

Minutes

Metropolitan Council



Meeting date: April 22, 2026

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair, Robin Hutcheson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Lilligren, District 6 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Jenkins, District 12 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judy Johnson, District 1 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yassin Osman, District 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Chai Lee, District 13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reva Chamblis, District 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Anjuli Cameron, District 8 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Toni Carter, District 14 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tyronne Carter, District 3 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diego Morales, District 9 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Victor Obisakin, District 15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deb Barber, District 4 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peter Lindstrom, District 10 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wendy Wulff, District 16 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Pacheco Jr., District 5 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gail Cederberg, District 11 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = present |

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

Call to order

A quorum being present, Council Chair Hutcheson called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council to order at 4:02 p.m.

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment was read by Council Member Lindstrom.

Agenda approved

Council members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Dr. Tyronne Carter, seconded by Obisakin, to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2026, regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council. **Motion carried.**

Public invitation

No public comments were made during the meeting. Written comments are attached to the Minutes.

Consent business

Consent business adopted (Items 1-5)

1. **2026-15:** That the Metropolitan Council approve a request by the City of Coon Rapids, Anoka County, and MnDOT to construct a grade separated interchange at Highway 610 and East River Road in Coon Rapids, subject to further review and approval by the Metropolitan Council if there are any significant changes in the design of the proposed project.
2. **2026-66:** That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to execute grant agreements with Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) and SouthWest Transit (SWT), Replacement Service Providers, for the disbursement of the balance of their undesignated FTA Section 5307 earnings as part of their transition to become FTA direct recipients. The table below identifies the amount and source of funds by Replacement Service Provider.

Provider (Funding Source)	Amount
MVTA (Regional Transp. Sales Tax)	\$5,587,167.19
MVTA (Motor Vehicle Sales Tax)	\$608,278.92
MVTA Grant Agreement Total	\$6,195,446.11
SWT (Regional Transp. Sales Tax)	\$2,498,870.01
SWT (Motor Vehicle Sales Tax)	\$3,614.86
SWT Grant Agreement Total	\$2,502,484.87
Total of Grant Agreements	\$8,697,930.98

3. **2026-67:** That the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached administrative modification to the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) to:
 - Add an environmental assessment and mitigation resources section
 - Update the federal performance measures and targets discussion to include trend data
4. **2026-69:** That the Metropolitan Council (“Council”) authorize the Regional Administrator to execute Joint Powers Agreement (“JPA”) # 26I001 with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (“BCA”) for Minnesota Fusion Center (“MNFC”) access.
5. **2026-73:** That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute contract 25P033 with Hatch Associates Consultants, Inc. to provide stray current rail engineering services that will support Metro Transit Engineering and Construction in an amount not to exceed \$5,000,000.

It was moved by Jenkins, seconded by Obisakin.

Motion carried.



Non-consent business – Reports of standing committees

Community Development

1. No reports.

Environment

1. No reports.

Management

1. No reports.

Transportation

1. **2026-68:** 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.

It was moved by Toni Carter, seconded by Johnson.

Chair Hutcheson noted that the Met Council is the lawfully designated metropolitan planning organization for the region, which is affirmed by the federal highway and transit administrations; and remains compliant with all federal transportation planning requirements. Chair Hutcheson thanked Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) members for their time and dedication to TAB meetings and to the multi-year process. Chair Hutcheson has spoken directly with Commissioners and leadership staff from Dakota and Scott counties about their concerns as well as opportunities for collaborations.

Prior to issuing calls for projects in 2028, Chair Hutcheson directed the Regional Administrator to work with staff to do the following: Review the outcomes of the current round of solicitation prior to issuing the next call for projects in 2028; Engage with TAB to discuss the function of the adopted criteria, and to potentially make adjustments, to ensure that transportation goals are met.

Council Member Jenkins commented that the process has been reviewed by both elected and appointed TAB members. Jenkins believe in the process, staff and community who participated in the process, and supports Chair Hutcheson's approach to reviewing the process for the next round.

Council Member Wulff noted that she preferred a consensus approach and will support the perspectives from Dakota and Scott counties by voting no.

Council Members Toni Carter and Obisakin support the comments made about this item. Both agree about the opportunity to review the process as needed.

Council Member Johnson appreciated the work that TAB is tasked with. Johnson noted that a full agreement isn't necessarily a bad thing if done in a good way.

Council Member Lindstrom expressed excitement about the current process. Lindstrom shared constituent feedback regarding past solicitation processes where it was harder to participate in due to cost and resource burdens.

Motion carried.

Other Business

1. No reports.

Information

1. **Better Bus Stops Program Update** (Berry Farrington, Jenny Ackerson and Paul Lamb)

Berry Farrington, Manager of Planning and Urban Design for Facilities Planning and Administration at Metro Transit, provided a summary of the program and introduced presenters, Jenny Ackerson, Senior Planner of Facilities Planning and Administration, and Paul Lamb, Project Manager for Engineering and Construction.

Presenter Jenny Ackerson introduced the Better Bus Stops Program fitting with one of the Metro Transit Forward Strategic Priorities primarily in the experience priorities, and for 2026 this relates to increasing rider satisfaction. Ackerson provided an overview of the program and improvement examples such as collecting bus stop accessibility data from 2022-2025 to help with adding accessible boarding areas (ADA pads), updating the bus stop improvement guidelines in 2025 resulting in more installation of bus shelters, and tracking key performance indicator data since 2016 to improve adding shelter light and shelter heat.

Presenter Paul Lamb summarized bus stop capital improvements completed in 2025 highlighting accomplishments by working with multiple Metro Transit led projects and coordinating with agency partners during roadway projects. Better Bus Stops Program is ongoing for future and presenter shared a map with planned improvements in 2026.

Chair and Council Members thanked presenters for sharing the data and information. Council Member Toni Carter asked clarifying questions regarding progression of shelters having light and heat. Presenters shared that shelter, light, and heat are standard amenities for LRT and BRT stations but is not the case for regular route bus stops which is the focus of the Better Bus Stops program.

Council Member Pacheco commented on the light amenity which makes a difference and improves safety at a shelter and asked about the benches with advertising. Presenter answered they are managed by an outside vendor and do coordinate with requests to move or adjust location of benches.

Council Member Cederberg asked about removal of bus signs from routes that are no longer in use and Regional Administrator answered there is a plan under Network Now and will connect with Metro Transit General Manager.

Council Member Jenkins asked a question about how residents can engage with Better Bus Stops and presenters directed to Metro Transit website comment form or call Metro Transit.

