

# 2022-2025 Federal Transportation Funding Call for Projects Process

Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) for FFYs 2022-2025

Transportation Alternatives (TA) Grant for FFYs 2022-2025

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement  
Program (CMAQ) Grant for FFYs 2022-2025

Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) Grant for 2021

## 2020 Process Guidance and Application Instructions

Thurston Regional Planning Council



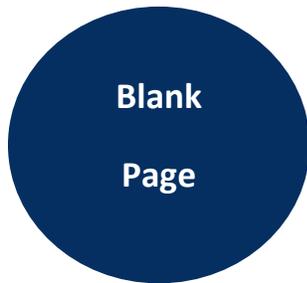
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# 2020 PROCESS GUIDANCE

## GENERAL INFORMATION

This document provides guidance and application instructions for Thurston Regional Planning Council’s (TRPC) 2022-2025 Regional Federal Transportation Funding Call for Projects. It covers the process schedule, applicant and project eligibility information, application instructions, and frequently asked questions for these grant programs. Applicants are encouraged to review this document prior to completing and submitting applications.

## TRPC STAFF SUPPORT

Applicants may request direct application support from TRPC staff through March 27, 2020. To obtain guidance, responses to questions, or set up a meeting to discuss proposals, contact Paul Brewster at 360.741.2526 or by email at brewstp@trpc.org.

## FUNDING BY GRANT PROGRAM

In 2020, TRPC will award \$12.6 million Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), \$1.3 million Transportation Alternatives (TA), \$1.36 million Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), and \$57,300 Highway Infrastructure Program funds to projects that will obligate in federal fiscal years 2021-2025. Federal Highway Administration grants will be awarded to eligible projects for 2021-2025 with the estimated funding levels shown by year in the table below.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)</b>					
Cumulative		\$3,133,000	\$6,285,000	\$9,437,000	\$12,589,000
Yearly		\$3,133,000	\$3,152,000	\$3,152,000	\$3,152,000
<b>Transportation Alternatives (TA)</b>					
Cumulative		\$380,000	\$715,000	\$1,024,000	\$1,359,000
Yearly		\$380,000	\$335,000	\$309,000	\$335,000
<b>Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)</b>					
Cumulative		\$122,000	\$481,000	\$840,000	\$1,200,000
Yearly		\$122,000	\$359,000	\$359,000	\$360,000
<b>Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) – One-time allocation for a rural project</b>					
One-time allocation	\$57,343				

## STBG FUNDING SET ASIDES

TRPC established two equal amounts of STBG funding set asides for the 2022-2025 Call for Projects:

1. RURAL COMMUNITY SET ASIDE – Six percent or \$755,340 for rural incorporated communities including Bucoda, Tenino, and Rainier. The set aside is also available to the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and the Nisqually Indian Reservation.

TRPC is coordinating with Thurston County Public Works to develop details for a separate call for projects process to be issued later this year. Staff anticipates this process will begin in September 2020.

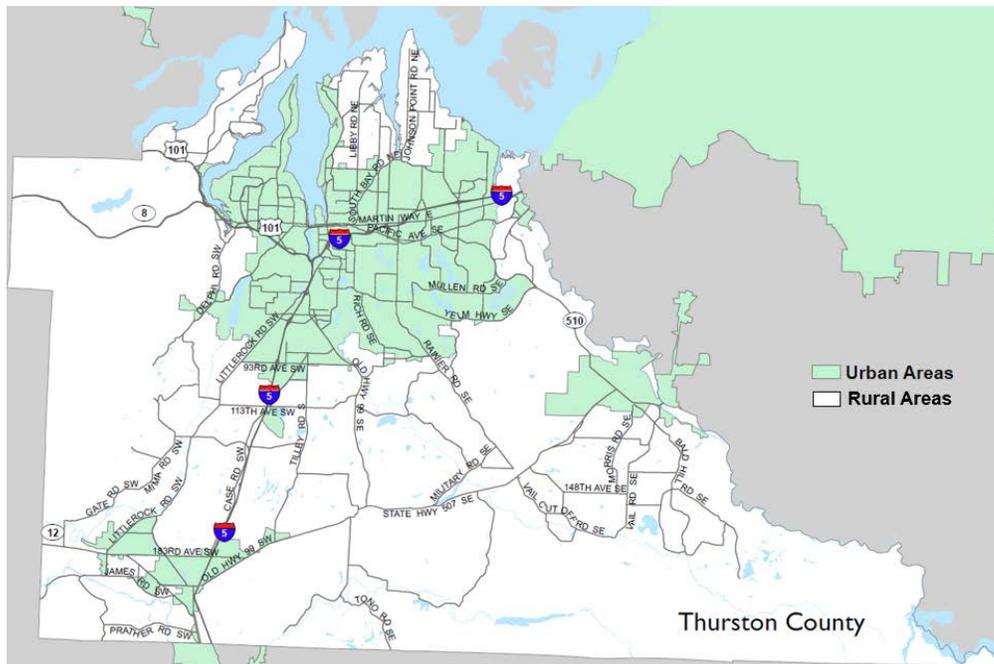
2. NON-TRADITIONAL PARTNER SET ASIDE – Six percent or \$755,340 is available for non-traditional partners to apply in the current process.

