

# Active Transportation Planning Assistance Application Guide

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## Active Transportation Program Planning Assistance Overview

These instructions are for Active Transportation Program planning assistance applications awarded pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 174.38.

Through planning assistance awards, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will support Active Transportation Action Plans for communities, tribes, cities, and counties across Minnesota. Successful applicants will receive:

- planning assistance provided by a statewide planning consultant
- recommendations of policy and programming activities to augment suggested infrastructure improvements
- demonstration project or other engineering-based technical assistance

Active Transportation Action Plans will include an analysis of existing conditions, public outreach and identification of potential infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions to work towards the State's goal of helping more people walk and bicycle safely to destinations where they live, work, and play. Successful applicants to this solicitation will also receive a demonstration project (including installation support and materials) or other engineering-based technical assistance for a sub-project of the planning assistance process. A demonstration (or quick build) project uses temporary materials to show how future changes to a street might look and feel like. Other implementation support could include a cost scoping estimate, engineering sketch, or data evaluation. More information on the planning process and type of assistance available through this program is available on the [Active Transportation Program webpage](#).

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials defines Active Transportation as: "Using human-powered means of travel to get from one place to another, which includes walking, bicycling, and the use of mobility assistive devices; and may also incorporate other human-scale modes like electric-powered, electric-assisted, or micromobility devices such as e-bikes and e-scooters."

Applicants for planning assistance should be prepared to support plan development by providing information, convening a new or existing local advisory group, helping to coordinate and lead community engagement (e.g. focus groups, talking circles), helping to arrange and publicize public workshops, preparing and printing some planning process materials, and participating in identifying local issues and solutions that will help more people walk and bicycle to destinations. Applicants should also be able to demonstrate a commitment to implementing the plan once it is complete.

*Please note: This plan is broader than engineering and infrastructure improvement identification. The Active Transportation Plan will include policy recommendations and programmatic activities that a community should engage in. Therefore, partners should be apprised of the need for both programs and city/county/tribal infrastructure improvements that may result from an Active Transportation Action Plan and be committed to these outcomes when applying.*

**Planning awards are intended to begin work in Winter of 2025, completing work by Winter or Spring 2026, dependent on the timing of the supplemental demonstration project installation.**

## Active Transportation Program Resources

Many resources are available to applicants considering how planning assistance may advance active transportation work in a community:

- [MnDOT Bicycle Planning Webpage](#)
- [MnDOT Pedestrian Planning Webpage](#)
- [MnDOT Advancing Transportation Equity Initiative](#)
- [FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide](#)
- [Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning](#)
- [FHWA Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian](#)
- [BikeMN's Bikeable Community Workshops](#)
- [MDH Walkable Community Workshops](#)
- [AARP's Livable Communities Library](#)

## Benefits of Active Transportation

In addition to increasing transportation options, improving active transportation in your community can have significant positive impacts on public health, economic vitality, greenhouse gas emission reduction, social connection, household economics, and more. Applicants will have the opportunity to appoint community members to a local working group (see the guidance for application Part 5 below) who can help ensure these co-benefits are incorporated into the completed Active Transportation Action Plans of selected communities.

## General Information

Responders must adhere to all terms of this RFP. All costs incurred in responding to this RFP will be borne by the responder.

### Public Data

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13.01 et seq., names and addresses of applicants will be public data once responses are opened. All remaining data in proposed responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in § 13.37) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this program, when all program agreements have been fully executed). All data created or maintained by the Minnesota Department of Transportation as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in § 13.37) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this program, when program agreements have been fully executed).

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13.03, subd. 1, all government data collected, created, received, maintained or disseminated by a government entity shall be public unless classified by statute, or temporary classification pursuant to section [13.06](#), or federal law, as nonpublic or protected nonpublic, or with respect to data on individuals, as private or confidential. The responsible authority in every government entity shall keep records containing government data in such an arrangement and condition as to make them easily accessible for

convenient use. Photographic, photostatic, microphotographic, or microfilmed records shall be considered as accessible for convenient use regardless of the size of such records.

