

2017-2019 Federal Funding Call for Projects Process

Surface Transportation Program (STP) Grant

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
Grant

Application Instructions and Process Guidance

Thurston Regional Planning Council



SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2016

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APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

2017 - 2019 TRPC FEDERAL FUNDING CALL FOR PROJECTS PROCESS

GENERAL INFORMATION

This booklet provides instruction and guidance for the 2017-2019 Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) Call for Projects. In Fall 2016, TRPC will award \$6.63 million in federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) and \$1.19 million in Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant funds for obligation in federal fiscal years (FFY) 2017 through 2019. TRPC will also award \$1.0 million in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds to projects for obligation in FFY 2017 and 2018.

This booklet includes the process schedule, describes project eligibility information, eligible entities, applications instructions, and frequently asked questions for these three grant programs.

TRPC STAFF SUPPORT

Applicants can get direct application support from TRPC staff through October 14, 2016. To obtain guidance, responses to questions, or set up a meeting to discuss project proposals, contact:

Paul Brewster at 360.741.2526 or by email at brewstp@trpc.org.

SCHEDULE

The STP, TAP and CMAQ project application and selection processes are on the same schedule. The following dates and deadlines apply to all three programs. All dates are for 2016.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
September 19	Official Call for Projects Opens
September 19-October 14	Staff Support for Applicants
October 14	Project Proposal Applications due by 5:00 p.m. PST
October 20	Technical Advisory Committee Review of Proposals
October 24 – Nov 4	Public Review & Comment on Proposals
November 4	TRPC Preliminary Review of Proposals
November 9	Transportation Policy Board (TPB) Project Review and Recommendation to TRPC
December 2	TRPC Project Review and Action on Project Selection

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 adopted Regional Transportation Plan. Examples of these partners include the Port of Olympia, school districts, state and federal natural resource agencies, fire districts, and non-profit organizations.

Eligibility Requirements

Specific regional and federal requirements that any project sponsor must comply with. 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 program administration staff at the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

Project Administration

With their submittal, all applicants must demonstrate the ability to administer and carry out project proposals consistent with federal guidelines, or have a commitment from another agency willing to do so. This is referred to as Certification Acceptance (CA) status approval, and is a federal requirement. Applications need a signature with their submittal from the CA-certified representative who will administer their projects. Federal CA status requirements apply to all applicants.

Local Match Requirements

Federal law stipulates that a minimum 13.5% of the total project cost come from non-federal contribution¹. This match requirement applies to STP, TAP, and CMAQ funding and may include

¹ The only exception to the “non-federal contribution” rule is that Indian Reservation Road (IRR) money can be used to match federal transportation funds.

committed local funds or secured state grants. Previous expenditures do not qualify unless explicitly approved by WSDOT Highways and Local Programs as valid match. Sponsors are not precluded from applying a higher match to their proposal, and are encouraged to do so.

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 will select project phases for funding by federal fiscal year to correspond with these obligation targets.

Funding Awards by Phase

Projects with multiple phases – Preliminary Engineering (PE), Right-of-Way (RW), Construction (CN) – will be awarded funds for one phase at a time (exceptions may apply to certain projects). 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, or for 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.

Sanctioning of Funds

TRPC reserves the right to rescind awarded funds from projects that fail to meet scheduled obligation dates. The state implemented “Use it or lose it” in 2013 to reduce the amount of federal funds tied up on projects that are not progressing as planned and increase the rate of project delivery.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PRIORITIES

Since 1998, TRPC has prioritized its federal funding investments to those projects that improve the existing multi-modal transportation system instead of investing in general purpose roadway capacity projects. Regional funding priorities are those projects or programs that improve:

1. Safety
2. Preservation
3. Efficiency of the multi-modal transportation system.

Although applicants are not required to demonstrate their proposal fulfill all three funding priorities, projects that meet more than one priority are desirable.