STBG Set Asides	2022-2025
Total to Program	\$12,589,000
1. 6% Rural Community Set Aside	\$755,340
2. 6% Non-Traditional Partner Set Aside	\$755,340
Total for Traditional Partners	\$11,078,320

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF STBG GRANT FUNDS

WSDOT requires TRPC geographically program STBG grant awards as follows:

- 80% to urban areas / \$10,071,200 (shown in green on map below)
- 7% to rural areas / \$881,230 (shown in white on map below)
- 13% is flexible for urban or rural / \$1,636,570



## SCHEDULE

The 2020 STBG, CMAQ, TA, and HIP application and selection processes are on the same schedule. The following dates and deadlines apply to all three programs.

<b>2020</b>	<b>Activity</b>
February 7	Council Action: Approval of Call for Projects Process
February 10	Call for Projects – Applications Accepted, TRPC staff support available to applicants
March 27	Applications Due by 5 p.m. PST
April 2 & 16	Technical Advisory Committee Proposal Review
April 6 – 19	Public Comments Accepted
May 13	First Transportation Policy Board (TPB) Review of Eligible Proposals
June 5	First Council Briefing and Review of Eligible Proposals
June 10	Second TPB Review and Action: Funding Recommendation to Council
July 10	Council Action: Proposal Selection

## APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Applications are due Friday, March 27, 2020 by 5:00 p.m. PST. 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 signature page does not require a hand-written signature, however 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](mailto:brewstp@trpc.org).

## KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

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

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### 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.

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#### 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.

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#### 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 Local Programs staff within the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

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#### 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.

**Applicants must identify a CA agency that will sponsor proposals prior to submitting their application and obtain a signature of a representative with CA status.**

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#### 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.

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#### CONTINGENCY PROPOSAL LIMITS

For STBG funds, applicants may submit up to three contingency proposals. For TA and CMAQ funds, applicants may submit one contingency proposal for each program.

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#### Local Match Requirements

Federal law stipulates that a minimum 13.5 percent of the total project cost must come from non-federal contribution<sup>1</sup>. The federal grant covers 86.5 percent of the total project cost. The match requirement applies to all grant funding and may include committed local funds or secured state grants. Previous expenditures do not qualify as a valid match unless explicitly approved by WSDOT Highways and Local Programs.

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#### 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.

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#### 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.

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<sup>1</sup> The only exception to the "non-federal contribution" rule is that Indian Reservation Road (IRR) money can be used to match federal transportation funds.

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## 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. For example, question 15 on the STBG application addresses information about construction and right-of-way project readiness.

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## 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.

## TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PRIORITIES

### STBG FUNDING PRIORITIES

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

1. **Safety** – Projects that enhance the safety of those who use, operate, and maintain the transportation system.
2. **Maintenance and Preservation** – Projects that protect existing transportation system investments and keep life-cycle costs as low as possible.
3. **Multimodal and System Efficiency** – This includes: 1) Projects that integrate multimodal transportation infrastructure and services consistent with Regional Transportation Plan and local comprehensive plan policies; 2) Projects that reduce the overall need to drive and encourage trips made by transit, walking, and bicycling; 3) Projects that increase the overall operating efficiency of the system through Transportation Demand Management strategies; and 4) Projects that use innovative traffic control design and/or transportation technologies that reduce congestion and vehicle miles traveled.

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

#### TA FUNDING PRIORITIES

TRPC has a history of funding projects that improve the connectivity, mobility, and circulation of trips made by bicycling, walking, and transit. However, the TA grant program offers a diverse range of eligible transportation enhancement projects and activities. Refer to the section on TA Project Eligibility for more information.