Council Member Lindstrom commented on using the Transit app where feedback questions are asked and questioned presenters if the app sends information to Metro Transit and presenter shared there is a partnership with Transit app and vendor has shared information. Lindstrom asked a question about solar power at bus stations and presenter discussed pilots over the years with changing technology and there is a plan to continue to grow the program.

Council Member Dr. Tyrone Carter asked a question on the configuration of a shelter to convert it to have light and heat, and presenter answered it doesn't take much as



light as heat can be attached to shelter structure. Dr. Carter asked about the goal for shelters to have light and heat and presenters shared the current criteria in program. Regional Administrator closed with appreciation for the work as there was little to no data at the start of the work and it is good to see the data and results and commitment to grow.

2. **Public Art Update** (Mark Granlund, Public Art Administrator)

Mark Granlund, Public Art Administrator at Metro Transit, gave an overview of Metro Transit's public art collection, which is one of the largest public art collections in Minnesota. Granlund introduced the five aspects of the Public Art in Metro Transit Program, which include collection maintenance, maintenance support, community opportunities, new and upgraded facilities, and interpretive programming.

Collection maintenance project included stainless steel fence repair at 50th St Station on the METRO Blue Line, as well as the removal of graffiti that covers public art. The presenter emphasized that public art tends to dissuade vandalism, and the program hopes to see less graffiti each year. Another public work, "Tool Shed", at the 38th Street Station on the METRO Blue Line, was repaired and repainted.

Maintenance Support is assisted by murals, such as those done at Rail Houses in Downtown East and 73rd & 34th in Minneapolis, as well as the Gold Line Park & Ride in Woodlane Park, which help reduce graffiti. The Bus Shelter Beautification Program is another facet of Maintenance Support shown to reduce damage to Metro Transit property; this program supports 34 shelters with artworks by 21 local artists.

Within Community Opportunities, Metro Transit has partnered with Rondo Community Land Trust Partnership to showcase local artwork on six B Line Stops, representing the history and community of the Rondo neighborhood.

The Public Art in Transit program also works toward New and Upgraded facilities; this is a proactive approach that looks for opportunities for public art at the conception of new facilities. One such example is North Loop Garage, that showcases large murals by Dani Bianchini and Pablo Kalaka, Hibaaq Ibrahim, Megan Moore, and Kada Goalen.

Interpretative Programming is a facet of the Public Art program that provides public art tours, as well as the Public Art in Transit webpages, which provide information about featured artists and opportunities. Local artists may also sign up for public art roster of over 140 artists, which is available to Council staff who need creative project. Granlund also addressed future collaborations that will take place with the Public Art & Policy team at the Metropolitan Council, integrating the operational aspects of the Public Art in Transit program with the outreach and engagement aspects of the Public Art & Policy program.

The presenter briefly overviewed some of the 2026 goals for the Public Art in Transit program, including restoration of damaged works and new artworks at the Green Line Extension signal houses, LRT Training Facility, and the North Loop Garage. Granlund concluded the presentation by naming some of the impacts of a vital public art program, such as enhanced user experience, easier maintenance, and more diverse and engaged communities.

Council Members expressed support for the mission of Public Art in Transit and the impact that these works have on the community.



Reports

Chair Hutcheson recognized Administrative Professionals Day and hope that staff had an opportunity to thank their administrative staff for their daily support. It is also Earth Day. Chair Hutcheson attended 2026 State of the Parks event at the new Mississippi Headwaters building, where they focused on water. Council Members are invited to attend the May 1, 2026, Metro Transit Police Department annual awards ceremony. There is no meeting on April 29, 2026 since it is the fifth Wednesday.

Council Member Lilligren will attend 2026 APA National Planning Conference in Detroit, MI to share the Council's work with tribal communities. Council Member Johnson commended Council Member Lilligren for his leadership to make this possible.

Council Member Obisakin thanked Chair Hutcheson for taking time to meet with District 15 representatives. They were impressed with the meeting, and it meant a lot to the community.

Regional Administrator provided briefings on significant construction projects for Green Line this weekend, as well as Blue Line this summer, and highlighted the importance of good repair for the transit system. In addition, the week of May 5th is an organization-wide staff appreciation week and shared opportunities for Council Members to join staff appreciation events as schedules allow.

General Counsel shared that May 1, 2026 is Law Day and encouraged staff to ask a lawyer to ask how they are going to celebrate the day.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Council meeting of April 22, 2026.

Council contact:

Mee Cheng, Recording Secretary
Mee.Cheng@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1222

Regional Solicitation Evaluation Community Considerations Summary/Timeline

Executive Summary

The Regional Solicitation is the Metropolitan Council's competitive process for allocating federal and regional transportation funds across the seven-county metro, recently redesigned to align with Imagine 2050 and incorporate updated criteria.

Community Considerations is a new, systemwide scoring criterion focused on how well projects understand, engage, and benefit nearby communities, implemented through three qualitative measures: community context, engagement, and benefits. It represents a shift from population-based equity measures to a broader process-focused approach.

From 2024-2026 a Policymaker Working Group and Technical Working Group, supported by multiple other groups of external transportation stakeholders, guided the redesign of application categories, scoring criteria, and measures. Policy debate related to Community Considerations focused on weighting. Key dates included:

April 2025 Policymaker Workshop Policymakers emphasized shifting equity evaluation toward community understanding and project process.

Spring/Summer 2025 Special Interest Working Groups 100+ participants developed and tested scoring measures; Community Considerations group recommended 20% weighting.

November–December 2025 Work Group Reviews Multiple committees reviewed the proposed criteria, with counties raising concerns about weighting while other members supported maintaining a stronger emphasis on community considerations.

December 17, 2025 Policymaker Working Group The group reached consensus on a hybrid approach: 20% weighting for most categories and 15% for safety categories.

December 18, 2025 TAC Funding & Programming Committee The committee supported Community Considerations, recommended lower weighting (15% overall, 10% for safety).

January 7, 2026 TAC The Technical Advisory Committee forwarded both weighting options (15%/10% and 20%/15%) to TAB without a single recommendation.

January 21, 2026 Policymaker Working Group Vote Members narrowly preferred the lower weighting option (15%/10%) in a split vote, reflecting differing priorities among counties, state, and council representatives. Several members were not present for this meeting.

January 21, 2026 TAB Decision TAB rejected the lower weighting option and approved the higher weighting (20%/15%) for the draft solicitation released for public comment.

January–February 2026 Public Comment Period Public and stakeholder feedback broadly supported including Community Considerations, with mixed views on weighting and general agreement to evaluate outcomes after implementation.

March 17, 2026 TAB Action TAB approved the full Regional Solicitation package without changes to Community Considerations following public comment.

April 2026 (Upcoming Council Action) The Metropolitan Council is scheduled to consider final approval of the solicitation in April 2026.

