

2022 Metropolitan Planning Federal Transportation Grant Program Call for Projects Process

Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) for FFYs 2025-2027

Transportation Alternatives STBG Set Aside for FFYs 2025-2027

Process Guidance and Application Instructions

Thurston Regional Planning Council



August 2022

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Materials can be provided in alternate formats by contacting the Thurston Regional Planning Council at 360.956.7575 or email info@trpc.org.

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2022 Process Guidance and Application Instructions

GENERAL INFORMATION

This document provides guidance and application instructions for Thurston Regional Planning Council's (TRPC) 2022 Metropolitan Planning Federal Transportation Grant Program Call for Projects, from here on referred to as the Call for Projects. Applicants can find information about the amount of funding, the process schedule, applicant and project eligibility, application instructions, and frequently asked questions. Applicants are encouraged to refer to this document while preparing their applications.

PROCESS SUPPORT

Applicants may request direct application support from TRPC staff through October 7, 2022. For assistance on application development or to obtain answers to questions about the process, contact Paul Brewster at 360.741.2526 or by email at brewstp@trpc.org.

FUNDING BY GRANT PROGRAM

In 2022, TRPC will award a total of \$11,380,000 in combined grant funds administered by the Federal Highway Administration. Specifically, TRPC will award \$9,302,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and \$2,078,000 in Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds to projects that will obligate in federal fiscal years 2025-2027.

TRPC reserves the right to award funding from either STBG or TA programs for eligible projects and activities. For example, TRPC may award STBG or a combination of funds from both grant programs in lieu of TA. That flexibility enables TRPC to maximize its funding programs, program additional projects, and meet yearly obligation targets.

REGIONAL SET-ASIDE

TRPC established one Regional Set-Aside for the 2022 Call for Projects:

Rural Community Support Program Set Aside – \$600,000 from the STBG flexible allocation (see Figure 1 and Table 1 below) to fund the Region's 2023 Rural Community Support Program (RCSP). TRPC is coordinating with Thurston County Public Works to develop details for a separate call for projects process issued in first quarter 2023. Eligible entities will include the communities of Bucoda, Tenino, Rainier, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, and the Nisqually Indian Reservation.

Note: RCSP applicants who receive a STBG or TA grant through TRPC's 2022 Call for Projects will be ineligible to apply for the 2023 RCSP Call for Projects.

Funding for Non-Traditional Partners - there is no Regional Set-Aside established for Non-Traditional Partners, however TRPC encourages proposals from eligible applicants. Non-traditional applicants are encouraged to apply with traditional partners. Proposals must comply with the same federal eligibility requirements as those from traditional partners.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF STBG AND TA GRANT FUNDS

TRPC is required to distribute these total allocations by geographic areas (Map 1). Figure 1 shows the percent distribution requirement. Table 1 shows the resulting available grant funding by program and geographic area and reflects a reduction in the STBG flexible funding of \$600,000 as a Set-Aside to fund the continuing Rural Community Support Program.

Figure 1. Percent Distribution of Grant Funds TRPC must Award by Geographic Area in 2022 (percent values are rounded)

Area	STBG	TA
Urban Medium	69%	47%
Urban Small	8%	5%
Rural	8%	15%
Flexible	15%	33%

Map 1: U.S. Census Geographic Areas for Federal Transportation Grant Funding Distribution

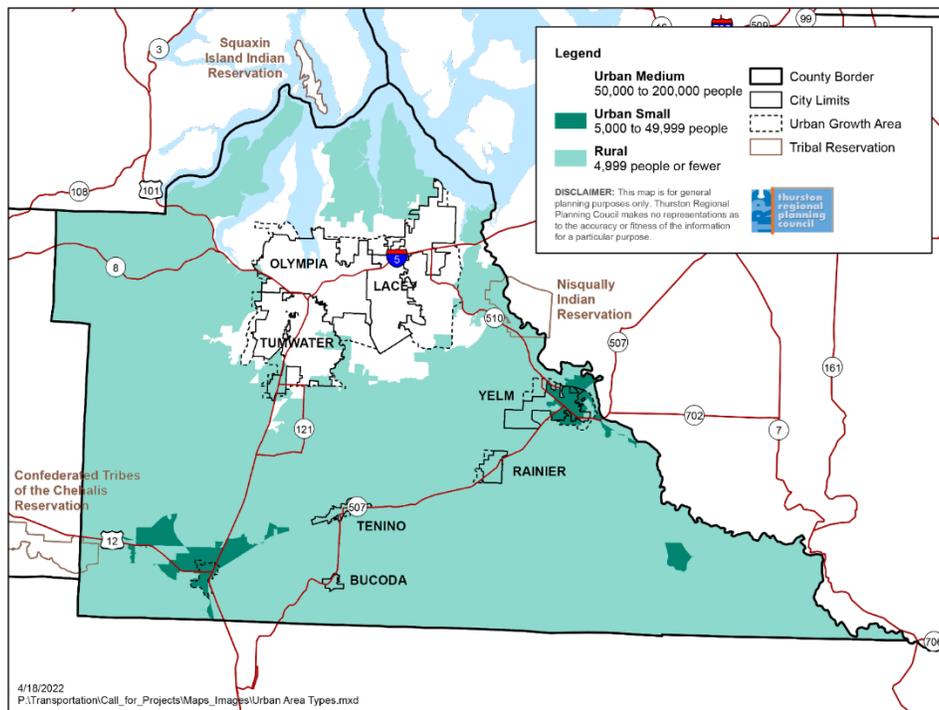


Table 1: TRPC Estimated Federal Transportation Grant Program Funding by Geographic Area.*

Grant Program	Total Available	Urban Medium	Urban Small	Rural	Flexible	Flexible after RCSP Set-Aside
STBG	\$9,302,000	\$6,381,300	\$725,800	\$770,400	\$1,424,400	\$824,400
TA	\$2,078,000	\$980,900	\$111,600	\$308,600	\$677,000	

*Dollar Values for geographic areas aren't exact matches due to the rounding of the percent portions shown above.

SCHEDULE

The 2022 STBG and TA application and selection processes are on the same schedule. The following dates and deadlines apply to both programs.

DATES – 2022	ACTIVITY
August 1-14	Revised Call for Projects Process Public Comment Period
September 2	Council Action – Process Approval
September 14	Transportation Policy Board (TPB) – Process Update
September 5 to October 7	Applications Accepted – Due by 5:00 pm Pacific Time October 7, 2022
October 20	Technical Advisory Committee – Technical Evaluation
October 24-November 6	Public Comment on Proposals
November 4	Council – Proposal Preview
November 13	TPB Action – Review and Funding Recommendation
December 2	Council Action – Funding Awards

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

- Applications are due Friday, October 7, 2022, by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time. TRPC will not consider applications submitted after the deadline.
- All applicants must submit an editable electronic version of the application. Printed copies are not a substitute for the electronic file.
- The submission of an application does not require a hand-written signature.
- Applicants must fully complete the fields in the Project Verification and Endorsement section.
- Supporting materials must also be submitted as an electronic file.
- Send completed applications and supporting materials to Paul Brewster at brewstp@trpc.org.

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The following terms and concepts apply to the federal transportation funding programs as administered by TRPC.

Traditional Transportation Partner

Any local agency that provides general purpose, surface transportation facilities, programs, and services as a part of its core mission. For this process, Traditional Transportation Partners include only Bucoda, Lacey, Olympia, Rainier, Tenino, Tumwater, Yelm, Thurston County, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and Intercity Transit.

Non-Traditional Transportation Partner

Any agency or organization other than those identified above that provides surface transportation facilities, programs, or services that directly support the goals and policies of the Regional Transportation Plan. Examples of these partners include TRPC, the Port of Olympia, school districts, state and federal natural resource agencies, fire districts, and non-profit organizations.

Eligibility Requirements

Within the constraints of federal guidelines, TRPC has adopted funding priorities and project requirements that serve as regional eligibility criteria. Applicants must also meet all federal requirements, as determined by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Local Programs staff.