#### CMAQ FUNDING PRIORITIES

The northern urbanized area of the Thurston Region is classified as a limited maintenance area for PM10 (particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter that comes from wood smoke, road dust, and combustion of fuels). TRPC is required to direct these funds toward cost-effective emission reduction and congestion mitigation activities that provide air quality benefits. Projects that reduce PM10 air pollutant, other air pollutants, and greenhouse gas emissions are a regional priority.

#### SUPPORT FOR OTHER REGIONAL INITIATIVES

There is a strong interest in projects, programs, and studies that align with established regional goals and policies in the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan. 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. While not an eligibility requirement, the region intends to leverage these federal funds to support on-going regional endeavors where possible.

#### 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 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 an efficient multimodal transportation system as described in the Regional Transportation Plan. 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.

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### STBG, TA, AND CMAQ APPLICATION QUESTION ON EQUITY

All three application forms include a question on equity (question 18 on STBG and TA and question 17 on CMAQ). Applicants should reference the Federal Funding Call for Projects Story Map online at <https://www.trpc.org/881/Application-Materials>. The top of the map includes four tabs ‘Age’, ‘Poverty’, ‘Race & Ethnicity’, and ‘Language’ that include Title VI data by census tract. Zoom and pan to the project location and click on the census tract for each tab to obtain values for the application. If the project spans more than one census tract, enter the highest values for each of the categories where you expect the project to have the greatest impact.

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### STBG QUESTION 20, ECONOMIC VITALITY

The STBG application question 20 addresses Economic Vitality through Sustainable Thurston Centers, Corridors, and Neighborhoods 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 20-minute walk) of an urban center, corridor, or neighborhood center with access to goods and services to meet some of their daily needs. If applicable, refer to the Federal Funding Call for Projects Story Map online at <https://www.trpc.org/881/Application-Materials>. For question 20a, use the ‘Centers and Corridors’ tab at the top of the map to determine whether your project is located in the centers and corridors area.

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### TA QUESTION 17, SUSTAINABLE THURSTON

The TA application question 17 addresses Sustainable Thurston Water Quality Target: Protect small stream basins that are currently ranked as “Intact” or “Sensitive.” Improve and restore as many as possible “Impacted” stream basins. If applicable, refer to the Federal Funding Call for Projects Story Map online at <https://www.trpc.org/881/Application-Materials>. For question 17a, Stream Basins Location, use the ‘Basin Conditions’ tab at the top of the map to identify the basin condition on your application.

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## 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 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.*

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## CA AGENCY INFORMATION

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

Lacey	Martin Hoppe	<a href="mailto:mhoppe@ci.lacey.wa.us">mhoppe@ci.lacey.wa.us</a>	360.438.2681
Olympia	Andrew Beagle	<a href="mailto:abeagle@ci.olympia.wa.us">abeagle@ci.olympia.wa.us</a>	360.570.3774
Tumwater	Mary Heather Ames	<a href="mailto:mhames@ci.tumwater.wa.us">mhames@ci.tumwater.wa.us</a>	360.754.4140
Thurston County	Matt Unzelman	<a href="mailto:matt.unzelman@co.thurston.wa.us">matt.unzelman@co.thurston.wa.us</a>	360.867.2335
Intercity Transit	Eric Phillips	<a href="mailto:ephillips@intercitytransit.com">ephillips@intercitytransit.com</a>	360.705.5832
TRPC	Veena Tabbutt	<a href="mailto:tabbutv@trpc.org">tabbutv@trpc.org</a>	360.741.2550
WSDOT Olympic Region	Brian Moorehead	<a href="mailto:moorehb@wsdot.wa.gov">moorehb@wsdot.wa.gov</a>	360.357.2712

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## APPLICATION FORMS AND OPTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Proposals must be submitted using the TRPC application forms. A fillable Adobe Acrobat form is available for STBG, TA, and CMAQ. HIP proposals may use the STBG application form. 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](http://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](mailto:brewstp@trpc.org) or 360.741.2526.

## SPECIFIC FUNDING PROGRAM INFORMATION

### SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT (STBG)

Instructions and guidance specific to the STBG.

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#### OBJECTIVE

TRPC will award \$12.6 million in STBG funds to projects that fully support regional funding priorities, support the Regional Transportation Plan, and can proceed with project delivery on a committed schedule.

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#### 2022-2025 PROJECT OBLIGATION

Selected proposals will obligate no earlier than October 1, 2021 and must obligate no later than August 1 for each subsequent year, through 2025. 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.

