does not include infrastructure improvements or resilience-related capital investments that would be eligible for PROTECT funding.

As part of this application process, you must enter your project location(s) information into our Geographic Information System (GIS) via the link below.

The GIS link is not generated until a project name has been added to the question “Project Name” above and the application has been saved. For multiple locations, you will refresh the window to add additional locations. If you make a mistake, please refresh and add the correct location and add a comment describing the error and correction. The project location(s) are used to determine some of the outcomes below. Please note that it may take several minutes for the GIS data to be populated in the application below.

Please click the following link which opens in a new window: Draw Project Location

I acknowledge that I clicked the GIS link and entered the required information. Yes

▼ Document Requirements

Instructions

Upload a PDF for the applicable project elements listed below. Multiple files can be uploaded with the attachment link below. Each individual attachment must be saved as an 8.5’’X11’’pdf and cannot be more than 15 pages in length to be considered. Only pdf files that meet the size and length limits will be accepted. Please do not submit entire plans or studies.

Summary

1. Applicants are required to submit a one-page Project Summary to be used by the scoring committees and TAB members. This one-pager may include the project name, applicant, route, a map, township/city/county where project is located, requested award amount, total project cost, before photo, project description, list of project benefits, or other pertinent information.
2. A Photograph from within the past year showing the Existing Conditions within the project area. If awarded funds, this photograph will be utilized in the Metropolitan Council’s online mapping tool to show a before-and-after comparison of the improvement. By submitting the application, the applicant agrees to allow the Council to use this photograph. Applicants should not use copyrighted images from other sources.

Maps

1. All infrastructure projects must include a map or concept drawing of the proposed improvements that clearly labels the beginning and end of the project, all roadways in the project area, roadway geometry, and any bicycle, pedestrian, and transit components anticipated upon completion of the project.

Coordination

1. The applicant must include a letter of support from the agency that owns/operates the facility, will operate the transit service, or will be expected to maintain the project (if different than the applicant) indicating that it is aware of and understands the project being submitted, and that it commits to operate and maintain the

facility for its design life.
2. Transit applicants that propose a project that begins or ends within another agency's service area must include a letter of support from the other transit agency.
3. If the applicant expects any other agency or competitive grant program to provide part of the local match, the applicant must include a staff-level letter from the other agency agreeing to financially participate/documentation of the competitive award.

Other

1. **For Transit and TDM Projects that include public/private joint-use parking facilities only** The applicant must upload a plan for and make a commitment to the long-term management and enforcement of ensuring exclusive availability of parking to public transit users during commuting times. Federal rules require that parking spaces funded be available exclusively to transit users during the hours of transit service. In the plan, the applicant must indicate how commuter and transit parking will coexist with parking needs for joint use tenants. The entity charged with ensuring exclusive parking for transit commuters after the facility opens must be designated in the plan.
2. **TDM Projects only**: Upload Project Budget (budget should include applicable costs, such as, salary, fringe benefits, overhead expenses, marketing, materials, etc.). If using a sub-vendor as part of the project, proper procurement procedures must be used after the project is awarded to select the vendor.

To add a document, select the green plus sign on the far right of the screen in the row below. A new screen will appear. Upload files by selecting Add files on the bottom left of the screen. After all files have been added, select Start Upload. (Note: if you need to add more files to the same group of attachments, use the green + button in the "Documents" section at the bottom.)

Long-Term Public Transit Parking Plan
Map or Concept Drawing
Photo Existing Conditions
Transition Plan (only upload if not linked)
Year-Round Maintenance Commitment

▼ Documents

To add other documents, click the green + sign, then click "Add Files." Then select the document category from the dropdown and click "Start Upload"

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

Filter by Type: All document types (7)

ADAPolicy_FINAL-04292020.pdf
Other Document | **ADA**
Added by Mindy Plewacki at 4:31 AM on June 25, 2026

2026 MVTA Title VI Plan.pdf
Other Document | **MVTA Title VI**
Added by Mindy Plewacki at 4:23 AM on June 25, 2026

Strategic-Plan_FINAL.pdf
Other Document | **MVTA Strategic Plan**
Added by Mindy Plewacki at 4:22 AM on June 25, 2026

Total-Project-Cost-Worksheet_Transit Connection Specialists.xlsx
Budget
Added by Mindy Plewacki at 4:19 AM on June 25, 2026

MVTA_Board Resolution_TDM.pdf

Resolution of Support
Added by Mindy Plewacki at 4:12 AM on June 25, 2026

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▼ Qualifying Requirements

The applicant must show that the project meets all the qualifying requirements to be eligible to be scored and ranked against other projects. All qualifying requirements must be met before completing an application.

