

Metropolitan Council's Regional Solicitation – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)s



What is Regional Solicitation?

- Regional Solicitation is a competitive grant process that occurs every two years where local governments, state agencies and transit providers apply for federal funds. The Metropolitan Council, as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Twin Cities Region, administers the process using an objective, data-driven and transparent process.
- Evaluation criteria are specific to the categories and type of project request. Proposals must address the project's role in the regional transportation system and regional economy, age and condition of the infrastructure, equity and affordable housing, safety, and connections.

Why are we pursuing a federal transportation grant for this corridor?

- The Minneapolis Public Works Department has identified Hennepin Avenue as a future reconstruction candidate due to the existing pavement condition, multimodal connections, number of daily users, as well as an opportunity to better plan for Metro Transit's future arterial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) E-Line.
- Hennepin Avenue, between Douglas Avenue and West Lake Street, is proposed to be programmed in the City's Capital Improvement Program for reconstruction in 2023.
- Public Works is conducting preliminary planning work in 2018 in order to submit an application for federal transportation funding through the Metropolitan Council's Regional Solicitation.

How much federal grant money can be awarded to this project?

- Public Works plans to submit an application in the "Roadway Modernization" category to support the project.
- The project is eligible for up to \$7 million dollars (80/20 – Federal/Local match).

Why now?

- **Timing.** This is a competitive process. Projects that are selected to receive federal funding through the 2018 solicitation will be programmed in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in years 2022 and 2023.

What is submitted for Regional Solicitation?

- The information submitted and level of detail varies from project to project. Generally, the application includes:
 - Basic project information, including estimated project funding;
 - Roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, transit and TDM elements if known;
 - Applicable regional and local policy guidance;
 - Proximity of corridor relative to jobs, manufacturing, education and affordable housing;
 - Commercial traffic and freight elements;
 - Traffic forecasting ;
 - Multimodal elements and connectivity.

After the application is submitted, what other project details will need to be determined?

- Additional project planning, community outreach and engagement will continue to support the necessary detailed design and engineering. Street cross-sections will be determined that define the design of the project components such as sidewalk, transit, bikeway, furnishing and streetscape elements, curb side uses, traffic signals, lighting, signing, striping, utilities and roadway elements such as pavement, curb and gutter, as well as construction staging.

Will there be additional opportunities for public engagement?

- Yes. Public engagement will be ongoing through construction as detailed design and engineering occurs for the project.

If we receive full federal funding, does that cover total project cost?

- No. The maximum grant award is \$7 million dollars and the current project is estimated to cost \$18.5 million dollars.

Will there be assessments?

- Yes. The City Council annually adopts a Uniform Assessment Rate. This rate would apply to a future road reconstruction project on the corridor regardless of whether or not the project is awarded federal funding.

How does the future ACCESS update and corresponding policy changes impact the conceptual layout?

- Following the adoption of a new citywide Comprehensive Plan, Minneapolis 2040 in 2019, the Public Works Department will embark on the process of updating ACCESS Minneapolis, the City's 10-Year Transportation Action Plan.
- This process will evaluate the existing plan components and the policy recommendations outlined in those plans. It is possible that new policy directives will be developed that impact street design as part of that process.

What are some past examples of City projects that successfully received federal funds through Regional Solicitation?

- Hennepin Ave – Downtown – Washington Ave to 12th St S (2016)
- 8th Street S – Downtown – Hennepin Ave to Chicago Ave (2014)
- Broadway Street NE – Stinson Blvd to Industrial Blvd (2014)
- Hennepin/Lyndale Ave “Bottleneck Project” (2012)