

2024 Regional Federal Transportation Grant Program and Rural Community Support Program Call for Projects Process

Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) for FFYs 2028-2030

Transportation Alternatives STBG Set Aside for FFYs 2028-2030

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program FFY 2025-2027

Carbon Reduction Program for FFY 2025-2027

Rural Community Support Program for CYs 2025-2026

Process Guidance and Application Instructions

Thurston Regional Planning Council



June 2024

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American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

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

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2024 Process Guidance and Application Instructions

GENERAL INFORMATION

This document provides guidance and application instructions for Thurston Regional Planning Council’s (TRPC) 2024 Metropolitan Planning Federal Transportation Grant Program Call for Projects, from here on referred to as the Call for Projects. This document provides applicants information about the process schedule, funding availability, funding priorities, project evaluation criteria, applicant and project eligibility, application instructions, and frequently asked questions. Applicants are encouraged to refer to this document while preparing their applications.

PROCESS SUPPORT

Applicants may request direct application support from TRPC staff through July 12, 2024. For assistance on application development or to obtain answers to questions about the process, contact Paul Brewster at 360.741.2526 or by email at brewstp@trpc.org.

2024 CALL FOR PROJECTS SCHEDULE

TRPC’s 2024 Call for Projects Schedule applies to both the federal and the Rural Community Support Program grant programs. The following dates and deadlines apply to all applicants.

DATES – 2024	ACTIVITY
June 10 - July 12	Federal Grant and Rural Community Support Program Project Applications Accepted
July 15-19	TRPC Staff Application Review and Scoring
August 1	Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Peer Review
August 12-25	Public Comment Period
September 5	TAC Public Comment Review
September 11	Transportation Policy Board (TPB) First Review
TBD Sept-Oct	TPB Subcommittee Review
November 1	Council First Review
November 13	TPB Second Review and Funding Recommendation
December 6	Council Project Selection and Approval

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

- Application materials are available at <https://www.trpc.org/881/Application-Materials>.
- All applications are due Friday, July 12, 2024, by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time. TRPC will not consider applications submitted after the deadline.
- All applicants must submit an editable electronic version of their application. Printed copies are not a substitute for the electronic file.
- Applicants must fully complete all sections in the Project Verification and Endorsement section.
- Supporting materials must be submitted in an electronic file format.
- Send completed applications and supporting materials to Paul Brewster at brewstp@trpc.org.

TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABILITY BY GRANT PROGRAM

In 2024, TRPC expects to award a combined total of \$19.2 million in federal grant funds administered by the Federal Highway Administration and \$550,000 in non-federal funding administered by TRPC and Thurston County through the Rural Community Support Program. Table 1 shows the amount of funding available by grant program and the federal fiscal or calendar years that projects will be programmed for obligation.

Table1: 2024 Regional Transportation Call for Projects Grant Program Availability

Grant Program	Years to Program	Funding Available
Surface Transportation Grant Program (STBG)	FFYs 2028-2030	\$10,000,000
Transportation Alternatives (TA)		\$2,500,000
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)	FFYs 2025-2027	\$5,000,000
Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)		\$1,708,335
Total Federal Funding Available		\$19,208,335
Rural Community Support Program (RCSP)	CYs 2025 and 2026	\$550,000

REGIONAL FUNDING SET-ASIDES

TRPC has identified two priority funding allocations for the 2024 Call for Projects:

1. **Regional Shared-Use Trail Preservation Set Aside*:** \$1,000,000 is set aside from the Carbon Reduction Program to fund priority trail pavement restoration projects on the Regional Trail Network to ensure safe and serviceable conditions for all trail users.
2. **Rural Community Support Program Set Aside:** \$600,000 from the STBG flexible allocation (Table 2) is designated to support the Region's 2024 Rural Community Support Program (RCSP). The Council approved the set aside in TRPC's 2022 Call for Projects Process.

FUNDING FOR NON-TRADITIONAL PARTNERS

There is no Regional Set-Aside established for Non-Traditional Partners, however TRPC encourages proposals from eligible applicants. Non-traditional applicants are encouraged to seek a traditional partner as a project sponsor. Proposals must comply with the same federal eligibility requirements as those from traditional partners. See Key Terms and Concepts for a description of partners.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS

TRPC is mandated to allocate federal grants to specific US Census geographic areas, namely Urban Large, Urban Small, and Rural (see Map 1). The STBG and TA grant programs provide a 'Flexible' distribution option, allowing a portion of the funds to be allocated to projects in any location, thus providing some flexibility in programming decisions. However, it's important to note that there is no flexible option available for CRP funding.

CMAQ funding is available to eligible projects that meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Projects must be situated within the Thurston County PM10 Air Quality Maintenance Area which is identified by the magenta line depicted on Map 1.

Table 2 offers a summary of the grant programs' geographic funding distribution estimates. It's worth mentioning that \$600,000 for the RCSP set aside will come from the STBG flexible funding and the total CRP funding could be reduced by \$1 million to establish the trail preservation set aside.

Table 2. 2024 Call for Projects Percent Distribution of Grant Funds by Geographic Area