Additional Background and Chronology

The Regional Solicitation Evaluation was an effort to redesign the entire Regional Solicitation application used for selecting projects for federal transportation funding in the seven-county metro region. In total there were over 120 touchpoints with stakeholders and the public throughout the process. The redesign also developed a new application and process for allocating the Active Transportation sales tax funds provided to TAB by the 2023 transit sales tax legislation. The project is meant to align the Regional Solicitation with the goals and objectives of [Imagine 2050](#), the regional development guide. A similar effort was undertaken in 2014 when *Thrive 2040* was adopted. *Thrive 2040* was the first time equity appeared as a regional goal and the 2014 redesign resulted in bringing equity criteria and measures into the Solicitation. These measures were evaluated and adjusted by TAB after each of the six solicitations from 2014 – 2024.

A 10-member **Policymaker Working Group** was formed to guide the process and make design policy recommendations to the TAB and Council, and to provide policy direction to the project's Technical Working Group and Special Issue Working Groups. The group met 14 times between April 2024 and March 2026. Members included four Council members and six TAB members from cities, counties, agencies and TAB citizen-members. Jim Hovland, Edina Mayor and TAB Chair, served as Chair of the Policymaker Working Group. The group primarily focused on the Solicitation structure (application categories) and project selection criteria meant to reflect the Imagine 2050 and 2050 TPP goals and objectives.

An 18-member **Technical Working Group** was formed to advise on technical matters in the Solicitation design. It was comprised of technical staff from local governments, transit providers, the Metropolitan Council, and state agencies and met throughout the study process. The Technical Working Group was chaired by Lakeville Public Works Director and TAC member, Paul Oehme. The group met 10 times and primarily focused on technical measures meant to reflect the project selection criteria and project eligibility and other requirements. In addition, 7 special interest working groups, including a Community Considerations group, were formed to provide initial technical recommendations on proposed measures to the Technical Working Group as described further below.

Community Considerations is a project scoring criteria that is proposed to be included in the Solicitation across all application categories. It is meant to focus on how well a project applicant understands, will engage with, and considers the communities nearby, adjacent to, and impacted by, a proposed project. It represents the *Imagine 2050* goal of Equity and Inclusion and the adopted *Imagine 2050* frameworks of community-centered engagement and environmental justice.

The Community Considerations criteria is measured using three qualitative measures of equal value: 1. community data and context; 2. community needs and future community

engagement; and. 3. community benefits. The measures together are meant to tell the “story” of a project as it relates to the community, near, adjacent to and impacted by the proposed project (i.e., describing who lives works and plays and accesses destinations near the proposed project; how community was involved in identifying the project need and how they will be engaged throughout the project development and decision-making phases; and what direct benefits the nearby community is expected to receive from the project).

The Community Considerations measures ask applicants to consider **all communities** near, adjacent to and impacted by proposed projects. Applicants are directed to also include the data, understanding and engagement with specific communities including youth, seniors, low-income, disabled and people of color. These populations are present in all geographic areas and communities, and the applicant will not receive specific points just for having these specific communities. The proposed Community Considerations measures are broader and more applicable everywhere, than the equity measures used in previous solicitations which mainly focused only on the populations of the specific communities, and also included an affordable housing measure.

Chronology

April 2024-March 2026: full period of the Regional Solicitation Evaluation and solicitation design work. The process began with policy work considering the Solicitation structure (application categories) and how it could relate to the Imagine 2050 goals and objectives, discussed funding targets or ranges for each application area, and then moved into the technical work of identifying criteria, measures, and measure weighting to be used for project scoring in each application category. Early in the process there was consideration for a standalone application category for projects that best advance equity. Instead, the group determined that the region’s goal for “equitable and inclusive” should be reflected across all categories. Committees considered up to 30% weighting.

April 2025 Policymaker Workshop: All Council Transportation Committee and TAB members were invited to participate in this workshop meant to set the prioritize outcomes for the solicitation spending. Policymaker participants highlighted the need to shift equity evaluation toward a focus on community understanding, project process, and community need, especially considering the challenges of engaging communities early on in project development. Members agreed that requiring detailed engagement at the application stage can disadvantage smaller communities and increase costs, further disadvantaging smaller applicants. Instead, they supported using broader, qualifying criteria and narrative justifications to assess equity-related impacts.

Spring/Summer 2025 Special Interest Working Groups: Two in-person workshops were held in April and May of 2025, where 101 participants from across the region provided technical expertise. The seven special interest working groups provided initial technical recommendations on the proposed measures to the Technical Steering Committee.

Participants also prioritized proposed measures in terms of their connection to regional policy and ability to differentiate among projects. These special interest working groups included safety, bicycle and pedestrian, roadways and bridges, transit, climate and electrification, TDM, and Community Considerations (equity).

The Community Considerations special interest working group met on three additional occasions to develop the three measures and also conducted a pilot scoring using projects from the 2024 solicitation. A recommendation after the pilot scoring was to use multiple scorers on each application and to hold additional meetings with the full group of Community Considerations scorers to level set and make sure all scorers understood the scoring expectations. On two separate occasions, the Community Considerations Interest Group recommended setting the total scoring weight at 20%, with each measure weighted equally (at 6.67%). Members of this Special Interest group included technical representation from MnDOT, Hennepin, Anoka and Washington counties, Metro Transit, four cities and one community-based organization (The Alliance), along with the project consulting team (Bellwether and Bolton & Menk).

Fall/Winter 2025 presentations and discussion across work groups and committees on all proposed solicitation criteria and measures with extra meeting time and full presentations dedicated to the Community Considerations criteria, measures and weighting as described below:

- **November 19, 2025, Policymaker Working Group** received a full presentation on Community Considerations criteria and measures recommendations ([PowerPoint Presentation](#)).
- **November 25, 2025, Technical Working Group** ([meeting notes](#)) received a presentation on Community Considerations recommendations, and discussed the measures.
- **December 2, 2025, TAB Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** ([Minutes](#)) County staff sent an email to the TAC and asked to present a proposal that lowered the Community Considerations measures total weighting to 10 percent, for all three measures, across all application categories and proposed that the points be reallocated across other unspecified criteria and measures. TAC had a discussion but did not pass a recommendation.
- **December 17, 2025, Policymaker Working group.** ([meeting notes](#)) During Working Group discussion, county members expressed interest in reducing the weighting of the community considerations measures. Other members, including Metropolitan Council members on the group, supported retaining the proposed 20% weighting. The Working Group reached a final consensus on the issue as follows: “The final consensus from the group was to recommend a reduction to 15 percent for the two safety applications and maintain 20 percent for other application categories.”

