



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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin Hutcheson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robin" and last name "Hutcheson" clearly legible.

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