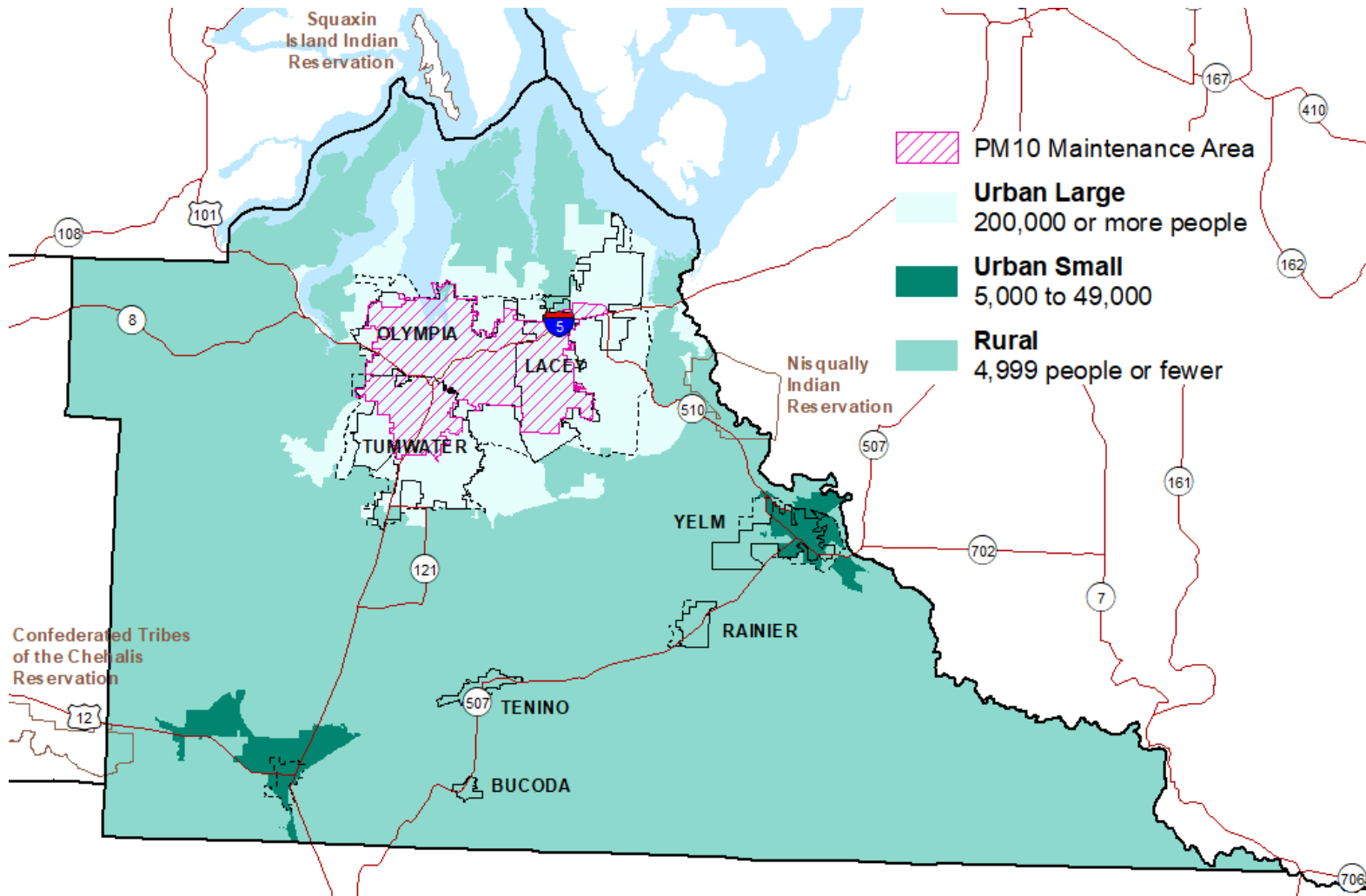
	STBG*	TA	CMAQ	CRP**
Total Available	\$10 million	\$2.5 million	\$5 million	\$1.7 million
Urban Large	65% \$6,600,000	47% \$1,175,000	N/A	42% \$717,010
Urban Small	7% \$700,000	5% \$125,000	N/A	26% \$437,097
Rural	8% \$800,000	14% \$350,000	N/A	32% \$554,228
Flexible	19% \$1,900,000*	33% \$825,000	N/A	N/A
Years to Program	2028-2030		2025-2027	

Notes: * The RCSP would reduce the STBG flexible funds by \$600,000. **The trail preservation set aside would reduce the total CRP funds by approximately \$1 million.

FLEXIBLE GRANT PROGRAMMING

TRPC reserves the right to award funding from either STBG, TA, CMAQ, or CRP grant programs for eligible projects and activities. For example, TRPC may award TA funding in lieu of an applicant's STBG request for eligible activities depending on project eligibility and funding need. The ability to exchange funding sources allows TRPC to maximize its grant programs, award multiple projects, and meet the region's yearly obligation targets.

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



REGIONAL FUNDING PRIORITIES

TRPC encourages applicants to submit proposals that can fulfill Regional Funding Priorities. Although applicants are not required to fulfill multiple funding priorities, projects that meet more than one priority are encouraged.

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

RURAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM PROJECT EVALUATION

OVERVIEW

Rural Community Support Program (RCSP) funds small community priority projects. Because they are funded by local revenue, the projects are not subject to TRPC's Federal Project Evaluation Criteria. RCSP applications will undergo both a technical and policy review process.

TECHNICAL REVIEW

The technical review, conducted by TRPC's Technical Advisory Committee, will focus on several key aspects of each proposal:

- **Scope:** This involves examining the intended objectives and extent of the proposed project.
 - **Cost:** Evaluation of the budget and financial aspects associated with the project's scope of work.
 - **Timeline:** Assessment of the proposed schedule and milestones for project completion.
 - **Right of Way:** Examination of the necessary land or property rights required for the project.
 - **Environmental Needs:** Consideration of environmental factors and requirements related to the proposed project.
-

POLICY REVIEW

The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) advises the Regional Council on transportation policies and objectives. The TPB will examine each RCSP proposal to evaluate how it aligns with regional transportation policies. The TPB will focus on the following project aspects:

- Direct benefits to the applicant community.
- Broader implications for the community, economy, environment.
- Supporting the overall multimodal transportation network.

The TPB will forward a RCSP funding recommendation to the Regional Council for project award selection.

FEDERAL PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

OVERVIEW

Each federal grant application is evaluated using TRPC's Evaluation Criteria. Each criterion is tied to a regional transportation funding priority, regional transportation goals or policy. Both applicants and policymakers are involved in the project evaluation process. There are checks in place to ensure the validity of the scoring and ranking of projects. There are six criteria:

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

Projects are scored and ranked within each geographic area. Each criterion carries a weight of 2 points. For projects in the Urban Large area, the maximum attainable score is 12 points. Projects in the Urban Small and Rural areas can have a maximum score of 10 points. The scoring process aims to provide transparency and a performance-based approach to evaluate and prioritize regional projects for funding awards.

Applicant Involvement: Applicants submit their proposals using grant application forms and score their own proposals based on the established criteria.

Staff and Technical Review: TRPC staff scores each application independently. The Technical Advisory Committee performs an independent review of each proposal's score to validate all projects' ranking. This ensures that the scoring is fair and accurate.

Transportation Policy Board Review: Policy makers will reference the scores and evaluate the impacts of each proposal to prepare a funding recommendation for the Thurston Regional Planning Council's final project selection.

EFFICIENT USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS

BACKGROUND

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) (23 U.S.C. 133) is the main sources of flexible federal funding available for roadway/highway, transit, and active transportation projects. However, federal funding comes with many specific requirements that may increase the cost of the projects. For planning projects, the increase in requirements is negligible; for construction projects it can be high. For this reason, many jurisdictions prefer to use federal funds only when the project is large enough – and the funding level sufficient – for the scope of work to allow the project to efficiently absorb the increased administrative costs.

EFFICIENT USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS CRITERIA SCORING

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

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

Table 3 shows how the criteria and number of points will be applied.

Table 3: Project Criteria Ranking for Efficient use of Federal Funds* (values are in thousands of dollars).