- **December 18, 2025, TAC Funding & Programming** ([adopted minutes](#)) In discussion of Community Considerations measures, members generally supported the concept and some raised concerns about weighting and subjectivity—particularly the risk of it becoming narrative-driven and less verifiable—while others emphasized its importance for equity, smaller communities, and capturing impacts not reflected in traditional quantitative metrics. The committee passed an amended motion to reduce weighting of the Community Considerations total weighting to 15% across all categories except 10% for the two safety categories.
- **January 7, 2026, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** ([adopted minutes](#)) Following discussion and recognizing the policymaker work group had provided a recommendation different from what the Funding & Programming Committee had passed, and that TAB should make the policy decision, the **TAC voted to forward both options to TAB**, the TAC Funding & Programming recommendation (15%/10%) and the December 17 Policymaker Working Group recommendation (20%/15%) to TAB.
- **January 21, 2026, Policymaker Working Group** ([full notes](#)) this excerpt of meeting notes encapsulates the core themes of extended committee discussion: Member Barber asked why the TAC Funding and Programming Committee felt the criteria weight was too high. Joe MacPherson (Anoka Co. Engineer) explained that the committee believed other important criteria, such as freight, should receive higher weights. Member Barber noted that lowering the weight for Community Considerations, one of the five Met Council goals (Equitable and Inclusive), would diminish its importance.

After further discussion, the Policymaker Work Group was asked to vote on a preferred option, with 6 preferring option 1 (15%/10%) and 4 preferring option 2 (20%/15%).

Option 1: Supported by members Holberg (Dakota), Ulrich (Scott), Goettel (Hennepin), Lake, Jeppson (Anoka), Kauppi (MnDOT); Option 2: Supported by members Barber, Martinson (TAB modal), Carter (Councilmember), and Johnson (TAB citizen). Eight Working Group members including two Council members, were not present.

- **January 21, 2026, TAB** ([adopted minutes](#)). The full TAB discussed the matter further in its meeting and took roll call votes on each of the options recommended by the TAC.
 - A motion to adopt the 15%/10% Community Considerations weighting failed 10-14. Voting for the motion were 6 county, 3 city, and the MnDOT representative. Voting against were Council, MPCA, citizen and modal representatives, Ramsey Co, St. Paul, and Cottage Grove representatives. Three city members, one citizen member, and the suburban transit member were absent. These members' alternates did not attend the TAB meeting. The Minneapolis, MAC, and one Council-appointed Transit member positions were vacant in January 2026.
 - A motion to adopt the 20%/15% Community Considerations weighting passed 14-9 (one member had left). This vote became part of the full Solicitation package TAB voted to release for public comment later in the meeting.

A public comment period ([comment report](#)) sought input on the full Regional Solicitation design from January 23 to February 17, 2026. Twenty two commentors provide comments across a range of topics. Comments regarding the importance of community input and engagement on projects broadly supported maintaining the Community Considerations measures, including specific support for the proposed weighting. County comments generally supported inclusion of the Community Considerations measures as follows:

- Hennepin County encouraged a sensitivity analysis of the weighting after the scoring and project selection
- Dakota County recommended reducing the weighting to 10-15%
- Scott County expressed concern that 20% weighting deemphasizes other measures
- Washington County comments did not specifically address this measure
- Ramsey, Anoka, and Carver counties did not submit solicitation comments

Additional comments emphasized the need to center the communities directly adjacent to the project area. In the comment responses, the Council committed to review and evaluate the Community Considerations criteria and measures after the 2026 solicitation has concluded (a standard and longstanding practice).

March 17, 2026, TAB (draft minutes not yet posted) did not include discussion of Community Considerations and no motions were made to revise the measures following public comment. The TAB overwhelmingly approved (via voice vote) the motion to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the full Regional Solicitation.

The Metropolitan Council is scheduled to consider the Solicitation approval at its April 22 Metropolitan Council meeting. The Council's Transportation Committee recommended the item for Council approval at its April 13 meeting.



SCOTT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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BARB WECKMAN BREKKE, DISTRICT 1
TOM WOLF, DISTRICT 2
JODY BRENNAN, DISTRICT 3
DAVE BEER, DISTRICT 4
JON ULRICH, DISTRICT 5

March 30, 2026

Sean P. Duffy
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Minnesota Metropolitan Council Federal Regional Funding Solicitation – Compliance with Current Federal Policy

Dear Secretary Duffy:

I am writing on behalf of the Scott County Board of Commissioners to express concerns regarding the Metropolitan Council's proposed Federal Funding Solicitation Guidance and its alignment with current federal transportation policy.

The Metropolitan Council recently released its draft funding criteria for public comment. This is a very complex solicitation the Metropolitan Council utilizes to award local Federal Transportation Funds in the region. In our response, the Scott County Board—representing one of the seven metropolitan counties under the Council's jurisdiction—requested that the Council seek a U.S. Department of Transportation review to ensure the criteria comply with federal policy. The Council declined this request and is scheduled to adopt these criteria at its full board in April.

Council staff concluded that the Metropolitan Council has broad discretion in developing funding criteria and emphasized community engagement as a priority. However, from our review, the community engagement component appears to function as a rebranded form of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and now accounts for up to 20% of scoring in several project categories. Engagement is narrowly defined as outreach to specific communities along a corridor rather than to the broader user base. As a result, major regional corridors—such as U.S. Highway 169—may be evaluated based on feedback from a small community segment rather than economic impact, freight movement, job access, or corridor-wide safety considerations. The weighting of this criterion and thus importance of this in project selection has expanded significantly in this latest project selection process.

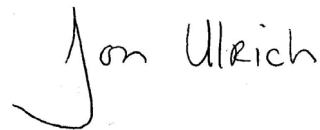
Sean P. Duffy
March 30, 2026
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Our Board finds it troubling that an appointed body declined the basic federal compliance review requested by elected county officials. This is an indication of how the Metropolitan Council operates and deals with local agencies within the region. The Metropolitan Council remains the only major Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the nation composed entirely of gubernatorial appointees without elected representation. This concern has been documented for more than a decade, including in a 2011 legislative auditor report recommending further evaluation of regional transit governance. Suburban communities have repeatedly sought a comprehensive review, beyond the explanation that the current structure is “grandfathered in; against the more recent federal legislation regarding MPO requirements.