## **Record Keeping and Audit**

Generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) refer to a common set of accepted accounting principles, standards, and procedures that a recipient, and any third-party contractor, and their accountants must follow when they compile their financial statements. (See also [Minn. Stat. section 15.17, subd. 1](#)) The records must permit audit verification of cost allocations claimed during the contract period. It is important to keep good records for all labor and material expenditures. Only reasonable costs directly related to and necessary for conducting the business of the public transit system are allowed. A cost is considered reasonable if, in its nature or amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person as ordinary and necessary for the operations. Regardless of when an expense invoice is received or paid by the recipient, the expense must be billed to MnDOT during the agreement period in which the expense was incurred. If applicable, the financial records of the recipient must be audited. Audits occur by the MnDOT audit department and when applicable, as part of an independent audit.

Monthly progress reports will be delivered to the MnDOT Project Manager for each community receiving planning assistance through the program from the start of the planning process through plan completion. Selected communities and the consultant will be expected to work together to submit accurate, timely progress reports.

## **MnDOT Not Obligated To Complete Project**

This RFP does not obligate MnDOT to award a Contract or complete the project, and MnDOT reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest.

## **Proposal Certifications**

By submitting a Proposal, responders warrant that the information provided is true, correct and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential Contract award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from Contract award and may subject the responder to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to MnDOT, by law.

## **Affidavit of Noncollusion**

Responders must complete the attached “Affidavit of Noncollusion” and submit it as part of the proposal.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Responders must provide a list of all entities with which it has relationships that create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest with the work that is contemplated in this RFP. This list should indicate the name of the entity, the relationship and a discussion of the conflict. Responders must complete the attached “Conflict of Interest Checklist and Disclosure Form” and submit it as part of the proposal.

## Organizational Conflicts of Interest

The responder warrants that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, and except as otherwise disclosed, there are no relevant facts or circumstances, which could give rise to organizational conflicts of interest. An organizational conflict of interest exists when, because of existing or planned activities or because of relationships with other persons, a vendor is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to MnDOT, or the successful responder's objectivity in performing the Contract work is or might be otherwise impaired, or the successful responder has an unfair competitive advantage. The responder agrees that, if after award, an organizational conflict of interest is discovered, an immediate and full disclosure in writing must be made to MnDOT, which must include a description of the action, which the successful responder has taken or proposes to take to avoid or mitigate such conflicts. If an organizational conflict of interest is determined to exist, MnDOT may, at its discretion, cancel the Contract. In the event the responder was aware of an organizational conflict of interest prior to the award of the Contract and did not disclose the conflict to MnDOT, MnDOT may terminate the Contract for default. The provisions of this clause must be included in all subcontracts for work to be performed similar to the service provided by the prime contractor, and the terms "contract," "contractor," and "contracting officer" modified appropriately to preserve MnDOT's rights.

## Eligible Applicants

To ensure that the Active Transportation Program is available to a broad range of stakeholders, both public and non-profit entities may submit applications for funding. Eligible entities are:

- (1) political subdivisions;
- (2) tax-exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended; and
- (3) federally recognized Indian Tribes.

It is up to each applicant to determine what type of plan will work best in the community. If a plan would be most beneficial to combine multiple cities, neighborhoods, or a corridor than an application should identify a lead entity that will work with each stakeholder to guide the contractor through the process and take ownership of the project.

## Funding Information

**The successful applicants will receive planning services from a selected transportation planning consultant but will not receive funding directly from MnDOT.**

This solicitation will award up to \$1,000,000 of state Active Transportation Program funds each year from 2024 through 2026 (to be split among successful applicants) toward statewide planning consultant services and does not require a local match. MnDOT enters directly into a contract with a statewide planning consultant to provide planning services to successful applicants. Monthly progress reports will provide updates on opportunities and challenges encountered through the duration of the project to MnDOT. Invoicing during the period of technical support will be handled by the Consultant through MnDOT's Consultant Services process.