Project/funding level is not an efficient use of federal funds	Acceptable use of federal funds	Reasonable use of federal funds	Best use of federal funds
-1 Point	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any construction or pavement maintenance (all phases) total project cost <250k. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standalone sidewalk construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Standalone Crosswalk (all phases) total project cost <250k. • Electric vehicle charging stations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavement maintenance (urban streets) >250k. • Trail construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Signal upgrades. • Fish passage barrier removal (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Stormwater improvements >250k. • Crosswalk (bundled) (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Trail Pavement Preservation > \$250k and < \$500k. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add funding to a project with existing federal funds (federalized project) at any funding level. • Street/road construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Roundabout or signal construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Pavement maintenance (rural roads) total project cost >250k. • Transit building facility construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Transit bus stop/other facility construction (all phases) total project cost >250k. • Vehicle replacements. • Transportation Demand Management programs. • Planning/feasibility studies. • Trail pavement preservation >\$500K.

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

Achieving this target is expected to support the following outcomes:

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

RANKING

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

PREFERRED PROJECT TYPES THAT SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABLE THURSTON PRIORITY GOAL

1. **Neighborhood center, urban corridor, or urban center planning projects** that integrate land use and transportation, such as the Martin Way Corridor Study or the SR507 Main Street Study.
2. **Safety Projects** that reduce bicycle and pedestrian injuries and fatalities on arterials and collectors on urban corridors or neighborhood centers. Projects could include speed reduction/management, medians, and roundabouts.
3. **Pedestrian street crossing improvements** that provide direct and safe street crossings in neighborhood centers and urban corridors. Projects could include pedestrian signals, flashing beacons, refuge crossing islands, multi-use trail connections, bulb outs, and new or replacement ramps.
4. **Active transportation projects** that support walking and bicycling in neighborhood centers and urban corridors. Projects could include non-motorized bridges and tunnels, navigation

or wayfinding signage, multi-use paths, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bicycle corridors, and other bicycle infrastructure such as community bicycle repair stations. Projects may also include community-focused active transportation safety, education, and encouragement programs. Projects may be standalone or a component of a larger road improvement project.

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

URBAN CENTERS/CORRIDORS RANKING

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

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

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

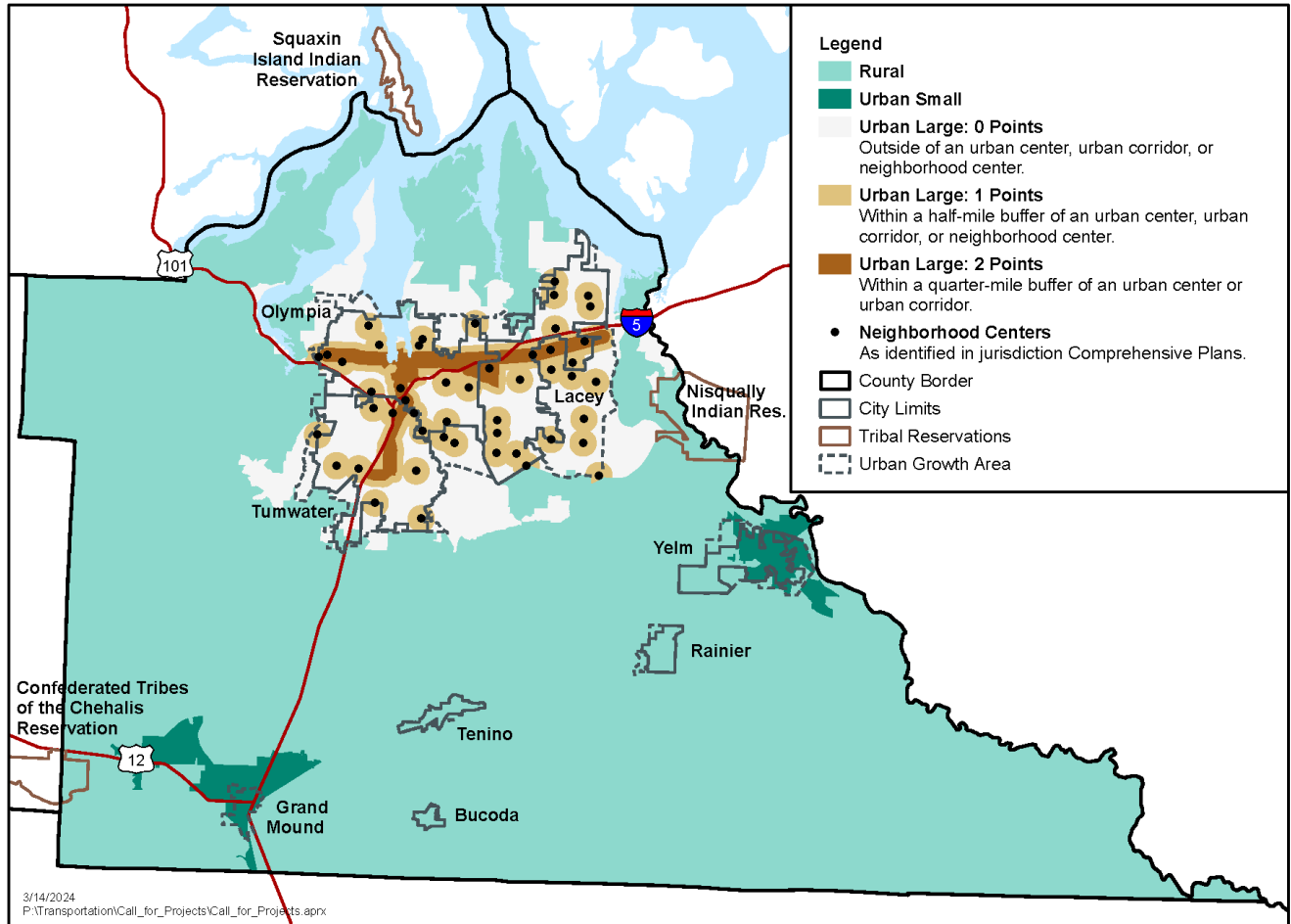
Table 4 shows how proposals submitted to TRPC will be evaluated and ranked under the criteria.

Table 4: Project Criteria Ranking for Sustainable Thurston Land Use Goal.

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

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

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



GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION

BACKGROUND

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

TYPES OF PROJECTS

Transportation emission reductions strategies typically fall into four different categories:

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

Table 5 shows examples of emission reduction project types, including some that are commonly awarded by TRPC.

Table 5: Examples of GHG Emissions Reduction Strategies.

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

Table 5 contents adapted from:

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

ESTIMATING EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS

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

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

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

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

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION RANKING

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

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

Table 6 shows how proposals submitted to TRPC will be evaluated and ranked under the criteria.

