Transportation Alternatives Solicitation

Guidebook

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Note: The solicitation for transportation alternatives funding for the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties) is conducted by the Metropolitan Council and the Transportation Advisory Board. For more information about the metro area solicitation, visit the Met Council website.

Transportation Alternatives Solicitation Information

Federal Program Requirements

Following is a partial listing of the regulations that apply to any project receiving federal transportation funds. These requirements must be taken in to consideration for budget development, project development and project implementation stages.

Davis-Bacon and Copeland Acts: Payment of pre-determined wage is applicable to all federal-aid construction contracts exceeding $2,000 and to all related subcontracts.

ADA Requirements: All Transportation Alternatives projects must comply with the federal and state handicapped accessibility mandates.

Anti-Discrimination Laws: Each sponsoring participant must comply with applicable federal and state Anti-discrimination laws and be able to demonstrate compliance.

Project Supervision: All projects must be under the direct supervision of a Minnesota Licensed Professional Engineer.

Additional Requirements and Specifications: Successful applicants will be provided with additional information as needed by MnDOT.

Qualifying Activities

As identified in federal law, transportation alternatives funds may be obligated for projects or activities described in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(29) or 213, as such provisions were in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the FAST Act.

Former 23 U.S.C. 213(b)(1):

1. Transportation Alternatives as defined in section 101 [former 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(29)]:
   The term “transportation alternatives” means any of the following activities when carried out as part of any program or project authorized or funded under this title, or as an independent program or project related to surface transportation:
   - 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 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).
   - 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, *which include but are not limited to*:
        i. inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising;
        ii. historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;
        iii. vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control; and
        iv. archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under title 23.
    - Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to:
        i. address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, including activities described in sections 23 U.S.C. 133(b)(3) [as amended under the FAST Act], 328(a), and 329 of title 23; or
        ii. reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats (Former 23 U.S.C. 213(b)(2)-(4)).
2. The recreational trails program under 23 U.S.C. 206 of title 23.
3. The safe routes to school program eligible projects and activities listed at section 1404(f) of the SAFETEA-LU:
    - Infrastructure-related projects.
    - Noninfrastructure-related activities.
    - SRTS coordinator. SAFETEA-LU section 1404(f)(2)(A) lists "managers of safe routes to school programs" as eligible under the noninfrastructure projects.
4. Planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.
    - See *Boulevards from Divided Highways* for examples.

There are no location restrictions for transportation alternatives set-aside infrastructure projects; they are not required to be located along highways.

For SRTS noninfrastructure projects, traffic education and enforcement activities must take place within approximately two miles of a primary or middle school (kindergarten through 8th grade).

Non-Qualifying Activities

As identified in federal law, transportation alternatives funds cannot be used for the following activities because there is no authorization under the Federal-aid Highway Program:

- State or metropolitan planning organization administrative purposes. Exceptions:
    - See FHWA's Memo Allocating Indirect Costs to Projects, dated September 4, 2015.
    - RTP administrative costs of the State for RTP set-aside funds.
- Promotional activities, except as permitted under the SRTS (200 CFR 200.421(e)(3)).

- Routine maintenance and operations, except trail maintenance as permitted under the RTP.
- General recreation and park facilities, playground equipment, sports fields, campgrounds, picnic areas and pavilions, etc.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation has elected that the following activities are also considered ineligible for transportation alternatives funding, even if not prohibited federally.

- Engineering activities
- Purchase of right-of-way

Project Sponsors and Applicants

Sponsors

Federal funds for transportation alternative projects are passed through MnDOT to recipients that are adequately staffed and equipped to undertake and satisfactorily complete the requirements associated with federally-funded work. MnDOT determined that state aid cities (i.e. cities with population of over 5,000 persons) and counties are qualified recipients for federal funds. The transportation alternatives solicitation requires their participation as a sponsor and / or applicant. If an eligible applicant is not a state aid city or county, then the applicant will need a state aid city or county to be a sponsor on their project. For a full description of state aid sponsor requirements please review the state aid manual at: http://www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/manual/2015esam.pdf

Applicants

Project applicants must be an entity eligible to receive the transportation alternatives funding. Eligible applicants are:

1. a local government: Local government entities include any unit of local government below a State government agency, except for an MPO. Examples include city, town, township, village, borough, parish, or county agencies.
2. a regional transportation authority: Regional transportation authorities are considered the same as the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations defined in the statewide planning section (23 U.S.C. 135(m)).
3. a transit agency: Transit agencies include any agency responsible for public transportation that is eligible for funds as determined by the Federal Transit Administration.
4. a natural resource or public land agency: Natural resource or public land agencies include any Federal, Tribal, State, or local agency responsible for natural resources or public land administration. Examples include:
    - State or local park or forest agencies;
    - State or local fish and game or wildlife agencies;
    - Department of the Interior Land Management Agencies; and
    - U.S. Forest Service.