Project Administration

Grant recipients are required to adhere to the policies, standards, and procedures described in the WSDOT Local Agency Guidelines (known as the [LAG Manual](#)).

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through a Stewardship Agreement, delegates authority to WSDOT for approving project development and construction administration. WSDOT has the option of delegating some or all this authority to qualified local agencies, state or federal agencies, or tribal governments. This procedure permits an agency to retain more of the approval authority at the local level when developing FHWA assisted transportation projects. WSDOT delegates this authority through a Certification Acceptance (CA) program. The CA program allows a local agency to save time and money, since the agency has the authority to develop, advertise, award, and manage its own projects.

Prior to submitting their application, applicants must identify a CA agency that will sponsor the proposal(s) and obtain a signature of a representative with CA status.

Contingency Proposals

In addition to submitting high priority proposals, applicants are encouraged to submit lesser priority proposals that could be funded should additional funding become available. Consideration will be given to contingency proposals that can quickly obligate, are scalable in scope so as to accept more or less funding, and have fewer permitting requirements.

The Council may subsequently select contingency proposals and award funding as conditions allow. Additional funding may become available through a future annual allocation, redistributed STBG funds from states that did not meet their obligation targets, or a local need to quickly reprogram the timing of projects to meet obligation targets.

Jurisdictions with selected contingency proposals will receive a conditional award letter. Selected contingency proposals will be programmed as projects in Appendix A: Other Secured and Planned TIP Projects in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

Obligation Targets

Obligation targets refer to state-mandated annual targets for federal funding obligation that TRPC must attain. Targets reflect federal fiscal year constraints (October 1 through September 30). TRPC award letters will specify each project's required obligation date.

Funding Awards by Phase

With rare exceptions, projects with multiple phases – Preliminary Engineering (PE), Right-of-Way (ROW), and Construction (CN) – will be awarded funds for one phase at a time. Completion of milestones that enable funding for a subsequent phase to be obligated is required before additional funds will be awarded. For most projects, this entails completion of federal level permitting requirements. Applicants are required to submit a separate application for each project phase if they occur in separate years.

Readiness to Proceed

Recognizing that different phases of a project have different federal requirements before they can obligate, project sponsors will be asked to demonstrate that their projects have met all necessary federal requirements needed to complete obligation. For the preliminary engineering phase of projects, vehicle acquisition, planning, design-only, or corridor study projects, this requires no additional documentation. For right-of-way and construction phases, readiness to proceed will be demonstrated by completion of federal level permitting. For example, question 15 on the STBG application addresses information about construction and right-of-way project readiness.

Sanctioning of Funds

TRPC is required to meet annual obligation targets mandated by WSDOT. WSDOT implemented a 'use it or lose it' policy in 2013 to: 1) Reduce the amount of federal funds tied up on projects that are not progressing as planned and; 2) Increase the rate of project delivery. To achieve its annual targets, TRPC reserves the right to rescind awarded funds from projects that fail to meet scheduled obligation dates. Conditions of TRPC's Obligation Authority will be specified in the award letters of selected projects and guided by TRPC's Obligation Authority Policy.

REGIONAL FUNDING PRIORITIES

In 2022, TRPC revised its Call for Projects Funding Priorities. TRPC encourages applicants to submit proposals that conform with the following project types:

1. **Active Transportation** – Projects that support active transportation such as walking and bicycling.
2. **Efficiency** – Projects that support meeting adopted vehicle level of service standards; and projects that help support Transportation Demand Management (TDM) goals and decrease annual per capita vehicle miles traveled in the Thurston Region.
3. **Maintenance** – Projects that support a pavement “Best First” approach recognizing that regular maintenance is much more cost effective than allowing a roadway to deteriorate and then rebuilding it; projects that support Transit Asset Management targets; projects that keep bridges in a state of good repair; and projects that keep other portions of the transportation system in a state of good repair.
4. **Planning** – Projects that develop project lists, support regional coordination, or provide data to inform planning.
5. **Resiliency** – Projects that protect the transportation system from natural and technological hazards and disruptions.
6. **Safety** – Projects that help reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads to zero by 2030; projects that help reduce the number of non-motorist fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads (e.g., bicyclists and pedestrians) to zero by 2030; and projects that help reduce transit-related fatalities, serious injuries, and safety incidents.

Although applicants are not required to fulfill multiple funding priorities, projects that meet more than one priority are desirable.

REGIONAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

OVERVIEW

TRPC has identified four Regional Priorities evaluation criteria that link to existing transportation goals and policies. Each criterion is worth 2 points, for a maximum possible score of eight points on a project in the Urban Medium Geographic Category, and six points in the Urban Small and Rural Geographic Categories. Applying a Regional Priority ranking offers both applicants and policy makers a transparent and performance-based approach to the evaluation and selection of priority regional projects for funding awards.

Regional Evaluation Criteria

1. Efficient use of Federal Funds.
2. Sustainable Thurston Urban Centers and Corridors (applies only to Urban Medium Geographic Category).
3. Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Goal.
4. Equity.

EFFICIENT USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS

Background

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) (23 U.S.C. 133) is one of the main sources of flexible federal funding available for transit or highway purposes. However, federal funding comes with many specific requirements that may increase the cost of the projects. For planning projects, the increase in requirements is negligible; for construction projects it can be high. For this reason, many jurisdictions will not request federal funding for transportation projects unless the project is large enough – and the funding level sufficient – for the scope of work to allow the project to efficiently absorb the increased administrative costs.

Efficient Use of Federal Funds Criteria Scoring

TRPC will evaluate the efficient use of federal funds based on the project type* and the total dollar cost. Four categories for ranking a project's efficient use of federal funds:

1. Type of project/funding level is the best use of federal funds, 2 points
2. Type of project/funding level is a reasonable use of federal funds, 1 point
3. Type of project/funding level is an acceptable use of federal funds, 0 points
4. Type of project/funding level is not an efficient use of federal funds, -1 point

Table 2 shows how the criteria and number of points will be applied.

Table 2: Project Criteria Ranking for Efficient use of Federal Funds
(values are in thousands of dollars).

Project/funding level is not an efficient use of federal funds	Acceptable use of federal funds	Reasonable use of federal funds	Best use of federal funds
-1 Point	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
Any construction or pavement maintenance (all phases) total project cost <250k.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standalone sidewalk construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Standalone Crosswalk (all phases) total project cost <250k. • Electric vehicle charging stations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavement maintenance (urban streets) >250k. • Trail construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Signal upgrades. • Fish passage barrier removal (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Stormwater improvements >250k. • Crosswalk (bundled) (all phases) total project cost >250k. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add funding to a project with existing federal funds (federalized project) at any funding level. • Street/road construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Roundabout or signal construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Pavement maintenance (rural roads) total project cost >250k. • Transit building facility construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Transit bus stop/other facility construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Vehicle replacements. • Transportation Demand Management programs. • Planning/feasibility studies.

* Other projects not listed in this table will be evaluated at time of review

SUSTAINABLE THURSTON URBAN CORRIDORS/CENTERS

Background

TRPC's Creating Places -- Preserving Spaces: A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region (2013), aims to integrate sustainability into all regional decision-making to achieve a healthy economy, society, and environment. Known as Sustainable Thurston, the plan identifies multiple priority goals, targets, and first action steps. The Council chose the Preferred Land Use Scenario as one of the regional priorities to evaluate a proposed project's performance in supporting vibrant centers and corridors in TRPC's Federal Call for Projects Process.

One of Sustainable Thurston's priority goals is to create vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhoods while accommodating growth. Creating places will support equal access to quality education, services, amenities, and infrastructure, as well as attract and retain employers and residents who desire an active urban environment. The plan set the following target:

By 2035, 72 percent of all (new and existing) households in our cities, towns, and unincorporated growth areas will be within a half-mile (comparable to a 12-minute walk for most people without a disability that limits walking) of an urban center, corridor, or neighborhood center with access to goods and services to meet some of their daily needs.