SUPPORT FOR THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN, SUSTAINABLE THURSTON, AND OTHER REGIONAL INITIATIVES

There is a strong interest in projects, programs, and studies that align with established regional goals and policies in the Regional Transportation Plan. Particular emphasis is placed on the transportation initiatives in Sustainable Thurston, which in turn includes initiatives such as Urban Corridor Communities, South Thurston Economic Development Initiative, Healthy Kids Safe Streets, Walk and Roll, Commute Trip Reduction, and the I-5 Action Plan, etc. While not an eligibility requirement, the region intends to leverage these federal funds to support on-going regional endeavors where possible.

DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

Each applicant will identify its own highest priority project(s) that fully support(s) 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 project 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 project itself or the problem or need the project addresses.

APPLICATION COMPLETENESS

All application sections, lines, fields, boxes, and signature requirements must be fully completed and checked for accuracy. Applicants should develop comprehensive but concise descriptions for each project submitted. Applicants understand that policy makers will review each proposal for how well it supports established funding priorities with an overall goal of promoting an efficient multi-modal transportation system as described in the Regional Transportation Plan. Applicants are advised to 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 proposed projects, issues or needs those projects address, and established regional funding priorities.

APPLICATION FORM

There is a unique application form for each funding program (STP, TAP, and CMAQ). Each application form is a maximum of four pages. Applicants should also provide a map of the project vicinity or service area. Photos, illustrations, letters, or other materials needed to support the proposal are allowed but not required – up to a maximum of four additional pages. Note that TRPC will print application packages black-and-white for policy maker review; maps and images should reproduce well in such a format.

Project proposals must be submitted using the official application form. Forms are available in both Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat formats. For a copy of the application materials, send an email request to brewstp@trpc.org or visit: <http://www.trpc.org/304/Transportation-Funding> to download a copy.

Please note any additional application instructions in the funding sections that follow.

STATUS OF EXISTING FEDERAL PROJECTS

Applicants are asked to identify any additional federal transportation projects that may be underway. This includes projects previously selected for funding by TRPC as well as those selected through other state processes, and which are still active projects. Applicants are asked to describe the status of those projects, including funding source and year awarded, progress to date, future obligation commitments, and ability to fulfill those obligation commitments while meeting those proposed in this grant process. The intent is to ensure that agency resources are allocated realistically and do not jeopardize the obligation schedule of past or future projects.

CERTIFICATION ACCEPTANCE AGENCY REQUIREMENT

A 'CA,' or Certification Acceptance agency, is one that is authorized by WSDOT to administer federal funds. To receive authorization, a CA agency has demonstrated to WSDOT that it is capable of managing these aspects of its federally-funded projects. Federal funds must be spent in a way that fully complies with many different federal requirements regarding the

environment, design and construction specifications, equal employment opportunities, disadvantaged business enterprises, bid processes, billing and accounting, and many other elements.

The Federal Highways Administration requires agencies and organization that obligate federal funding to have CA status. **Non-traditional Partners must identify a CA agency that will sponsor project proposals prior in their application and include a signature of a local agency representative with CA status.**

CA AGENCY CONTACTS

Only a few agencies in this region are authorized as CAs. Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Thurston County are CA agencies for construction projects within their jurisdictions. Intercity Transit is a CA agency for transit projects that go through the Federal Transit Administration and for many Safe Routes to School Projects. The WSDOT Olympic Region office also administers eligible projects that have no CA agency.

If a project is difficult to administer or stretches the eligible use of funds, a CA agency assumes the risk and any repercussions, rather than the non-traditional project applicant. If the problems are severe, the agency may lose its CA status and not be able to administer its own projects in the future. In extreme instances, the agency may have to reimburse Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for funds expended on ineligible aspects of the project. For that reason, agencies with CA status may be reluctant to administer projects outside their usual and customary realm of work or level of familiarity. This doesn't mean that they won't serve as a CA agency, but a detailed application and project proposal will strongly influence their decision.