Table 6: Project Criteria Ranking for GHG Emissions Goal.*

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

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

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

UNDERSTANDING THE DEFINITION OF EQUITY IN THE THURSTON REGION

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

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

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

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

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

EQUITY DEFINITION

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

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

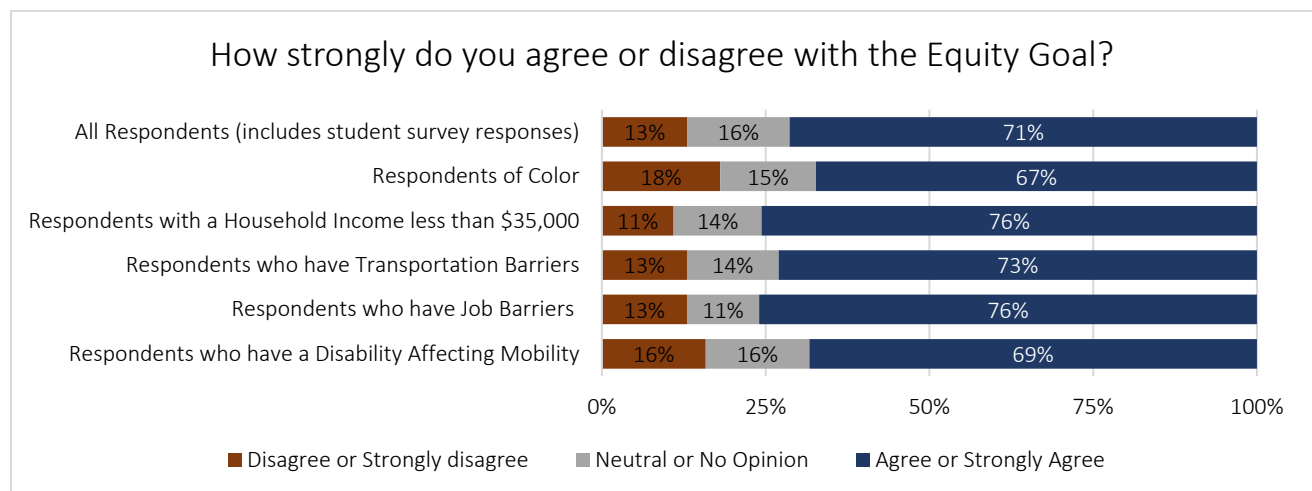
EQUITY GOAL

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

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

EQUITY GOAL SURVEY RESULTS

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



TYPES OF EQUITY

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

- Procedural equity, which is focused on the degree of involvement of diverse public stakeholders in the processes by which transportation decisions are made.
- Geographic equity, which is focused on the distribution of impacts across geography and space.
- Social equity, which is focused on the distribution across population groups that can be equal or differ by income, social class, and mobility ability.

INCREASING PROCEDURAL EQUITY

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

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

SURVEY RESULTS FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Public input was sought on a wide range of project types, grouped into Project Priority categories, as shown in Table 7. TRPC analyzed survey results based on demographic information to identify traditionally underserved populations, using the definition:

Underserved population

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

- minority populations; and
- low-income populations.

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

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

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

Table 7. Survey Results for Underserved Populations on Project Priorities.

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

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

GEOGRAPHIC EQUITY: DISTRIBUTING FUNDING ACROSS THE REGION

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

SOCIAL EQUITY: UNDERSTANDING PROJECT BENEFITS AND BURDENS

Another aspect of integrating equity into project prioritization is to evaluate the benefits and burdens of projects to marginalized populations. Table 8 supplies some examples of those transportation project benefits and burdens.

Table 8. Examples of Transportation Benefits and Burdens

Transportation Benefits	Transportation Burdens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to social, educational, and economic opportunities. • Increased access to high-quality mobility options. • Travel time savings . • Cost savings. • Congestion mitigation. • Reduction of pollution. • Improved connectivity within communities. • Opportunities for physical activity through active transportation modes. • Reduction in traffic injuries and fatalities. • Local hiring and job training for jobs in construction, maintenance, and operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced access to essential opportunities and services. • Restricted or no access to high quality transportation. • Long/increased travel times. • Financial burdens. • Traffic congestion. • Increased pollution. • Physical division of communities. • Creation of barriers to bicycling and walking. • Exposure to traffic-related safety risks. • Vulnerability to climate impacts. • Inequitable enforcement.

EQUITY RANKING

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

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

Table 9 shows how proposals submitted to TRPC will be evaluated and ranked under the criteria.

Table 9: Project Criteria Ranking for Equity

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

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

BACKGROUND

The Regional Transportation Plan includes goals and policies to expand and improve access and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. Active transportation infrastructure provides people safe access across our urban and rural areas with greater connectivity in neighborhood centers to promote more walk and bike trips to schools, workplaces, commercial areas, and transit services.

TRPC's Call for Projects aims to select projects that will help communities increase the share of trips that can be made by walking, riding a bike, or a micromobility device such as an electric powered wheelchair or scooter, or improve access to transit stops.

The Call for Projects will evaluate and rank projects on their ability to:

- Create safe spaces that separate bicyclists and pedestrians from higher speed traffic so people can more safely and conveniently meet their daily travel needs without a vehicle.
- Integrate bicycle and pedestrian facilities with public transit or public-school transportation services.
- Increase peoples' level of physical activity by choosing healthier and sustainable modes of travel.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION RANKING

TRPC will evaluate Active Transportation based on project types. There are four categories for ranking a project's enhancement or expansion of walking, biking, and micromobility modes in the region:

1. Type of project greatly improves active transportation, 2 points
2. Type of project expands active transportation, 1 point.
3. Type of project offers minimal active transportation benefits, 0 point.
4. Type of project adversely impacts active transportation, -1 point.

Table 10 shows how the criteria and number of points will be applied.