Achieving this target is expected to support the following outcomes:

- Greater Efficiency in the Delivery of Services and Provision of Infrastructure.
- Greater Access to Jobs, Shopping, Food, and Services.
- More Efficient Use of Resources.
- Greater Protection of Environmental Quality.

Ranking

TRPC will use a two-factor approach, based on: (1) A project's location within a Sustainable Thurston Urban Corridor, Urban Center, or Neighborhood Center (see Map 2) and/or as described on the applicant's proposal; and (2) Project type, as criteria for prioritizing a project's ability to create vibrant urban centers.

Preferred Project Types that Support the Sustainable Thurston Priority Goal*

1. **Neighborhood center, urban corridor, or urban center planning projects** that integrate land use and transportation, such as the Martin Way Corridor Study or the SR507 Main Street Study.
2. **Safety Projects** that reduce bicycle and pedestrian injuries and fatalities on arterials and collectors on urban corridors or neighborhood centers. Projects could include speed reduction/management, medians, and roundabouts.
3. **Pedestrian street crossing improvements** that provide direct and safe street crossings in neighborhood centers and urban corridors. Projects could include pedestrian signals, flashing beacons, refuge crossing islands, multi-use trail connections, bulb outs, and new or replacement ramps.
4. **Active transportation projects** that support walking and bicycling in neighborhood centers and urban corridors. Projects could include non-motorized bridges and tunnels, navigation or wayfinding signage, multi-use paths, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bicycle corridors, and other bicycle infrastructure such as community bicycle repair stations. Projects may also include community-focused active transportation safety, education, and encouragement programs. Projects may be standalone or a component of a larger road improvement project.

5. **Bus Stop Enhancements** that improve safety and both ADA and public accessibility to transit stops on urban corridors and in neighborhood centers.
6. **Transit route infrastructure improvements** for existing or new routes on urban corridors that support Bus Rapid Transit or other modes of high-capacity transportation.
7. **Intelligent Transportation Systems and traffic signal operations** that improve the operating efficiency of transit services, projects that improve traffic signal operating efficiency for the movement of goods and services on urban corridors, and traffic signal efficiency that better serves ADA accessibility or bicycle and pedestrian intersection crossings where new demand is projected.
8. **Maintenance projects** that reduce life cycle costs and preserve existing infrastructure on urban corridors and in neighborhood centers.

Urban Centers/Corridors Criteria

Projects will be evaluated based on their location within the [Sustainable Thurston Urban Corridors, Urban Centers, and Neighborhood Centers Map](#) (see Map 2). The criteria is only applicable to projects located in the U.S. Census Urban Medium area; the criteria will not affect projects located in Urban Small or Rural areas. For projects within the Urban Medium area, but not located in an urban center, urban corridor, or neighborhood center, points may be considered if the project location is pending an urban center or neighborhood center zoning amendment, or if a rezone is identified in a transportation plan or sub-area plan for a future zoning change that will coincide with the project's implementation date. Points will also be considered for proposals when the applicant provides a narrative justification for neighborhood centers not on the map that have existing land uses and businesses that support commercial activities consistent with the objectives of Sustainable Thurston.

Four categories for ranking a project's support for Sustainable Thurston Urban Centers/Corridors:

1. Project supports Sustainable Thurston within a quarter mile of an urban center or urban corridor, 2 points.
2. Project supports Sustainable Thurston within a half mile of an urban center, urban corridor, or neighborhood center, 1 point.
3. Project does not directly support Sustainable Thurston but improves access to goods and services, 0 points.
4. Project does not support Sustainable Thurston, -1 point.

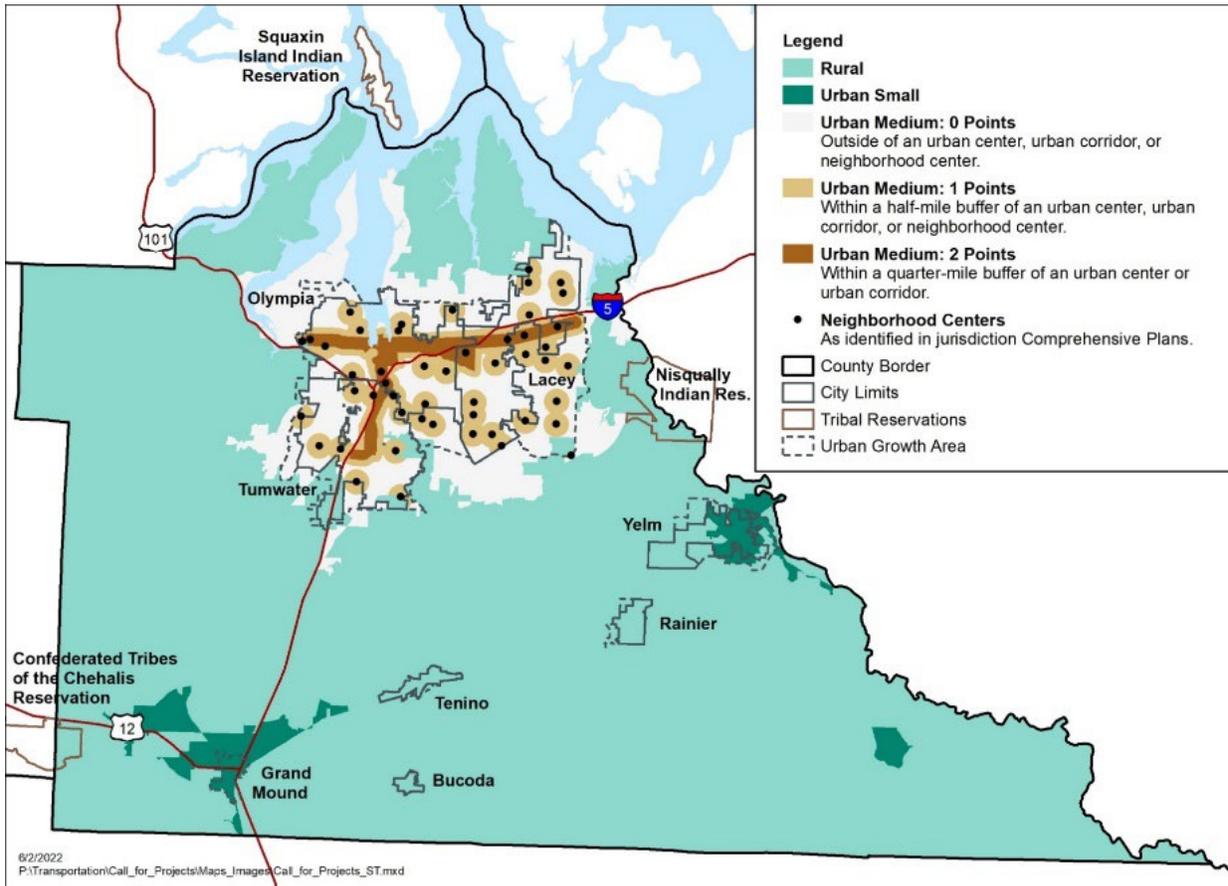
Table 3 shows how proposals submitted to TRPC will be evaluated and ranked under the criteria.

Table 3: Project Criteria Ranking for Sustainable Thurston Land Use Goal.

Project does not support Sustainable Thurston	Project does not directly support Sustainable Thurston, but improves access to goods and services	Project supports Sustainable Thurston within a half mile of an urban center, urban corridor, or neighborhood center	Project supports Sustainable Thurston within a quarter mile of an urban center or urban corridor
-1 Point	0 Points	1 Point	2 points
The project proposal is not included as an eligible project type and the project is located outside of an urban center, urban corridor, or neighborhood center.	Project is within an urban corridor, urban center, or neighborhood center (orange or yellow area on the map) but is not a preferred project type; or the project is outside of an urban center or urban corridor but is a preferred project type.	The majority of the project* is within a half mile of an urban center, urban corridor, or neighborhood center and is a preferred project type.	The majority of the project* is within a quarter mile of an urban center or urban corridor and is a preferred project type.