A CA agency will incur some additional administrative cost in assuming CA responsibility. Local agencies typically require up to 20 percent of the amount of the federal funding requested by a non-traditional partner 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 project cost estimates. *Neither federal law nor TRPC requires local jurisdictions to serve as CA agencies for any other agencies or organizations.*

CA AGENCY INFORMATION

Following are key transportation contacts within the CA agencies in this region:

Lacey	Martin Hoppe,	mhoppe@ci.lacey.wa.us ,	360.438.2681
Olympia	Randy Wesselman,	rwesselm@ci.olympia.wa.us ,	360.753.8447
Tumwater	Jay Eaton,	jeaton@ci.tumwater.wa.us ,	360.754.4140
Thurston County	Scott Davis,	davissa@co.thurston.wa.us ,	360.867.2329
Intercity Transit	Dennis Bloom,	DBloom@intercitytransit.com ,	360.705.5832

PROJECT SUBMITTAL

Send an electronic copy of project proposals to Paul Brewster at brewstp@trpc.org. Alternatively, mail or deliver one hard copy to Thurston Regional Planning Council, 2424 Heritage Court SW, Suite A, Olympia WA 98502.

Applications are due Friday, October 14, 2016 by 5:00 p.m. PST. TRPC will not consider applications submitted after the deadline.

Hard copy applications should be single-sided and not stapled. Any photos or maps should reproduce well in black-and-white print. Please include all materials associated with the project proposal in one package.

SPECIFIC FUNDING PROGRAM INFORMATION

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (STP)

Following are instructions and guidance for STP grants.

OBJECTIVE

TRPC will award \$6.63 million in STP funds to projects that fully support established priorities of the Regional Transportation Plan and which can proceed with project delivery on a committed schedule.

2017-2019 PROJECT OBLIGATION

Selected projects will obligate no earlier than February 20, 2017 and must obligate no later than August 1 for each subsequent year, through 2019. Applicants must state their committed year of project obligation on the application form. Failure to meet the committed year of obligation may result in the awarded funds being withdrawn from the project.

FUNDING TARGET FOR NON-TRADITIONAL PARTNER PROPOSALS

TRPC invites non-traditional partners to apply for funding, and has set aside up to 5% or \$330,000 in STP funds for those awards. It is impossible for most non-traditional partners to administer federal funds without support from local agencies or WSDOT. While local agencies with Certification Acceptance (CA) status are not required to sponsor a project proposal, they are encouraged to consider opportunities to establish inter-local agreements with non-traditional partners' project proposals and focus on the benefits that their project proposals can

provide the region. More information about CA status can be found in the Development of Project Proposals section.

STP PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

TRPC will fund a variety of projects in both the urban and unincorporated rural areas of the region. Since 1998, this region has directed its discretionary regional STP funds toward 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 STP means that most types of transportation projects other than a general purpose capacity projects are eligible for consideration.

Projects must be located on federal-aid routes. Projects located on rural minor collectors and local roads are ineligible (view WSDOT's Federal Functional Classification Map App to view federal-aid routes:

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

STP eligible projects and activities include:

- Construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, resurfacing, restoration preservation, or operational improvements of highways
- Bridge and tunnel replacement
- Inspection and evaluation of bridges
- Capital costs for transit projects (vehicles and facilities)
- Carpool projects, electric and natural gas vehicle infrastructure
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including trails
- Modification of sidewalks to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act
- Highway and transit safety projects, hazard eliminations, railway/highway grade crossings
- Capital and operating costs for traffic management systems
- Planning programs
- Transportation alternatives
- Environmental mitigation
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Eligible projects for TAP funding are generally eligible under STP funding

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act information about STP and eligible activities may be found here:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/160307.cfm>

ELIGIBLE PROJECT APPLICANTS

Project sponsors eligible to receive STP funds include the cities and the county, transit agencies, school districts, tribal governments, special purpose districts that manage public transportation facilities or services, and natural resource or public land agencies.

Non-traditional partners are encouraged to apply. Non-governmental organizations and nonprofit entities are ineligible to apply as direct recipients of federal STP funds. Nonetheless, such entities are encouraged to inquire about the eligibility of their projects and learn what opportunities may exist to partner with a local government agency to apply for or administer their project on their behalf.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants seeking STP funding for a larger single project with multiple phases must submit a separate application for each phase, if the project is expected to obligate across two or more years. For example, if the design and engineering phase will obligate in 2017 and construction would obligate in 2018 or 2019, applicants must submit a separate application for each phase.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP)

Following are instructions and guidance for TAP grants.