5. a school district, local education agency, or school: School districts, local education agencies, or schools may include any public or nonprofit private school. Projects should benefit the general public and not only a private entity.
6. a tribal government.
7. a nonprofit entity responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs: Examples include a nonprofit entity responsible for:
    - a local program implementing construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs; and
    - a safe routes to school program.
8. any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for, or oversight of, transportation or recreational trails (other than an MPO or a State agency) that the State determines to be eligible, consistent with the goals of this subsection.

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

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

The Recreational Trails Program set-aside funds retain the RTP eligible project sponsor provisions under 23 U.S.C. 206 (23 U.S.C. 133(h)(5)(C)).

Local Match and Cost Sharing Requirements

For all projects, including SRTS projects, funded with transportation alternatives funds, the federal share is the same as for the general federal-aid highway program: 80 percent Federal / 20 percent state or local match subject to the sliding scale adjustment. (23 U.S.C. 120)

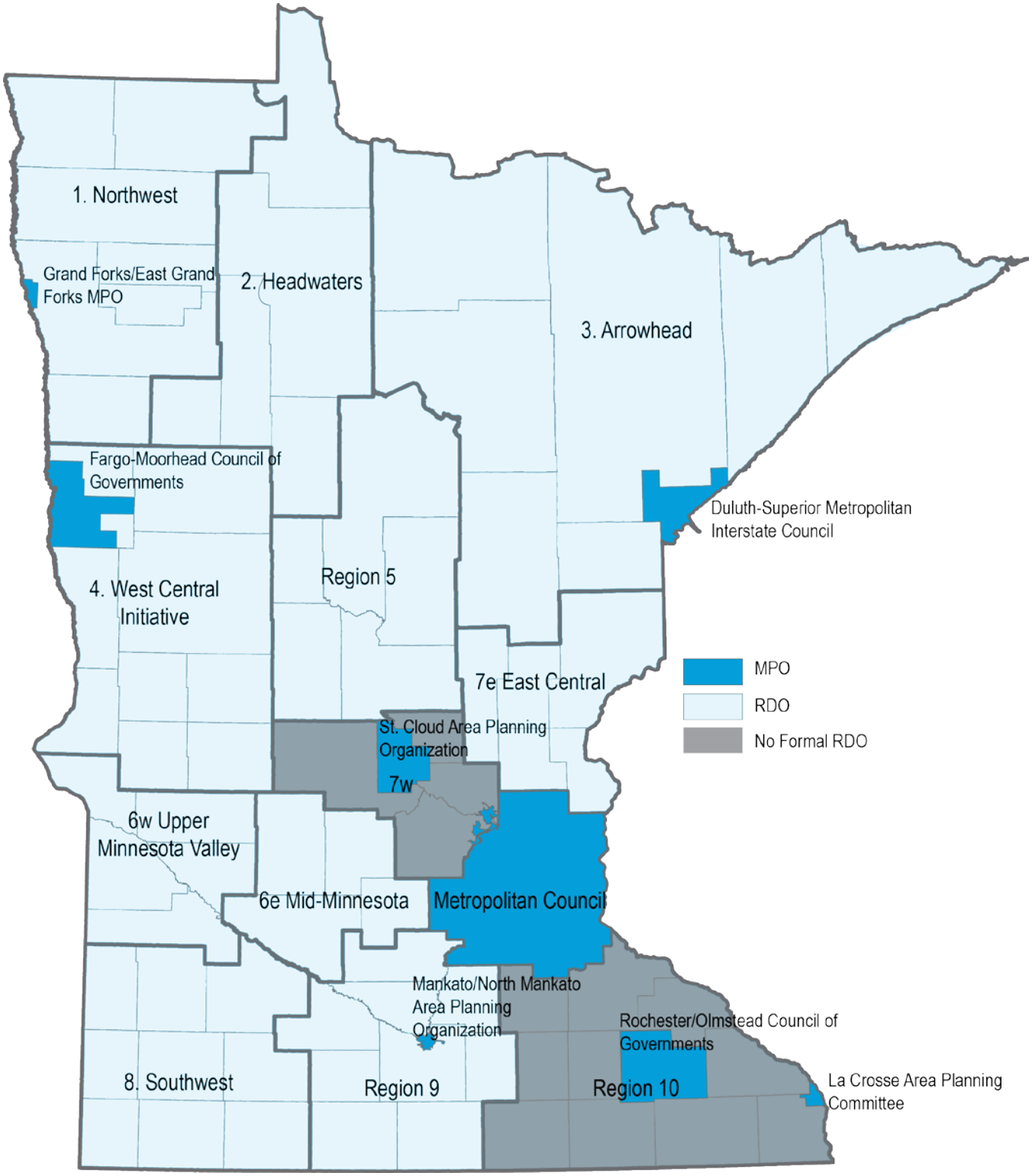
As provided in 49 CFR 18.24 "Matching or cost sharing," the following requirements are emphasized:

