

2026 and 2027 Transportation Alternatives (TA) program Instructions Document

Instructions

The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Government (Metro COG) is soliciting projects for use of its direct suballocation of Transportation Alternatives (TA) program funds for federal fiscal years (FFY) 2026 and 2027.

Table 1: Estimated Funding Amounts Available by Year Included in the Solicitation

State	Fiscal Year 2026	Fiscal Year 2027
North Dakota	\$850,000	\$860,000
Minnesota		\$140,000

If an application exceeds \$500,000 in requested TA funds, applicants are encouraged to phase their project whenever possible. This would allow more flexibility in allocating funds and alleviate the burden of local matching funds should multiple high-cost projects be selected.

Applications must be received by Metro COG by **12:00 noon on November 30, 2023**. To apply for funding, please submit a project application to Paul Bervik at Metro COG at bervik@fmmetrocog.org.

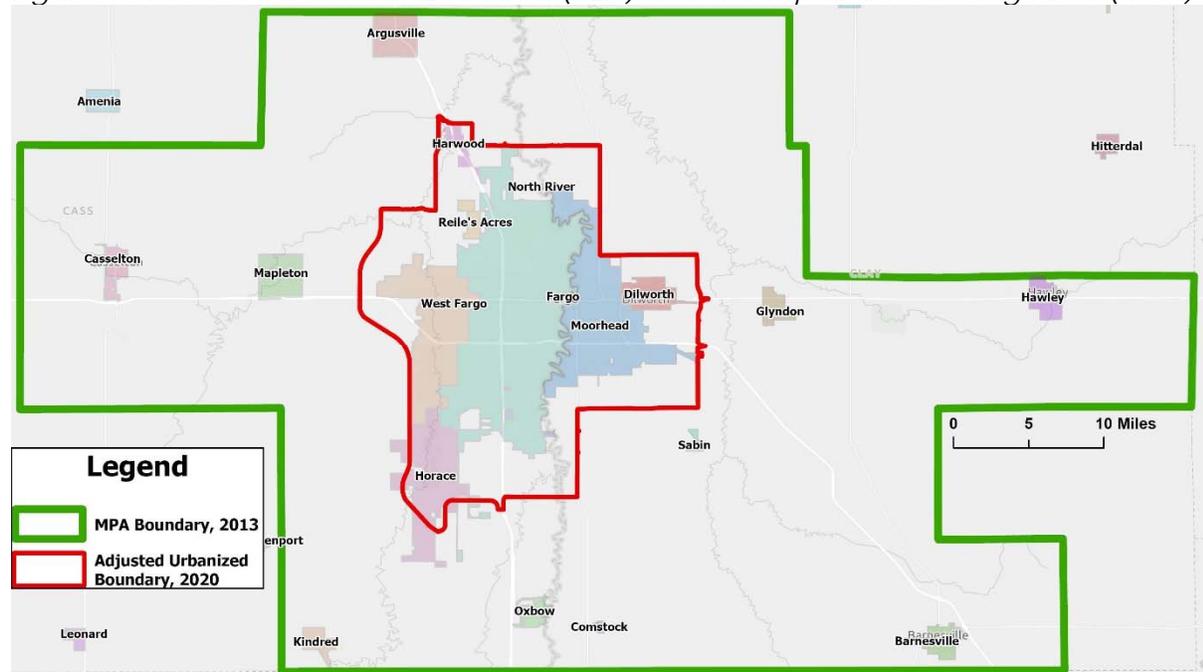
Please complete the following form with all applicable information. Completing all elements of this form thoroughly will help Metro COG staff to review projects and work with the TTC and Policy Board to prioritize projects.

Process

After project applications are submitted to Metro COG, staff will review each application. This review will take into account eligibility, ability to fund, need, Title VI & EJ impacts, conformance with plans, and priority in the MTP as well as other factors. Staff will complete site visits for all appropriate applications and complete a thorough evaluation of each project. The Metropolitan Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee will then score the received TA projects using the scoring matrix which has been iteratively developed by the Metropolitan Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee. This scoring as well as Metro COG's staff's evaluation will be presented to Metro COG's Transportation Technical Committee (TTC). The TTC will provide a technical evaluation of all of the submitted project for Metro COG's Policy Board. The Policy Board will then determine which projects are funded and how much funding will be allotted to each project in each of the fiscal years during which funding is available.