OBJECTIVE

TRPC will award \$1,194,092 in TAP funds to projects that support objectives of the Regional Transportation Plan and the Sustainable Thurston Plan, and which can proceed with project delivery on a committed schedule.

2017-2019 PROJECT OBLIGATION

Selected projects will obligate no earlier than February 20, 2017 and must obligate no later than August 1 for each subsequent year, through 2019. Applicants must state their committed year of project obligation on the application form. Failure to meet the committed year of obligation may result in the awarded funds being withdrawn from the project.

FUNDING TARGET FOR NON-TRADITIONAL PARTNER PROPOSALS

TRPC welcomes proposals from eligible non-traditional partners. TRPC established a target of 10% or \$120,000 of total TAP funds for non-traditional applicant proposals. Proposals must comply with the same federal eligibility requirements as those from traditional partners. The 10% target may be aspirational. After awarding funds to compliant non-traditional applicants, TRPC will make any remaining set aside funding available to traditional partners. More information about eligible entities can be found in the Eligible Applicants section below.

TAP PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

TRPC will consider all eligible project types equally in this TAP grant process. However, applicants should be aware that historically this region has favored bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs.

The Transportation Alternatives Program is a set-aside within the federal Surface Transportation Program with its own rules and requirements. Federal statute identifies a very broad – but very specific – array of project types eligible to receive funding. In general, the eligible projects and activities permitted under previous federal transportation legislation - Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) - are applicable to the current federal transportation legislation (FAST Act.) Eligible activities include:

- The Safe Routes to School program under Section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity (SAFETEA-LU) Act:
 - Non-infrastructure-related activities to encourage walking and bicycling to school, including public awareness campaigns and outreach to press and community leaders, traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools, student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health, and environment, and

funding for training, volunteers, and managers of Safe Routes to School programs;

- Safe Routes to School coordinator; and
- Infrastructure-related projects such as planning, design, and construction of projects on any public road or any bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail in the vicinity of schools that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school, including sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities; off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, secure bicycle parking facilities, and traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools.
- Planning, design, and construction of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bike 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;
- Planning, design, and construction 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 non-motorized transportation users;
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas;
- The recreational trails program under section 206 of title 23;
- 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;
 - 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:
 - Address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, including activities described in sections 133(b)(11), 328(a), and 329 of title 23; or
 - Reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.
- Planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

FAST Act information about TAP and guidance on eligible activities may be found here:

ELIGIBLE PROJECT APPLICANTS

Entities eligible to receive TAP funds include:

1. A local government: Local government entities include any unit of local government below a State government agency, except for a metropolitan planning organization(MPO). 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 defined in the statewide planning section (23 U.S.C. 135(m)).
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; and
 - 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 nonprofit entity responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs: Examples include a nonprofit entity responsible for:
 - a local program implementing 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; and
 - a safe routes to school program.
8. Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for, or oversight of, transportation or recreational trails (other than an MPO or a State agency) that the State determines to be eligible, consistent with the goals of this subsection.

State DOTs and MPOs are not eligible entities as defined under 23 U.S.C. 133(h)(4)(B) and therefore are not eligible project sponsors for TAP Set-Aside funds. However, State DOTs and MPOs may partner with an eligible entity project sponsor to carry out a project.

Nonprofit organizations are not eligible as direct grant sub-recipients for TAP Set-Aside funds unless they qualify through one of the eligible entity categories (e.g., where a nonprofit organization is a designated transit agency, school, or an entity responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs). Nonprofit entities are eligible to partner with any eligible entity on an eligible project, if State or local requirements permit.

NUMBER OF TAP APPLICATIONS THAT CAN BE SUBMITTED

Project applicants may submit a maximum of three applications for TAP funding. However, applicants must identify the priority order if submitting more than one application.