* Other projects not listed in this table will be evaluated at time of review

Map 2: Sustainable Thurston Urban Corridors, Urban Centers, and Neighborhood Centers (online map: <https://arcg.is/WKTmm>)



GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Background

Transportation makes up an estimated 33 percent of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in Thurston County. TRPC is committed to reduce GHG emissions through its transportation investments. The Council adopted the following targets in February 2021: achieve 45% reduction of 2015 levels by 2030 and achieve 85% reduction of 2015 levels by 2050. To help achieve these targets, TRPC is incorporating GHG reduction potential into its Call for Projects Process.

Types of Projects

Transportation emission reductions strategies typically fall into four different categories:

- **Cleaner Vehicles/Vehicle Improvement Strategies.** Replace high emission generating vehicles with cleaner vehicles.
- **Transportation Demand Management Strategies.** Policies or programs that reduce the number of vehicles on the road.
- **Transportation System Management Strategies.** Increase the person-trip capacity of the existing system.
- **Land Use Strategies.** “Smart Growth” development practices.

Table 4 shows examples of emission reduction project types, including some that are commonly awarded by TRPC.

Table 4: Examples of GHG Emissions Reduction Strategies.

Cleaner Vehicles / Vehicle Improvement Strategies	Transportation Demand Management & Active Transportation Strategies	Transportation System Management Strategies	Land Use Strategies*
Replace high emission generating vehicles with cleaner vehicles	Reduce the number of vehicles on the road	Increase the person-trip capacity of the existing system	“Smart Growth” development practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle retrofits. • Fleet upgrades. • Feebates. • Scrappage Programs. • Tax Incentives for Cleaner Vehicles . • Heavy-Duty Vehicle Retrofits. • Eco-Driving Education and Training and Dynamic Eco-Driving. • Truck Stop Electrification and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach / education. • Expanded transit routes or schedules. • Transit Incentives. • Telework. • Youth TDM Programs. • Road Pricing (including distance-based fees and cordoning). • Car Sharing. • Pay-as-You-Drive Insurance . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic Signal Optimization. • Ramp Metering. • Incident Management. • Speed Limit Reduction and Enforcement. • Roundabouts. • Capacity expansion. • Resurfacing Roads. • Alternative Construction Materials. • Traffic Calming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning regulations, including projects that support increasing infill, mixed use, and density. • Parking policies, including pricing. • Studies to align land use and transportation. • Affordable housing on High Density Corridors.

Cleaner Vehicles / Vehicle Improvement Strategies	Transportation Demand Management & Active Transportation Strategies	Transportation System Management Strategies	Land Use Strategies*
Auxiliary Power Units . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-Idling Regulations and Campaigns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ridesharing and HOV Lanes. Bus Stop Improvements. Bicycle and Pedestrian facilities. 		

Table 4 contents adapted from:

1. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 2012. *Reference Sourcebook for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Transportation Sources* [<https://trid.trb.org/view/1285484> 7/9/2021].
2. Victoria Transport Policy Institute (VTPI) 2017. *Smart Transportation Emissions Reduction Strategies* [<https://www.vtpi.org/ster.pdf> 7/9/2021].

Estimating Emissions Reductions

TRPC uses several resources to estimate emissions reductions for transportation projects, namely tools from the Federal Highway Administration (https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/toolkit/) and a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality and Improvement Program reporting tool developed by Puget Sound Regional Council. TRPC also uses data from traffic counts or from the regional travel demand models. Most estimates rely on assumptions such as:

- Reduced vehicle miles traveled
- Reduced intersection delay
- Number of people targeted by outreach efforts
- Number of people changing their travel behavior due to new infrastructure (e.g., bicycle lanes, trails, vehicle charging stations, transit service)

Emissions from transportation projects, including GHG emissions, are difficult to quantify, especially prior to project implementation. The best estimates account for emissions over the life cycle of the project, including construction, manufacturing, implementation, and any side effects. However, many resources for estimating emissions only consider a subset of these factors since their scope can be difficult to trace and quantify. How effectively a project reduces GHG emissions will depend on:

- Socioeconomic and behavioral factors, such as income, type of employment, and willingness to change travel behavior.
- Land use factors such as housing density, proximity to jobs and services, and alternative modes/routes in the project vicinity.
- Induced demand created by the project over the long term.
- Whether the project stands alone or is paired with other strategies. The ability to monitor and measure emissions reduction performance upon project or program implementation

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Criteria

TRPC will use a qualitative approach for evaluating GHG emissions reductions, based on the project type and its benefits, as a criterion for project prioritization. Four categories for ranking a project's ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions:

1. GHG reduction is one of the primary purposes of the project, 2 points
2. Project addresses another transportation need but may have a GHG reduction benefit, 1 point
3. Project is unlikely to increase or decrease GHG emissions, 0 point
4. Project will likely increase GHG emissions, -1 point

Table 5 shows how proposals submitted to TRPC will be evaluated and ranked under the criteria.

Table 5: Project Criteria Ranking for GHG Emissions Goal.*

Project will increase GHG emissions	Neutral	Project may have GHG reduction benefits	GHG reduction is one of the primary intentions of project
-1 Point	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street widening without multimodal elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersection improvements at non-congested areas.** • Pavement maintenance. • Fish passage barrier improvement. • Studies/plans without land use element. • Vehicle replacement without emissions reduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus stop improvements serving a corridor with >15-minute headways. • Intersection improvements in congested areas.** • Studies/plans with land use element or with the intent to reduce GHG. • Building facility construction that supports Transit operations and maintenance; traffic management; or other efficient travel. • New street connections without multimodal facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New street connections with multimodal elements. • Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. • TDM projects (Walk and Roll, CTR). • Vehicle replacement or retrofit resulting in lower emissions. • Electric vehicle charging station. • Vanpool/carpool investments. • Bus stop improvements serving a corridor with <=15-minute headways. • Transit corridor infrastructure and operational improvements. • High-capacity transportation.

*Other projects not listed in this table will be evaluated at time of review.

**Based on jurisdictions' methodology for evaluating Level of Service.

Background

Integrating equity into transportation decision-making has been identified as a Council priority. A recent study by Williams et al., 2019¹ entitled "Integrating Equity into MPO Project Prioritization," explored documents from 35 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) across the county to gain insight into their project prioritization process. Their primary findings:

- Prioritization practices vary significantly between MPOs.
- The broader local context and the MPO's unique planning environment and role influence the approaches used.
- Public involvement is imperative during these processes.

A study by Wennink, A. and Krapp, A., 2020², titled Equity-Oriented Performance Measures in Transportation Planning, stresses that "it is important to have a clear understanding of what is meant by transportation equity."

Understanding the Definition of Equity in the Thurston Region

TRPC staff developed a transportation priorities survey to collect direct public input from the community. The survey invited participation from all members of the Thurston region. The survey included demographic questions so that respondents' answers can be correlated to various demographic characteristics, including:

- Household income.
- Race and ethnicity.
- Whether a person has a disability affecting their mobility.
- Whether a person has trouble finding a job or a better paying job due to their transportation barriers (job barriers).
- Whether a person has trouble getting to the places they need to go (transportation barriers).

To further our region's efforts on equity, TRPC's Transportation Priorities community survey provided a definition of equity to the community and solicited input on an equity goal.

¹ Williams, K.M., Kramer, J., Keita, Y, Enomah, L.D., and Boyd, T., 2019. Integrating Equity into MPO Prioritization. Center for Transportation, Equity, Decisions, and Dollars (CTEED). [https://ctedd.uta.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/kris_final.pdf].