# Application Process and Information

## Application Instructions

Completed applications must be **submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday, November 22, 2024** online and include:

1. Completed online application form
2. Letters of support uploaded with application

The application should be completed online. If you are unable to do so, please contact [Will Wlizlo \(william.wlizlo@state.mn.us\)](mailto:william.wlizlo@state.mn.us)

## Informational Webinars

Three webinars will be provided to go over the Active Transportation Program application requirements. Join the meeting using the links provided on the [Active Transportation Planning Assistance web page](#) or email the Active Transportation Coordinator [Will Wlizlo \(william.wlizlo@state.mn.us\)](mailto:william.wlizlo@state.mn.us) for more information. Both webinars will cover the same materials, it is not necessary to attend both.

## Submitting Your Application

Applications must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday, November 22, 2024 [via online submission](#).

## Application Notification

Awards for planning assistance will be announced in Winter 2024 and implemented beginning in early 2025. MnDOT reserves the right to cancel awards, when necessary.

## Application Questions

If you have questions about the program or application please submit them to [Will Wlizlo \(william.wlizlo@state.mn.us\)](mailto:william.wlizlo@state.mn.us). All questions and answers will be posted to an FAQ document on the MnDOT Active Transportation Program website.

## Application Guidance

The [application is online](#). Use this guide to assist in answering the questions. Information on evaluation criteria will follow this section.

### Part 1: Project Lead Contact Information

Please list the name of the organization applying for planning assistance and the application lead's contact information. This person will be notified of final decisions and will be expected to communicate award announcements to the rest of the Active Transportation Program partners. The project lead will represent the



planning team during project submission and will be invited to participate in development opportunities during the planning process. This section is not scored.

Multiorganization collaboration is not evaluated for this program. Scoring criteria do not take multiorganization collaboration into account.

**Part 2: Community Information Sheet**

Please provide name and population data for each community (or neighborhood if more applicable) that will be involved in the planning process. You will also be asked to provide the scope of the planning area (citywide, regional, tribal lands, etc.)

Lastly, applicants will be asked to summarize the scope and scale of their planning assistance request. (“A community-wide bicycle master plan,” or “Planning for walking and bicycling connections along and across county road 12345 through town,” for example.) This section is not scored.

**Part 3: Equity – Reaching Priority Populations**

**A. Equity: Reaching Priority Populations (30 points)**

MnDOT’s Active Transportation Program aims to achieve equitable outcomes by funding initiatives that prioritize communities who are more likely to rely on active transportation, are more vulnerable to unsafe traffic conditions, or have experienced historic disinvestment.

The Active Transportation Equity Score uses 15 indicators to identify locations in Minnesota that likely have a greater need for Active Transportation investment. The maximum score awarded to a hexagon in the analysis was 13 points. Points will be awarded to applicants proportionally compared to the maximum awarded score based on the applying community’s equity score.

Calculations of equity scores will be conducted by MnDOT Office of Transit and Active Transportation staff. The scores to be used can be viewed on [MnDOT’s Active Transportation Equity Score Web App](#). This app allows viewers to preview scores throughout the state and develop an understanding of how scores will be calculated.

As an example, the table below shows scores and the percentage of the total area for a hypothetical application. OTAT Staff would calculate an area-weighted average to arrive at an overall score for the area in question. For this example, assume the applying area is 2.5 hexagon area units. The following table shows how the area-weighted average would be calculated.

Hexagon Score	Percentage of Total	Final Score
4	20%	0.8
5	20%	1
8	20%	1.6

Hexagon Score	Percentage of Total	Final Score
9	40%	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7</b>

For corridor planning projects, the length of the corridor will be used in the weighted average calculation instead of area.

