



Policies and Scoring Criteria For STBG Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program Projects

Introduction

As a metropolitan planning organization serving an urban area with a population over 200,000, the Greater Madison MPO receives a direct suballocation of federal funding under the STBG Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set Aside Program. The Greater Madison MPO selects projects for funding with this allocation. Once the projects are selected, WisDOT oversees the projects to ensure that all federal requirements are met and disburses the federal funding to the project sponsors. WisDOT also solicits and selects projects for TA funding in smaller urban areas under 50,000 population that do not have an MPO.

The following is a description of the program policies and criteria for scoring projects that the MPO will use to select and fund TA projects using the MPO's suballocation of funding. The policies listed below are those that differ from federal and WisDOT policies. Any policies not mentioned in this document, such as eligible project sponsors and minimum project cost, follow WisDOT's policies. WisDOT's TA guidelines, policies, procedures, and the application form that project sponsors must use are available on WisDOT's website at <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/tap.aspx>. In addition to the WisDOT TA application, sponsors of projects seeking MPO funding for projects in the Madison urban area must complete the MPO's Supplemental Application for TA Funding, available on <https://www.greatermadisonmpo.org/planning/improvementprogram.cfm>.

MPO Policies

- **Eligible Project Categories:**

The MPO will accept projects within only the following federally eligible STBG Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program categories:

- Construction of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation.†
- Enhancement of existing off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including: widening a paved path, paving unpaved trail, or adding wayfinding to existing facilities.†
- Construction of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including stand-alone wayfinding and system enhancements such as bicycle fix-it-stations or rest areas, removal of barriers to/construction of accessible routes and ADA improvements, and transit stop improvements such as shelters, benches, and bicycle racks.

- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users;
- Bike share capital costs, including bicycles, docks, and other equipment;
- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) non-infrastructure projects [SRTS infrastructure projects should be applied for as Bicycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure Projects];
- ADA Transition Plans for Public Rights-of-Way (excluding portions of Transition Plans for facilities and programs not within Public Rights-of-Way). [Note that MPO staff and resources are available to assist with community ADA Transition Planning upon request.]

Federally eligible projects for which the MPO will not utilize its TA funds include reconstruction of existing multi-use paths (unless it involves significant improvement such as widening), purely recreational trails, and most “transportation enhancement” activities, including environmental mitigation, historic preservation, and scenic beautification (see 23 U.S.C. Section 133 (b) for the complete list of eligible project activities under federal law).

- Eligible Project Costs:
For infrastructure projects, funding will only be awarded for construction. Design, right of way, and utilities costs will not be eligible expenses for TA funds awarded by the MPO.
- Cost Share:
In order to stretch the limited funding available, projects will be required to provide a larger local match than the required 20% minimum. A sliding scale between 80/20 and 60/40 will be used, calculated by the formula below with all projects costing over \$600,000 requiring a 40% local share.

Formula for computing the federal share:

P = Federal participation percentage (round to zero decimal places)

X = Project cost

Total Project Cost	Federal Share (Percentage)
= or < \$300,000	80%
\$300,001 - \$599,999	$P = 80 - ((X - 300,000) / 15,000)$
= or > \$600,000	60%

- Project Screening:
The MPO eliminated Project Readiness and Constructability from the scoring criteria and established project readiness instead as a screening criterion. Do not submit applications for funding for projects which do not meet the following requirements:

For Infrastructure Projects:

- The project will be ready for construction when scheduled. This means that at least some initial design work has been completed and it is beyond a purely conceptual stage. [Note: TA projects are required to begin within four years of project award and be completed within six years.]

- There are no serious engineering feasibility, real estate, environmental, railroad, or funding issues that need to be resolved. [Note: These issues make it more likely that projects cannot meet the required WisDOT timelines. Expect projects that require railroad coordination to take at least two years for that coordination to occur.]
- The project has the necessary financial commitment and local support so that it can begin to move forward immediately upon notice of funding.
- The project will be maintained for year-round use as appropriate (if not plowed in winter, it should be groomed or set for cross-country skiing or otherwise maintained for appropriate year-round use).
- The project will include appropriate wayfinding to ensure that it can be accessed and used conveniently, safely, and consistently.
- The project will meet or exceed accessibility design requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Beginning in 2036, only communities¹ with ADA Transition Plans for their Public Rights-of-Way will be eligible for infrastructure project funding. [Some state DOT's already have this requirement; if WisDOT adopts this or a similar requirement, whichever is earliest of the state and MPO deadlines will apply.]

For Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Projects:

- The project is ready to move forward upon notice of funding.
[TA projects are required to begin within four years of project award and be completed within six years.]
- The project has the necessary financial commitment and local support so that it can begin to move forward immediately.

Project Scoring Criteria - Bicycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure Projects

The project scoring criteria for bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure projects are grouped under the following categories with the point totals (out of 100) as follows:

1. Importance to Regional Transportation System and Supports Regional Development Framework (35 points)
2. Access and Service Area (20 points)
3. Congestion Mitigation (5 points)
4. Safety Enhancement (15 points)
5. Environment (5 points)
6. Equity (15 points)
7. Cost Efficiencies (5 points)

The following table is used to score project funding applications and should be considered when developing applications.

