

Transportation Committee

Regional Solicitation Evaluation

metro council.org



December 8, 2025

Purpose of Today's Meeting

- Review and discuss major changes to applications
- Provide feedback on Community Considerations criteria
- Discuss overall timeline



Regional Solicitation

What is the Regional Solicitation?

- The Regional Solicitation is the **process** to award federal transportation funding to projects that **meet regional transportation needs**.
- The Council approves the application materials, concurs with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) project selections, and then approves the projects as they enter the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- The funding is not typically used for pure asset preservation projects, but to make improvements to the system.
- The \$125 million/year only represents 3% of total transportation funding in the region, but the process and decision gets a lot of attention since the funding is flexible and can be used for many different transportation purposes.

Project Overview

Regional Solicitation Evaluation

- Comprehensive evaluation of the Regional Solicitation process, completed every 10 years
- Overall goal is to align the allocation of the region's federal transportation funds (approximately \$250 million every two years) through the Regional Solicitation project selection process to help achieve **the goals, objectives, and policies** of the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) and Imagine 2050.
- One of the federal requirements for the funding is that projects must be consistent with the region's Transportation Policy Plan.

2050 TPP Goals

Equitable
and Inclusive

Healthy and
Safe

Dynamic and
Resilient

Climate
Change

Natural
Systems

Goal-Based Structure

Safety

Proactive Safety (All Modes):

Small Projects (HSIP)
Large Project
(Reg Sol Federal
Funding)

Reactive Safety (All Modes):

Small Projects (HSIP)
Large Projects
(Reg Sol Federal
Funding)

Dynamic and Resilient

Bicycle/Pedestrian

Federal Reg Sol Funding

Regional Bike Facilities

Reg Active Transportation Funding

Local Bike Facilities

Local Pedestrian
Facilities

Active Transportation
Planning

Transit

Transit Expansion
(Including
Microtransit)

Transit Customer
Experience

Arterial Bus Rapid
Transit

Roadway

Roadway
Modernization

Congestion
Management
Strategies

New Interchanges

Bridge Connections

Environment

EV Charging
Infrastructure

Travel Demand
Management
(TDM)

Regional Data

Regional Modeling/Travel Behavior Inventory

The goal area, Our Region is Equitable and Inclusive, is being proposed as a scoring measure called Community Considerations.

Special Issue Working Groups

For each application category, working groups recommended:

- Eligible project types
- Scoring criteria and measures
- Potential project funding minimums and maximums
- Scoring priorities and weighting



Safety

Bike/Ped

Transit

Roadway

Climate/GHG/EV

TDM

Community Considerations

Roadway Modernization

Criteria and Measures	%
1. Multimodal/Complete Streets Connections Measure A – New or improved multimodal connections (transit, bicycle, pedestrian, TDM elements)	40%
2. Safety Measure A – Connection to existing safety planning efforts Measure B – Safety improvements for people outside of vehicles Measure C – Safe System approach	30%
3. Freight Measure A – Connection to Regional Truck Corridor Study tiers	5%
4. Natural Systems Protection and Restoration Measure A - Flood mitigation, stormwater treatment, other environmental benefits, etc.	5%
5. Community Considerations Measure A – Community Data and Context Measure B – Community Needs and Future Engagement Measure C – Community Benefits	20%
Total	100%

Funding Targets

(TAB Recommended Targets in Red)

Safety: \$30M

Proactive Safety
(Roadways and
Bike/Ped)

Reactive Safety
(Roadways and
Bike/Ped)

Plus Metro HSIP: \$30M

Dynamic and Resilient

Bike/Ped \$35M Fed.

Federal Reg Sol Funding: \$35M

Regional Bike Facilities

Reg AT Funding: \$50M

Local Bike Facilities

Local Pedestrian
Facilities

Active Transportation
Planning

Transit: \$60M

Transit Expansion
(Including
Microtransit)

Transit Customer
Experience

Arterial Bus Rapid
Transit

Roadway: \$110M

Roadway
Modernization

Congestion
Management
Strategies

New Interchanges

Bridge Connections

Environment: \$15M

EV Charging
Infrastructure

Travel Demand
Management
(TDM)

Regional Data

Regional Modeling/Travel Behavior Inventory: \$1.5M

The goal area, Our Region is Equitable and Inclusive, is being proposed as a scoring measure called Community Considerations.

What's Changing for 2026?

- Simplified applications to focus on 1-2 outcomes, rather than a broad range of criteria.
- 2 new safety funding categories that will complement the MnDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program, but with a higher funding maximum (\$7 million).
- New electric vehicle charging application category (selection in 2028).
- Equity is not a project category in the 2026 solicitation cycle. Instead of an application category, equity is included in the scoring (called Community Considerations) for every funding category, as well as funding priority for one project that scores exceptionally well in this area.
- Regional Sales Tax Active Transportation Funding incorporation into the Regional Solicitation Structure. A target of \$50M will be available in 2026. Funding categories include:
 - Local Bike Facilities
 - Local Pedestrian Facilities
 - Active Transportation Planning

Community Considerations Criteria



Regional Direction



Imagine 2050 + TPP Goal of Equity & Inclusion

- One of five regional goals: Equitable and inclusive region
- Regional Equity Framework:
 - People-centered, data-driven decision-making approach
 - Prioritized engagement with overburdened communities
 - Benefits to communities that go beyond harm mitigation

Equity is at the core of our regional vision—every decision should improve outcomes for historically excluded communities.