Table 10: Active Transportation Ranking

Project adversely impacts active transportation	Project offers limited active transportation elements	Project expands active transportation	Project significantly expands active transportation
-1 Point	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New streets without multimodal features or complete streets elements • Roadway or interchange studies that principally address vehicular level of service. • Projects that add or widen existing vehicle lanes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalk or bicycle infrastructure replacement without significant upgrades to the design of the original bicycle and pedestrian facilities (i.e. pavement preservation, intersection redesign) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus route expansion • Bus stop shelters and enhancements including ADA treatments such as level boarding platforms. • Completing gaps in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (includes new street connections) • Replacing existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure with upgraded design • Pedestrian and bicycle wayfinding signs or systems • Safe Routes to School Education and Encouragement Programs • TDM programs that encourage the use of active transportation. • Regional Trails Plan trail study or PE phase • Active transportation planning project or study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority projects in an adopted active transportation or bicycle/pedestrian plan. • Pedestrian street crossings aligned with transit stops; or enhanced street crossing such as refuge islands or flashing beacons. • Residential 6'+ sidewalks with a minimum 4' enhancement or buffer zone such as a stormwater swale landscape treatment. • Commercial 8-12' sidewalks with a minimum 4' wide enhancement or buffer zone. • Active transportation infrastructure improvements on school walk routes • Regional Trails Plan ROW or construction project • Off street and on-street pedestrian and bicyclist facilities and features that are consistent with recommendation in the following resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSDOT Active Transportation Program Design Guide • NACTO Urban Street Design Guide • NACTO Urban Bicycle Guide • Or other current best practice design guides from FHWA or AASHTO

SAFETY

BACKGROUND

Safety is paramount in transportation, affecting all modes and aspects from design to system users' behavior. Like elsewhere in the United States, the Thurston region faces a traffic safety crisis with rising roadway deaths, particularly among pedestrians and cyclists. Acknowledging this urgency, safety is a key focus in applying safety evaluation criteria to promote projects that will help the region achieve its safety goal.

TRPC's 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Goal 4, System Safety and Security is to "Enhance the safety and security of those who use, operate, and maintain the transportation system."

In lieu of an adopted Regional Transportation Safety Plan, TRPC will evaluate projects based on their ability to:

1. Make people safer regardless of the mode in which they travel.
2. Make roadways safer by designing and building multimodal transportation infrastructure that accounts for human behavior and separates people traveling at different speeds.

TRPC's Call for Projects aims to select projects that will help the region achieve the following safety objectives:

- a. Projects that help reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads to zero by 2030.
- b. Projects that help reduce the number of non-motorist fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads (e.g., bicyclists and pedestrians) to zero by 2030.
- c. Projects that help reduce transit-related fatalities, serious injuries, and safety incidents.

SAFETY RANKING

TRPC will evaluate safety based on the project type. There are four categories for ranking a project's safety:

1. Type of project offers greater risk reduction and is a priority outcome from a system or project safety analysis performed by the applicant, 2 points.
2. Type of project reduces risk for collisions, serious injuries, or fatalities, 1 point.
3. Type of project offers minimal safety benefits, 0 point.
4. Type of project may increase risk for collisions, serious injuries, or fatalities, -1 point.

Table 11 shows how the criteria and number of points will be applied.

Table 11: Safety Ranking

Project may increase risk for collisions, serious injuries, or fatalities	Minimal Safety Benefits	Project reduces risk for collisions, serious injuries, or fatalities	Priority Project that offers greater risk reduction
-1 Point	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that increase capacity or widen lanes • New construction without multimodal features or complete streets elements • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standalone pavement preservation projects such as rehabilitation and reconstruction • Stand-alone chip seals or overlay projects • Vehicle procurement or replacement projects • Stormwater projects • TDM projects without traffic safety education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge structural retrofit or replacement with multimodal elements. • Bus stop enhancements • Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure • Intersection or corridor improvements for safety reasons. • Roadway lighting that contributes to safety of vulnerable users such as pedestrian and bicyclist illumination at crossings, intersections, and segments • Sight distance, clear zone improvements. • Street crossing improvements • Pedestrian/bicycle signal improvements. • Traffic Safety Education Programs and Activities. • Speed management features. • Pavement marking repair/replacement • ADA features such as Accessible Pedestrian Signals, curb ramp upgrades, tactile markings on crossings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project identified through systemic safety analysis. • A project included in an applicant's adopted or officially referenced safety plan.

FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligibility criteria and descriptions of project and program activities are provided for the four federal grant programs and TRPC's Rural Community Support Program.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT (STBG)

STBG PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

TRPC will fund a variety of projects throughout the urban and unincorporated rural areas of the region. The flexibility inherent in STBG means that most types of transportation projects other than general-purpose capacity projects are eligible for consideration.

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

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

STBG eligible projects and activities include:

- Construction of highways, bridges, and tunnels.
- Construction of ferry boats and terminal facilities.
- Transit capital projects.
- Infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems capital improvements including vehicle-to-infrastructure communication equipment.
- Truck parking facilities.
- Wildlife crossing structures.
- Operational improvements and capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring, management, and control facilities and programs.
- Highway and transit safety infrastructure improvements and programs.
- Fringe and corridor parking facilities.
- Recreational trails projects.
- Planning, design, or construction of boulevards and other roadways.
- Protection for bridges and tunnels.
- Surface transportation planning programs, highway and transit research and development, and workforce training.
- Surface transportation infrastructure modifications to facilitate direct intermodal interchange, transfer, and access into and out of a port terminal.
- Projects and strategies designed to support congestion pricing.
- Projects and strategies designed to reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions.
- The installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and vehicle-to-grid infrastructure.
- The installation and deployment of current and emerging intelligent transportation technologies, including the ability of vehicles to communicate with infrastructure, buildings, and other road users.

- Planning and construction of projects that facilitate intermodal connections between emerging transportation technologies.
- Protective features, including natural infrastructure, to enhance the resilience of a transportation facility otherwise eligible for assistance under STBG.
- Measures to protect a transportation facility otherwise eligible for assistance under STBG from cybersecurity threats.

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

STBG ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES (TA)

TA PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

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

Eligible project types include:

- Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other nonmotorized transportation users.
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
- Community improvement activities, including:
 - inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising;
 - historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;

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

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

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

TA ELIGIBLE 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. Examples include city, town, township, village, borough, parish, or county agencies.
2. A regional transportation authority. Regional transportation authorities are considered the same as the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations
3. A transit agency. Transit agencies include any agency responsible for public transportation that is eligible for funds as determined by the Federal Transit Administration.
4. A natural resource or public land agency. Natural resource or public land agencies include any Federal, Tribal, State, or local agency responsible for natural resources or public land administration. Examples include:
 - State or local park or forest agencies.
 - State or local fish and game or wildlife agencies.
 - Department of the Interior land management agencies.
 - U.S. Forest Service.
5. A school district, local education agency, or school. School districts, local education agencies, or schools may include any public or nonprofit private school. Projects should benefit the general public and not only a private entity.
6. A Tribal government.

7. A nonprofit entity. The BIL removed the requirement that the nonprofit entity be responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs.
8. Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for or oversight of transportation or recreational trails (other than a metropolitan planning organization that serves an urbanized area with a population of over 200,000 or a State agency) that the State determines to be eligible.
9. A State, at the request of an eligible entity listed above.
Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)

CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ)

The CMAQ program plays a pivotal role in addressing two critical challenges facing urban areas: traffic congestion and air pollution. Established under the Clean Air Act, CMAQ funding aims to support projects that reduce emissions from transportation sources, improve air quality, and alleviate traffic congestion. Projects must be situated in Thurston County's PM10 Air Quality Maintenance Area (see Map 1).