**B. Narrative Response (15 Points)**

Applicants will be asked to provide information about how the proposed plan will address equity in any way that would not be readily identified by the Active Transportation Equity Tool. This could include finding ways to mitigate barriers within the community, provide broader access to a community resource, address historic disinvestment, or invest in communities that have been historically marginalized. The best answers will describe specific locally relevant priority populations and how those groups will be included in the project. Priority populations include people of color, children and youth, Native American populations, people with low incomes, small rural communities, older adults, and people with disabilities. More information about MnDOT’s approach to transportation equity can be found in the [Advancing Transportation Equity Initiative](#).

**Part 4: Project Need**

- A. Please use this section to describe the unique barriers and needs your community, tribe, city, or county have that makes walking and biking challenging for people. Describe how this planning process will engage the community and key stakeholders to identify policy, systems and built environment changes to improve walking and biking conditions for all. (15 points)
- B. MnDOT adopted a target to reduce vehicle miles traveled, or VMT, by 14% statewide and per capita by 2040. Describe how this planning process will help convert trips to active travel modes in your community. Applicants might consider improving access to destinations, reducing travel distances between locations via nonmotorized modes, complementing land use policies, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, or other outcomes in the answer. (10 points)
- C. Describe how this plan fits into and/or supports larger community goals. Applicants might consider comprehensive planning efforts, city/county/tribal transportation plans, local public health initiatives, school district wellness policies, traffic safety goals, complete streets policies and active living plans in the answer. (5 points)
- D. Please describe challenges or possibilities in your community related to implementing a demonstration project or engineering-based technical assistance that will be provided as a part of the planning process. (Selected communities will have the opportunity to implement a demonstration project, conduct a cost scoping estimate, or receive an engineering sketch or data evaluation related to a part of the Active Transportation Action Plan as it develops.) Applicants may describe potential

demonstration project locations, previous resident feedback, local initiatives, community engagement, or other conditions that may impact this sub-project in any way. (5 points)

### **Part 5: Active Transportation Program Team Members and Local Support**

A robust, well rounded and engaged Active Transportation Program team is critical for the successful development and implementation of an Active Transportation Program Plan. The applicant should aim to demonstrate individual commitment to the team from a variety of sectors.

- A. Please provide a team leader who will co-lead the planning process with the statewide consultant and assist with organizing meetings, local engagement, and tracking progress on the plan.
- B. Please provide the Active Transportation Program with the following information in the question A table:
  - a. Provide names and/or titles of active/committed team members
  - b. Provide their role on the team and how they will contribute to plan development and implementation. Examples of roles may include team lead, city planning support, community outreach, etc. Consider the skills, knowledge or connections that could be valuable for during the planning process that is unique to each of these individuals. More ideas on how various team members can contribute to an Active Transportation Program team.

### **Part 6: Existing Conditions and Implementation Support**

- A. If there are any plans, policies, or construction that would positively *or* adversely affect the progress of Active Transportation Program work in your community, please describe them and provide relevant links to supporting documentation. This question is not scored. Types of plans, policies, or projects may include but are not limited to:
  - Pedestrian Master Plan
  - Bicycle Master Plan
  - Safe Routes to School Comprehensive Plan
  - Complete Streets policy
  - Community development or comprehensive plan
  - Capital improvement plan or CIP
  - Corridor study or engineering study
  - Historic district designations or other land use ordinances
  - Upcoming highway expansion project plan
  - No bicycling or walking policies
- B. Using the 6Es—[education, encouragement, engagement, equity, engineering and evaluation](#)—briefly discuss the Active Transportation Program specific activities that currently happen in your community or have occurred within the last two years. (5 points)

Examples might include:

  - Crosswalk safety campaigns
  - Bike rodeos or safety courses
  - Infrastructure improvements for walking and biking

- Teaching Walk! Bike! Fun! curriculum or components of the curriculum
- Bike Libraries or bike share programs
- Community engagement related to walking and biking

