

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding 2023 Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) Solicitation

Updated: 10/30/2023

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1. I don't know much about the LRIP program. Where can I find more information?

Please see the following resources for more information on the LRIP program and the 2023 solicitation:

- [Local Road Improvement Program webpage](#)
 - [2023 LRIP Application - FormStack](#)
 - [2023 LRIP Solicitation Guide](#)
 - [2023 LRIP Program Guide \(PowerPoint\)](#)
 - [2023 LRIP bond grant agreement](#) (grantees will be required to execute this grant agreement before funds are available)
 - [2023 LRIP general fund grant agreement](#) (grantees will be required to execute this grant agreement before funds are available)
 - [2023 LRIP Solicitation Webinar presentation](#) This provides a good, general overview of the 2023 LRIP solicitation.
 - [LRIP information sheet](#)
 - [LRIP legislative history](#)

2. I've heard there are a lot of rules associated with bond funds. Where can I learn more about bond requirements and restrictions?

Minnesota Management and Budget is the authority on state bonding. Numerous resources can be found at the following links:

- [Bonding](#)
- [Capital Projects](#)

Bond funds are not eligible for work on TH right of way. State Aid will determine the appropriate funding source, as there will be several considerations. Projects that have TH impacts will be funded with general funds. Projects on tribal lands will be funded with general funds. Projects entirely on county, city, or township property will be funded with bonds or general funds.

However, LRIP funds will only cover construction costs whether the project is funded with bond funds or general funds. Any other costs cannot be funded with LRIP grant funds, which includes, but is not limited to planning, design, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, construction management, and applicant or sponsoring agency staff time or personnel costs.

Construction may only be on city, county, townships, and Tribal owned streets or right-of-way. Work on trunk highways or trunk highway right-of-way may be allowed with a letter of support from the MnDOT District Engineer.

3. Why is county sponsorship required for township and non-state aid city projects?

Counties can provide expertise and resources that townships and non-state aid cities may not have. Counties generally have more experience procuring engineering and design contracts and executing and administering construction contracts. In addition, counties have extensive experience working

with MnDOT's district and central office State Aid staff and are familiar with processes. Counties may also have experience applying for, securing, and administering grant funds. Finally, counties have an existing mechanism in place that allows State Aid to issue project related payments. These mechanisms do not exist for townships and non-state aid cities.

It is typical that counties require townships and non-state aid cities to hire an engineering consultant to prepare plans and specifications, coordinate with State Aid, and provide construction administration and inspection services. This is allowable only if the consultant has experience working with state aid and developing state aid plans.

From the state's perspective, county sponsorship helps mitigate the risks of LRIP funds expiring before the project is constructed and with improper use of funds.

4. \$102.967 million is available in LRIP funds. How much will go to townships, non-state aid cities, state aid cities, counties, and federally recognized Indian Tribes, and when can I receive the funds?

MnDOT intends to award LRIP grants to counties, state aid cities, non-state aid cities, townships, and federally recognized Indian Tribes throughout the state. MnDOT will attempt to award grants with an eye towards geographic equity and agency equity. Final awards by MnDOT district and by agency type will depend on number and quality of applications received.

LRIP funds are paid on a reimbursable basis and require execution of a LRIP grant agreement before funds can be accessed. Following execution of the LRIP grant agreement, the grantee will incur construction expenses, pay the contractor, and then submit a state aid pay request to seek reimbursement. Non-state aid city and township grantees will need to work with their county engineer to submit the state aid pay request on their behalf.

5. Can LRIP funds be used on private roads?

No. LRIP funds can only be used on publicly or tribally owned and maintained roads. LRIP funds cannot be used on private driveways, private parking lots, or other infrastructure improvements located on privately owned right of way unless the local agency or tribal agency can demonstrate an ownership over that right of way for no less than 125% of the useful life of the improvement. In addition, the right of way that contains bond funded improvements will become "state bond financed property," as defined in [Minnesota Statute 16A.695](#).