Eligible project types include:

1. Implementation of public transit improvements, such as bus rapid transit (BRT) systems, light rail, or commuter rail projects.
2. Development and implementation of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, including bike lanes, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and bike-sharing programs.
3. Deployment of alternative fuel vehicles (e.g., electric, hybrid, natural gas) and associated infrastructure, such as charging stations or refueling stations.
4. Promotion of ridesharing, vanpooling, and other transportation demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips.
5. Installation of traffic signal synchronization systems and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) to optimize traffic flow and reduce congestion.
6. Implementation of congestion pricing schemes or tolling initiatives to manage traffic demand and reduce vehicle emissions.
7. Deployment of clean vehicle technologies, such as diesel retrofits, particulate traps, or emission control systems, for existing fleets.
8. Introduction of telecommuting programs, flexible work schedules, and other initiatives to reduce peak-hour traffic congestion and vehicle emissions.
9. Support for land use and transportation planning efforts that promote transit-oriented development (TOD), mixed-use zoning, and compact urban design to minimize vehicle travel and enhance air quality.
10. Project planning activities are eligible only if the project leads directly to construction of a CMAQ project; that is, system planning and other non-project specific planning is not eligible.

CMAQ ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include cities, counties, transit agencies, MPOs, tribes, special purpose governments, and non-profit organizations with a public agency sponsor.

For more information about the CMAQ program, visit:

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environMent/air_quality/cmaq/reference/cmaq_essentials/

CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM (CRP)

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), to provide funds for projects designed to reduce transportation emissions, defined as carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from on-road highway sources.

Eligible project types include:

- Projects to establish or operate a traffic monitoring, management, and control facility or program, including advanced truck stop electrification systems
- Public transportation infrastructure
- Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation
- Advanced transportation and congestion management technologies
- Deployment of infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems capital improvements and the installation of vehicle-to-infrastructure communications equipment
- A project to replace street lighting and traffic control devices with energy-efficient alternatives
- Travel demand management strategies and programs;
- Efforts to reduce the environmental and community impacts of freight movement;
- Acquisition, installation, or operation of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure or hydrogen, natural gas, or propane vehicle fueling infrastructure; and
- Purchase or lease of zero-emission construction equipment and vehicles, including the acquisition, construction, or leasing of required supporting facilities
- Diesel engine retrofits
- Certain types of projects to improve traffic flow that are eligible under the CMAQ program, and that do not involve construction of new capacity
- A project that reduces transportation emissions at port facilities, including through the advancement of port electrification

For more information about the Carbon Reduction Program, visit:

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/crp.cfm>.

CRP ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants eligible to receive CRP funds include Traditional and Non-Traditional Partners in Thurston County including cities, county, tribes, Intercity Transit, Port of Olympia, and TRPC.

RURAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM (RCSP)

RCSP Overview

The Rural Community Support Program (RCSP) was established by TRPC in partnership with Thurston County to create a reliable funding program for the region's traditionally underserved communities. The program can fund small but impactful projects while simplifying the grant application and project implementation processes with minimal barriers.

RCSP AWARD DISTRIBUTION

Thurston County Public Works will serve as the fiscal agent for the RCSP. Thurston County will reimburse awardees up to \$550,000 in funding for eligible project expenses. Successful applicants will receive an award letter from TRPC. A memorandum of understanding between the applicant and Thurston County will specify the grantee's project's funding schedule and the process for requesting grant funds. Funds will be distributed as reimbursement upon the successful completion and documentation of project phases. Projects awarded RCSP funds will be eligible for reimbursement over a two-year period as shown:

- 2025, \$275,000
- 2026, \$275,000

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The federal STBG, TA, and CRP eligible project types offer general guidelines for RCSP project proposals. Because projects will be reimbursed with non-federal funds, applicants have greater flexibility to submit project proposals that align with their community's priorities. Applicants are encouraged to coordinate with TRPC and Thurston County staff for technical assistance and guidance on their prospective proposals prior to submitting their applications.

RCSP ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include the Nisqually Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, the Town of Bucoda, the City of Rainier, and the City of Tenino.

ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTIONS

All RCSP applicants may submit federal grant applications in lieu of an RCSP funding request, however all federal grant requirements will apply to all project implementation phases. TRPC's Federal Transportation Grant Program Call for Projects stipulates that RCSP communities that

receive a federal grant award are ineligible to apply for RCSP funding in TRPC's subsequent call for projects cycle. For example, the City of Tenino was awarded a federal Transportation Alternatives grant in 2022, therefore the City of Tenino is ineligible to submit an RCSP proposal in 2024.

FEDERAL APPLICATION LIMITS AND URBAN FUNDING CAP

OVERVIEW

TRPC's Call for Projects process acknowledge the differences in capabilities among jurisdictions when it comes to developing plans, submitting grant applications, and managing projects awarded with federal funding.

To ensure a fair balance in the selection process of projects to be funded, there are limits on the amount of funding that applicants may request and a funding cap that applies to projects located in the Urban Large geographic area. These limits aims to support both larger and smaller jurisdictions by providing opportunities for their grant proposals to be considered, as long as they align with regional goals.

By implementing the Urban Funding Cap, regional policymakers can distribute funding across various jurisdictions over multiple funding cycles, thereby promoting equitable allocation and supporting a diverse range of projects. This approach helps to advance the overall goals of the region more effectively.

URBAN SMALL AND RURAL STBG AND TA MAXIMUM AWARDS

FUNDING REQUESTS

There are no specific limits placed on the amount of funding that applicants from Urban Small and Rural areas can request for STBG and TA grants. However, the awards granted cannot exceed the maximum available funding levels allocated for each specific geographic area. Applicants have the flexibility to apply for funding in Urban Small, Rural, or a combination of both areas if their project spans across these regions. For instance, a project like pavement preservation in the Grand Mound area that extends into adjacent Rural areas is eligible.

The funding maximum for both STBG and TA grants encompasses the total flexible funding available for these grant programs across Urban Small, Rural, and combined areas.

MAXIMUM FUNDING LEVELS

Table 12a shows the STBG funding available for Urban Small, Rural, and combined areas, based on the estimated federal funds available for 2024. Similarly, Table 12b outlines the available funding for TA grants outside the Urban Large area.