² Wennick, A., and Krapp, A., 2020. Equity-Oriented Performance Measures in Transportation Planning. American Planning Association. [https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/PAS-MEMO-2020-03-04-rev.pdf]

Equity Definition

Everyone has their own idea of what equity means to them. Sometimes, equity can be confused with equality. Here's what we mean when we use those words:

- Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities.
- Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

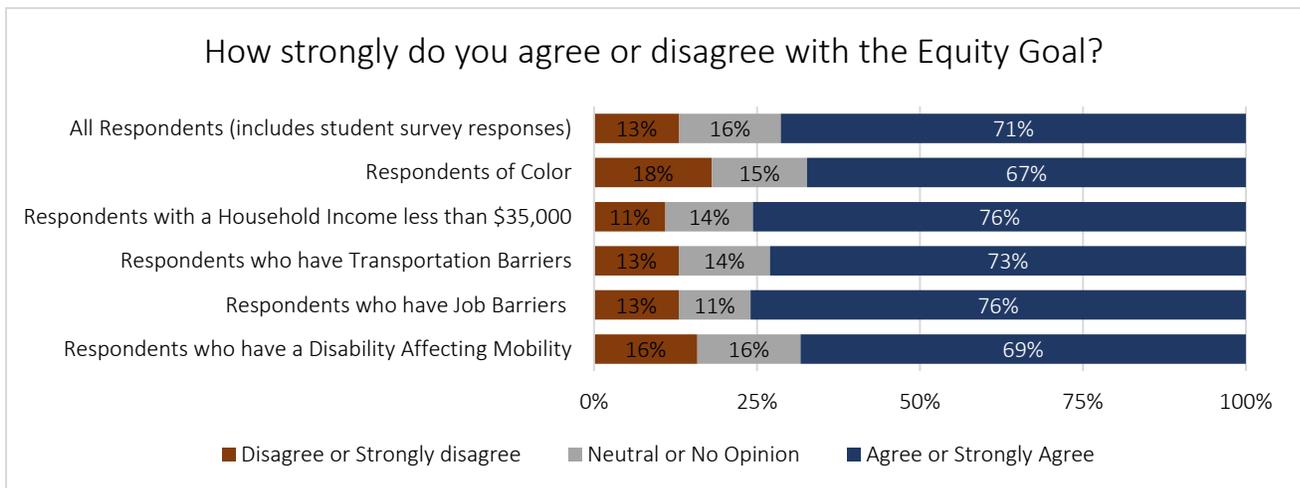
Equity Goal

TRPC would like to set a goal for making equity a greater part of transportation planning. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following goal?

Provide equitable transportation access and service for people of all ages, races and ethnicities, incomes, abilities, English language proficiencies, or other demographic characteristics as appropriate for the community's land use characteristics (urban, suburban, and rural).

Equity Goal Survey Results

In general, survey respondents supported the Equity Goal across all demographics. The highest support was from households with incomes less than \$35,000, and residents with barriers to jobs.



Types of Equity

The Wennick and Krapp study also summarized that "The most common definitions equate transportation equity with the fair distribution of benefits and burdens of transportation projects, plans, policies, and processes." They further state that transportation equity can be classified into three different types based on how fairness is assessed:

- Procedural equity, which is focused on the degree of involvement of diverse public stakeholders in the processes by which transportation decisions are made.

- Geographic equity, which is focused on the distribution of impacts across geography and space.
- Social equity, which is focused on the distribution across population groups that can be equal or differ by income, social class, and mobility ability.

Increasing Procedural Equity

To increase public involvement in TRPC's project selection process, TRPC's Transportation Priorities community survey asked the question:

Thurston Regional Planning Council distributes money from the federal government through grants for transportation studies, projects, and programs. Because of federal rules, this money can only be used in certain ways. Please mark how important the following types of studies, projects, and programs are to you.

Survey Results for Underserved Populations

Public input was sought on a wide range of project types, grouped into Project Priority categories, as shown in Table 6. TRPC analyzed survey results based on demographic information to identify traditionally underserved populations, using the definition:

UNDERSERVED POPULATION

An "Underserved population" or "traditionally underserved population" generally refers to a broad category that includes:

- minority populations; and
- low-income populations.

The definition may also include many other demographic categories that face challenges engaging with the transportation process and reaping equitable benefits, such as children, older adults, and persons with disabilities.

The survey revealed that underserved populations' responses are similar to results for all respondents, suggesting that priorities do not vary greatly among different demographic groups within the Thurston Region. Although there is generally strong support for all project types funded by TRPC, the following project types rank in the top five for three or more underserved population groups (highlighted in green):

- Planning and Studies with public involvement.
- Safety.
 - Make intersections safer.
 - Make crossing the street safer.
 - Make bus stops more convenient and safer for bus riders, especially for people with disabilities
- Maintenance.
 - Increase road maintenance (fix pavement/potholes).
- Active Transportation.
 - Add sidewalks and safe street crossings to existing streets.

Table 6. Survey Results for Underserved Populations on Project Priorities.

Percentages are based on the percent of respondents who indicated a project was "Somewhat Important" or "Very Important" Green = Top 5 Projects as related to the list above Project	Respondents of Color	Respondents with a Household Income less than \$35,000	Respondents who have Transportation Barriers	Respondents who have Job Barriers	Respondents who have a Disability Affecting Mobility	All Respondents
Planning and Studies						
Conduct planning studies, with public involvement, that address current and future transportation challenges	93%	95%	96%	97%	96%	95%
Safety						
Make intersections safer	96%	93%	96%	94%	96%	97%
Make crossing the street safer	95%	94%	96%	93%	96%	96%
Make bus stops more convenient and safer for bus riders, especially for people with disabilities	93%	94%	97%	96%	94%	93%
Efficiency						
Add turning lanes or center lanes	88%	86%	83%	77%	89%	89%
Invest in new transportation technologies (improved traffic signals, real-time travel information)	88%	88%	86%	84%	89%	90%
Invest in projects that reduce the need to travel, such as encouraging working from home	79%	83%	80%	84%	79%	81%
Maintenance						
Increase road maintenance (fix pavement/potholes)	94%	96%	94%	90%	97%	97%
Replace transit vehicles or bus stop shelters	78%	87%	87%	87%	83%	80%
Resiliency						
Improve roads that are detour routes to Interstate 5 (I-5)	91%	88%	86%	85%	93%	91%
Improve roads that are more likely to be impacted by hazards such as flooding or landslides	92%	93%	92%	87%	94%	93%
Complete missing roads/street connections	86%	84%	86%	84%	87%	83%

Percentages are based on the percent of respondents who indicated a project was "Somewhat Important" or "Very Important"	Respondents of Color	Respondents with a Household Income less than \$35,000	Respondents who have Transportation Barriers	Respondents who have Job Barriers	Respondents who have a Disability Affecting Mobility	All Respondents
Green = Top 5 Projects as related to the list above						
Project						
Help improve water quality and/or fish habitat by fixing places where roads and bridges impact natural areas	91%	96%	95%	95%	92%	93%
Active Transportation						
Add sidewalks and safe street crossings to existing streets	93%	96%	96%	95%	95%	95%
Add bicycle lanes to existing streets	78%	88%	87%	86%	78%	83%
Complete the regional trail network	82%	87%	86%	90%	82%	87%
Invest in school/public awareness programs to reduce travel trips and increase safety	78%	87%	84%	80%	79%	80%

Geographic Equity: Distributing Funding Across the region

TRPC has a long-standing practice of distributing funding for transportation projects to all communities in the Thurston Region. Examples of this include specific funding targets for rural and urban communities and fostering partnerships with Thurston County and the smaller south county cities and towns and Tribal partners.

Social Equity: Understanding Project Benefits and Burdens

Another aspect of integrating equity into project prioritization is to evaluate the benefits and burdens of projects to marginalized populations. Table 7 supplies some examples of those transportation project benefits and burdens.

Table 7. Examples of Transportation Benefits and Burdens

Transportation Benefits	Transportation Burdens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased access to social, educational, and economic opportunities. Increased access to high-quality mobility options. Travel time savings . Cost savings. Congestion mitigation. Reduction of pollution. Improved connectivity within communities. Opportunities for physical activity through active transportation modes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced access to essential opportunities and services. Restricted or no access to high quality transportation. Long/increased travel times. Financial burdens. Traffic congestion. Increased pollution. Physical division of communities. Creation of barriers to bicycling and walking.