Applicants may select the option of Advance Construction (AC) on their application. This option allows eligible applicants to obligate earlier, however reimbursement of eligible expenses may not occur until funding becomes available. Selecting the AC option does not guarantee a project can obligate with AC. TRPC will evaluate AC on a case by case basis. Intercity Transit is ineligible to obligate with AC.

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#### 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, 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
- TA-eligible projects are generally also STBG-eligible

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act information about STBG and eligible activities:

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

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#### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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

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#### NUMBER OF STBG PROPOSALS THAT CAN BE SUBMITTED

Applicants are encouraged to submit priority proposals for STBG funding. Applicants may also submit up to three contingency proposals.

#### TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES (TA)

Instructions and guidance for TA grants.

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#### OBJECTIVE

TRPC will award \$1.4 million in TA 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.

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## 2022-2025 PROJECT OBLIGATION

Selected projects will obligate no earlier than October 1, 2021 and must obligate no later than August 1 for each subsequent year, through 2025. 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.

Applicants may select the option of Advance Construction (AC) on their application. This option allows eligible applicants the ability to obligate earlier, however reimbursement of eligible expenses may not occur until funding becomes available. Selecting the AC option does not guarantee a project can obligate with AC. TRPC will evaluate AC on a case by case basis. Intercity Transit is ineligible to obligate with AC.

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## FUNDING FOR NON-TRADITIONAL PARTNER PROPOSALS

TRPC encourages proposals from eligible non-traditional partners. Non-traditional applicants are encouraged to apply with traditional partners. Proposals must comply with the same federal eligibility requirements as those from traditional partners. More information about eligible entities can be found in the Eligible Applicants section below.

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## TA PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

TRPC will consider all eligible project types equally in this TA grant process. However, TRPC has a history of investing TA grants in bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs.

The Transportation Alternatives grant is a set-aside within the federal Surface Transportation Block Grant 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21) – apply 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 TA and guidance on eligible activities:

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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 a metropolitan planning organization(MPO). Examples include city, town, or county agencies.
2. A transit agency: Transit agencies include any agency responsible for public transportation that is eligible for funds as determined by the Federal Transit Administration.
3. 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.
4. 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 public and not only a private entity.
5. A Tribal government.
6. 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.
7. 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 TA 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 TA 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.

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#### NUMBER OF TA PROPOSALS THAT CAN BE SUBMITTED

Applicants may submit one priority proposal for TA funding. Applicants may also submit one contingency proposal. Traditional partners are encouraged to apply with non-traditional partners.

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#### FUNDING CAPS

There is no funding cap on how much a single proposal may request. However, TRPC strongly intends to fund more than one TA project. Any applicant requesting most or all the available funds should 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)

Instructions and guidance for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) grants.

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#### OBJECTIVE

TRPC will allocate \$1.2 million in CMAQ funds to proposals 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 PM<sub>10</sub> (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.



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## 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 Particulate Matter 10, Particulate Matter 2.5, carbon dioxide, ozone, and other air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions. 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 multimodal 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.

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## CMAQ PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

All eligible project types will be considered equally in this CMAQ grant process. However, only those partners with projects that provide benefit in the Lacey-Olympia-Tumwater Air Quality Maintenance 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 multimodal traveler information systems
  - Traffic signal control systems
  - Freeway management systems (such as ramp metering)
  - Transit management systems
  - Incident management programs
  - 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 (like CTR)

## Public Education and Outreach Activities Related to Air Quality

### 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 owners and operators regarding retrofit options
- 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 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 noted pollutant for the Thurston region.

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## NUMBER OF CMAQ PROPOSALS THAT CAN BE SUBMITTED

Applicants may submit one proposal for CMAQ funding. Applicants may also submit one contingency proposal. Traditional partners are encouraged to apply with non-traditional partners when feasible.

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## FUNDING TARGETS

Both traditional and non-traditional partners with projects or programs that provide benefit in the Lacey-Olympia-Tumwater PM10 Air Quality Maintenance Area are eligible to compete for CMAQ grant funds.

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## AIR QUALITY ANALYSIS AND DATA

TRPC and the applicant are required to report on project air quality benefits. To fulfill this requirement, TRPC will assist applicants to analyze planning level air pollutant and greenhouse gas reduction estimates. Applicants are expected to provide data and information that can be used to estimate air quality benefits from the proposal before projects are selected. TRPC will coordinate with applicants to obtain the inputs to measure air quality benefit results prior to the April 2 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting.