6. Can federally recognized Indian Tribes apply for LRIP funding?

Yes, federally recognized Indian Tribes are eligible to apply for LRIP funding.

7. Would a system wide project be eligible, such as county-wide culvert replacement or mill and overlays on a grid of roads?

A series of safety improvements on different County State Aid Highways would be eligible under the Rural Road Safety Account. But a jurisdiction-wide culvert replacement, mill and overlay on a grid or unrelated system of roads, or other multi-location projects would not be eligible. Under the Routes of Regional Significance, the intent is to fund single regionally important roadway projects.

8. Are bridge replacement projects eligible for the LRIP program?

No. Bridge replacement projects are not eligible for LRIP. The local bridge replacement program (LBRP) provides funding to reconstruct and rehabilitate deficient bridges. And there is a separate program to replace deficient township bridges. However, structures that are less than 10 feet in length are not considered bridges and are not eligible for the LBRP program. Replacement of these structures would be an eligible use of LRIP funds.

More information can be found on the LBRP and the town bridge program at:

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/local-bridge-replacement-program.html>

9. We have a regionally significant route that follows multiple roads. Would this situation be eligible for LRIP funds?

Yes. If the multiple roads, when combined, serve a single regionally significant purpose, the multiple roads should be submitted as a single LRIP application. For example, if 100th Street travels north, veers to the right and travels east along 10th Avenue, and then veers to the left and continues north as 105th Street, this should be submitted as a single project. But if the two roads serve different regional purposes and/or different users, they should be submitted as two separate applications. For example, if 100th Street traveled north-south and 1st Avenue travels east-west, those should be submitted as separate applications.

10. Are there any special considerations for projects on a border road between multiple agencies or for a contiguous route that includes multiple roads?

For border roads with half of the road owned by one agency and half by a different agency, both agencies with an ownership interest must support the application. If a road changes jurisdiction – for example, the road is owned by the city within the city limits but owned by the county or township outside the city limits – all agencies with an ownership interest must support the application. In either case, one application should be submitted by whichever agency would lead the project. If LRIP bond financed improvements will ultimately be owned by multiple agencies, each agency will need to execute a grant agreement prior to construction.

If the road serves a single regionally significant purpose and/or would benefit the same users, the \$1.5 million funding cap would apply regardless of how many agencies have partial ownership of the road. If the roads serve different regional purposes and/or would benefit different users, separate applications should be submitted.

11. Can I seek funds for cost sharing for trunk highway components on a MnDOT project?

No, LRIP funds cannot be used on TH components. LRIP funds are intended to provide funding on local roads or Tribal Roads, not on trunk highways. However, applicants can seek funds for local or Tribal costs on the local or Tribal system that are required as part of a MnDOT trunk highway project. This would fall under the TH account.

12. Can I seek funds for required city/township/Tribal cost sharing on a county project?

Yes, but doing so would require a letter of support from the county. The county and city/township/federally recognized Indian Tribe could also submit a joint application seeking funds that would be shared by multiple agencies on a single project that includes multiple agencies.

13. Do I need to hire a consultant to develop the LRIP application?

No. While many engineering consultants do provide this as a service, applicants are not required to hire an engineering consultant to develop the LRIP application.

However, we do require that the cost estimate submitted in Section H of the application is based in planning and engineering principles. It is important to have a good, accurate cost estimate as it is in everybody's best interest. For example, the construction cost estimate from the application will be a major factor in determining the grant award. For applicants that are selected for LRIP funding, if the engineering plans and specifications later show that costs are above the amount identified for a grant, the grantee will be responsible for paying all costs above the LRIP grant award.

14. More than one road qualifies as a Route of Regional Significance in my jurisdiction. Should I submit one application or two?