C. What is your team’s vision for a successfully implemented Active Transportation Action Plan? In other words, what is the best outcome that you can imagine from a completed plan? What do you plan to accomplish after the planning process? Please consider including who will be involved and by when in your implementation. (10 points)

### Part 7: Supporting Documentation

Please attach the following supporting documentation:

1. City staff, City administrator, or Tribal Council letter of support from each community that will be covered in the plan and/or a County official letter if this will be a County or Regional level plan.
2. Letter of support from the local partner (Pedestrian/Bicycle group, Local Public Health, SRTS or TZD committee, etc.)
3. Affidavit of Noncollusion
4. Conflict of Interest form

## 2024 Planning Assistance Scoring Criteria and Review Process

In order to be evaluated, applications must be:

- Submitted by the deadline;
- Complete; and,
- Meet eligibility requirements

Part 2 – Part 7 will be evaluated using the criteria explained in the “2024 Active Transportation Program Planning Assistance Scoring Criteria” section.

Review committees include internal MnDOT staff and partner agencies. The Active Transportation Advisory Committee recommends adoption of award decisions.

### Applicant Classification by Community Size

Program administrators will be grouping applicants by [Legislative City designations](#) to accurately compare similar communities in lieu of dividing applicants by metro and greater Minnesota.

Cities are classified by population under [Minnesota Statutes, section 410.01](#). Cities are divided, for legislative purposes, into four classes.

1. **First class:** Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Once a city is in the first class, it is not reclassified

unless its population decreases by 25 percent from the census figures that last qualified the city as first class.

2. **Second class:** Cities with a population between 20,001 and 100,000
3. **Third class:** Cities with a population between 10,001 and 20,000
4. **Fourth class:** Cities with not more than 10,000 inhabitants

During application review, towns and townships will be grouped with fourth class cities.

MnDOT will consider tribal entities as an additional fifth classification during application review. A tribal entity applying for this opportunity will not be required to deny its sovereignty as a requirement or a condition of applying for or receiving planning assistance, per Minn. Stat. § 16C.05, subd. 7.

Population by Type of Local Government and Class As of the state demographer’s 2018 estimates, the state’s total population is 5,629,416 and is distributed among these classifications of cities, and in towns or unorganized areas as follows:



Note: Based on 2010 census and 2018 estimates data from the [state demographer’s website](#). Counties or Tribal Governments who apply will be considered based on their population with the corresponding city classification. Collaborative applications between entities will be classified based on the population of the largest applying entity.

MnDOT commits to selecting at least one proposal from each classification in which there is an applicant.

# 2024 Active Transportation Program Planning Assistance Scoring Criteria

Questions	In order to get points indicated, the response meets these criteria:
<p><b>Part 1-2</b> These sections are reviewed by the selection committee but not scored.</p>	<p>No Points</p>
<p><b>Part 3:</b> The community information sheets will be ranked by the committee on the following criteria:</p> <p>A) Equity Score to prioritize resources towards marginalized populations and communities (30 points)</p> <p>B) Narrative response to how the potential plan would advance equity (15 points)</p>	<p><b>Part 3A: 0-30 points</b> The number of points received for the equity score are a weighted average of the application’s subject area as a percentage multiplied by the number of points available.</p> <p>Continuing the example from earlier in the guide, a community scoring 7 out of 13 would receive a score of:</p> <p><math>(7/13) \times 30 = 16</math> (with any rounding to the nearest whole point). In this example, the application would score 16 points for this section.</p> <p><b>Part 3B: 0-15 points</b> 0-5 Points: Application does not or minimally describes how a planning process will improve equitable outcomes for locally relevant priority populations. Does not include a statement of why transportation equity is important to the community. 6-10 Points: Application identifies some potential opportunities to advance transportation equity within the planning area. Examples may lack specificity or development. Locally relevant priority populations are mentioned, but participation in the planning process is limited. Includes a statement of why transportation equity is important to the community. 11-15 Points: Specific, detailed opportunities to advance transportation equity are identified. Locally relevant priority populations are included in the planning process and are expected to have decision-</p>