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## HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (HIP)

Instructions and guidance specific to the HIP.

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## OBJECTIVE

TRPC will award \$57,343 in HIP funds to one proposal that fully supports regional funding priorities, supports the Regional Transportation Plan, and can proceed with project delivery on a committed schedule. The project funding must be programmed outside the federal urbanized area.

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## 2021 PROJECT OBLIGATION

The selected project must obligate no earlier than October 1, 2020 and must obligate no later than September 30, 2021. Failure to meet the committed year of obligation will result in the awarded funds being withdrawn from the project.

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## HIP PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Detailed requirements for the HIP funds:

- Eligible activities – only construction of highways, bridges and tunnels per 23 USC 133 (b)(1)(A). Construction includes design and right of way that directly relates

to the construction of the roadway project (23 USC 101(a)(4)). HIP funds are not eligible to be utilized on:

- Rural minor collectors or local access
- Transportation alternatives, ferries, transit, etc.
- Transportation planning and studies
- Projects must be identified in the STIP - fund codes are:
  - HIP(UL) – Population over 200,000
  - HIP(US) – Population between 5,001 and 200,000
  - HIP(R) – Population of 5,000 or less

A 13.5% non-federal match is required. Projects must be located on rural federal-aid routes. 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>

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#### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Only CA applicants in rural areas of the region are eligible to apply.

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#### NUMBER OF HIP PROPOSALS THAT CAN BE SUBMITTED

Due to the limited amount of funding, applicants may only submit one proposal.

### GUIDANCE FOR ALL THREE FUNDING PROGRAMS

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

#### 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 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.

## TECHNICAL REVIEW OF PROPOSALS

TRPC's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and TRPC staff will conduct the first round of application reviews. This review will focus on clarity of proposal 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 proposal for clarification. Applicants are encouraged to attend the review meeting currently scheduled for **April 12 and April 16 at TRPC from 2-4 p.m.** 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 proposals available for independent public review and comment. TRPC will post an announcement on [www.trpc.org](http://www.trpc.org). Proposals will be available on-line for review or available in hard copy upon request April 6-17. All comments received by **Friday, April 17, 2020, 5:00 p.m. PST** will be shared with applicants and included in the proposal review package submitted to the Transportation Policy Board and Thurston Regional Planning Council.

## TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD PROPOSAL REVIEW AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) is scheduled to consider all proposals during their regular meetings on **May 13 and June 10, 2020**. 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 will make a funding recommendation to TRPC on May 13.

**The May 13 Transportation Policy Board meeting will culminate in a list of projects recommended to the Council for funding.**

## THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL PROPOSAL REVIEW AND FINAL SELECTION

TRPC will conduct a preliminary review of all proposals at its regular meeting on Friday, June 5, 2020. 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, July 10, 2020** TRPC will consider the TPB recommendation and any public comments received before project selection.

**Thurston Regional Planning Council will identify those projects to be funded in this regional call for projects process. TRPC retains final decision-making authority on the distribution of STBG, TA, CMAQ, and HIP federal grant 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. STBG in lieu of TA or CMAQ in lieu of TA. Doing so may enable TRPC to maximize its funding programs, program additional projects, and meet yearly obligation targets.

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

The selected proposals will be programmed as funding secure or contingency projects in the 2021-2024 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). TRPC will adopt the RTIP in fall 2020. Adoption of the RTIP will program these projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program. The projects will subsequently become eligible for obligation in the year they are programmed beginning around the middle of February 2021 at the earliest. TRPC staff will work with successful applicants to meet these programming requirements.

## TRPC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Successful 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.

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DOES A PROPOSAL HAVE TO ADDRESS SAFETY, PRESERVATION, AND EFFICIENCY NEEDS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR AN STBG GRANT?

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

- *Does it eliminate a documented or systemic condition that poses a demonstrated hazard for drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, or transit?*
- *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?*

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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 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.

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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. 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*).** This region fully embraces a multimodal transportation philosophy that integrates the needs of all travelers, not just those driving cars. 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. 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 proposal doesn’t mean writing pages and pages of description. Applicants are limited to 150 to 300 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.

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I HAVE A GREAT 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 strings 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.***

The final authority on 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 360.357.2712 or by email at [moorehb@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:moorehb@wsdot.wa.gov) ).

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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) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program grants.

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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, TA, CMAQ and HIP 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.

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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](mailto: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.