If the two or more different roads, when combined, serve a single regionally significant purpose, they should be submitted together as a single application. For example, let's say that 100th Street travels north, veers to the east along 3rd Ave, and continues north as 105th Street. In this case if the 100th Street to 3rd Ave to 105th Street routes serves as a regionally significant north-south connection, this should be submitted as a single application. However, if the multiple roads serve different regional purposes and/or different users, they should be submitted as separate

applications. For example, if 100th Street travels north-south and it intersects 1st Avenue that travels east-west, those should be submitted as separate applications.

In either case, the roads in question would need to meet the definition of being Regionally Significant to be considered for funding.

15. What roles are required of counties that are sponsoring township and non-state aid city applications?

The solicitation guide states that the sponsor's tasks include, but are not necessarily limited to the following items:

- Be the fiscal agent on behalf of the community and have funds flow from MnDOT to the county to the contractor
- Request SAP/SP number for the project
- Ensure the project meets milestones and dates
- Assist local agency in execution of a grant agreement
- Develop, review and/or approve the plan
- Submit plan, engineers estimate, and proposal to the District State Aid Engineer (DSAE)
- Advertise, let, and award the project
- Submit pay requests to State Aid
- Communicate progress and updates with the DSAEs and State Aid State Programs Engineer
- Ensure that the project receives adequate supervision and inspection
- Assist with project close out

However, there is no expectation that the county would design, inspect, and construct the project with in-house staff or hire and pay a consultant with county funds. In many cases, counties require that townships and non-state aid cities hire a consulting engineer to provide these services. MnDOT State Aid for Local Transportation is open to this type of arrangement if the selected consultant has experience working with State Aid, developing state aid plans, and administering and inspecting construction projects. Applicants are advised to use State Aid experience as a prerequisite in their request for proposals (RFP). In this case, the county would assist the township or non-state aid city with development of the RFP and selection of a qualified consultant. We would also ask that the county act as a technical resource for the consultant and review the plans before they are submitted to the District State Aid Engineer.

Since many townships and non-state aid cities have very limited experience advertising, letting, and administering construction contracts, State Aid requires that the county hold the construction contract. If the township or non-state aid city hires a qualified consultant as described above, the consultant can provide inspection and much of the day-to-day construction administration.

In all cases, the county will be required to request the State Aid Project (SAP) number and submit state aid pay requests during construction. It is acceptable for the consultant to develop draft pay requests for the county's review and submittal.

16. Which agency will need to execute a grant agreement for projects that require a county sponsor?

The grantee (as the ultimate owner of the infrastructure improvement) will need to execute a grant agreement, not the county sponsor. The agreement must be between MnDOT and the ultimate owner of the infrastructure that will be constructed with LRIP funds.

Once funding is awarded, it is recommended that a formal Joint Powers Agreement be executed between the sponsor and the applicant outlining the roles and responsibilities for the specific project. See [sample joint powers agreement](#) (Word), which can be modified to fit the specific circumstances of the project.

17. Does State Aid have a template resolution of support for the submitting agency?

We do not have a standard template. However, local agencies can consider the following in creating a customized resolution.

Include WHEREAS statements that describe some or all of the following:

- \$102.967 million in LRIP funding is available, with a cap of \$1.5 million for each project
- Acknowledgement that LRIP funds can be used on reasonable elements associated with roadway construction and that other costs, including but not limited to: consultant engineering and inspection, utility construction, as well as construction costs above the LRIP award will need to have alternate funding sources
- The roadway name, project limits, and transportation deficiencies
- How the project will address the deficiencies
- Average daily traffic, safety history and statistics, functional classification
- Previous planning efforts on the corridor
- Why the road is considered a route of regional significance, or why it is eligible for the rural road safety account or the trunk highway account
- Which parties and number of users that will benefit from the project
- Whether the project will benefit multiple agencies
- Whether the project will include multi-modal or non-motorized components
- The construction cost estimate and planned year of construction
- Whether and which type of other funding sources have been secured
- For non-state aid cities and townships, discuss coordination efforts with the county
- Any other information that the local agency deems relevant

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The town board, city council, or county board supports the construction or reconstruction project, and agrees to maintain such improvements
2. The town board, city council, or county board supports submittal of the LRIP application