By selecting each checkbox, the applicant confirms compliance with the following project requirements:

The project will follow all applicable federal and state design standards, including state statutes such as State Aid Rule 8820 as required.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

The project is consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and actions of the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan Briefly list the applicable 2050 TPP objectives and policies.

Briefly list the applicable 2050 TPP objectives and policies*

This project advances several objectives and policies of the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan by increasing awareness and utilization of existing transportation services, expanding transportation choices, and reducing barriers to mobility. Through transportation demand management (TDM) strategies, personalized travel assistance, employer and community partnerships, and targeted outreach, the project supports the TPP's goals of improving access to destinations and opportunities, advancing equity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, maximizing the effectiveness of existing transportation investments, and encouraging shifts away from single-occupancy vehicle travel. The project also supports regional collaboration by connecting residents, employers, schools, local governments, and community organizations with available transportation resources and services.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

The project or the specific transportation problem/need that the project addresses must be in a local planning or programming document completed within the last 10 years. Reference the name of the comprehensive plan, regional/statewide plan, capital improvement program, corridor study, Safe Routes to School Plan, Bicycle System Plan, or other approved/adopted plan or program of the applicant agency. The Active Transportation Planning application category (whose projects will be creating the plan itself) is exempt from this requirement.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

List the applicable document(s) and pages*

MVTA Strategic Plan (2024-2028), pp. 5–11 – Identifies community engagement, customer education, ridership growth, and innovative mobility solutions as agency priorities that are directly supported by the Transit Connection Specialists program.

2050 Transportation Policy Plan (2025), Chapters 2, 4, and 8 – Supports transportation demand management, increased transit utilization, equitable access to transportation, and greenhouse gas reduction through mode shift strategies.

Imagine 2050 Regional Development Guide (2025) – Supports expanding transportation choices, improving access to opportunities, and engaging communities in transportation decision-making.

The project complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

The project must be accessible and open to the general public.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

The project must represent a permanent improvement with independent utility. The term “independent utility” means the project provides benefits described in the application by itself and does not depend on any other construction elements to be delivered for the proposed project to be achieved.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

The infrastructure project must not be a temporary construction project. A temporary construction project is defined as work that must be replaced within five years and is ineligible for funding. Staged construction is eligible for funding as long as future stages build on, rather than replace, previous work.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

The project applicant has sent written notification regarding the proposed project to all affected units of government prior to submitting the application. Staff-level letters of support are required if another agency owns the roadway, will deliver the transit service, will contribute financially to the project, will be expected to sponsor the project, or will be expected to maintain the project. Transit projects proposing a project that crosses into another agency's service area must include a letter of support from all relevant transit agencies.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

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The Metropolitan Council and the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) get the first opportunity to utilize a share of the greenhouse gas and vehicle miles traveled offsets of any awarded federal or active transportation regional sales tax projects proportionate to the share of the total project cost funded by TAB to fulfill state requirements for the Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment (MN Statute 161.178) enacted in 2023. Each offset can only be used one time. If the projects are not needed by the Metropolitan Council and TAB as offsets to other awarded Regional Solicitation highway projects, ownership of them will revert, in whole or in part, to the original project sponsor. Based on inputs provided in the application, Met Council staff will calculate the magnitude of the offsets.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

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The applicant agrees to provide Metropolitan Council staff with post-construction data, as requested, in order to perform before-and-after analyses.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

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Federally funded projects must exclude costs for studies, preliminary engineering, design, or construction engineering. Right-of-way acquisition costs are only eligible as part of transit stations/stops, transit terminals, park-and-ride facilities, or pool-and-ride lots. Noise barriers, drainage projects, fences, landscaping, etc., are not eligible for funding as a standalone project, but can be included as part of the larger submitted project that is otherwise eligible.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

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Applicant is a public entity (e.g., county, city, tribal government, transit provider, etc.), or non-profit organization in the TDM category only. Applicants for federal funds that are not State Aid cities in the seven-county metro area with populations over 5,000 must contact the MnDOT Metro State Aid Office prior to submitting their application to determine if a public agency sponsor is required. Applicants for the three application categories funded with Active Transportation Regional Sales Tax funds do not need to be a State Aid city or a county to apply.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

The public agency sponsor must either have a current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluation or transition plan that covers the public right of way/transportation, as required under Title II of the ADA. The transition plan must be completed by the local agency before the Regional Solicitation application deadline.

Choose one*	The applicant is a public agency that employs 50 or more people and has a completed ADA transition plan that covers the public right of way/transportation.
Date plan completed by governing body*	4/29/2020
Link to plan*	Uploaded

If you cannot include a document link, please upload the document in the Document Requirements section.