Transportation Benefits	Transportation Burdens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in traffic injuries and fatalities. • Local hiring and job training for jobs in construction, maintenance, and operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to traffic-related safety risks. • Vulnerability to climate impacts. • Inequitable enforcement.

Equity Criteria

TRPC will use a three-tiered approach to integrate equity into the Call for Projects update process:

1. Public Involvement Score
 - a. Projects that rank in the top five for three or more underserved population groups, 1 point.
 - b. All other projects, 0 points.
2. Geographic Equity Score – geographic equity will be achieved through funding minimums and caps.
3. Social Equity Score
 - a. Projects that have a demonstrated benefit for an underserved population, either by geographic proximity (for example a school route sidewalk project for a school with a high proportion of students receiving free and reduced lunch), or a targeted program (for example dial-a-lift vehicles), Additional 1 point.
 - b. Projects that place a disproportionate burden on an underserved population, -1. Examples can be found in Table 8.

Table 8 shows how proposals submitted to TRPC will be evaluated and ranked under the criteria.

Table 8: Project Criteria Ranking for Equity

Base Points			Bonus Point
Disproportionate Burden	All other Projects	Priority Projects for Underserved Populations	Bonus Point: Demonstrated Benefit
-1 Point	0 Points	1 Point	+1 Point
Projects that have a disproportionate burden on an underserved population, regardless of project type.	<p>Efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add turning lanes or center lanes. Invest in new transportation technologies (improved traffic signals, real-time travel information). Invest in projects that reduce the need to travel, such as encouraging working from home. <p>Maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace transit vehicles or bus stop shelters. <p>Resiliency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve roads that are detour routes to Interstate 5 (I-5). Improve roads that are more likely to be impacted by hazards such as flooding or landslides. Complete missing roads/street connections. Help improve water quality and/or fish habitat by fixing places where roads and bridges impact natural areas. <p>Active Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add bicycle lanes to existing streets. Complete the regional trail network. Invest in school/public awareness programs to reduce travel trips and increase safety. 	<p>Planning and Studies with public involvement</p> <p>Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make intersections safer. Make crossing the street safer. Make bus stops more convenient and safer for bus riders, especially for people with disabilities. <p>Maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase road maintenance (fix pavement). <p>Active Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add sidewalks and safe street crossings to existing streets. 	Projects that have a demonstrated benefit for an underserved population.

GRANT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Objective

TRPC will award a combined total of \$11,380,000 in STBG and TA funds to projects that support regional funding priorities, regional evaluation criteria, support the Regional Transportation Plan, and can proceed with project delivery on a committed schedule.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT (STBG)

STBG Project Eligibility

TRPC will fund a variety of projects in both the urban and unincorporated rural areas of the region. Historically, the region has awarded regional federal funds for investments that make the transportation system safe and efficient for all modes of travel and which keep life cycle costs as low as possible. The flexibility inherent in STBG means that most types of transportation projects other than general-purpose capacity projects are eligible for consideration.

Projects must be located on federal-aid routes (exceptions apply for TA projects funded with STBG funds and certain plans and studies). Projects located on rural minor collectors and local roads are ineligible. Visit WSDOT's Federal Functional Classification Map App to view federal-aid routes:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/data/tools/geoportal/?config=FunctionalClass>

STBG eligible projects and activities include:

- Construction of highways, bridges, and tunnels.
- Construction of ferry boats and terminal facilities.
- Transit capital projects.
- Infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems capital improvements including vehicle-to-infrastructure communication equipment.
- Truck parking facilities.
- Wildlife crossing structures.
- Operational improvements and capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring, management, and control facilities and programs.
- Highway and transit safety infrastructure improvements and programs.
- Fringe and corridor parking facilities.
- Recreational trails projects.
- Planning, design, or construction of boulevards and other roadways.
- Protection for bridges and tunnels.

- Surface transportation planning programs, highway and transit research and development, and workforce training.
- Surface transportation infrastructure modifications to facilitate direct intermodal interchange, transfer, and access into and out of a port terminal.
- Projects and strategies designed to support congestion pricing.
- Projects and strategies designed to reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions.
- The installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and vehicle-to-grid infrastructure.
- The installation and deployment of current and emerging intelligent transportation technologies, including the ability of vehicles to communicate with infrastructure, buildings, and other road users.
- Planning and construction of projects that facilitate intermodal connections between emerging transportation technologies.
- Protective features, including natural infrastructure, to enhance the resilience of a transportation facility otherwise eligible for assistance under STBG.
- Measures to protect a transportation facility otherwise eligible for assistance under STBG from cybersecurity threats.

For details on Implementation Guidance for the STBG Program as revised by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, visit <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/>

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES (TA)

TA Project Eligibility

Transportation Alternatives STBG Set-Aside provides funding for a variety of generally smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities; construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas; community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management; environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity; recreational trails; safe routes to school projects; and vulnerable road user safety assessments.

Eligible project types include:

- 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.

- 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, including:
 - inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising;
 - historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;
 - vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control; and
 - archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project
- Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to:
 - address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff; and
 - reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats
- The recreational trails program
- The safe routes to school program
- Planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

For details on Implementation Guidance for the TA STBG Set-Aside Program as revised by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, visit:

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/guidance/.

TA Eligible Entities

Entities eligible to receive TA funds include:

1. A local government. Local government entities include any unit of local government below a State government agency, except for an MPO representing an urbanized area with a population over 200,000. Examples include city, town, township, village, borough, parish, or county agencies.
2. A regional transportation authority. Regional transportation authorities are considered the same as the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations

3. A transit agency. Transit agencies include any agency responsible for public transportation that is eligible for funds as determined by the Federal Transit Administration.
4. A natural resource or public land agency. Natural resource or public land agencies include any Federal, Tribal, State, or local agency responsible for natural resources or public land administration. Examples include:
 - State or local park or forest agencies.
 - State or local fish and game or wildlife agencies.
 - Department of the Interior land management agencies.
 - U.S. Forest Service.
5. A school district, local education agency, or school. School districts, local education agencies, or schools may include any public or nonprofit private school. Projects should benefit the general public and not only a private entity.
6. A Tribal government.
7. A metropolitan planning organization that serves an urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or fewer. MPOs representing urbanized areas over 200,000 population are not eligible entities.
8. A nonprofit entity. The BIL removed the requirement that the nonprofit entity be responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs.
9. Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for or oversight of transportation or recreational trails (other than a metropolitan planning organization that serves an urbanized area with a population of over 200,000 or a State agency) that the State determines to be eligible.
10. A State, at the request of an eligible entity listed above.

Eligible applicants include both Traditional and Non-Traditional Partners. All applicants must have projects administered by a CA agency.

COMBINED STBG AND TA FUNDING CAPS AND APPLICATION LIMITS

Funding Caps

A funding cap recognizes the jurisdictions' varying capabilities to develop plans, grant applications, and manage their federally awarded projects. A cap can help balance the project selection process to fund both larger and smaller jurisdictions' grant proposals that advance regional goals. These strategies also allow regional policy makers to award funding across the various jurisdictions over several funding cycles.

Urban Small and Rural Funding Maximum Awards

There are no funding caps for the Urban Small and Rural Areas. However, awards may not exceed the maximum available funding levels for these areas. For any TRPC issued

Call for Projects Process, applicants may apply for funding for either Urban Small, Rural, or a combination of these two, if the proposal is in both geographic areas (see Map 1). For example, a pavement preservation project in the Grand Mound area that extends into the surrounding Rural area. The funding maximum for both STBG and TA include the total flexible funding available for these grant programs for Urban Small, Rural, and combined areas.

Table 9a shows the maximum STBG funding available in the Urban Small, Rural, and combined areas based on the estimated amount of federal funds to be programmed in 2022, and Table 9b shows the maximum funding for TA.