3. The township, city, or county provides assurance that the township, city, or county will pay all costs associated with the project beyond the LRIP grant award.
4. In the case of non-state aid cities and townships, that the town board or city council seeks the support by resolution of the county to act as project sponsor for the project should the township or non-state aid city be selected to receive LRIP funds, and that such sponsorship shall include the following responsibilities:
 - Be the fiscal agent on behalf of the community and have funds flow from MnDOT to the county to the contractor
 - Request SAP/SP number for the project
 - Ensure the project meets milestones and dates
 - Assist local agency in execution of a grant agreement
 - Develop, review and/or approve the plan
 - Submit plan, engineers estimate, and proposal to the DSAE
 - Advertise, let, and award the project
 - Submit pay requests to State Aid
 - Communicate progress and updates with the DSAEs and State Aid State Programs Engineer
 - Ensure that the project receives adequate supervision and inspection
 - Assist with project close out

18. Does State Aid have a template resolution of support for the sponsoring county?

We do not have a standard template. However, local agencies can consider the following in creating a customized resolution agreeing to act as project sponsor.

Include WHEREAS statements that describe some or all of the following:

- \$102.967 million in LRIP funding is available, with a cap of \$1.5 million for each project
- Non-state aid cities and townships must have a county sponsor
- City or township has requested county sponsorship for this project by Resolution XX-XX
- The roadway name and project limits, and the non-state aid city or township that is responsible
- Discuss coordination efforts with the city or township
- The city or township understands that it will be responsible for all costs not covered by LRIP including but not limited to consultant engineering, right of way acquisition, construction administration and inspection, utility construction, as well as construction costs above the LRIP award
- The city or township has agreed to maintain such improvements for the lifetime of the improvements.
- Any other information that the county deems relevant

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. the county agrees to act as project sponsor for the project should the township or non-state aid city be awarded LRIP funds, and that such sponsorship shall include the following responsibilities:
 - Be the fiscal agent on behalf of the community and have funds flow from MnDOT to the county to the contractor
 - Request SAP/SP number for the project
 - Ensure the project meets milestones and dates
 - Assist local agency in execution of a grant agreement
 - Develop, review and/or approve the plan
 - Submit plan, engineers estimate, and proposal to the DSAE
 - Advertise, let, and award the project
 - Submit pay requests to State Aid
 - Communicate progress and updates with the DSAEs and State Aid State Programs Engineer
 - Ensure that the project receives adequate supervision and inspection
 - Assist with project close out

19. To whom should letter of support be addressed?

Letters of support should be addressed to the applicant. The applicant will attach letters of support to the LRIP application.

20. How can I find a road's functional classification?

Here is how to find your roadway functional classification:

- I. Browse to the Enterprise MnDOT Mapping Application at EMMA (<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/tda/emma.html>)
- II. Select Launch Application link at top of page.
- III. The entire state of Minnesota will appear when the page first loads. Enter target street address or city in upper left to zoom to requested location. Users can alternatively zoom manually using the +/- icons or scrolling with their mouse.
- IV. Click "Layer List" graphic in upper right corner of window (three stacked pieces of paper)
- V. Within Layer List window, click "Map Layers" to expand a list of all data that can be displayed via this application.
- VI. Find "Functional Class" in the layer list and click the open box next to it. It should populate with a white checkmark in a blue box. Now click the arrow to the left of the blue box to expand the map legend. Compare your project location to the colored legend to identify the functional classification of a roadway.
- VII. Further clarity on the functional classification of a roadway can be identified by clicking on the ellipsis (set of three dots) to the right of "Functional Class" in the "Layer List" and

selecting “View in Attribute Table”. This will activate a table at the bottom of your window and allow you to click on any visible roadway to display a textual listing of its classification.