All projects that are located within right-of-way occupied by an active railroad must confirm that the railroad has been engaged in project planning.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.*	Yes

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The applicant is categorized as a subrecipient in accordance with 2CFR200.330.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.*	Yes

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Travel Demand Management projects only: The applicant will adhere to Subpart E Cost Principles of 2CFR200 under the proposed subaward.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.*	Yes

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The project does not duplicate a service already provided, such as carpooling or vanpooling programs. The applicant may propose an enhancement or expansion of these services.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.*	Yes

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The project does not include infrastructure that is eligible for funding in other categories, such as bike paths, sidewalks, or transit stop infrastructure.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.*	Yes

The project is eligible for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funding, which is the federal funding source used on this application category. For competitive application projects, the project may fund up to three years of program administration and operations for expanded TDM programs, but cannot fund ongoing program administration and operations for existing services.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets the requirement above.* Yes

▼ Prioritizing Criteria and Measures

2050 TPP Goal: We lead on addressing climate change.

Category Definition: The Travel Demand Management (TDM) application category seeks to fund projects that reduce trips, emissions and single occupancy vehicle usage, as well as support access to services and sustainable travel choices for regional commuters and residents. TDM projects should focus on connecting people to their places of employment and/or other activities and influence longer-term individual travel behavior mode choices that support an efficient use of the transportation system. Base-level TDM funding for the Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs) and Metro Transit Commuter Programs are not part of this application process.

This application contributes to these 2050 TPP Objectives or Policies:

- The region's transportation system minimizes its greenhouse gas emissions.
- By 2050, the region reduces vehicle miles traveled by 20 percent per capita below 2019 levels.
- Use travel demand management (TDM) to plan, fund, and promote multimodal travel options and alternatives to driving alone.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and is intended only to provide examples. For questions regarding project eligibility, see the qualifying requirements for this application category and contact the Metropolitan Council.

- Shared mobility program promotion
- Telework & flexible work schedules
- Parking reduction management
- TDM ordinance & plan development
- Technology for TDM integration
- Traveler incentive programs
- Local bikesharing infrastructure, marketing, and promotion
- Local carsharing infrastructure, marketing, and promotion
- Support, programming, and promotion of carpooling
- Support and promotion of vanpooling

▼ Evaluative Criteria

1. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Reduction Potential

This criterion measures the project's potential to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).

Measure A - Average weekday users & miles shifted to non-single occupancy vehicle travel or trip reduction

Provide estimates, including methodology, of average weekday users & miles shifted to non-SOV travel or trip reduction (400-word response).*

MVTA's Transit Connection Specialists program supports mode shift from single-occupancy vehicle travel through travel training, mobility outreach, employer engagement, transit education, and individualized trip planning. The proposed project expands the current program from one Transit Connection Specialist to two Transit Connection Specialists and one Business Intelligence/Transit Analyst, significantly increasing MVTA's capacity to connect residents with transit, microtransit, ridesharing, vanpooling, walking, bicycling, and other transportation options.

Methodology: In 2025, the existing Transit Connection Specialist conducted approximately 50 outreach events, provided more than 60 hours of community engagement, and directly engaged approximately 1,000 individuals

throughout MVTA's service area. Based on the demonstrated success of the existing program and the expansion from one position to three positions, MVTA conservatively estimates the project will generate approximately 100 new average weekday users through travel training, employer partnerships, mobility counseling, and community outreach. For estimating miles shifted from SOV travel, MVTA used the Metropolitan Council's default average commute trip length of 12.1 miles. Assuming each new weekday user replaces two daily single-occupancy vehicle trips with transit or another shared transportation option, the project is estimated to reduce approximately 2,420 vehicle miles traveled per weekday (100 users × 2 trips × 12.1 miles).

MVTA will measure program performance through participant surveys, employer reporting, follow-up travel behavior assessments, and transit ridership data to validate and refine future VMT reduction estimates.

Measure A Scoring Guidance

Consider the information and narrative provided by the applicant and rate projects based on the benchmarks provided below. Projects may be rated at any point along the scale based on their performance against the stated criteria.

- High: The highest rated projects in this measure will have the strongest potential to significantly reduce VMT and make a strong case as to how the project will do it. The response will include quantitative metrics showing significant VMT reduction using an established methodology.
- Medium-High
- Medium: Mid-range projects in this measure may have good potential to reduce VMT and make a strong case by using a less established methodology. Similarly, mid-range projects may have quantitative data and an established methodology but only offer moderate potential reduction in VMT.
- Medium-Low
- Low: Low-rated projects will have limited potential to reduce VMT or may use less established or unclear methodology to estimate the VMT reduction potential.
- Non-responsive/Not relevant: Projects that do not have potential to reduce VMT should receive zero points in this measure.

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2. Connections to Jobs, Education & Opportunity

This criterion measures the project’s ability to support people traveling to jobs, education, and other opportunities using sustainable transportation options.