Table 9a. STBG Maximum Award for 2022 Urban Small, Rural, and Combined Projects

	Urban Small	Rural	Urban Small & Rural Combined Project
STBG	\$725,800	\$770,400	\$1,496,200
Flexible	\$824,400	\$824,400	\$824,400
Maximum Possible Award*	\$1,550,200	\$1,594,800	\$2,320,600

Table 9b. TA Maximum Award for 2022 Urban Small, Rural, and Combined Projects

	Urban Small	Rural	Urban Small & Rural Combined Project
TA	\$111,600	\$308,600	\$420,200
Flexible	\$677,000	\$677,000	\$677,000
Maximum Possible Award*	\$788,600	\$985,600	\$1,097,200

Note: The flexible funding can be awarded to projects in the Urban medium area, so actual awards may be less than an applicant's request.

Urban Medium Funding Cap

TRPC is implementing a funding cap that exclusively applies to proposals that will be implemented within the Urban Medium area (see Map 1). Specifically, the funding cap stipulates that no one applicant can receive more than 33 percent of the estimated funding available in the first two Calls for Projects, over a three-Call for Projects cycle.

The flexible funding is not factored into the Funding Cap as this could be awarded to proposals located in the Urban Small and Rural areas. The Funding Cap will apply to both the STBG and TA grant programs (refer to Geographic Programming Requirements for Federal Funding on page 4). The proposed funding cap will span the 2022, 2024, and 2026 Call for Projects funding cycles.

This means that the maximum STBG awarded to one applicant cannot exceed \$3,759,100 over the combined 2022 and 2024 Call for Project cycles. Figure 2 shows the estimated funding cap that would be in effect for the 2022 and 2024 Call for Projects (see Background: Estimate of Available Funding on page 31). However, this cap would not apply to any applicants who are co-applicants to a multi-agency project proposal.

In 2024, TRPC will recalculate the 2024 Funding Cap to account for changes in funding levels based on the region's annual allocation and the status of project programming and obligations.

Figure 2. Funding Cap for Urban Medium Category for the 2022 Call for Projects.

Urban Medium – 33% of Calls 1 & 2 Funding combined	
STBG	\$3,759,100
Transportation Alternatives	\$495,400

Over the three-Call for Projects cycle, an applicant cannot be awarded funding greater than the Funding Cap unless it is through a contingency project, being the lead or a partner for a joint project, or through sponsoring a project for a non-traditional partner. If an applicant chooses to decline a funding award, or de-obligate funding attached to a funding award, they will be eligible to re-apply for funding during the next funding cycle.

Additional considerations:

To reduce risk for failure to meet the region's obligation target, TRPC will encourage applicants to split large construction project requests (over \$2.5 million) into project phases that can obligate in differing years. This will retain the ability to maintain a flexible project list to meet annual obligation targets.

New Three-Call for Projects Cycle

In the fourth Call for Projects cycle (anticipated in 2028), all the applicant's funding cap levels will be reset and a new funding cap will be established. It doesn't matter whether an applicant met the funding cap during the first, second, or third Call for Projects cycle.

Limit on Applications Submitted

Applicants can submit up to four proposals (STBG and TA combined) for each geographic category (see Map 1), and be a lead applicant, or partner, for no more than three joint projects. Individual projects may not exceed the Funding Cap. Applicants are asked to rank their proposal from one (highest) and so on.

An applicant may want to indicate on the application form if they desire their priority proposal to be included on the contingency list to receive additional grant funding, should it become available (Question 12d).

Limit on Contingency Proposals Submitted

Applicants can also indicate if their projects should be submitted directly to the Contingency List (Question 10). Applicants are not limited on the number of contingency list project applications. Applicants should prioritize their projects, as applicant prioritization will be used to break ties, if applicable.

DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSALS

Applicants will identify their highest priority project(s) and may also consider contingency proposals that fully support the established TRPC transportation funding priorities. Projects will reflect each applicant's own internal prioritization processes and procedures. TRPC assumes that all projects submitted have the full support and financial commitment of sponsoring agencies and organizations.

EVIDENCE OF LOCAL PUBLIC PROCESS

Local government applicants must demonstrate their priority proposals originated in or have been subject to some type of public involvement process. For example, the proposal may be the implementation step of a planning or study process that involved the public, or it may have been vetted through a transportation improvement plan (TIP) or capital facilities plan (CFP) development process. Applicants should describe any previous opportunity the public has had to provide input on the proposal itself and/or the problem or need the proposal addresses.

APPLICATION COMPLETENESS

All relevant application sections, lines, fields, boxes, and signature requirements must be fully completed and checked for accuracy. For questions that are not applicable, mark "N/A" and skip to the next question. Applicants should develop comprehensive but concise descriptions for each application submitted. Policy makers will review each proposal for how well it supports established funding priorities with an overall goal of promoting TRPC's Regional Funding Priorities. Applicants should develop articulate descriptions that fully speak to the intent of this federal funding project selection process, and which are understandable to a policy maker audience. Applications should make distinct connections between characteristics of the proposal, issues or needs the proposal addresses, and established Regional Funding Priorities.

Ca Agency Sponsorship

Applicants without CA approval status require a CA agency sponsor to administer their project. A CA agency will incur additional administrative cost in assuming CA responsibility, so typically plan for up to 20 percent of the total federal funding requested to cover those costs. The applicant may be expected to contribute to the additional costs that an agency would incur if it acts as your CA agency. Clarify expectations on this up front with CA sponsors and be sure it is factored into proposal cost estimates. *Neither federal law nor TRPC requires local jurisdictions to serve as CA agencies for any other agencies or organizations.*

Ca Agency Information

Prospective applicants may contact the following Certification Acceptance agencies for consultation or seeking a CA sponsor for proposals:

Lacey	Martin Hoppe	mhoppe@ci.lacey.wa.us	360.438.2681
Olympia	Sophie Stimson	ssimson@ci.olympia.wa.us	360.753.8497
Tumwater	Mary Heather Ames	mhames@ci.tumwater.wa.us	360.754.4140
Thurston County	Matt Unzelman	matt.unzelman@co.thurston.wa.us	360.867.2335
Intercity Transit	Eric Phillips	ephillips@intercitytransit.com	360.705.5832
TRPC	Paul Brewster	brewstp@trpc.org	360.741.2550
WSDOT Olympic Region	John Ho	hojohn@wsdot.wa.gov	360.705.7383

Application Forms and Optional Attachments

Proposals must be submitted using the TRPC application forms. A fillable Adobe Acrobat form is available for the STBG and TA grant programs. Applicants may submit no more than five pages of additional documentation to establish support for their proposal such as a vicinity map, photos, illustrations, cross-sections, or letters. Additional pages to document Title VI information or to report on the status of existing federal projects does not count toward the five-page limitation.

Application materials are available for download from www.trpc.org. Applicants are encouraged to review all questions and fields prior to filling it in. Questions about the application materials may be directed to Paul Brewster, brewstp@trpc.org or 360.741.2526.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - CALL FOR PROJECTS PROCESS

Some general process guidance applies to the Surface Transportation Block Grant and the Transportation Alternatives Program.

2025-2027 PROJECT OBLIGATION

Selected proposals will obligate no earlier than October 1, 2024 and must obligate no later than June 30 for each subsequent year, through 2027. Applicants must state their committed year of project obligation on the application form. TRPC staff will coordinate with successful grant recipients to determine the appropriate year of obligation for each project, which will be specified in a project's award letter.

Applicants are encouraged to become familiar with [TRPC's Obligation Authority Policy](#). Failure to meet the committed year of obligation without a committed effort to mitigate the situation with TRPC and WSDOT may result in the awarded funds being withdrawn from the project.

PROPOSAL REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Thurston Regional Planning Council is responsible for administering these federal funds in a way that fully supports the Regional Transportation Plan, Sustainable Thurston Plan, and established funding priorities, and which is consistent with all applicable state and federal requirements. This process is intended to facilitate that administration of funds.