Enclosed are the Board’s resolution, the scoring criteria, and the Council’s response. We are requesting that the U.S. Department of Transportation review these criteria for consistency with current federal transportation policy, provide appropriate oversight of the MPO, and consider whether additional evaluation of its governance structure is warranted.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,



Jon Ulrich, Chair
Scott County Board of Commissioners
julrich@co.scott.mn.us

C: Scott County Commissioners
Representative Angie Craig
Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Tina Smith
Anoka County Chair Schulte
Carver County Chair Workman
Dakota County Chair Halverson
Washington County Chair Bigham
Met Council Representative Deb Barber
Met Council Representative Wendy Wulff

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SCOTT COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

Date: February 17, 2026

Resolution No.: 2026-43

Motion by Commissioner: Jody Brennan

Seconded by Commissioner: Dave Beer

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-43; AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF COMMENTS ON THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL'S DRAFT 2026 REGIONAL SOLICITATION APPLICATION PROCESSES

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council has adopted its Imagine 2050 Regional Development Framework as the region's comprehensive development guide; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council has adopted its 2050 Transportation Policy Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council has prepared its 2026 Regional Solicitation, Active Transportation Solicitation, and Highway Safety Improvement Program Solicitation draft packages that reflect nearly two years of work to redesign the solicitation applications and processes to align with Imagine 2050 and the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council and Transportation Advisory Board have released these draft application packages and processes for a 30-day public review and comment period.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Scott, Minnesota, that it thanks the Metropolitan Council for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft 2026 Regional Solicitation Application Processes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Scott County Board of Commissioners believes that the comment letter should be considered and incorporated into the final application packages and processes, including:

- 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

- 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.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Scott County Board of Commissioners authorizes submitting this resolution and signed comment letter to the Metropolitan Council and Transportation Advisory Board.

VOTE RESULTS:

Yes: Barb Weckman Brekke, Tom Wolf, Jody Brennan, Dave Beer, Jon Ulrich

No: None

Absent:

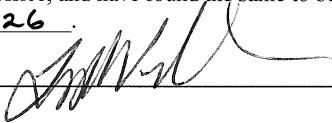
Abstain: None

State of Minnesota)

County of Scott)

I, Lezlie A. Vermillion, duly appointed qualified County Administrator for the County of Scott, State of Minnesota, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of a resolution with the original minutes of the proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners, Scott County, Minnesota, at their session held on 2/17/2026 now on file in my office, and have found the same to be a true and correct copy thereof.

Witness my hand and official seal at Shakopee, Minnesota, on 2/17/2026.



County Administrator

Administrator's Designee



SCOTT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

200 Fourth Avenue West · Shakopee, MN 55379-1220
(952) 496-8100 · www.scottcountymn.gov

BARB WECKMAN BREKKE, DISTRICT 1
TOM WOLF, DISTRICT 2
JODY BRENNAN, DISTRICT 3
DAVE BEER, DISTRICT 4
JON ULRICH, DISTRICT 5

February 17, 2026

Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

SUBJECT: Scott County Comments on 2026 Regional Solicitation

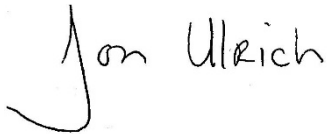
Dear Metropolitan Council and Transportation Advisory Board Members,

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:

- 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.
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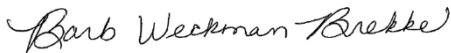
Respectfully,



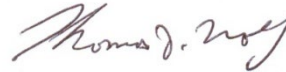
Jon Ulrich, Chair
Commissioner District 5



Jody Brennan, Vice Chair
Commissioner District 3



Barb Weckman Brekke
Commissioner District 1



Tom Wolf
Commissioner District 2



Dave Beer
Commissioner District 4

Commenter	Comment	Response
<p>Scott County Board of Commissioners</p>	<p>Dear Metropolitan Council and Transportation Advisory Board Members, 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. 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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>
<p>Scott County Board of Commissioners</p>	<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>

COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

Foundational Policies

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.
2. **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
3. **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.
 4. **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 will serve as a basis for your response to each measure.

COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

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.

COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

Measures Description

Measures	Rating/Points	%
<p>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 communities. 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.</p> <p>*Examples of detailed community data: demographics (race, ethnicity, age, low income, disabled), affordable housing locations, essential services, employers/job centers, schools, cultural and social destinations.</p>	<p>Low / Low-Medium / Medium / Medium-High / High</p>	<p>33% (6.7 points)</p>
<p>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, 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.</p>	<p>Low / Low-Medium / Medium / Medium-High / High</p>	<p>33% (6.7 points)</p>
<p>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 that the project may bring to the specific communities. Describe how any potential burdens will be mitigated.</p>	<p>Low / Low-Medium / Medium / Medium-High / High</p>	<p>33% (6.7 points)</p>
<p>Final rating/score</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>100%</p>

COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

Scoring rubric

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.

A. Community Data and Context

The project application...

Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes general census data on “specific communities,” (e.g. “community has x% low-income population, versus the regional average of y%”) • Has a basic list of important destinations without demonstrating local knowledge • Has a project area description but lacks community insight or context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has local maps and/or description beyond census data • Has granular data or maps (e.g., knowledge of a concentration of specific communities in this neighborhood or location) • Identifies affordable housing locations and areas of low-income • Links data to project purpose • Identifies past system burdens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has granular, neighborhood-scale data and context on specific communities • Identifies cultural assets & significant sites validated by the communities (e.g., this community of low-income residents expressed a need to be able to walk to a health care destination). • Describes any past and present transportation harms to communities • Has data on cultural history of communities,

COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

B. Community Needs and Future Engagement

The project application...

Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes how the project need was identified through planning and information-gathering work with communities Describes how input from “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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> References documented organizational policies, procedures and commitments that support future engagement with specific communities on the project, E.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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 engagement staff -Other governing board or council action demonstrating a commitment to community considerations

COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

C. Community Benefits

The project application...

Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not describe project benefits for specific communities• Describes benefits in general terms for all users• Does not acknowledge potential project burdens, despite high potential for them to arise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describes benefits for specific communities• Ties benefits directly to community-identified needs• Describes how benefits were identified through engagement• Includes early mitigation plans for project burdens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describes how project repairs past burdens and removes 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)



April 3, 2026

Commissioner Jon Ulrich
Chair, Scott County Board of Commissioners
200 Fourth Avenue West
Shakopee, MN 55379-1220

Subject: Scott County 3-30-2026 Letter to USDOT regarding the Transportation Advisory Board Regional Solicitation Process

Dear Chair Ulrich:

I am writing in response to Scott County's recent letter to the USDOT Secretary expressing concerns with the region's proposed design of its Regional Solicitation for Federal Funds.

First, thank you for your on-going participation on both the Regional Solicitation Policymaker Work Group and the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) over the past 2.5 years as these groups worked to redesign the Solicitation. These groups, representing the voices of elected local government, technical experts and the public, served as the effort's key decisionmakers. The Metropolitan Council disputes your characterization of the Regional Solicitation criteria and the Transportation Advisory Board process included in your letter.