Measure A – Connections to jobs, education and other opportunities

Provide a brief narrative that describes how the proposed project supports people connecting to jobs, education or other opportunities using sustainable transportation options. Include how connections will be made, number of connections, and who and how many people will benefit. Provide quantitative information as applicable (400 words or less)*:

The proposed project will improve access to jobs, education, healthcare, and other essential destinations by helping residents understand and utilize available transportation options throughout Dakota and Scott Counties and the broader region.

Through travel training, trip planning assistance, mobility navigation, employer partnerships, and community outreach, the program will connect individuals with fixed-route transit, MVTA Connect microtransit, ridesharing, vanpooling, walking, bicycling, and regional transit services. These options provide access to major employment centers, educational institutions, healthcare providers, retail destinations, and community resources.

The project will particularly benefit populations that often face transportation barriers, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income households, students, job seekers, new transit users, and residents without access to a personal vehicle. By reducing transportation barriers and increasing awareness of available mobility options, the program helps residents reach jobs, workforce training, schools, colleges, healthcare appointments, and other destinations that support economic mobility and quality of life.

In 2025, a single Transit Connection Specialist conducted 50 outreach events, provided more than 60 hours of community engagement, and directly engaged approximately 1,000 individuals. Building on this success, the expanded three-person program is expected to engage more than 30,000 individuals over the three-year grant period through outreach, travel training, community partnerships, and mobility assistance.

The project is estimated to generate approximately 100 new average weekday users of transit and other shared transportation options. By improving access to opportunity through sustainable transportation, the project supports workforce access, educational attainment, equitable mobility, and economic vitality.

If you provided quantitative information above, provide a brief narrative of the data and methodology you used to quantify the project impact (400 words or less):

Quantitative estimates are based on actual performance data from MVTA's existing Transit Connection Specialist program. In 2025, a single Transit Connection Specialist conducted 50 outreach events, provided more than 60 hours of community engagement, and directly engaged approximately 1,000 individuals through travel training, outreach activities, employer engagement, and community partnerships.

To estimate future impacts, MVTA scaled historical program performance to reflect the proposed expansion from one position to three dedicated staff. Based on demonstrated outreach capacity and anticipated growth in community partnerships and travel training activities, MVTA estimates the program will engage more than 30,000 individuals over the three-year grant period.

The estimate of 100 new average weekday users is based on the expanded program's ability to increase awareness of and access to transit and shared mobility options through direct engagement, individualized trip planning assistance, and travel training. This estimate is considered conservative given the anticipated increase in outreach capacity and geographic coverage.

Measure A Scoring Guidance

Consider the information and narrative provided by the applicant and rate projects based on the benchmarks provided below. Projects may be rated at any point along the scale based on their performance against the stated criteria.

- High: The highest rated projects in this measure will have the strongest potential to increase the number of people using sustainable travel choices when traveling to jobs, education and other opportunities. The response will include quantitative metrics showing these connections using an established methodology.
- Medium-High
- Medium: Mid-range projects in this measure may have good potential to increase the number of people using sustainable transportation options when traveling to jobs, education and other opportunities and make a strong case using a less established methodology. Similarly, mid-range projects may have quantitative data and an established methodology but only offer moderate connections to jobs, education, or other opportunities.
- Medium-Low
- Low: Low rated projects have limited potential to increase connections to jobs, education or other opportunities based on the information provided.
- Non-responsive/Not relevant: Projects that do not improve connections to jobs, education or other opportunities should receive zero points in this measure.

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3. Project Effectiveness Evaluation

This criterion measures the effectiveness of proposed TDM strategies.

Measure A – Plan and methods to evaluate project outcomes

Project results and impacts will be captured in a coordinated survey tool that collects project launch/baseline data, mid-project execution data (where applicable), and post project data. Tools to aid in evaluation are listed below, but additional tools may be used as well.

- FHWA CMAQ Emissions Calculator Toolkit resource to estimate emissions reductions
- Met Council GHG Scenario Planning Tool
- CAPCOA GHG Handbook

Describe the plan for the project and methods to evaluate project outcomes (400 words or less).*

MVTA will utilize a data-driven evaluation framework to measure project performance, outcomes, and community impact throughout the grant period. Baseline, mid-project, and post-project data will be collected and analyzed to assess the effectiveness of outreach, travel training, mobility navigation, and transportation demand management strategies.

The project will track key performance indicators including outreach events conducted, individuals engaged, travel training participants, employer engagements, community partnerships, referrals to transportation services, and utilization of available mobility options. Additional measures will include average weekday transit users generated through project activities, customer feedback, and participant-reported changes in transportation awareness, confidence, and mobility.