¹This only applies to communities required to have ADA Transition Plans. The requirements of the ADA apply to all public entities or agencies, no matter the size. The transition plan formal procedures as outlined in 28 C.F.R. section 35.150 only govern those public entities with more than 50 employees.

<p><u>Quality of Life:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project provides bicycling and walking opportunities in areas of natural, cultural, or historic interest, enhancing use of the facility for recreational as well as transportation purposes. 	0 – 7	Up to 7 points for projects that utilize natural etc. areas, providing high quality recreational opportunities
<p><u>Health:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project provides improved access to healthy food resources, health care, and/or active recreation opportunities. 	0 – 3	Up to 3 points for projects that connect to grocery stores or health care facilities or active recreation opportunities.

2. Access and Service Area – 20 Points Total		
Criteria	Points	Scoring Guidelines
<p><u>Population Served:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project serves a large number of people based on population within 1 mile of the facility, location of the facility within the overall bikeway network, and location within the region and community. 	0 – 10	Maximum points for projects with a large population within a relatively short distance of the facility or likely to make use of the facility due to its location.
<p><u>Destinations Served:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project serves a large number of destinations based on jobs, services, schools, shopping, parks/recreational facilities, and/or entertainment within 2 miles of the facility, location within the network, and location within the region and community. 	0 – 10	Maximum points for projects providing access to regional or local mixed-use or employment/activity centers, community facilities, and services.

3. Congestion Mitigation – 5 Points Total		
Criteria	Points	Scoring Guidelines
<p>The project will increase the attractiveness of pedestrian/bicycle travel in a corridor or area with significant peak period traffic congestion. [See maps on page 3-12 of the Connect Greater Madison: 2050 RTP for information on corridors with poor travel time reliability.]</p>	0 – 5	

4. Safety Enhancement – 15 Points Total		
Criteria	Points	Scoring Guidelines
<p><u>Crash History, Documented Safety Problem, or other Safety and Accessibility:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is located in a corridor or area with a history of bicycle/pedestrian crashes, and the project addresses the safety problem(s) or issue(s). 	0 – 15	Maximum points for projects that address an existing major safety problem based on number of crashes relative to use and/or a documented safety issue, including deficiency identified in SRTS plan.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project addresses a hazardous condition that discourages bicyclists from using the facility or corridor. The project addresses a network deficiency identified in a Safe Routes to School Plan. 		
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5. Environment – 5 Points Total

Criterion		Scoring Guidelines
<u>Use of Alternative Modes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the project will result in an increase in bicycling, walking, and transit trips for transportation purposes, resulting in reduced motor vehicle trips/VMT. 	0 – 5	

6. Equity – 15 Points Total

Criteria	Points	Scoring Guidelines
<u>Environmental Justice & Accessibility:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project improves pedestrian/bicycle access for environmental justice areas. [These include areas with concentrations of low income and minority populations and households with no motor vehicle available. See maps in Appendix D – EJ Analysis of the current Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County.] 	0 – 15	<p>Up to 15 points will be awarded for projects located in/connecting to or otherwise improving ped/bike access to a Tier 1 EJ Area.</p> <p>Up to 9 points for projects located in/connecting to or otherwise improving ped/bike access to a Tier 2 EJ Area.</p>

7. Cost Efficiencies – 5 Points Total

Criteria	Points	Scoring Guidelines
<u>Other Funding, Cost Efficiencies:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximizes use of available federal funds by leveraging other state, local, or private funding. Project demonstrates cost efficiencies and/or leverages additional funding from past or for future project phases or enhancements. 	0 – 3	
<u>Opportunity/Risk:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a risk of a lost opportunity or loss of other funding if not selected in the current program cycle? If funded now the project could be done more cost effectively because it can be built at the same time as another project in the same corridor. 	0 – 2	

Project Scoring Criteria - Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Projects

1. Scope of Audience/Reach/Impact – 50 Points Total		
Criteria	Points	Scoring Guidelines
The project will reach a broad audience and a large portion of students within a school district would be impacted by the programming or activities	0 – 15	Maximum points awarded for district-wide programs
The program or activities add(s) value to other improvements or programs that are happening in the community or school	0 – 10	Maximum points awarded for programs build on existing momentum, or that will support planned improvements or programs
Project is likely to increase the number of children walking and bicycling to school safely and ensure that infrastructure that is added is being used	0 – 15	Maximum points awarded for programs that will document student mode split changes, and which have established goals and supporting policies to increase the number of children walking and bicycling to school
Project engages the broader community beyond the school, students, faculty/staff, and parents	0 – 10	Maximum points awarded for programs that engage community partners and champions outside the school system

2. Health, Safety, and Environmental Justice – 50 Points Total		
Criteria	Points	Scoring Guidelines
The program or activities is/are located at schools with a high rate of students eligible for free and reduced lunches	0 – 20	Maximum points awarded for programs that target or provide a higher level of support to these schools than to those with low rates of such students
The program or activities foster(s) improved childhood health, reduced childhood obesity and encourages a healthy and active lifestyle	0 – 15	Maximum points awarded for programs that promote active transportation beyond the school commute
The program or activities increase(s) real or perceived bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic safety	0 – 15	Maximum points awarded for programs that address real or perceived safety problems that have been identified and documented