



DRAFT 2024 Transportation Planning Project Solicitation Guidance **Issued October 6, 2023**

Introduction

The Capital Region Transportation Council (Transportation Council) is seeking proposals for community planning initiatives, technical assistance and municipal complete streets workshops for inclusion in its work plan for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2024. The Transportation Council's work plan is known as the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) in which federal transportation planning funds, made available through the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, are assigned to transportation planning activities in the Capital Region. Planning proposals must advance the principles of the region's metropolitan transportation plan, New Visions 2050. The 2024-2025 UPWP covers the period April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 and an estimated \$300,000 in federal funds will be available for planning activities.

Eligible Sponsors

Cities, towns, villages, and counties in the Transportation Council's metropolitan planning area are eligible to apply. The Transportation Council's planning area includes the counties of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga (except the Town of Moreau and the Village of South Glens Falls) and Schenectady. The Transportation Council's member organizations are also eligible to apply. Applications from not-for-profits, neighborhood groups, and other organizations will be considered if the application is sponsored and submitted by at least one local government in the study area and involves the participation of others, if applicable.

Regional Planning Principles

The principles contained in [New Visions 2050](#) guide the Transportation Council's investment of federal funds in transportation planning. UPWP planning proposals must advance New Visions principles which are consistent with federal policies. Key New Visions themes, followed by planning project examples, are provided on page 2.

New Visions 2050 Planning Themes and Project Examples

Quality Region Planning

- Land use and transportation plans
- Public participation initiatives
- Zoning code updates
- Development mitigation reviews

Infrastructure

- Sidewalk and trail location data collection
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition plans
- Flood vulnerability assessments

Regional Operations & Travel Reliability

- Traffic count data collection and analysis
- Travel demand modeling
- Traffic signal retiming plans

Safety

- Crash data analysis
- Education programs
- Speed studies

Transportation System Resiliency/Security

- Electric vehicle infrastructure planning
- Hazard mitigation plans
- Evacuation route planning

Complete Streets

- Corridor studies
- Demonstration projects
- Municipal staff training workshops

Bicycles and Pedestrians

- Bicycle and pedestrian counts
- Trail feasibility studies
- Safe Routes to School and bicycle/pedestrian plans

Transit and Mobility Options

- Mobility hub planning
- Transit supportive development plans
- Parking studies

Transportation Demand Management

- Park and ride lot plans and data collection
- Single occupant vehicle trip reduction planning
- Sustainable commuting programs

Freight

- Freight data collection
- Truck access and circulation studies
- Intermodal center planning

Environmental Stewardship

- Carbon reduction plans
- Climate action plans
- Green infrastructure plans

Transportation Related Technologies

- Smart city planning
- Coordinated traffic signal planning
- Curbside management plans

Eligible Planning Activities

For 2024, the UPWP solicitation is focused on communities interested in hosting a municipal complete street workshop, that need Transportation Council staff technical assistance on a local planning issue or sponsors that need a consultant assisted community planning/Linkage study. Requests for technical assistance are capped at \$25,000 and community planning studies are capped at \$150,000. Applicants are encouraged to propose creative and innovative projects that address the region's evolving local and regional planning needs. Examples of recently funded projects may be found in the Transportation Council's current [2023-2024 UPWP](#). Intermunicipal

proposals and additional in-kind services or cash matches above the minimum required are encouraged. The Transportation Council reserves the right to confirm or modify cost estimates based on past planning project experience.

Project Types	Cost Estimate Ranges
Complete Streets Workshops The Complete Streets Educational & Technical Assistance Workshops will help transportation planning practitioners and decision makers identify and overcome Complete Streets policy and implementation barriers. The workshops are available to local governments, particularly in Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties as Albany County is hosting their own county wide workshop in collaboration with the Transportation Council in fall 2023. See the Workshop Flyer for additional information including descriptions of the workshop types and the Complete Streets Workshop series webpage for past participants.	N/A Match Requirement: No local cash is required; communities are required to provide in-kind assistance with meeting logistics, including securing a meeting space and ensuring key stakeholders will be in attendance.
Technical Assistance Program This program provides Transportation Council staff time and expertise to local governments undertaking small-scale community planning initiatives, for example: • Land use/neighborhood planning • Data collection and analysis • Trail planning • GIS mapping and analysis • Zoning and site planning These projects have a shorter turnaround time, a discrete scope of work, and may have limited public outreach. For a comprehensive list of eligible project types, see the Community Planning Technical Assistance web page.	Up to \$25,000 Match requirement: An in-kind match contribution of not less than 10% of the actual project cost is required
Community Planning/Linkage Program This program provides funding for local governments to prepare community-based transportation and land use plans consistent with New Visions 2050 planning and investment principles, for example: • Neighborhood and Area Transportation Plans • Corridor Studies and Concept Plans • Complete Streets Plans • Zoning and Land Use Regulations • Active Transportation Plans These consultant-assisted projects generally have a comprehensive scope of work and robust public outreach. For a list of example project types, see the Linkage Program web page.	\$20,000 (minimum - \$150,000 (maximum)) Match requirements: A cash or in-kind match contribution of not less than 10% of the actual project cost is required