The Council serves as the region's lawfully designated Metropolitan Planning Organization under 23 USC 134, as FHWA and FTA reaffirmed as recently as March 2025.¹ The Council remains compliant with all federal transportation planning requirements. The TAB is created under state law (Minnesota Statutes Section 473.386) to advise the Council on transportation planning matters. The TAB has primary responsibility for designing and recommending the Solicitation to the Council for approval.

Under longstanding agreed upon regional practice, the Council can either agree without modification to the TAB's recommended Solicitation design or send it back for reconsideration. Because TAB's membership includes a majority of local elected officials along with agency, modal and citizen representatives, this practice assures that local representatives have the primary voice in deciding how the region's federal funds are allocated to local projects.

At the March 18, 2026 TAB meeting that included a representative from Scott County elected leadership, on a voice vote with almost unanimous support, the TAB accepted the proposed Solicitation public comment report and recommended that the Council approve its updated

¹ *March 2025 Metropolitan Council Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review*. "Over the years, FHWA and FTA have received several inquiries regarding the Council's composition In response to the inquiries, FHWA and FTA have consistently noted that the Council was designated as the MPO before December 18, 1991, and has not been redesignated since. This allows the Council to qualify for the exemption under 23 USC 134(d)(4) regarding MPO composition requirements. The 2024 TMA certification review upholds this determination."

Solicitation design. The TAB's action followed a two-year process that included multiple rounds of public engagement, a formal 45-day comment period, policymaker work group meetings, and broad participation from local governments and the public.

During the Solicitation redesign process, there was considerable discussion by TAB of the proposed Community Considerations criteria and measures, specifically whether these measures should comprise 15% or 20% of project scores. The TAB recommended 20% while Scott County preferred 15% weighting for this measure. For roadway projects the other 80% of the scoring uses measures for safety, reliability, excessive delay, freight, and multimodal connections. In the application category for Roadway Congestion Management Projects, 45% of the points are for delay reduction, reliability, and freight, 30% are for safety and multimodal connections and 5% are for natural resource considerations. These 80% measures relate to freight and people movement through project areas, while 20% of project scores relate to the experiences of nearby people and communities.

We'd like to clarify three specific issues raised in Scott County's letter that are not supported by the record of the solicitation design process:

1. In the USDOT letter, Scott County suggests that it submitted comments to the Council and TAB in opposition to the Community Considerations criteria. The attached resolution sent by Scott County expresses support for these criteria (third comment bullet): *"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."* This comment rightfully led us to believe that the county was in support of Community Consideration measures but had an issue with the weighting or value of the measures. The TAB discussed and voted on the measures weighting and chose to set it at 20%.
2. Scott County suggests that it requested, and that the Council declined, a specific request for a USDOT review of the Community Considerations measures. We are not in receipt of any record indicating a specific request to seek federal review of these measures. Criteria included in the regional solicitation is consistent with federal guidelines, therefore no additional review of local decision-making would be expected.
3. In its letter to USDOT, Scott County suggests that the Community Considerations engagement measure is narrowly defined to outreach to only specific communities and that projects will be evaluated only from this feedback.

The definition of Community includes all populations adjacent to and impacted by a project. Applicants are asked to address the data and context of, engagement with, and benefits to, all people near and adjacent to proposed projects. The solicitation provides no recommendation or guidance that scorers award points based upon the presence of specific populations.

While we recognize that Scott County has expressed concerns, the TAB's recommendation reflects a broad, multi-year regional process and was supported by its membership, including local elected officials.

I hope you will consider this letter as part of the longstanding constructive work between Scott County and the Metropolitan Council. I look forward to when we can discuss these, and other matters of our mutual regional benefit, in person.

Sincerely,



Robin Hutcheson
Chair, Metropolitan Council

CC: Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Tina Smith
Representative Angie Craig
USDOT
Scott County Commissioners
Anoka County Chair Schulte
Carver County Chair Workman
Dakota County Chair Halverson
Washington County Chair Bigham
Met Council Representative Deb Barber
Met Council Representative Wendy Wulff



April 7, 2026

Sean P. Duffy
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Minnesota Metropolitan Council Regional Funding Solicitation Community Considerations criteria

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am writing on behalf of the Dakota County Board of Commissioners to express concern regarding the updated proposed criteria for the Metropolitan Council's 2026 Regional Solicitation for federal funding. The Met Council's current scoring structure was not supported by the Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) Funding and Programming Committee, six of seven county elected representatives, three of five of the city elected officials and the MnDOT representative. The scoring structure values Community Considerations disproportionately high over other core criteria. Further, this approach reflects a vote that was passed primarily by appointed members, not key elected officials who represent the broader Twin Cities area. This is unlike other metro planning organizations across the rest of Minnesota and the country.

Dakota County, like other local governments, completes a thorough engagement process for every transportation project to ensure the communities' values, needs and concerns are considered in project development and design. However, the Transportation Advisory Board's (TAB) recommended Community Consideration criteria weighted at 15–20 percent of the overall score is disproportionately high. More concerning, it's narrowly defined, subjective and not supported by the majority of elected officials. Community Considerations are also narrative based, which makes them difficult to measure. The county elected officials proposed a maximum of 10 percent for Community Considerations, while the TAC recommended a 15 percent maximum.

The TAC recommendation failed by a vote of 10 to 14 at the Jan. 21, 2026, meeting of the TAB. The final motion passed to adopt implementation of Community Considerations at 15 percent for safety and 20 percent for other application categories, but the vote composition raises serious concerns about local representation and regional consensus. The measure was largely supported by appointed board members, while ignoring the position recommended by elected officials and transportation professionals.

The board's decision does not reflect the position of those most accountable to the public and responsible for carrying out transportation investments across the region. This reflects broader concerns that the very unique Met Council, a metropolitan planning organization unlike any other across the country, doesn't represent the best interests of the region nor the priorities of its elected officials.