FUNDING CAPS

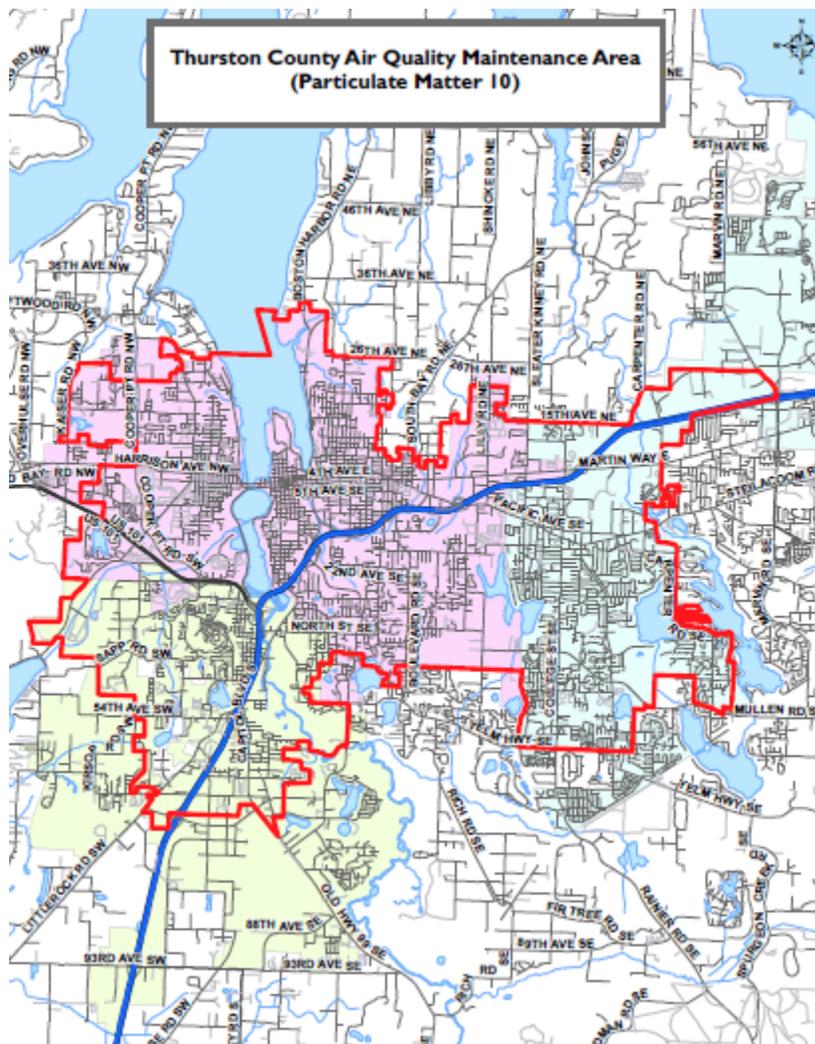
There is no funding cap or limitation on how much a single grant proposal may request. However, *applicants should understand that TRPC strongly intends to fund multiple TAP projects.* Any applicant requesting most or all of the available funds should expect to demonstrate why the proposal is so exceptional that it merits substantial funding in light of this policy intent – these proposals are likely to be held to a higher standard than those requesting lesser amounts.

CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ)

Following are instructions and guidance for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) grants.

OBJECTIVE

TRPC will allocate \$1.0 million in CMAQ funds to projects that reduce regulated criteria air pollutants from transportation sources. Funds are available for areas designated under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards as non-attainment or maintenance areas. The urbanized area of the Thurston Region is currently classified as a limited maintenance area for PM10 (the area shown in red in the map below for particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter). TRPC is required to direct these funds toward cost-effective emission reduction and congestion mitigation activities that provide air quality benefits.



2017-2018 PROJECT OBLIGATION

Selected projects will obligate no earlier than February 20, 2017 and must obligate no later than August 1, 2018. Applicants must state their committed year of project obligation on the application form. Failure to meet the committed year of obligation may result in the awarded funds being withdrawn from the project.