Ineligible Activities

- National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) environmental assessments
- State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) environmental assessments
- Detailed engineering
- Field land surveying for right of way mapping
- Right-of-way acquisition
- Storm water/sewer system design
- Site preparation
- Construction projects
- Transportation department operations

Project Administration

The UPWP is funded with federal transportation planning funds from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. These funds are allocated to the Transportation Council by New York State and come with requirements at both the federal and state levels. If funding is awarded, in addition to the requirements outlined below, additional project administration guidance will be provided to project sponsors. A few key administration requirements:

Complete Streets Workshops:

- The Transportation Council is retaining a consultant to deliver the Complete Street Workshops at its own expense. Communities will be asked to provide in-kind support.

Technical Assistance Program:

- Transportation Council staff will provide technical assistance in-house. Technical assistance projects must be completed by March 1, 2025. A detailed scope of work will be finalized with the project sponsor prior to project initiation.

Community Planning/Linkage Program:

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Transportation Council staff and project sponsors will be executed before projects can begin. If the MOU is not executed by September 30, 2024, planning funds will be forfeited.
- The Transportation Council will administer consultant contracts and provide additional technical assistance throughout the study process.
- The Transportation Council uses an abbreviated but competitive approach to consultant selection. Sponsors should be aware that if consultant assistance was used to prepare the planning project application or to develop the scope of work, that consultant will not be

eligible for the contract. In addition, consultants on retainer to a municipality are not guaranteed planning project contracts.

- Consultant assisted planning studies must be completed within 18 months of the date of contract execution. Should the project be delayed, the following milestones will apply:
 - Within 3 months of contract execution – have a kick-off meeting.
 - Within 12 months – consultant completes 50% of the scope of work.
 - Within 18 months – consultant completes 100% of the scope of work.

If the above milestones are not met, the sponsor must submit a request for an extension to Transportation Council's Planning Committee and the sponsor will not be eligible to request additional Transportation Council planning funds until the delayed project is complete.

- In-kind match may include meeting attendance, document review, and other project tasks. Sponsors must document hours and either hourly rates (including fringe) of salaried staff or the [value of volunteer time](#) spent on tasks supporting the project. In-kind match documentation shall be submitted to the Transportation Council.
- The Transportation Council will invoice sponsors for cash match, if offered, no later than December 1, 2024. Sponsors should ensure the availability of cash matches in calendar year 2024 budgets.
- Cash match sources may include state, county, and local funds as well as funds from private and not-for-profit groups with a direct connection or interest in the project.
- Other federal funds may not be used for the local match.
- Federal funds are capped.
- Failure to meet the Transportation Council's requirements may result in funding being revoked. Transportation Council reserves the right to cancel projects at any time.

Public Participation

UPWP funded planning activities expected to result in recommendations or actions with direct or indirect impact on the public must provide for public input and participation. The magnitude of a project will determine the extent of the public input component. All consultant assisted activities will utilize the Transportation Council's [Public Participation Plan](#) as a guide for public involvement. Projects that are of a technical nature and/or focus on data collection efforts (such as traffic volume data collection) do not require public input. The Transportation Council will make the final determination on the need for public involvement for all proposed projects.

Title VI and Nondiscrimination

The Transportation Council's Nondiscrimination Program consists of separate Title VI and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) components. The Transportation Council is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, its metropolitan transportation planning process on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age,

disability, or economic status, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations.

Successful applicants for UPWP funds are expected to make concerted efforts to have broad and meaningful public participation from all affected parties in their planning processes, and to demonstrate that the project does not have discriminatory impacts.

Pre-Application Resources

Transportation Council staff is available to discuss planning project concepts with sponsors prior to submitting a proposal. Contact the Transportation Council if you would like to set up a pre-application in person or virtual meeting.

A virtual UPWP workshop is scheduled for Thursday, October 18th at 12 p.m. via Zoom. **Sponsor attendance is highly encouraged.** Register at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kgM7_xyJSXWlnodD8jxxzg. A video recording will be available on the Transportation Council's YouTube channel after the meeting.

Application Process

All proposals must be received by **Friday, December 1, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.** Project sponsors must complete an application form for each proposed project individually via Jotform. Applications received via mail or fax will not be accepted unless pre-approved by the Transportation Council's Executive Director.