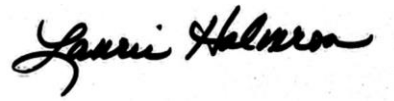
County Board of Commissioners

P 651-438-4418 **W** www.dakotacounty.us
A Dakota County Administration Center • 1590 Highway 55 • Hastings • MN 55033



This item is up for final approval by the Met Council on April 22, 2026, and will set the criteria for the next 10 years for regional transportation funding. We ask that you review the Met Council's Regional Solicitation proposed criteria and its implementation process. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Laurie Halverson, Chair
Dakota County Board of Commissioners

Enc:

Minutes, Transportation Advisory Board – January 21, 2026

TAC recommendation

TAB recommendation (see pages 16–39)



SCOTT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

200 FOURTH AVENUE WEST · SHAKOPEE, MN 55379-1220
(952)496-8100 · www.scottcountymn.gov

BARB WECKMAN BREKKE, DISTRICT 1
TOM WOLF, DISTRICT 2
JODY BRENNAN, DISTRICT 3
DAVE BEER, DISTRICT 4
JON ULRICH, DISTRICT 5

April 21, 2026

Councilmembers Deb Barber and Wendy Wulff
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Re: Scott County opposition to the Met Council's Regional Funding Solicitation

Dear Councilmembers Barber and Wulff,

The Scott County Board of Commissioners is requesting that you vote no on the Metropolitan Council's 2026 Regional Solicitation. The Scott County Board continues to have concerns over the Community Considerations section of the solicitation.

The County Board requested a review of the criteria being used and compliance with Federal Transportation Policy, which the Met Council refused to do. We continue to believe that the Transportation Policy Plan and the solicitation are not in compliance with current federal policy, as it directly and indirectly cites Executive Orders that have been revoked.

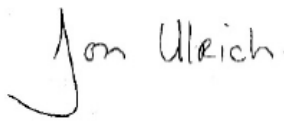
Community engagement is an important part of what Scott County does for transportation projects. The projects that the Metropolitan Council/Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) solicit are regional in nature, not local neighborhood projects. These corridors are the principal and minor arterials that move freight and provide mobility through the region, and that's where federal funds should be utilized. Scott County submits projects identified in our Met Council approved transportation plan—principal arterials with approved corridor studies—and holds multiple local meetings. As elected officials, County Commissioners make decisions on behalf of all constituents, even though not everyone agrees with the final decision.

The Technical Advisory Committee's Funding and Programming Committee approved a reduced weighting for the Community Considerations scoring criteria by a vote of 15 to 6. Many members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) did not support the regional solicitation scoring criteria, but when told the Met Council was going to get 20% regardless of a TAC recommendation, they essentially deferred to the TAB. At the TAB meeting when this was proposed, six of the seven county elected representatives, three of the five of the city elected officials, and the MnDOT representative opposed the scoring proposal. The scoring structure values Community Considerations disproportionately high over other fundamental criteria. Again this is being approved primarily by appointed members, not by elected officials as directed by federal policy.

The Community Considerations portion of the solicitation is narrowly defined and very subjective. How will an applicant score the highest points for documented harms? How does one actually score that? Is it a matter of storytelling, with those who spin the best tale getting the most points? Where should we tell the regional highway story and highlight the harms to the small businesses and farmers with grain sitting on a congested highway? Why are we only allowed to tell the story about the adjacent neighborhood? The county elected officials proposed a maximum of 10 percent for Community Considerations, while the TAC recommended a 15 percent maximum. The most subjective items are qualifying criteria, which needs to be completed before you can even apply for funds.

We would ask that you vote no on this item at the April 22, 2026 meeting. The Scott County Board continues to believe until you request a review by the Secretary of Transportation on the relevance of the scoring criteria and composition of the TAB (majority of unelected officials making this decision) that the solicitation should be tabled. We appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Ulrich". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Jon Ulrich, Chair
Scott County Board of Commissioners

Enc:

Community Considerations Scoring Matrix

Robin Hutcheson, Chair, Metropolitan Council
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St North
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1805

April 21, 2026

Dear Chair Hutcheson,

Mobility is power. The ability for people across our region to move efficiently, safely, and affordably—to reach jobs, schools, places of worship, healthcare, and one another — is foundational to a thriving region. This principle emerged from extensive public outreach across all seven counties and has guided the Metropolitan Council’s work for more than a decade, reflected in both Thrive MSP 2040 and Imagine 2050. This is why we — community-based and transportation advocacy nonprofits — support the Transportation Advisory Board's recommendation to include the Community Considerations criterion in the upcoming Regional Solicitation, weighted at 20% of application scores.

The Community Considerations criterion in the Regional Solicitation ensures that transportation investments are not only technically sound but also grounded in the lived realities of the people and places they are intended to serve. At its core, Community Considerations recognizes a simple truth: transportation projects do not exist in a vacuum. Every project is situated in a specific place—shaped by the people who live, work, learn, and gather there.

The Regional Solicitation already maintains a strong technical foundation, prioritizing safety, reliability, freight movement, and overall system performance. By centering place and the people who live near the project, Community Considerations ensures Regional Solicitation investments take into account how transportation systems are experienced on the ground. A project that performs well in a model but creates unintended burdens or misses key local needs is ultimately a less effective investment.

The Community Considerations framework is structured and evidence-based. It asks applicants to:

- Ground projects in data and context, including who is present in a place and how transportation systems have shaped it over time;
- Demonstrate how project needs were identified through engagement, planning, and direct input;
- Clearly articulate project benefits and how they respond to identified needs while addressing potential burdens.

This is not an abstract or purely narrative exercise. It is a disciplined approach that integrates data, documentation, and local knowledge to produce better outcomes.

The definition of “community” is appropriately place-based, focusing on those who are adjacent to and directly impacted by a project—those whose daily lives are shaped by it. This ensures investments respond to real conditions while maintaining broader system-level analysis through existing technical criteria.

While communities may not speak in technical engineering terms, they bring essential knowledge: where safety risks are concentrated, how traffic patterns function, where access breaks down, and what design elements could mitigate harm or enhance benefit. Incorporating this knowledge leads to more responsive and successful projects.

Meaningful engagement also strengthens trust and accountability. When project teams engage with communities, they move from being perceived as distant decision-makers to partners in shaping shared outcomes. This builds mutual understanding, reduces conflict, and creates a stronger foundation for implementation.

Importantly, Community Considerations is not new. It builds on years of regional work, including the Transportation Advisory Board's 2014 Regional Solicitation redesign, broad engagement for two rounds of regional long-range planning, and reflects a continued commitment to improving how decisions are made and how benefits and burdens are understood.