The proposed Business Intelligence/Transit Analyst position will support data collection, performance monitoring, dashboard development, reporting, and analysis. The Analyst will work with Transit Connection Specialists to

identify trends, evaluate program effectiveness, and target outreach activities to communities with the greatest transportation needs.

MVTA will utilize customer surveys, travel training evaluations, outreach participation records, ridership data, and partner feedback to measure outcomes. Surveys will collect information regarding transportation habits, awareness of available services, transportation barriers, and utilization of sustainable transportation options.

Project impacts related to vehicle trip reduction, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and emissions reduction will be evaluated using available regional and federal resources, including the FHWA CMAQ Emissions Calculator Toolkit and other applicable Metropolitan Council tools. Evaluation results will be used to refine outreach strategies, improve program effectiveness, and maximize project benefits throughout the grant period.

Measure A Scoring Guidance

Consider the information and narrative provided by the applicant and rate projects based on the benchmarks provided below. Projects may be rated at any point along the scale based on their performance against the stated criteria.

- High: The highest rated projects in this measure will provide a well thought out project or program plan with sound methods documented to evaluate the project outcomes. The response will include quantitative metrics that speak to how many, how much or how often and show these connections using an established methodology.
- Medium-High
- Medium: Mid-range projects in this measure may provide a well thought out project or program plan with sound methods documented to evaluate the project outcomes but using a less established methodology. Qualitative data could be used to gather in-depth insights that are not easily measured attributes or characteristics and lead to a better understanding of why and how. Similarly, mid-range projects may have quantitative data and an established methodology but only offer moderate project or program effectiveness.
- Medium-Low
- Low: Low rated projects provide minimal information on the project or program plan, or the plan lacks detail to be effective.
- Non-responsive/Not relevant: Projects that do not include a project or program plan or have a plan that does not demonstrate effectiveness should receive zero points in this criterion.

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5. Innovation

This criterion measures how well the project introduces new concepts to the region or expands to a new geographic region. Innovative TDM projects may involve the deployment of new creative strategies for the region, expand the geographic scope of a project to a new geographic area, serve populations that were previously unserved, or incorporate enhancements to an existing program.

Measure A - Completely new, new to the region or serving new communities*

Check all innovation characteristics that apply for your project (the list below is in priority order for scoring):

Project replicates a project done in another region (but not done in the Twin Cities region) (1 point), Project expands the geographic scope of an existing successful project (1 point), Project significantly enhances an existing program (1 point)

Describe your innovation based on the category/categories above (400 words or less)*

The proposed project builds upon MVTA's successful Transit Connection Specialist program by significantly expanding its scale, geographic reach, and effectiveness. Rather than creating a new standalone initiative, the project advances a proven mobility navigation and travel training model that has demonstrated measurable community impact.

Since implementation, the existing program has successfully connected residents with transit and other transportation options through travel training, mobility assistance, employer engagement, and community outreach. In 2025, a single Transit Connection Specialist conducted 50 outreach events, provided more than 60 hours of community engagement, and directly engaged approximately 1,000 individuals.

The proposed project significantly enhances this successful program by expanding from one position to three dedicated staff, including two Transit Connection Specialists and one Business Intelligence/Transit Analyst. This expansion will increase outreach capacity, strengthen community partnerships, improve mobility assistance services, and allow MVTA to engage additional communities and populations throughout Dakota and Scott Counties.

The project also expands the geographic scope of the existing program and increases MVTA's ability to reach underserved populations, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income households, students, job seekers, and residents without access to a personal vehicle. The addition of a dedicated Business Intelligence/Transit Analyst further enhances the program by supporting data-driven decision making, performance measurement, and continuous improvement.

By combining expanded outreach, mobility navigation, travel training, and enhanced performance evaluation, the project increases access to transportation options and opportunities while building on a model that has already demonstrated success within the MVTA service area.

Measure A Scoring Guidance

Projects that introduce new TDM ideas or apply research and/or touch on multiple innovation categories above will receive the most points along with projects that address multiple innovation categories. For scoring, follow the rubric below; points are cumulative for a total of 5 points:

- 3 points: New policy, program or creative strategy
- 1 point: Applies research from another organization, replicates a project done in another region or expands the geographic scope of an existing successful project
- 1 point: Project serves or engages a new group of people or significantly enhances the impacts of an existing program

▼ Community Considerations

The Regional Solicitation Community Considerations criterion draws on multiple Metropolitan Council and Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) policies, including:

1. Imagine 2050 and Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) Goal: Our region is equitable and inclusive. Racial inequities and injustices experienced by historically marginalized communities have been eliminated and all people feel welcome, included, and empowered Imagine 2050

Equity Statement

Equity means that historically excluded communities – especially communities of color – have measurably improved outcomes through an intentional and consistent practice of adapting policies, systems, services, and spending so that they contribute to the repair of both historic and ongoing injustice.