It is important to note that costs incurred prior to FHWA project approval are not eligible for reimbursement. TA funds eligible for reimbursement include project construction costs only. Ineligible costs include: all planning, public engagement, preliminary engineering, construction engineering, environmental impact mitigation, right of way acquisition, utilities, and those construction items that are not eligible for federal aid.

Figure 1: Metro COG's Urbanized Area (UZA) and Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)



Eligible Projects

Projects eligible for TA funding must be within the Metro COG Urbanized Area Boundary (UZA), be consistent with Metro Grow: 2045 FM Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), and meet general eligibility requirements for use of federal aid dollars under Title 23 of the US Code 133 Transportation Alternatives program. Eligible Transportation Alternatives projects include the following:

- Bicycle & Pedestrian Projects:
 - Construction of on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities
 - Construction of Safe Routes to School projects
 - Construction of projects for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities
 - Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation uses
 - Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements
 - Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements
 - Secure bicycle parking facilities
 - Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools
 - Turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas
- Scenic and Environmental Projects:
 - Vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way
 - Archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project
 - Streetscape improvements and corridor landscaping
 - Establishing living snow fences
 - Control and removal of outdoor advertising

- Environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff or reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity
- Historic Projects:
 - Historic preservation and rehabilitation of operating historic transportation facilities

Eligible Projects Applicants

- City and county governments
- Transit agencies
- Natural resource and public land agencies
- School districts, local education agencies, or schools
- Tribal governments
- Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for or oversight of transportation or recreational trails

Nonprofit Organizations

A nonprofit organization must partner with an eligible project applicant. The eligible project applicant would submit the application and be responsible for the project if it is awarded funds.

Eligible Projects Sponsors

Applications must be submitted to Metro COG through one of the following entities:

- Cities
- Board of County Commissioners
- Tribal Governments
- Transit Agencies
- Federal and State Agencies

Note: Unlike past TA solicitations, a city under 5,000 no longer is required to partner with their respective Board of County Commissioners.

All other eligible applicants including school districts and park districts need to partner with their respective city or county.

Schedule

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|-------------------|---|
| October 6, 2023 | Begin project solicitation process |
| November 30, 2023 | Application due date.
Metro COG staff begin reviewing projects. |
| December 2023 | Bike/Ped Committee scores projects |
| January 11, 2024 | The Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) provides a technical analysis of the projects. |
| January 18, 2024 | Policy Board reviews projects and awards funding. |

Questions

If you have any questions about the TA and/or the solicitation, or specific local questions about prospective projects, please contact Paul Bervik at Metro COG at (701)532-5107 or bervik@fmmetrocog.org. Metro COG will consult with MnDOT or NDDOT for questions we are unable to answer regarding eligibility. Completed applications can be emailed to Paul Bervik, Metro COG Assistant Transportation Planner, at bervik@fmmetrocog.org or mailed to Metro COG (Attention: Paul Bervik) at:

1 - 2nd Street N
Case Plaza, Suite 232
Fargo, ND 58102

Metro COG will collaborate with applicants to assist in the documentation of information to ensure that the use of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds meets eligibility requirements. As we move forward with future solicitations, Metro COG will identify any refinements to the contents of project applications.

Consultation, Cooperation & Coordination

Establishing the definitions of consultation, cooperation, coordination and designated recipient help set the stage for how and why there are various solicitation processes for the CRP funds.

- [Consultation](#) occurs when one or more parties confer with other identified parties in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action, considers the views of the other parties and periodically informs them about action taken.
- [Cooperation](#) occurs when the parties involved work together to achieve a common goal or objective
- [Coordination](#) occurs when parties involved work together to develop and adjust plans, programs, and schedules to achieve general consistency as appropriate.
- [Designated recipient](#) is an entity selected to receive and allocate an amount of funds that are attributable to urbanized areas of 200,000 or more in population, or a State or regional authority if the authority is responsible under the laws of a State for a capital project and for financing and directly providing public transportation.

Urbanized areas that are TMAs (>200,000)

As of October 1, 2023, Metro COG's urbanized area was designated a Transportation Management Area (TMA). Per [23 CFR 450.332\(c\)](#), in areas designated as TMAs, the MPO shall select all 23 U.S.C. and 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 funded projects in **consultation** with the State and public transportation operator(s). In order for funds to be obligated to a project, the project must be included in the approved TIP and in accordance with the priorities in the approved TIP. The State shall select projects on the NHS in **cooperation** with the MPO, from the approved TIP. TMAs are considered **designated recipients** of some forms of federal funds, which include TA funds.