For Complete Streets Workshops, apply at <https://form.jotform.com/232395981502157>. Sponsors will need to upload the following:

1. A brief cover letter that includes a commitment to the local match requirement signed by the lead elected official or chief executive (.pdf format).
2. A copy of the adopted community complete street resolution, policy, ordinance, and/or checklist, if applicable.

For Technical Assistance and Community Planning/Linkage Program projects, apply at <https://form.jotform.com/222775394470160>. Within the electronic application for Technical Assistance and Community Planning/Linkage Program projects, sponsors will need to upload the following:

1. A brief cover letter that includes a commitment to the local match requirement signed by the lead elected official or chief executive (.pdf format).
2. A project location map, if applicable (.pdf format).
3. Letters indicating commitment of transportation facility owners, if the facility is not owned by the project sponsor, to the project (.pdf format).

4. Letters from project partners proposing in-kind services or the provision of matching funds. Do not include general letters of endorsement (.pdf format).

Applications that do not adhere to the above requirements will not be accepted. For application questions, please contact the Transportation Council at 518-458-2161 or info@capitalmpo.org.

Project Evaluation

Proposals will be screened by Transportation Council staff to ensure they are complete and meet all program requirements. Project sponsors must submit a good-faith project budget which will be reviewed for appropriateness. A review of the local match requirement will also be undertaken and confirmed with project sponsors. Incomplete submissions and those that do not meet the program requirements will not be considered for funding.

Transportation Council staff will evaluate proposals as follows. Proposals that best meet the evaluation criteria will be more competitive for funding.

The Technical Assistance and Community Planning/Linkage Program evaluation criteria are:

1. Project advances one or more New Visions principles or [Federal planning factors](#) (up to 5 points)
2. Study Area includes or is adjacent to a Census Tract identified as low income or minority based upon the Transportation Council's [Title VI/Environmental Justice Analysis](#) (up to 4 points)
3. Proposal includes an intermunicipal partnership (4 points)
4. Sponsor demonstrates strong commitment to the project (i.e. resolution supporting the proposal, exceed match requirements, implementation funds identified, etc.) (up to 3 points)
5. Proposed project implements a previously completed Transportation Council Plan (i.e. Linkage Plans or regional plans). New Visions 2050 does not apply. For a list of Transportation Council's completed plans, visit <https://www.capitalmpo.org/transportation-plans/council-planning-documents> (up to 3 points)
6. Project sponsor demonstrates ability to support the project through staff, appointed officials or volunteers (up to 3 points)
7. Proposed project is innovative or demonstrates a creative or new approach to a transportation and/or land use issue. (up to 3 points)

The Complete Streets Workshops evaluation criteria are:

1. Clarity and extent of applicant's goals, barriers to be overcome (up to 6 points)
2. Level of community interest in accommodating all roadway users (up to 5 points)
3. Level of leadership commitment to Complete Streets solutions (up to 5 points)

4. Clarity and extent of expected next steps resulting from workshop (up to 3 points)
5. Level of public involvement to be included in workshop (up to 3 points)
6. Location in or adjacent to a Census Tract identified as low income and/or minority based upon the Transportation Council's Title VI/Environmental Justice Analysis (up to 3 points)

Additional considerations include the proposed budget, type of project, sponsor UPWP workshop attendance, geographic balance, number of Transportation Council supported project awards to sponsor in last five years and planning funds requested per capita of study area.

Timeline for Project Selection

October 6, 2023:	Call for projects released
October 18, 2023:	Sponsor workshop
December 1, 2023:	Applications due
December 2023:	Transportation Council staff evaluates and prioritizes projects/studies
January 3, 2024:	Transportation Council staff shares list of proposed projects and funding recommendations with Transportation Council's Planning Committee
February 7, 2024:	Planning Committee reviews and approves Draft 2024-2025 UPWP; opens 25-day public review
March 7, 2024:	Transportation Council Policy Board reviews and adopts 2024-2025 UPWP

Award Notification

Project sponsors will be notified as to the status of their proposals prior to the January 3, 2024 Planning Committee meeting at which projects will be recommended for funding. Recommended projects will be added into the draft 2024-2025 UPWP to be approved at the February 7, 2024 Planning Committee meeting. The Transportation Council's Policy Board will approve a final 2024-2025 UPWP on March 7, 2024 following a 25-day public review process. Project funding will not be available for use until April 1, 2024 and the ability of planning projects to move forward will be dependent on Transportation Council staff availability.

Following Policy Board approval, sponsors awarded funding for Community Planning/Linkage Program projects will receive project administration guidance and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for signature from Transportation Council staff. The MOU must be executed before the project can begin.