WSDOT Local Programs provides the following guidance on programming CMAQ funding in the State Transportation Improvement Program (this only applies to agencies with proposals that will be selected for funding):

At the beginning of FFY 2017 (October 1, 2016) a full year's of CMAQ apportionment is made available. A few changes are necessary to ensure first year projects have funding available to deliver, including:

- *FTA transfers will be required to be shown in the first year of the STIP.*
- *Only projects in the first two years of the STIP will be authorized.*
- *All second year projects submitted for authorization will initially be Advance Construction.*

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PRIORITIES

Projects selected for CMAQ funding must contribute to a reduction in per capita vehicle miles traveled or to overall system operating efficiency that reduces vehicle stops and starts that generate tire and brake wear. Applicants should understand that policy makers will review each proposal for how well it complies with federal Clean Air Act requirements, while supporting established funding priorities with an overall goal of promoting an efficient multi-modal transportation system as described in the Regional Transportation Plan. Applicants are advised to develop articulate descriptions that fully speak to the intent of this CMAQ project selection process and which are understandable to an audience of policy makers.

CMAQ PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

All eligible project types will be considered equally in this CMAQ grant process. However, applicants should be aware that only those partners with projects that provide benefit in the Lacey-Olympia-Tumwater urbanized area are eligible to compete for these funds.

CMAQ funding Eligible activities include:

Alternative Fuels and Vehicles

- Purchase of publicly-owned alternative fuel vehicles including passenger vehicles, refuse trucks, street cleaners, and others.
- Conversion of publicly-owned fleet vehicles to run on alternative fuels.

Congestion Reduction and Traffic Flow Improvements

- Construction of roundabouts, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, left-turn or other managed lanes provided they demonstrate net emissions benefits;
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) projects, including traffic signal synchronization projects, traffic management projects, and traveler information systems. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that the following ITS projects have very high benefit in reducing emissions:
 - Regional multi-modal traveler information systems;
 - Traffic signal control systems;
 - Freeway management systems (such as ramp metering);
 - Transit management systems
 - Incident management programs; and
 - Congestion pricing programs

Transit Improvements

- New transit facilities if they are associated with new or expanded mass transit service;
- New transit vehicles to expand transit service;
- Diesel engine retrofits
- System-wide upgrades that improve transit operating speed or reliability of service
- Operating assistance to expand transit to a new area (note: limited to three years).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities and Programs

- Construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
- Non-construction outreach related to safe bicycle use;

Travel Demand Management

Any operating expenses are limited to three years, during which time an on-going source of funding must be established.

- Fringe parking;
- Traveler information services;
- Shuttle services;
- Guaranteed ride home programs;
- Market research and planning in support of TDM implementation
- Carpools and vanpools;
- Traffic calming measures;
- Parking pricing;
- Variable road pricing;
- Telecommuting programs;
- Employer-based commuter choice programs (similar to CTR).

Public Education and Outreach Activities Related to Air Quality

Transportation Management Associations (TMA)

Transportation Management Associations are groups of citizens, firms, or employers that organize to address the transportation issues in their immediate locale by promoting rideshare programs, transit, shuttles, or other measures. Eligible expenses include start-up costs and up to three years of operating assistance during which time an on-going source of funding must be established.

Carpooling and Vanpooling

- Marketing activities designed to increase the use of carpools and vanpools;
- Purchase and use of computerized matching software and outreach to employers;
- Vanpool vehicle capital costs

Freight / Intermodal

Projects and programs targeting freight capital costs like rolling stock or ground infrastructure are eligible provided that air quality benefits can be demonstrated.

- Primary projects can include new diesel engine technology or retrofits of vehicles or engines, including on-road and off-road vehicles as well as rail.
- Secondary projects reduce emissions through shifts in or additions to infrastructure, such as intermodal container transfer facilities that reduce the trips made by truck by shifting the freight distribution to rail.

Diesel Engine Retrofits and Other Advanced Truck Technologies

This is a federal and state funding priority due to the very high cost-benefit ratio of certain activities in reducing particulate matter. A variety of activities are eligible for CMAQ funding, including:

- Replacing an older engine with a newer, cleaner-emitting engine;
- Rebuilding an engine;
- Purchase and installation of after-treatment hardware, including particulate matter traps and oxidation catalysts, and other technologies (high priority activity);
- Support for heavy-duty vehicle retirement programs;
- Outreach activities that provide information exchange and technical assistance to diesel owner and operators regarding retrofit options; and
- Upgrading long-haul heavy-duty diesel trucks with advanced technologies, such as idle reduction devices, cab and trailer aerodynamic fixtures, and single-wide or other efficient tires.