21. How can I find the latitude and longitude for my project location?

Here is how to find your project location latitude and longitude:

- I. Browse to Google Maps (maps.google.com)
- II. Find your project location and right-click.
- III. A dropdown menu will appear with the latitude and longitude of the location listed at the top in decimal format. Left-click on the latitude and longitude to copy it to your clipboard.
- IV. Note that the latitude and longitude that you will copy to your clipboard are in the format latitude, longitude. You will need to separate the latitude and longitude to enter them in the application form.

22. Funding Account questions

a. How can I qualify for funding from the Trunk Highway Account?

Funds from this account are for local road or Tribal Road improvements impacted by trunk highway projects. It is **not** intended to be used for improvements or projects on the trunk highway or within the trunk highway corridor right of way that require local or Tribal cost sharing per MnDOT’s Cost Participation Policy. LRIP bond funds cannot be used for work on a trunk highway or on trunk highway right of way.

b. How can I qualify for funding from the Routes of Regional Significance fund?

The Routes of Regional Significance is by far the most common type of project that is submitted for consideration of LRIP funding. MnDOT recognizes that regional significance for a township or non-state aid city road may be very different than regional significance for a state aid city or county road. In determining selections, we will consider geographic equity and equity across the various agency types.

The key for townships and non-state aid cities and other applicants seeking funds from the Routes of Regional Significance account, is that the project must meet the definition of a Route of Regional Significance. Section D2 in the solicitation guide and application deal with Routes of Regional Significance. The solicitation guide states that at least one box must be checked to be considered regionally significant (see bullets below), but the applicant should also use the narrative spaces in Section D2 to further describe why the road is regionally significant. If the project clears the bar for being considered regionally significant, township and non-state aid city and Tribal applications will be compared against other township and non-state aid city and Tribal applications; state aid city applications will be compared against

other state aid city applications; and county applications will be compared against other county applications.

Six Checkboxes to demonstrate Regional Significance

- Farm to market route
- Part of an economic development plan
- Provides capacity or congestion relief to a parallel trunk highway system or county road
- Part of a 10-ton route network
- Connect to regional tourist destination
- Is a connection to the regional system, trunk highway, or a county road

c. How can I qualify for funding from the Rural Road Safety account?

The Rural Road Safety Account is intended for projects on County State Aid Highways (CSAH) primarily to reduce traffic crashes, deaths, injuries, and property damages. Funds from this account are eligible for use on CSAHs only. The applicant will need to demonstrate the safety deficiency that the project is intended to address, reference the county road safety plan, and the discuss the safety focus area(s) that the proposed project will address.

23. How will projects be scored and compared against each other?

In scoring the applications, we will consider all of those elements identified on the application, some of which include:

- The degree to which a roadway is regionally significant. In general, roadways that are more regionally significant will score higher.
- The number of people that will be benefited by the project. Generally, the more people benefited by the project, the higher the score. For example, a regionally significant roadway reconstruction project for a road with 2,000 average vehicles per day would benefit the 2,000 daily users 365 days per year. Whereas, a standalone culvert improvement project on a similar regionally significant road with 2,000 average vehicles per day to prevent overtopping associated with localized flooding, would benefit the 2,000 daily users perhaps 5-10 days per year. The first example project would provide greater cumulative benefit when compared to the second project.
- The critical nature of the transportation deficiency that would be eliminated by the project.
- Project readiness. Bond funds are set to expire on December 31, 2027, and general funds are set to expire June 30, 2027, so we want to fund projects that have a high degree of

certainty of being constructed in 2024, 2025, or 2026, with little controversy or potential for the project to be delayed or abandoned.

24. How can low volume township/non-state aid city/Tribal projects compete against larger city or county applications?

MnDOT intends to award LRIP grants to counties, state aid cities, non-state aid cities, townships, and tribes. In determining LRIP grant awards, MnDOT will consider geographic equity and equity across the various agency types. Accordingly, tribal and township and non-state aid city applications will be compared against other tribal and township and non-state aid city applications; state aid city applications will be compared against other state aid city applications; and county applications will be compared against other county applications.