Imagine 2050 contains an Equity and Environmental Justice Framework, which is a people-centered approach that should guide regional processes and actions to work toward a more equitable region. A description of the framework is linked here Imagine 2050: Regional Vision, Values, Goals - Revised for Adoption. The three components of the framework include:

- A people-centered, data-driven decision-making approach
- Prioritized engagement with overburdened communities
- Provision of benefits to the communities that go beyond harm mitigation

TPP Policies or Objectives

TPP Policies and Objectives related to achieving the regional equitable and inclusive goal include:

- Conduct engagement activities and implement shared decision making with historically underrepresented communities throughout policy making, planning, and project development to ensure equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of transportation investments.
- Evaluate processes, policies, programs, and plans to ensure that community benefits and burdens from transportation investments are distributed equitably.
- Implement investments that repair harms and impacts to historically disadvantaged communities from past highway investments.
- Implement strategies against gentrification and displacement caused by transportation investments.

TAB Communities to Consider

Beginning with the Regional Solicitation redesign in 2014, the Transportation Advisory Board has identified “specific communities” that should be prioritized in transportation decision-making processes: people of color, Indigenous people, low-income, disabled, youth and older adult populations. These specific communities should be engaged and empowered in transportation decision-making processes, and projects should be developed to specifically address their transportation needs.

Metropolitan Council staff have provided an interactive map that can be used to understand the composition of the communities of consideration within your project area. This map can serve as a basis for your response to each measure but applicants are encouraged to provide additional detail and understanding of community.

Other Key Concepts

Community Definition: For the Community Considerations scoring criterion, “community” is defined as people and groups of people who are adjacent to and/or impacted by the proposed project. This includes those who live, work, attend school, or access essential destinations (such as healthcare, shopping, or services) within the project area. Prioritized consideration is given to communities of color, Indigenous communities, low-income, disabled, youth, and older adult populations. The term “community” does not include transportation system users who only travel through the area without connecting to destinations within it. Transit users and others outside personal vehicles may be considered part of the community if their trips begin, end, or include stops within the project area.

Scoring

Three qualitative measures are used for the Community Considerations criterion as described below. Applicants will receive a High, Medium/High, Medium, Medium/Low, or Low rating for each of the three measures: (1) Community Data and Context, (2) Community Needs and Future Engagement, and (3) Community Benefits.

Funding Priority

Projects receiving a high score on each of the three measures, if any, will be considered for funding priority. Up to one (1) project from each solicitation round that was not otherwise selected for funding will be recommended for full funding in either the Roadway, Bike/Ped, Transit, or Environment categories.

Applicant Training Opportunities

The Met Council will provide optional yearly trainings for local agency staff to build their understanding of the Community Considerations criterion and measures. This training will also be centered around best practices set forth by the Council’s Equity Evaluation of Regional Transportation Investment Processes study.

Community Considerations Scoring

Scorers for the Community Considerations criterion will be selected based upon their experience and knowledge in community work, will have completed the Community Considerations training, and will meet multiple times as a group of scorers to discuss and agree upon scoring expectations. Projects recognized as a funding priority will be reviewed and agreed upon by all Community Considerations scorers. 2-3 Community Considerations scorers will be assigned to each project application.

This criterion measures the project’s ability to ensure the needs of specific populations are considered and prioritized in transportation decisions.

A. Community Data and Context

Describe the project area’s community data and context* including locations of specific communities and important regional and local destinations those community members access regularly. Relate the community data to the project purpose. Supplement widely available demographic data with community-specific information via additional maps or descriptions. Include any transportation history impacting the communities and intentional or unintentional past and ongoing harms caused by the transportation system (600 words or less).*

Examples of detailed community data: demographics (race, ethnicity, age, low income, disabled), affordable housing locations, essential services, employers/job centers, schools, cultural resources, places of worship and social destinations.

The project area includes Dakota and Scott Counties and the communities served by MVTA's fixed-route, express, and microtransit services. Within the service area are diverse populations identified by the Transportation Advisory Board for prioritized consideration, including people of color, low-income households, older adults, youth, individuals with disabilities, and residents of affordable housing. These populations live, work, attend school, receive services, and participate in community life throughout the MVTA service area.

MVTA's existing Transit Connection Specialist has worked directly with senior organizations, disability advocates, employers, schools, county agencies, and community organizations throughout Dakota and Scott Counties. These relationships provide firsthand understanding of the transportation challenges experienced by residents and help ensure outreach efforts are tailored to community needs rather than relying solely on demographic data.

As suburban communities continue to grow, many destinations are separated by longer travel distances than in more urbanized parts of the region. Residents who cannot drive, do not have reliable access to a vehicle, are experiencing a disability, are aging in place, or are unfamiliar with available transportation options may face

significant barriers accessing essential destinations and opportunities.