Key Definitions



Framing the Community Considerations Criterion

- Community = people and groups of people adjacent to and/or impacted by proposed projects
 - Includes people who live, work, go to school, access destinations in the project area
 - Includes transit users and others outside vehicles whose trips begin or end in project area
 - Does not include commuters passing through a project area
- Specific communities = TAB defined communities to highly consider and prioritize, includes people of color, low-income, Indigenous, disabled, youth and older adults

Community Considerations ensures the needs of specific populations are considered and prioritized in transportation decisions.

3 Proposed Measures



1. Community Data and Context

- *Strong applications show a clear, nuanced understanding of the community.*

2. Community Need and Future Engagement

- *Strong applications show how community needs were identified and future engagement is planned.*

3. Community Benefits

- *Strong applications deliver meaningful benefits to nearby communities and reduce harms.*

Scoring Details

- 5 ratings: Low, Medium-Low, Medium, Medium-High, High ratings, on 3 measures
- High ratings are a high bar - only those applications documenting full use of best practices
- Annual training required for scorers and available to all agency staff

Feedback this Fall

Sept-Oct Comments	11/19 Policy Working Group	11/25 Technical Steering Committee	12/3 Technical Advisory Committee
Overall support for approach; tweak it but keep the fundamentals	--	--	Concern that applicants will be lumped in the middle
Concerns about community engagement wording and timing	Staff brought major revisions that the group supported	--	--
How should this criterion be weighted across categories (i.e., 20%)?	Mixed feedback; requests input from TSC	Mixed feedback; seek guidance today and from Policymaker Work Group	County technical staff recommended 10% weighting
Will funding priority benefit too many projects?	Mixed feedback; requests input from TSC	Recommendation for additional limits	--

Topic #1: Scoring Recommendations



Current Scoring Recommendation

- 20% of points for Community Considerations measures across all application categories

Considerations

- Four of the Imagine 2050 goal areas have application categories devoted to their implementation. Community Considerations does not have a devoted application category, so its implementation comes in a consistent set of scoring measures used in all application categories.
- Designed so that community driven projects will score higher.
- Goes beyond projects to encourage organizational and systems change.
- Additional Met Council supports for scoring fairness and consistency:
 - Pilot testing and iteration
 - Training for applicants and scorers
 - Scoring committee facilitation and support

Topic #2: Community Considerations

Funding Priority



Funding Priority = provide funding to those projects scoring High-High-High on the Community Considerations measures, and that are not otherwise funded under a proposed funding option

- Substitutes for not having a separate application category for this regional Goal
- Very difficult to achieve; Community Considerations scoring committee (includes all scorers) will agree and recommend
- Substitutes for bonus points as used in previous Solicitation design
- Meant to reward projects with very high community alignment and focus but that might otherwise be small in nature, unable to achieve high scoring under technical 80% of scoring
- No more than one priority project total for the entire solicitation
- No priority project from the Safety categories

Next steps



Next steps:

1. Second Package of Action Items to Release for Public Comment– Dec/Jan
 - TAC F&P – December 18
 - TAC - January 7
 - TAB – January 21
2. Public outreach on the entire application package begins – Jan/Feb
3. Committee and TAB approval post-public comment – March
4. Metropolitan Council approval – April 2026
5. Call for projects – Spring 2026
6. Project selection – End of 2026

Thank You

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Appendix



Measure 1: Community Data & Context



Understanding Who Lives Near & Is Impacted by the Project

- Demonstrate detailed knowledge of communities
- Use data to show demographics & needs
- Focus on specific communities (people of color, Indigenous, low-income, disabled, youth, older adults)
- Go beyond census data – identify smaller concentrations of specific communities, locations of affordable housing, connections to important regional and local destinations, locations and areas of cultural importance, community history
- Demonstrate nuanced knowledge of communities gained from past work

Strong applications show a clear picture of who the community is and how their needs shape the project.

Measure 2: Community Needs & Future Engagement

This measure evaluates two aspects: community involvement in identifying the project need and planned future engagement with communities

What **community need** does the project address and how was this need identified?

- Long-range or strategic planning work
- Community surveys
- Meetings and conversations with residents or community groups
- Other interactions and past work in the community
- Community support for the project

What organizational policies, procedures and commitments support **future engagement**, e.g.

- Adopted engagement policies, procedures, staff
- Budget for engagement
- Formal, approved engagement plan
- Reparative project goals
- Community advisory committee structures or shared decision-making



Measure 3: Community Benefits



Delivering Benefits That Address Community Needs

- Prioritize benefits to specific communities
- Demonstrate project benefits address community needs
- Improved access to important community destinations benefits
- Repair past and present harms from the transportation system
- Provide benefits to specific communities beyond mitigating project harms

Projects must deliver meaningful benefits to nearby, impacted communities and reduce harms.