As community-based organizations and nonprofits engaged in transportation advocacy working across the region, we strongly support the inclusion and continued use of the Community Considerations criterion. It strengthens the Regional Solicitation process and advances a more complete and responsible approach to transportation investment—one that integrates performance, place, and people. This is well worth 20% of a project's evaluation given what it can mitigate down the road.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to a transportation system that works for everyone in the entire region. Please contact joohee@thealliancetc.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

African Career, Education & Resources, Inc.
African Economic Development Solutions
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
The Arc Minnesota
Asian Economic Development Association
Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota
Community Stabilization Project
Fresh Energy
Heritage Park Neighborhood Association
Jewish Community Action
Lake Street Council
Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing

MN350
Move Minnesota
New American Development Center
Northside Residents Redevelopment Center
Sierra Club North Star Chapter
West Side Community Organization

TOM EMMER
6TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA
HOUSE MAJORITY WHIP
COMMITTEES
FINANCIAL SERVICES
VICE CHAIR
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DIGITAL ASSETS,
FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY, AND
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2306

April 21, 2026

Metropolitan Council
360 Robert St. North
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Metropolitan Council,

I am writing to you today to express my strong opposition to the proposed Metropolitan (MET) Council's 2026 Regional Solicitation guidance, which provides instructions in the application process to award federal transportation funding to projects in the Twin Cities metropolitan region. I am urging you to withdraw this proposal, which, if adopted, could seriously jeopardize Minnesota's federal funds, including those in the Sixth Congressional District.

After his inauguration, President Donald J. Trump issued several executive orders (EOs) eliminating and prohibiting discriminatory "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI) practices by federal contractors and their subcontractors, ensuring merit-based and efficient contracting and employment and promoting equal treatment under the law for every American.¹ Additionally, on April 24, 2025, U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy issued a reminder that federal funding must comply with federal guidance and classifications instead of trying to meet DEI goals.² Any recipient of federal funding is obligated to follow federal laws and regulations regarding DEI practices.

However, it has come to my attention that the MET Council—made up entirely of gubernatorial appointees—is in direct violation of the administration's DEI policies in their proposed 2026 Regional Solicitation. Specifically, the "Community Considerations" criterion is a core scoring element this year that ensures projects align with the MET Council's equity, inclusion, and environmental justice goals.³ The criterion draws on multiple MET Council and Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) DEI policies, including Imagine 2050 and the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), which prioritize "adapting policies, systems, services, and spending so that they contribute to the repair of both historic and ongoing injustice" experienced by "historically marginalized communities," including "people of color, Indigenous people, low income, disabled, youth, and older adult populations."⁴ These DEI criterion currently account for up to 20 percent of the score in several project categories, despite learning that the majority of county commissioners, city elected officials, and a MnDOT representative support limiting Community Considerations to a maximum of 15 percent of the total score.

¹ "Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Addresses DEI Discrimination by Federal Contractors." *The White House*. 26 March 2026. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2026/03/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-addresses-dei-discrimination-by-federal-contractors/>.

² "Trump's Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy: Follow the Law." *U.S. Department of Transportation*. 24 April 2025. <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/trumps-transportation-secretary-sean-p-duffy-follow-law>.

³ "2026 Regional Solicitation Scoring Criteria and Measures Weighting." *Metropolitan Council*. 13 January 2026. <https://metro council.org/Council-Meetings/Committees/Transportation-Advisory-Board-TAB/2026/January-21,-2026/2026-7.aspx>.

⁴ "Community Considerations." *Metropolitan Council*. <https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation/Applying-for-Regional-Solicitation-funds/Applications/2026-Draft-PDF-Regional-Solicitation-Applications/2026RsComCons.aspx>.

My office was also informed that MET Council declined a county's request for the U.S. Department of Transportation to review the guidance criteria to ensure federal compliance. As stewards of our state's transportation funds, you have a fiduciary duty to Minnesotans to ensure you are following the letter of the law over personal DEI interests.

I am deeply concerned by the MET Council's proposed 2026 Regional Solicitation guidance and the danger it poses to Minnesota's federal transportation funding. As the Representative of Anoka and Carver County, I strongly urge you not to adopt this proposal as a final measure in your vote on April 22, 2026, in order to ensure Minnesota continues to receive critical federal transportation funds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Emmer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



April 21, 2026

Councilmembers Mark Jenkins, Victor Obisakin and Wendy Wulff
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Re: Dakota County opposition to Minnesota Metropolitan Council Regional Funding Solicitation Community Considerations criteria

Dear Councilmembers Jenkins, Obisakin and Wulff,

I am writing on behalf of the Dakota County Board of Commissioners to express concern regarding the updated proposed criteria for the Metropolitan Council's 2026 Regional Solicitation for federal funding. Due to those concerns, we respectfully urge you to vote "no" on the upcoming April 22, 2026, Met Council vote to approve the proposed criteria.

The proposed scoring structure was not supported by the Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) Funding and Programming Committee, six of seven county elected representatives, three of the five city elected officials and the MnDOT representative. The scoring structure values Community Considerations disproportionately high over other core criteria. Further, this approach reflects a vote that was passed primarily by appointed members, not key elected officials who represent the broader Twin Cities area. The Met Council's structure and process are unlike other metro planning organizations across the rest of Minnesota and the country.

Dakota County, like other local governments, completes a thorough engagement process for every transportation project to ensure the communities' values, needs and concerns are considered in project development and design. However, the Transportation Advisory Board's (TAB) recommended Community Consideration criteria weighted at 15–20 percent of the overall score is disproportionately high. More concerning, it's narrowly defined, subjective and not supported by the majority of elected officials. Community Considerations are also narrative based, which makes them difficult to measure. The county elected officials proposed a maximum of 10 percent for Community Considerations, while the TAC recommended a 15-percent maximum.

County Board of Commissioners

P 651-438-4418 W www.dakotacounty.us

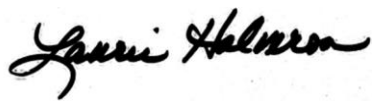
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The TAC recommendation failed by a vote of 10 to 14 at the Jan. 21, 2026, meeting of the TAB. The final motion passed to adopt implementation of Community Considerations at 15 percent for safety and 20 percent for other application categories, but the vote composition raises serious concerns about local representation and regional consensus. The measure was largely supported by appointed board members, while ignoring the position recommended by elected officials and transportation professionals. It does not reflect the position of those most accountable to the public and responsible for carrying out transportation investments across the region.

This item is up for final approval at the April 22, 2026, Met Council meeting and will set the criteria for the next 10 years for regional transportation funding. Please vote “no” on the Met Council’s Regional Solicitation proposed criteria and its implementation process. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Laurie Halverson, Chair
Dakota County Board of Commissioners

Enc:

Minutes, Transportation Advisory Board – January 21, 2026

TAC recommendation

TAB recommendation (see pages 16–39)

cc: Metropolitan Council Chair Robin Hutcheson

Council Member Judy Johnson

Council Member Reva Chamblis

Council Member Tyronne Carter

Council Member Deb Barber

Council Member John Pacheco, Jr.

Council Member Robert Lilligren

Council Member Yassin Osman

Council Member Anjuli Cameron

Council Member Diego Morales

Council Member Peter Lindstrom

Council Member Gail Cederberg

Council Member Chai Lee

Council Member W. Toni Carter

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