Community members regularly utilize transportation services to access healthcare and essential needs destinations, including hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, grocery stores, food shelves, county service centers, social service agencies, and human service providers. Access to these destinations is critical for maintaining health, independence, and quality of life, particularly for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income households.

Students and families rely on transportation connections to schools, after-school programs, libraries, Dakota County Technical College, Inver Hills Community College, CAP Agency programs, workforce training opportunities, and other educational and enrichment resources. Reliable transportation can be a determining factor in educational participation and success.

Transportation access also supports employment and economic mobility. The MVTA service area contains major employment destinations, including the Mall of America area, Viking Lakes, healthcare campuses, manufacturing and industrial centers, retail districts, hospitality employers, and business parks throughout Dakota and Scott Counties. Community members also access CareerForce locations, workforce development services, and job training opportunities throughout the region.

Beyond essential trips, transportation supports community connection and quality of life. Residents use transportation services to reach destinations such as Valleyfair, Canterbury Park, community centers, parks, places of worship, cultural events, recreational facilities, and social gatherings.

Despite the availability of transportation services, barriers remain. Residents may be unaware of available options, face language or accessibility barriers, lack confidence navigating multiple services, or struggle to identify transportation solutions that meet their needs. The proposed project addresses these ongoing transportation burdens by providing travel training, mobility navigation, and community outreach designed to improve equitable access to opportunities throughout Dakota and Scott Counties.

B. Community Needs and Future Engagement

Describe how the project was identified, and how it addresses a community need. Community needs may be identified through long-range or strategic planning, community surveys, formal or informal meetings and conversations with community members or neighborhood groups, outreach, and other means. Describe any discussion with specific communities, and how it contributed to identifying the project need. Describe how community engagement will occur throughout the project. Reference the engagement spectrum on page 55 of the Imagine 2050 Regional Vision, Values, and Goals chapter of the Regional Development Guide. Describe and link (if possible) documented organizational structures that support future engagement on the project; these structures could include policies, procedures, financial or staff resources, or other documents (600 words or less).

The need for this project was identified through MVTA's ongoing community outreach, travel training activities, customer feedback, service planning efforts, and direct engagement with residents, employers, community organizations, and local government partners. Through these efforts, MVTA has consistently identified a common challenge: transportation services may be available, but many residents remain unaware of their options or face barriers navigating and utilizing available transportation resources.

The success of MVTA's existing Transit Connection Specialist program further demonstrated the need for expanded mobility navigation and travel training services. In 2025 alone, the program conducted 50 outreach events, provided more than 60 hours of community engagement, and directly engaged approximately 1,000 individuals. Community members consistently shared that transportation services often exist, but understanding which service to use, how to ride, how to transfer, or whether they qualify for specialized transportation remains a significant barrier.

Community needs have also been identified through conversations with organizations serving populations prioritized by the Transportation Advisory Board, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income households, students, and job seekers. These conversations have reinforced the importance of providing personalized assistance that helps residents understand and utilize available transportation options.

Future engagement will occur throughout the project using a continuous engagement approach that aligns with the Imagine 2050 engagement spectrum. The project will focus on informing, consulting, involving, and collaborating with community members and partner organizations to better understand transportation needs and improve mobility outcomes. Engagement activities will include travel training sessions, outreach events, customer surveys, community meetings, employer partnerships, presentations, and direct one-on-one mobility assistance.

MVTA has established organizational resources to support ongoing engagement, including dedicated outreach staff, customer service resources, communication channels, public engagement processes, and partnerships with community organizations throughout Dakota and Scott Counties. The proposed project further strengthens this commitment by expanding dedicated engagement capacity through two Transit Connection Specialists and a

Business Intelligence/Transit Analyst who will help evaluate community feedback, identify emerging needs, and ensure outreach efforts remain responsive to the communities being served.

Community Needs and Future Engagement Scoring Guidance

Applicants will receive a High, Medium/High, Medium, Medium/Low, or Low rating for each of the three measures. The expectations should be considered as cumulative, i.e., Medium builds on Low; High builds on Medium. Scoring via this rubric will be based exclusively on the application materials provided.

High: The project application:
-References documented organizational structures that support future engagement on the project, e.g.Policy, procedure, and/or budget to compensate engagement participants; Formal, approved engagement plan; Anti-displacement policy, strategy, or funding; Reparative project goals shaped by community; Commitment to financial opportunity for local businesses and contractors; Advisory committee charter; Dedicated project engagement staff; Other governing board or council action demonstrating a commitment to community considerations.