- 18.24(b) Qualifications and exceptions-(1) Costs borne by other Federal grant agreements. Except as provided by Federal statute, a cost sharing or matching requirement may not be met by costs borne by another Federal grant. This prohibition does not apply to income earned by a grantee or subgrantee from a contract awarded under another Federal grant.
- (3) Cost or contributions counted towards other Federal costs-sharing requirements. Neither costs nor the values of third party in-kind contributions may count towards satisfying a cost sharing or matching requirement of a grant agreement if they have been or will be counted towards satisfying a cost sharing or matching requirement of another Federal grant agreement, a Federal procurement contract, or any other award of Federal funds.

Timeline Guidance for Project Development to Construction

Time from funding award	Activity and duration
26-52 weeks	Eligible agency completes planning and preliminary work to describe and estimate cost of project. (26-52 weeks but public input and collaboration with land owners may take longer)
52-78 weeks	Project is selected in four-year State Transportation Improvement Program. (26 weeks)
78-130 weeks	Eligible agency completes preliminary engineering to assess social, environmental and economic impacts and to apply design criteria. (26-52 weeks)
80-132 weeks	Preliminary discussions and review scoping as to appropriate document. (2 weeks)
84-145 weeks	Eligible agency prepares environmental document. (4-13 weeks)
90-153 weeks	Eligible agency submits environmental documentation to District State Aid Engineer with original signatures. (6-8 weeks)
96-161 weeks	District State Aid Engineer reviews the documents. Are document components appropriate / correct? If no, eligible agency is contacted to resolve. Eligible agency corrects and resubmits. (Add 6-8 weeks if second draft is needed)
104-171 weeks	District State Aid Engineer reviews; comments and / or approves. (8-10 weeks)
105-173 weeks	State Aid for Local Transportation notifies District State Aid Engineer and eligible agency of environmental clearance approval and to proceed with right of way, detailed plans and necessary documentation for federal authorization. (1-2 weeks)
128-199 weeks	Eligible agency completes and submits plans, right of way certification and required documentation to the District State Aid Engineer. (13-26 weeks)
138-209 weeks	Plan review by District State Aid Engineer and State Aid for Local Transportation. (10 weeks)
143-214 weeks	Federal authorization to let project. (5 weeks)
145-216 weeks	Bid opening and certification of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. (2 weeks)
147-218 weeks	Contractor secures bond and signs contract. (2 weeks)
150-221 weeks	Contract approval and initiation of construction. (3 weeks)