25. I have a project scheduled for 2024 construction. The solicitation guide states that projects that will be awarded and/or under construction before selection notification are not eligible for funding under this solicitation. When will selections be announced?

We anticipate announcing selections by March 29, 2024, but it could be later depending on the number of applications we receive. Projects that are scheduled for 2024 construction are eligible for LRIP funding under this solicitation. However, the project should not be awarded or under construction prior to LRIP grant selection announcements. We realize this may put agencies with some good 2024 projects in a difficult position, particularly given that we do not have hard selection announcement date.

If a local agency or tribal agency chooses to submit an LRIP application for a 2024 project, there are some things the local agency or tribal agency should consider:

1. The potential that LRIP selections are not announced in March 2024, which could impact the local agency or tribal agency's ability to deliver the project under the timeframe it was planning. It would be unfortunate if a local agency or tribal agency were to delay a project in hopes of receiving LRIP funds, only to not be selected.
2. If a project is identified for an LRIP selection, but it is later determined that the project was awarded or under construction before the selection announcement, funds would be withdrawn, and a different project would be selected.
3. Plans will have had to have been developed with state aid review (whether on a state aid route or not) and have the plans and engineer's estimate developed to identify LRIP eligible and non-LRIP eligible items. The process for developing and having state aid review an LRIP funded project is different than a run of the mill state aid project. So, there would need to be some extra effort beyond a standard state aid plan, with no guarantee that the local agency or tribal agency would receive LRIP funds. If you intend to apply for LRIP funds, you should be in touch with your District State Aid Engineer (DSAE) now to discuss plan development and review requirements. DSAE contact information can be found [here](#).

If the local agency or tribal agency chooses to submit one or more LRIP applications that fit in this category, make sure to be clear in Section E.3 as to the status of design and intent for the impending award and start of construction.

26. What Design Standards will I be required to use?

As usual, work on County State Aid Highways and Municipal State Aid Streets are subject to all of the requirements in the State Aid Rules.

For projects off the state aid system, the District State Aid Engineer, state fund grant recipient, and project sponsor, if required, will determine the appropriate design standards. These projects generally will utilize either design standards documented in the State Aid Rules or those standards in the most current version of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Official (AASHTO) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets. Other industry-accepted design standards may be approved by the DSAE on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that State Aid does have a process that can allow deviations from the identified design standards. Design deviations may be considered on a location-by-location basis. This process is similar to the Variance process, but uses a smaller, informal committee made up of representatives from district and central office State Aid instead of the formal [Variance](#) Advisory Committee.

Applicants can contact their [District State Aid Engineer](#) to discuss design standard assumptions during the application process if desired.

27. If my agency is selected to receive LRIP funds, what other costs might my agency be responsible for?

Items that are eligible for LRIP funds include reasonable elements associated with roadway construction, including basic landscaping and turf establishment.

Landscaping planters, benches, bike racks, decorative fences, ornamental lighting, and other aesthetic treatments above the standard are generally not eligible. Other items that are not eligible include maintenance (e.g., seal coating), engineering, construction administration and inspection, right of way acquisition, water main, sanitary sewer, and private utility work. Additionally, work on trunk highways, on trunk highway right of way, or on private right of way is not eligible.

Any items that are not eligible for LRIP funds will be the responsibility of the grantee.

28. Is there an expiration date for the LRIP bond and general funds?

Yes. The LRIP bond funds are set to expire on December 31, 2027, four full calendar years after the bond funds were appropriated. The LRIP general funds are set to expire on June 30, 2027.

Accordingly, the LRIP solicitation guide states that projects should be ready for construction in 2024, 2025, or 2026. This creates some float in the schedule in case there are unforeseen delays.

29. Can agency staff construct the project, and if so, can LRIP funds be used to pay for staff time?

No. The project must be advertised and awarded to a contractor, consistent with [Minnesota Statute 471.345](#) Subdivision 3. This applies to all LRIP funded projects, even if the total contract amount is less than \$175,000.

And no, LRIP funds cannot be used for agency staff costs.