Table 12a. STBG Maximum Award for 2024 Urban Small, Rural, and Combined Projects

	Urban Small	Rural	Urban Small & Rural Combined Project
STBG	\$700,000	\$800,000	\$1,500,000
Flexible	\$1,300,000	\$1,300,000	\$1,300,000
Maximum Possible Award*	\$2,000,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,800,000

Table 12. TA Maximum Award for 2024 Urban Small, Rural, and Combined Projects

	Urban Small	Rural	Urban Small & Rural Combined Project
TA	\$125,000	\$350,000	\$475,000
Flexible	\$825,000	\$825,000	\$825,000
Maximum Possible Award*	\$950,000	\$1,175,000	\$1,300,000

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

CMAQ MAXIMUM AWARDS

Each proposal seeking CMAQ program funding cannot exceed \$2 million for a single project phase to be allocated within one fiscal year. For the Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2025-2027, applicants have the option to submit multiple proposals for CMAQ funding. Additionally, it is advisable for applicants to include contingency proposals, anticipating potential funding opportunities in case TRPC receives CMAQ allocations for the federal fiscal years 2028-2030.

CRP MAXIMUM AWARDS

There are no limits on the amount of funding applicants can request for CRP grants across Urban Large, Urban Small, and Rural allocations. Unlike the STBG and TA grant programs, CRP does not have a flexible share. The available funding for CRP awards will be adjusted to accommodate the trail preservation set-aside.

Table 13 provides a breakdown of the funding levels available for each geographic area before and after accounting for the potential trail set-aside project (\$500,000 reduction each for both the Urban Large and Rural areas).

Table 13. CRP Maximum Awards by Geographic Area

	Urban Large	Urban Small	Rural	Total CRP Available
CRP Funding Before a Set Aside Award	\$717,010	\$437,097	\$554,228	\$1,708,335
CRP Available minus the Set Aside Award*	\$217,010	\$437,097	\$54,228	\$708,335

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CRP FUNDS

- The trail preservation set aside up to \$1 million will be drawn from the Carbon Reduction Program.
- The actual amount of CRP funding available for project awards will vary based on the total amount awarded to a trail preservation set aside project.
- Table 13 funding levels show \$500,000 could be drawn from the Urban Large and Rural Areas.

URBAN LARGE FUNDING CAP

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

The Funding Cap applies only to STBG and TA Urban Large area grant allocations. The flexible share of funding from these programs is excluded from the Funding Cap as this could be awarded to proposals located in the Urban Small and Rural areas. All CMAQ and CRP funding is also excluded from the Funding Cap. The current funding cap spans the 2022, 2024, and 2026 Call for Projects funding cycles.

An applicant’s cumulative balance of awards over the funding cycles is used to determine if they have reached the cap.

In 2024, TRPC recalculated the Funding Cap to account for changes in funding levels between the funding that was forecast for 2024 and the actual 2024 allocation and current programming levels.

For the 2024 Call for Project Process, an applicant cannot exceed \$4,995,276 in combined STBG and TA Urban Large awards. Figure 1 shows the estimated funding cap that would be in effect for the 2024 Call for Projects (see Tables 14a-143 for the calculation of the 33% funding cap derived from the 2022 and 2024 funding cycles).

Figure 1. Funding Cap for Urban Large Area for the 2024 Call for Projects (33% of Funding Cycles 1&2 Combined).

STBG	\$4,283,829
TA	\$711,447
STBG and TA Urban Large Funding Cap	\$4,995,276

FUNDING CAP PENALTY

If an applicant’s combined Urban Large STBG and TA awards exceed the Funding Cap over the three cycles, they become ineligible for additional Urban Large STBG and TA awards for the remainder of the three-cycle period.

NEW THREE-CALL FOR PROJECTS CYCLE

The funding cap levels are reset at the beginning of each new three-cycle period, regardless of whether an applicant exceeded the cap in previous cycles.

FUNDING CAP PENALTY EXCEPTIONS

The penalty does not apply to an applicant who declines or de-obligates funding, allowing them to reapply for funding up to the balance of the funding cap. Contingency project awards or redistributed funding awards do not count against the funding cap. Applicants who reach the funding cap remain eligible to apply for new contingency projects, apply as a lead or a partner for a joint project, or apply as a sponsor for a non-traditional partner project.

LIMIT ON APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

Applicants can submit up to four proposals (STBG and TA combined) for each geographic category (see Map 1). Applicants can submit up to three joint projects. Applicants are asked to rank their proposal from one (highest) and so on.

Applicants should prioritize and rank their proposals, with the option to indicate if they wish to be considered for the contingency list for additional grant funding.

LIMIT ON CONTINGENCY PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

There is no limit on the number of contingency list project applications an applicant can submit. TRPC's "[Obligation Authority Policy and Procedures](#)" provides guidance on how contingency proposals are prioritized for funding.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

To reduce the region's risk of failing to meet its obligation target, TRPC encourages applicants to split large construction project requests (over \$2.5 million) into project phases that can obligate in differing years. This retains TRPC's ability to maintain a flexible project list to achieve annual obligation target requirements.

BACKGROUND: ESTIMATE OF AVAILABLE FUNDING*

Table 14a. 2022 Call for Projects Funding Levels (first funding cycle)

Fund Type	Total	Urban Large	Urban Small	Rural	Flexible	Flexible adjusted to remove RCSP
STBG available	\$9,302,000	\$6,381,300	\$725,800	\$770,400	\$1,424,400	\$824,400
STBG Set Aside (TA) available	\$2,078,000	\$980,900	\$111,600	\$308,600	\$677,000	n/a

Table 14b. 2024 Call for Projects Funding Levels (second funding cycle)

Fund Type	Total	Urban Large	Urban Small	Rural	Flexible	Flexible adjusted to remove RCSP
STBG available	\$10,000,000	\$6,600,000	\$700,000	\$800,000	\$1,900,000	\$1,300,000
STBG Set Aside (TA) available	\$2,500,000	\$1,175,000	\$125,000	\$350,000	\$825,000	n/a

Table 14c. Combined funding – 2022 and 2024 funding cycles

Fund Type	Total	Urban Large	Urban Small	Rural	Flexible	Flexible adjusted to remove RCSP
STBG available	\$19,302,000	\$12,981,300	\$1,425,800	\$1,570,400	\$3,324,400	\$2,124,400
STBG Set Aside (TA) available	\$4,578,000	\$2,155,900	\$236,600	\$658,600	\$1,502,000	n/a

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT FLEXIBLE FUNDS

- Funding for the Rural Community Support Program will be taken from the STBG flexible category.
- Remaining Flexible funds can fund projects in any geographic area.

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 open to public involvement process. For example, the proposal may be the implementation step of a planning or study process that involved the public, or it may have been vetted through a transportation improvement plan (TIP) or capital facilities plan (CFP) development process. Applicants should describe any previous opportunity the public has had to provide input on the proposal itself and/or the problem or need the proposal addresses.