RDO & MPO Contact Information



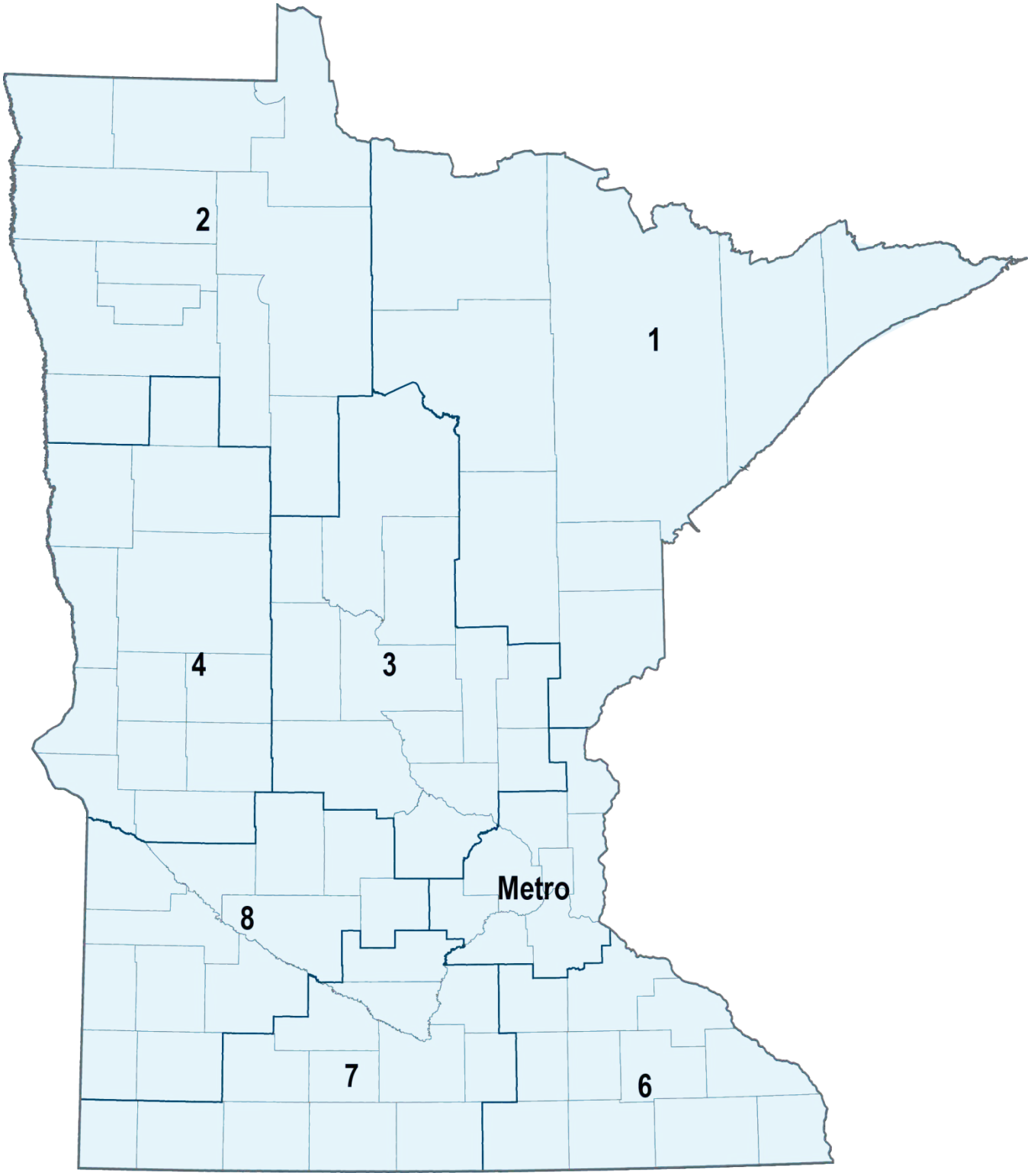
Regional Development Organization Contact Information

Region	Organization name	Counties served	Address & phone	Website
1	Northwest Regional Development Commission	Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau	115 S Main St Warren, MN 56762 218-745-6733	www.nwrdc.org
2	Headwaters Regional Development Commission	Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen	403 4th St NW PO Box 906 Bemidji, MN 56601 218-444-4732	www.hrdc.org
3	Arrowhead Regional Development Commission	Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis	221 West 1st St Duluth, MN 55802 218-722-5545	www.ardc.org
4	West Central Initiative	Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, Wilkin	1000 Western Ave PO Box 318 Fergus Falls, MN 56538 218-739-2239	www.wcif.org
5	Region 5 Development Commission	Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, Wadena	200 1st Street NE Suite 2 Staples, MN 56479 218-894-3233	www.regionfive.org
6e	Mid-Minnesota Development Commission	Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville	333 SW 6th St Suite 2 Willmar, MN 56201 320-235-8504	www.mmrdc.org
6w	Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission	Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift, Yellow Medicine	323 W Schlieman Ave Appleton, MN 56208 320-289-1981	www.umvrdc.org
7e	East Central Regional Development Commission	Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Pine	100 S Park St Mora, MN 55051 320-679-4065	www.region7erdc.org
8	Southwest Regional Development Commission	Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock	2401 Broadway Ave Suite 1 Slayton, MN 56172 507-836-8547	www.swrdc.org
9	Region 9 Development Commission	Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan	10 Civic Ctr Plaza P.O. Box 3367 Mankato, MN 56002 507-387-5643	www.rndc.org