Questions	In order to get points indicated, the response meets these criteria:
	making power. Includes a compelling statement of why transportation equity is important to the community.
<p><b>Part 4:</b></p> <p>A) Description of need and use of plan, and potential to get more people walking and bicycling.</p> <p>B) Description of how plan will reduce vehicle miles traveled VMT in community.</p> <p>C) How does this plan fit into community goals?</p> <p>D) Description of barriers and opportunities related to engineering-based technical assistance sub-project.</p>	<p><b>Part 4A: 0-15 Points</b></p> <p>0-5 Points: Application does not have a clear sense of how this plan will advance walking and bicycling.</p> <p>6-10 Points: Application identifies either need for the plan or potential to get people walking and bicycling, but not both.</p> <p>11-15 Points: Application responds to multiple aspects of active transportation with an understanding of how the plan will move the community towards the stated goals.</p> <p><b>Part 4B: 0-10 Points</b></p> <p>0-5 Points: Application does not have a clear sense of how this plan will help convert trips to walking, bicycling, and other active modes; reduce VMT in the community; or increase access to active transportation in communities with lower rates of personal vehicle ownership.</p> <p>6-10 Points: Application demonstrates how an Active Transportation Action Plan will reduce mode share of single-occupant automobiles; increase mode share of walking, bicycling, and other active modes; or increase access to active transportation in communities with lower rates of personal vehicle ownership.</p> <p><b>Part 4C: 0-5 Points</b></p> <p>The successful applicant will clearly describe how the Active Transportation Program fits into their community goals.</p> <p><b>Part 4D: 0-5 Points</b></p> <p>0-3 Points: Application will identify a barrier OR</p>

<p><b>Questions</b></p>	<p><b>In order to get points indicated, the response meets these criteria:</b></p>
	<p>opportunity related to the engineering-based technical assistance sub-project.  4-5 Points: Applicant will describe barriers AND opportunities related to the engineering-based technical assistance sub-project.</p>
<p><b>Part 5:</b>  Active Transportation Team members and roles</p>	<p><b>Part 5: 20 Points</b>  0-9 Points: Most of the team is missing or is not yet identified  10-12 Points: There is a good mix of team members, could use more support  13-17 Points: There is a good mix of team members and necessary partners are involved with clear and unique roles, however a locally relevant priority population ambassador is not identified.  18-20 Points: There is a good mix of team members, all necessary partners are involved, and a locally relevant priority population ambassador is identified. Top scoring applications will identify a specific engagement strategy or objective in the contribution column for the priority population ambassador.</p>
<p><b>Part 6:</b>  A) Provide any existing plans, policies, or upcoming projects in the community with supporting documentation.  B) Using the 6Es, discuss existing Active Transportation Program activities.  C) What is your team’s vision for a successful Active Transportation Plan? What do you plan to accomplish after the planning process?</p>	<p><b>Part 6A: Not scored</b>  <b>Part 6B: 0-5 Points</b>  0 Points: No Active Transportation work is occurring  1-3 Points: Some work has happened in the past or is occurring in some of the E areas.  5 Points: Active Transportation activities are happening, and clearly described in the application.  <b>Part 6C: 0-10 Points</b>  The successful applicant will have a clearly demonstrated vision including who will be involved and the timeline for future accomplishments is comprehensive.</p>



Questions	In order to get points indicated, the response meets these criteria:
<p><b>Part 7:</b> Supporting Documentation</p>	<p><b>Part 7: (5 Points)</b>  0 Points: Supporting documents are not attached. Without both letters of support, Affidavit of Noncollusion, and Conflict of Interest form, application is disqualified.  5 Points: Supporting documents are attached. Letters are unique in nature describing individual or organizational roles in planning and implementation. Affidavit of Noncollusion and Conflict of Interest form are complete.</p>
<p>Application Total</p>	<p>___ / 120 points</p>