APPLICATION COMPLETENESS

All relevant application sections, lines, fields, boxes, and signature requirements must be fully completed and checked for accuracy. For questions that are not applicable, mark "N/A" and skip to the next question. Applicants should develop comprehensive but concise descriptions for each application submitted. Policy makers will review each proposal for how it supports TRPC's Regional Funding Priorities. Applicants should describe how their proposals will support the Regional Transportation Plan's goals and policies. Applications should make distinct connections between characteristics of the proposal, issues or needs the proposal addresses, and established Regional Funding Priorities.

CA AGENCY SPONSORSHIP

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

CA Agency Contact Information

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

Lacey	Martin Hoppe	mhoppe@ci.lacey.wa.us	360.438.2681
Olympia	Joey Jones	jjones1@ci.olympia.wa.us	360.753.8307
Tumwater	Mary Heather Ames	mhames@ci.tumwater.wa.us	360.754.4140
Thurston County	Becky Conn	Becky.conn@co.thurston.wa.us	360.867.2349
Intercity Transit	Jessica Gould	jgould@intercitytransit.com	360.705.5808
TRPC	Paul Brewster	brewstp@trpc.org	360.741.2550
WSDOT Olympic Region	John Ho	hojohn@wsdot.wa.gov	360.705.7383

APPLICATION FORMS AND OPTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

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

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

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - CALL FOR PROJECTS PROCESS

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

PROJECT OBLIGATION TIMING

CMAQ AND CRP OBLIGATIONS

- Selected CRP and CMAQ proposals will obligate no earlier than October 1, 2025 and must obligate no later than June 30 for each subsequent year, through 2027.

STBG AND TA OBLIGATIONS

- Selected STBG and TA proposals will obligate no earlier than October 1, 2028 and must obligate no later than June 30 for each subsequent year, through 2030.

RCSP REIMBURSEMENT

- Selected RCSP project timing is subject to the terms and conditions that will be specified in the agreement between Thurston County and the applicant.
- In general, Thurston County will reimburse up to a maximum of \$275,000 in each calendar years 2025 and 2026 upon successful project completion of projects.

STATED OBLIGATION PREFERENCE

Applicants must state their committed year of project obligation on the application form. TRPC staff will coordinate with successful grant recipients to determine the appropriate year of obligation for each project, which will be specified in a project's award letter.

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

PROPOSAL REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

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

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

TECHNICAL REVIEW OF PROPOSALS

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

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

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PROCESS

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

TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD REVIEW AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) is scheduled to consider all proposals during their regular meeting on September 11, 2024, at 7:30 a.m.

The TPB will convene a subcommittee to perform a policy maker review of the proposals and create a ranked list of projects for the full TPB's consideration. The TPB will consider all TAC recommendations and public comments. On November 13, 2024, the TPB will forward a funding recommendation to the Council.

Applicants are encouraged to attend TPB meetings to answer policy makers' questions about their proposals. TRPC staff will notify all eligible applicants of meeting dates.

COUNCIL REVIEW AND FINAL SELECTION

TRPC will conduct a preliminary review of all proposals at its regular meeting on Friday, November 1, 2024. Any questions generated will be forwarded to the TPB or TAC for their consideration. It is not necessary for applicants to attend this meeting, though all are welcome to do so.

On Friday, December 6, 2024, the Council will consider the TPB recommendation, and any public comments received before project selection. The Council will identify those projects to be funded in the 2024 Regional Call for Projects Process. The Council retains final decision-making authority on the distribution of STBG, TA, CMAQ, and CRP federal grant funds and RCSP funds to priority projects.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

The selected proposals will be programmed as funding secure or contingency projects in the 2025-2029 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). Approval of TRPC's RTIP and subsequent amendments will program eligible projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program. The programming and administration of the RTIP is necessary for projects to be eligible for obligation in the applicant's desired year. TRPC staff will work with successful applicants to meet these programming requirements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

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

Traditional Transportation Partner

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

Non-Traditional Transportation Partner

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

Eligibility Requirements

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

Project Administration

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

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

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

Contingency Proposals

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

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

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

Obligation Targets

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

Funding Awards by Phase

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

Readiness to Proceed

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

Sanctioning of Funds

TRPC is required to meet annual obligation targets mandated by WSDOT. WSDOT implemented a 'use it or lose it' policy in 2013 to: 1) Reduce the amount of federal funds tied up on projects that

are not progressing as planned; and 2) Increase the rate of project delivery. To achieve its annual targets, TRPC reserves the right to rescind awarded funds from projects that fail to meet scheduled obligation dates. Conditions of TRPC's Obligation Authority will be specified in the award letters of selected projects and guided by TRPC's Obligation Authority Policy.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

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

No, to be eligible, a proposal must only demonstrate how it addresses one of the funding priorities identified by TRPC. However, a proposal that addresses multiple priorities is likely to score as a high priority project.

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 a regional priority. Examples of other potential priority project types include corridor or sub-area plans; development of street design standards to incorporate “complete street” concepts; transit vehicle acquisitions; park-and-ride facility planning; systems analysis; signal systems; and traffic safety education activities. A good investment in construction begins with a good investment in analysis and planning. Applicants are not bound to a single type of project in this process.

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

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

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

- **Familiarize yourself with the region’s transportation priorities, the Regional Transportation Plan, and Sustainable Thurston’s Action Plan (*Creating Places, Preserving Spaces*).** Make sure that your proposal and description clearly speak to the funding priorities in the context of overarching regional policies.
- **Make sure your proposal is well thought out and the description is easy to understand.** Policy makers will have a hard time recognizing a great project if the description is unorganized or incomplete. Use plain English to clearly convey the intent and benefits of your proposal.
- **Be clear and concise.** Making a great pitch for your proposal doesn’t mean writing pages and pages of description. Applicants are limited to 150, 300, or 500 word counts for most sections on the application forms. Information should be succinct and compelling. Tip – edit your narrative content in Microsoft Word, perform a word count, and paste the final version in the application form.
- **Be prepared.** If you haven’t lined up your Certification Acceptance (CA) agency, or verified federal eligibility requirements, your proposal will not be considered eligible.

- **Be ready to answer questions.** The technical and policy reviews may generate specific questions about your proposal or how you plan to implement it. This is the reviewers' responsibility and is meant to ensure that they fully understand what you are proposing to do with a regional grant.
- **Don't over commit!** Federal grant funds place a heavy emphasis on accountability. Be realistic in your assessment of project obligation schedules considering your other agency commitments and availability of match resources. Don't lose your grant by being unaware of what obligation entails or how long it takes. The technical review will pay attention to the ability to deliver project obligation schedules.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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