Idle Reduction Programs

- Truck stop electrification programs; and

- Auxiliary power units.

Training for Implementation of Air Quality Programs

Inspection / Maintenance (I/M) Program

- Establishment of either publicly or privately owned I/M facilities, including construction of facilities, purchase of equipment, I/M program development, and one-time start-up costs;
- Establishment of “portable” I/M programs, provided they are public services and reduce emissions.

In all cases, planning and project development in support of eligible CMAQ activities are also eligible for funding.

Central to all of these activities is the need to demonstrate air quality benefits. There are many different types of air pollutants. While potential projects can receive credit for reducing air pollutants like greenhouse gases and carbon monoxide, consideration must include the benefits associated with reducing particulate matter since that is the pollutant the Thurston region was in violation with previously.

FUNDING TARGETS FOR TRADITIONAL PARTNER PROPOSALS

There are no targets established for traditional partners. Note that only those traditional partners with projects that provide benefit in the Lacey-Olympia-Tumwater urbanized area are eligible to compete for these funds.

GUIDANCE FOR ALL THREE FUNDING PROGRAMS

Some general process guidance applies to the Surface Transportation Program, the Transportation Alternatives Program, and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program.

PROJECT 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.

Project proposals will be evaluated for how well they support regional transportation planning goals and objectives. This is a policy-based process; it does not rely on weighted point-scores to establish priority ranking. 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.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION TIMELINE

Applicants may submit project proposals to TRPC beginning Monday, September 19, 2016; however applications must be received by **Friday, October 14, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. PST.**

This timeline provides applicants four weeks to complete and submit their applications. If you are mailing or hand delivering your application, please allow sufficient time for TRPC to receive the application by Friday, October 14, 2016 by 5:00 p.m. PST. TRPC will not accept applications submitted after the deadline. TRPC staff will prepare project proposal packets for peer, public, and policy maker review and coordinate logistics and communications for the review process.

TECHNICAL REVIEW OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

TRPC's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and TRPC staff will conduct the first round of project reviews. This review will focus on clarity of project description and details, 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 project proposal for clarification. Project applicants are encouraged to attend this meeting currently scheduled for **Thursday, October 20, 2016** to answer any questions that may arise. 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 project proposals available for independent public review and comment. We will post notice in [The Olympian](#) and on the TRPC website. Project applications will be available

on-line for review or available in hard copy upon request. All comments received by **Friday, November 4, 2016, 5:00 p.m. PST** will be shared with project applicants and included in the project review package submitted to the Transportation Policy Board and Thurston Regional Planning Council.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD PROJECT REVIEW AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) will consider all project proposals at its regular meeting on **Wednesday, November 9, 2016**. Project applicants are strongly encouraged to attend this TPB meeting to answer any questions policy makers may have about the proposed projects. TRPC will send notice of this meeting to all applicants. The TPB will make a final ruling at this meeting on any outstanding questions regarding consistency with regional funding priorities.

The Transportation Policy Board review at the November 9, 2016 meeting will culminate in a list of projects recommended to TRPC for funding.

THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL PROJECT REVIEW AND FINAL SELECTION

TRPC will conduct a preliminary review of all project proposals at its regular meeting on Friday, November 4, 2016. Any questions generated will be forwarded to the TPB for its consideration. It is not necessary for project applicants to attend this meeting, though all are welcome to do so.

On **Friday, December 2, 2016** TRPC will consider the TPB recommendation and any public comments received before taking action on funding requests.

Thurston Regional Planning Council will identify those projects to be funded in this regional STP, CMAQ, and TAP allocation process. TRPC retains final decision-making authority on the distribution of regional STP, TAP, and CMAQ funds to priority projects.