Medium: The project application:
-Describes how the project need was identified through planning and information-gathering work with communities
-Describes how input from engagement with “specific communities”helped identify the project need and purpose
-References Imagine 2050 Engagement Spectrum (engagement and power sharing levels) and identifies future community engagement activities
-Describes how specific communities will be included and prioritized in future engagement efforts

Low: The project application:
-Does not link past planning and information-gathering work with communities to identify project need
-References planning work that is too broad to practically influence project need
-Does not include description of input and interactions with “specific communities” that helped identify the project need
-Does not include description or commitment to future engagement efforts with communities

C. Community Benefits

Provide a description of the anticipated project benefits and how these benefits address the needs of the identified communities. Describe any past or ongoing burdens the project will mitigate and how any potential new impacts or burdens will be addressed (600 words or less).*

The proposed project will provide significant community benefits by improving access to transportation options and reducing barriers that prevent residents from reaching employment, education, healthcare, shopping, social services, and other essential destinations. Through travel training, mobility navigation, community outreach, and individualized trip planning assistance, the program will help residents identify and utilize transportation solutions that best meet their needs. Because the project expands transportation knowledge rather than transportation infrastructure, benefits can be realized quickly while remaining flexible enough to respond to changing community needs over time.

The project will particularly benefit populations that often experience transportation challenges, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income households, students, job seekers, new transit users, and residents without access to a personal vehicle. Dakota and Scott Counties continue to experience population growth and an increasing number of older adults who may seek transportation options that support independence and mobility beyond driving. These populations may face ongoing burdens related to transportation affordability, limited transportation knowledge, lack of access to reliable transportation options, mobility limitations, or difficulty navigating available services. By providing personalized assistance and education, the project will help reduce these barriers and increase access to opportunities throughout the region.

The project also supports community goals related to economic mobility, workforce participation, independence, healthy aging, and quality of life. Improved awareness and utilization of transit, microtransit, ridesharing, vanpooling, walking, and bicycling options will help residents access destinations while reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicle travel.

Because the project focuses on education, outreach, and mobility assistance rather than physical infrastructure changes, no significant negative community impacts are anticipated. The program is voluntary and designed to expand transportation choice rather than replace existing options. By helping residents understand and use transportation services that already exist, the project maximizes the value of public investments while improving access to opportunity for the communities that need it most.

Community Benefits Scoring Guidance

Applicants will receive a High, Medium/High, Medium, Medium/Low, or Low rating for each of the three measures. The expectations should be considered as cumulative, i.e., Medium builds on Low; High builds on Medium. Scoring via this rubric will be based exclusively on the application materials provided.

High: The project application:
-Describes how project repairs past burdens and barriers
-Describes how project improves safe access to priority destinations
-Describes how project adds context-sensitive features beyond transportation needs (e.g. art, greenspace, other community-influenced elements).

Medium: The project application:
-Describes benefits for specific communities
-Ties benefits directly to community-identified needs
-Describe how benefits were identified through engagement
-Includes early mitigation plans for project burdens.

Low: The project application:
-Does not describe project benefits for specific communities
-Describe benefits in general terms for all users
-Does not acknowledge potential project burdens, despite high potential for them to arise.

▼ **Funds & Payments** - Internal

Current Amount Recommended:

▼ Funding Sources

Funding Sources

No Funding Sources available

▼ Payments and Refunds

Payments and Refunds

Add Payment

No transactions available

▼ **Grant Requirements** - Internal

Progress Reports

No Progress Reports available

▼ **ArcGIS** - Internal

gis_taz_population:

gis_taz_jobs:

gis_regional_destinations:

gis_project_location_description:

▼ **Review & Feedback** - Internal

Program: Regional Solicitation

Sub Program: Regional Solicitation - Transit and TDM Projects

Assigned Council Program Contact:

Finance Unit Reviewer:

External Reviewers

Reviewers

▼ Internal Reviewers

Comments Returned to Applicant:

Program Feedback:

▼ Evaluative Criteria

Measure A – Average weekday users & miles shifted to non-single occupancy vehicle travel or trip reduction:

Measure A – Connections to jobs, education and other opportunities:

Measure A – Plan and methods to evaluate project outcomes:

Measure A – Completely new, new to the region or serving new communities:

Evaluative Criteria Total: 0

Dates & Financials - Internal Only

Start Date:

End Date:

Amount Requested: $600,000.00

Total Project Budget:

▼ Communications & Relationships - Internal

Relationships

Interactions

► Signals (0 Signals)

► Internal Notifications (0 internal notifications)

OUTLOOK EMAIL COMPONENT

SYSTEM GENERATED EMAIL ALERTS

▼ **Notes & History** - Internal

Status Initial Review

Adobe Sign

Agreement ID:

Adobe Status:

Latest Event:

Adobe Executed Date:

NOTES

Draft → Initial Review
Created by Mindy Plewacki at 5:46 AM on June 25, 2026

HISTORY

Show History

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