Metropolitan Planning Organization Contact Information

Organization name	Address & phone	Website
Rochester-Olmstead Council of Governments	2122 Campus Drive SE Suite 100 Rochester, MN 55904 507-328-7100	www.co.olmsted.mn.us
Mankato-North Mankato Area Planning Organization	10 Civic Center Plaza Mankato, MN 56001 507-387-8630	www.mankato.mn.gov/mapo
St. Cloud Area Planning Organization	1040 County Road 4 St. Cloud, MN 56303 320-252-7568	www.stcloudapo.org
Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments	1 2nd Street N Suite 232 Fargo, ND 58102 701-232-3242	www.fmmetrocog.org
Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council	221 W 1st Street Duluth MN 218-529-7509	www.dsmic.org
La Crosse Area Planning Committee	400 N 4th Street Rm 2300 La Crosse, WI 54601 608-785-5977	www.lapc.org
Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization	255 N 4th Street Grand Forks, ND 58206 701-746-2660	www.theforksmpo.org
Twin Cities Metropolitan Council	390 Robert Street N St. Paul, MN 55101 651-602-1000	www.metrocouncil.org

ATP Contact Information



Area Transportation Partnership Contact Information

ATP	Counties served	Address & phone	Website
1	Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, St. Louis	MnDOT District 1 1123 Mesaba Ave Duluth, MN 55811 218-725-2700	www.nemnatp.org
2	Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau	MnDOT District 2 3920 Highway 2 West Bemidji, MN 56601 218-755-6500	www.dot.state.mn.us/d2/atp
3	Benton, Cass, Crow Wing, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd, Wadena, Wright	MnDOT District 3 7694 Industrial Park Road Baxter, MN 56425 218-828-5700	www.dot.state.mn.us/d3/atp
4	Becker, Big Stone, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Mahnomen, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Wilkin	MnDOT District 4 1000 Highway 10 West Detroit Lakes, MN 56501 218-846-3600	www.dot.state.mn.us/d4/atp
Metro	Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington	MnDOT Metro District 1500 West Co Rd B-2 Roseville, MN 55113 651-234-7500	www.dot.state.mn.us/metro
6	Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Winona	MnDOT District 6 2900 48th Street NW Rochester, MN 55901 507-286-7500	www.dot.state.mn.us/d6/atp
7	Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, Nobles, Rock, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan	MnDOT District 7 2151 Bassett Drive Mankato, MN 56001 507-304-6100	www.dot.state.mn.us/d7/atp
8	Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Yellow Medicine	MnDOT District 8 2505 Transportation Road Willmar, MN 56201 320-231-5195	www.dot.state.mn.us/d8/atp

Note: Chisago County submits a Greater Minnesota transportation alternatives application because it is not part of the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area, even though it is part of the Metro ATP. Chisago county transportation alternatives applications are reviewed and scored by the East Central Regional Development Commission before they are forwarded to the Metro ATP integration committee.

Other Key Contacts

SRTS, Scenic Byway & Recreational Trails Program Coordinator Contact Information

Name	Role	Address & Phone	Email
Dave Cowan	MnDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator	395 John Ireland Blvd MS 315 St. Paul, MN 55155 651-366-4189	Dave.Cowan@state.mn.us
Holly Slagle	MnDOT Scenic Byway Coordinator	395 John Ireland Blvd MS 620 St. Paul, MN 55155 651-366-3623	Holly.Slagle@state.mn.us
Dan Golner	MnDNR Recreational Trails Coordinator	500 Lafayette Road Box 39 Saint Paul, MN 55155 651-259-5599	Daniel.Golner@state.mn.us

General Transportation Alternatives Contact Information

Name	Role	Address & Phone	Email
Chris Berrens	MnDOT Transportation Alternatives Contact	395 John Ireland Blvd MS 440 St. Paul, MN 55155 651-366-3755	Chris.Berrens@state.mn.us
Katie Caskey	MnDOT Transportation Alternatives Contact	395 John Ireland Blvd MS 440 St. Paul, MN 55155 651-366-3901	Kathryn.Caskey@state.mn.us

2016-2017 Solicitation Details

Solicitation Timeline

- **Friday, September 30, 2016 –** Announce solicitation / call for letter of intent.
- **Monday, October 31st, 2016 –** Deadline for applicants to submit letters of intent.
- **Friday, November 18th, 2016 –** Deadline for RDO / MPO / district review of letters of intent. Recommendation to proceed forward with full application given to applicants.
- **Monday, November 21st, 2016 –** Official start of full application period.
- **Friday, January 13th, 2017 –** Deadline for applicants to submit full applications.
- **Monday, April 17th, 2017 –** Deadline for ATPs to select selection project for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program for fiscal years 2018 to 2021.

Related Documents

Transportation Alternatives Solicitation Letter of Intent Worksheet

The document includes information on the letter of intent review process and a worksheet to assist with completing the online letter of intent form.

Transportation Alternatives Solicitation Full Application

The document is the full application form for the transportation alternatives solicitation.