NOTE: Thurston Regional Planning Council reserves the right to award funding from alternate eligible funding sources to those requested, i.e. STP in lieu of TAP or CMAQ in lieu of TAP. Doing so may enable TRPC to maximize its funding programs, program additional projects, and meet yearly obligation targets.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

The TRPC action will trigger amendments to the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). These amendments are expected to become effective on or about February 17, 2017.

TRPC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Successful project applicants are requested to acknowledge 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 PROJECT HAVE TO ADDRESS SAFETY, PRESERVATION, AND EFFICIENCY NEEDS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR AN STP GRANT?

No, to be eligible, a project only has to demonstrate how it addresses one of the three funding priorities identified by TRPC. However, a project that does address all three priorities should be a high priority for any agency or organization. Some questions to consider to determine what kind of project you may want to fund with an STP grant:

- *Does it eliminate a condition that poses a demonstrated hazard for drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, or transit? Proposals that address ‘actual’ safety hazards are often more compelling than those that address ‘potential’ or future hazards.*
- *Does it help protect investments that have already been made in the existing system and keep life-cycle costs as low as possible?*
- *Does it make the existing system function more efficiently, carry more people, or reduce the need for travel altogether?*

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; traffic impact fee analysis; signal systems; and public outreach and education, among other things. 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 PROJECT THAT MEETS REGIONAL AND FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS GUARANTEE FUNDING?

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

To be successful in securing funds, a project should have a positive impact on the community. The completeness and accuracy of a project application increases a project’s likelihood of receiving funding. To increase project appeal:

- **Familiarize yourself with the region’s transportation priorities, the Regional Transportation Plan, and Sustainable Thurston’s Action Plan [Creating Places, Preserving Spaces].** This region fully embraces a multi-modal transportation philosophy that integrates the needs of all travelers, not just those driving cars. Make sure that your project proposal

and description clearly speak to the funding priorities in the context of overarching regional policies.

- **Make sure your project 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. Remember that many policy makers are not engineers. Use plain English to clearly convey the intent and benefits of your proposal.
- **Be clear and concise.** Making a great pitch for your project doesn't mean writing pages and pages of description. You should be able to write a one- or two-page description that speaks to the merits of your proposal, the problem or need it addresses, and the benefits that it will generate.
- **Be prepared.** If you haven't lined up your Certification Acceptance (CA) agency, or verified federal eligibility requirements, your project 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. That is their responsibility, and is meant to ensure that they fully understand what you are proposing to do with a regional grant.
- **Don't over commit!** Recent changes in how federal funds are administered at the state level mean that you can lose your project funding if you are overly optimistic about what you can accomplish in a particular timeframe. These changes put 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 particular attention to the ability to deliver project obligation schedules.

Remember that 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 A COOL IDEA FOR A PROJECT, 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 – there is lots of flexibility, but there are also many strings attached to the revenue. You need to ensure that your project 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. It is best to 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.

The final authority on project federal eligibility is the WSDOT office of Highways and Local Programs. Applicants are strongly advised to contact Brian Moorehead at WSDOT Olympic Region to confirm that proposals are fully eligible under federal funding guidelines (by phone at 357.2712 or by email at moorehb@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 participate in these funding programs, too. Therefore, TRPC targets a portion of the total available funds for project proposals from non-traditional transportation partners. In the context of this process, non-traditional partners may include, but are not limited to, nonprofit organizations or service providers, state agencies, Port of Olympia and school districts.

Note that the target for awards to non-traditional partners is a discretionary TRPC policy. TRPC may award more or less depending on the caliber and priority of proposals received.

IF MY PROJECT IS SELECTED, WILL TRPC GIVE ME THE MONEY TO DO THE WORK?

No, you will not receive any money up front. The Surface Transportation Program and the Transportation Alternatives Program are reimbursement-type grant programs. This means that you need to complete the work described in your grant application and submit an approved invoice to the Federal Highway Administration via the Highways and Local Programs division of WSDOT. You will be reimbursed for all eligible work up to the amount awarded in your grant.

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 by email at brewstp@trpc.org or by phone at 360.741.2526. Paul may also be available to come meet with you and your project team. This is especially useful early in the project development process.