Proposals will be evaluated for how well they support the Regional Funding Priorities. Projects will be scored and ranked based on their total Regional Evaluation Criteria points. Familiarity with established funding priorities, linkage to existing plans and policies, and clarity in writing for a policy maker audience are all important factors in successful project reviews.

Technical Review of Proposals

TRPC staff will conduct the first round of application reviews. Staff will validate each application's eligible points on TRPC's Evaluation Criteria. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will review applications for their technical and financial feasibility, compliance with federal and regional eligibility requirements, and verification of obligation commitments.

After this review, TRPC may guide applicants to make minor refinements to a proposal for clarification. Applicants are encouraged to participate in the review meeting currently scheduled for October 20, 2022, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Notice of this meeting will be sent to all applicants. TRPC staff will follow up with those who are unable to attend.

Public Review and Comment Process

TRPC will make all proposals available for public review and comment. TRPC will post an announcement on www.trpc.org. Proposals will be available on-line for review or available in hard copy upon request October 24 - November 6, 2022. All comments received by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on November 6 will be shared with applicants and included in the proposal review package submitted to the Transportation Policy Board and Thurston Regional Planning Council. Public Comments should be submitted in writing to Paul Brewster, brewstp@trpc.org.

Transportation Policy Board Review and Funding Recommendation

The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) is scheduled to consider all proposals during their regular meeting on November 13, 2022, at 7:00 a.m. The TPB will consider all TAC recommendations and public comments. Applicants are encouraged to attend these meetings to answer policy makers' questions about their proposals. TRPC staff will send notice of these meeting to all applicants. The TPB is scheduled to approve a funding recommendation to the Council at this meeting.

Council Review and Final Selection

TRPC will conduct a preliminary review of all proposals at its regular meeting on Friday, November 4, 2022. Any questions generated will be forwarded to the TPB or TAC for their consideration. It is not necessary for applicants to attend this meeting, though all are welcome to do so.

On Friday, December 2, 2022, the Council will consider the TPB recommendation, and any public comments received before project selection.

The Council will identify those projects to be funded in this 2022 Regional Call for Projects Process. The Council retains final decision-making authority on the distribution of STBG and TA federal grant funds to priority projects.

Regional Transportation Improvement Program Amendments

The selected proposals will be programmed as funding secure or contingency projects in the 2023-2026 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). TRPC will amend the RTIP in winter 2023. Approval of TRPC's RTIP and subsequent amendments will program eligible projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program. The programming and administration of the RTIP is necessary for projects to be eligible for obligation in the applicant's desired year. TRPC staff will work with successful applicants to meet these programming requirements.

Acknowledgement

Successful applicants are requested to acknowledge TRPC in press releases and other project notifications that their projects are funded with federal transportation dollars awarded by Thurston Regional Planning Council.

FREQUENTLY ASKED FUNDING QUESTIONS

This section includes commonly asked questions about these federal funding programs and the TRPC funding process.

Does a proposal have to address all regional funding priorities for a STBG grant?

No, to be eligible, a proposal only must demonstrate how it addresses one of the funding priorities identified by TRPC. However, a proposal that does address multiple priorities should be a high priority for any agency or organization.

Does a proposal have to be a construction project to be considered a priority?

No, proposals do not have to include construction activities to be considered regional priorities. Examples of other potential priority project types include corridor or sub-area plans; development of street design standards to incorporate "complete street" concepts; transit vehicle acquisitions; park-and-ride facility planning; systems analysis; signal systems; and traffic safety education activities. A good investment in construction begins with a good investment in analysis and planning. Applicants are not bound to a single type of project in this process.

Does a proposal that meets regional and federal eligibility requirements guarantee funding?

No, compliance with eligibility requirements only means that TRPC will consider the proposal for funding.

To be successful in securing funds, a proposal should have a positive impact on the community and be competitive with TRPC's Regional Evaluation Criteria. The completeness and accuracy of an application increases a proposal's likelihood of receiving funding. To increase the appeal of your proposal:

- **Familiarize yourself with the region's transportation priorities, the Regional Transportation Plan, and Sustainable Thurston's Action Plan (*Creating Places*,**

Preserving Spaces). Make sure that your proposal and description clearly speak to the funding priorities in the context of overarching regional policies.

- **Make sure your proposal is well thought out and the description is easy to understand.** Policy makers will have a hard time recognizing a great project if the description is unorganized or incomplete. Use plain English to clearly convey the intent and benefits of your proposal.
- **Be clear and concise.** Making a great pitch for your proposal doesn't mean writing pages and pages of description. Applicants are limited to 150, 300, or 500 word counts for most sections on the application forms. Information should be succinct and compelling. Tip – edit your narrative content in Microsoft Word, perform a word count, and paste the final version in the application form.
- **Be prepared.** If you haven't lined up your Certification Acceptance (CA) agency, or verified federal eligibility requirements, your proposal will not be considered eligible.
- **Be ready to answer questions.** The technical and policy reviews may generate specific questions about your proposal or how you plan to implement it. This is the reviewers' responsibility and is meant to ensure that they fully understand what you are proposing to do with a regional grant.
- **Don't over commit!** Federal grant funds place a heavy emphasis on accountability. Be realistic in your assessment of project obligation schedules considering your other agency commitments and availability of match resources. Don't lose your grant by being unaware of what obligation entails or how long it takes. The technical review will pay attention to the ability to deliver project obligation schedules.

TRPC has a responsibility to allocate these public funds wisely. Policy makers will look for innovative, resourceful, and competitive proposals that will generate significant return on the investment for the traveling public. They are likely to be hesitant about proposals that seem too experimental or are not well thought out.

I have an idea for a proposal, and I know it will really work! How do I find out if it is eligible for funding?

Remember that this is a federal funding program – lots of flexibility, but many administrative requirements are attached to the revenue. You need to ensure that your proposal meets regional and federal eligibility requirements.

Your best strategy is to discuss your proposal with knowledgeable staff at TRPC, WSDOT Olympic Region, or local agencies as soon as possible. Learn about possible pitfalls early in the project development process so that you have time to make course corrections or rethink your proposal.

Once applications have been submitted, TRPC prohibits major rewrites of proposals to address eligibility issues. Minor revisions after the technical review may be accepted case-by-case.

The final authority on federal eligibility is the WSDOT Office of Highways and Local Programs. Applicants are strongly advised to contact John Ho at WSDOT Olympic Region to confirm that proposals are fully eligible under federal funding guidelines (by phone at 360.705.7383 or by email at hojohn@wsdot.wa.gov).

Why does this process distinguish between 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' transportation partners?

Every local jurisdiction in the region has unfunded safety, preservation, efficiency, and enhancements projects. These projects are needed to support the regional transportation system, but there is simply not enough money to fund them. Policy makers established a process that will enable some of these highest priority projects to move forward in every jurisdiction.

However, policy makers wanted to make sure that other agencies or organizations could also participate in these funding programs. Therefore, TRPC encourages proposals from non-traditional transportation partners. In the context of this process, non-traditional partners may include, but are not limited to, certain nonprofit organizations or service providers, state agencies, Port of Olympia, and school districts.

Note that most non-traditional partners must apply as project co-sponsors for Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program grants.

If my proposal is selected, will TRPC give me the money to do the work?

No, you will not receive any money up front. STBG and TA grants are reimbursement-type grant programs. Grant recipients must follow [WSDOT's Local Agency Guidelines](#) to administer their projects. Project sponsors will submit approved invoices to the Federal Highway Administration via WSDOT Local Programs Olympic Region. You will be reimbursed for all eligible work up to the amount awarded in your grant. If you receive funding, you will work with WSDOT on the frequency of invoice submittal.

I have more questions now than when I started. Who can I contact for more information?

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Paul Brewster with questions, ideas, clarifications, and any other needs associated with this call for projects. Reach Paul Brewster by email at brewstp@trpc.org or by phone at 360.741.2526. Paul may also be available to meet with you and your project team. This is especially useful early in the project development process.