**MnDOT Greater Minnesota Transportation Alternatives Solicitation**

**October 1, 2018**

The MnDOT Transportation Alternatives (TA) Solicitation is a competitive grant opportunity for local communities and regional agencies to fund projects for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, historic preservation, Safe Routes to School and more.

During last year’s 2017-2018 solicitation, the area transportation partnerships in Greater Minnesota received 60 initial inquiries through the letter of intent process. Of which, 44 went on to submit a full application. Of the 44 full applications, 17 local communities received funding. The total transportation alternatives funding for this application cycle was more than $5.6 million. However, the program leveraged an additional $7.8 million in total investment toward new projects for pedestrians, bicyclists, historic preservation, Scenic Byways and Safe Routes to School.

**Overview**

For the 2018/19 application cycle, MnDOT is conducting a joint solicitation for Transportation Alternatives and Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects. The same application will be used for both funding programs. You only need to submit the one application form to automatically be considered for both programs, as eligible. Important eligibility requirements to be aware of are noted below.

* The Safe Routes to School funding available through this solicitation is primarily for project construction in fiscal years 2020 and 2021. Safe Routes to School funding does not require any local match. Projects located anywhere in Minnesota are eligible for this funding. The maximum award for SRTS Infrastructure projects in $300,000.
* The Transportation Alternatives funding available through this solicitation is primarily for project construction in fiscal year 2023. Transportation Alternatives funding requires a 20 percent local match. Only projects located outside of the seven-county metropolitan area are eligible for Transportation Alternatives funding. Maximum funding awards are set by each Area Transportation Partnership. Projects that receive SRTS Infrastructure funding will not receive 2023 Transportation Alternatives funding.

See the TA Solicitation Guidebook and SRTS Infrastructure Program Guidance for more information about each program and additional eligibility requirements.

**Who can apply**

MnDOT determined that state aid cities (i.e. cities with population of over 5,000 persons) and counties are qualified ***recipients*** and the Transportation Alternatives solicitation requires their participation as a ***sponsor*** and/or applicant. If an eligible ***applicant*** is not a state aid city or county, then the applicant will need a state aid city or county to be a sponsor on their project. Examples of eligible local applicants include: cities, transit agency, DNR, school district, tribal government.

**What is eligible**

Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.

Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other nonmotorized transportation users.

Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.

Community improvement activities, which include but are not limited to:

1. inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising;
2. historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;
3. vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control;
4. archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under title 23.

Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to:

1. address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, including activities described in sections 23 U.S.C. 133(b)(3) [as amended under the FAST Act], 328(a), and 329 of title 23;
2. reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats (Former 23 U.S.C. 213(b)(2)-(4)).

Safe Routes to School Implementation-This option is available for communities that have a project identified in their SRTS Plan and only need funds to implement the improvements. SRTS funds may be used for one or more of the following improvements:

* 1. Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements: intersections or midblock crossings, median refuges, raised crossings, raised intersections, speed humps and curb extensions.
  2. Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities: exclusive multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trails, sidewalk, and pathways that are separated from a roadway.
  3. On-road facilities: bicycle lanes or bicycle boulevards
  4. Traffic control devices: signs, bicycle and pedestrian activated signals, and pavement marking Note: Electronic devices must be permanent - not mobile.

**Getting started**

Greater Minnesota applicants must submit a letter of intent describing the key components of their project. The letter of intent information and form can be found [here](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/ta/). After you submit the letter of intent, the UMVRDC will be notified, and we will schedule a time to meet with you and review your project proposal and the steps necessary for delivering a federally funded project prior to submitting a full grant application.

MnDOT will open the solicitation window Monday, October 1st and the deadline to submit letters of intent is October 31st.

**Timeline**

* **Monday, October 1, 2018 –**Announce joint Transportation Alternatives and Safe Routes to School solicitation. Open letter of intent period.
* **Wednesday, October 31, 2018** – Deadline for applicants to submit letters of intent.
* **Friday, January 4, 2019 –**Deadline for applicants to submit full applications.
* **Monday, April 15, 2019** – Deadline for ATPs to select TA projects and grant recipients announced.

You can visit the [MnDOT Transportation Alternatives website](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/ta/documents/TA%20LOI%20Worksheet_2016-2017.docx) for more information about this program or contact Dawn Hegland at the UMVRDC to learn more about the program and talk about your project. [Dawn.hegland@umvrdc.org](mailto:Dawn.hegland@umvrdc.org) 320-189-1981 x101