



**DRAFT**

## **2025 Transportation Planning Project Solicitation Guidance For Planning Committee Review**

### **Introduction**

The Capital Region Transportation Council (Transportation Council) is seeking proposals for community planning initiatives to include in its work plan for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2025. The Transportation Council's work plan is known as the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) within which federal transportation planning funds, made available through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), 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 2025-2026 UPWP covers the period April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026 and a minimum of \$250,000 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 the sponsor agrees to be involved in the planning process.

### **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 2025, the UPWP solicitation is focused on communities interested in hiring a consultant to undertake Complete Streets planning, housing, land use, and site design strategic plans, ADA Self-Evaluations and Transition Plans, and other transportation corridor/Linkage Program planning initiatives. 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 [2024-2025 UPWP](#). Intermunicipal proposals and cash matches above the minimum required are encouraged.

Requests for Transportation Council staff technical assistance including data collection and analysis, corridor field visits and existing conditions assessments, mapping, transportation related local government trainings and workshops, etc. may be submitted at any time through the Transportation Council/Capital District Regional Planning Commission’s Technical Assistance Program. Technical assistance projects require a local contribution of in-kind services. Review the [Technical Assistance Program guidelines](#) for more information.

<b>Transportation Council Programs</b>	<b>Project Cost Estimate Cap</b>
<p><b>Community Planning/Linkage Program</b></p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Streets Plans</li> <li>• Neighborhood and Area Transportation Plans</li> <li>• Corridor Studies and Concept Plans</li> <li>• Zoning and Land Use Regulations</li> <li>• Active Transportation Plans</li> </ul> <p>Consultant-assisted projects generally have a comprehensive scope of work and robust public outreach. For a list of example project types, see the <a href="#">Linkage Program</a> web page.</p>	<p><b>\$150,000 (maximum)</b></p> <p>Match requirements: A cash match contribution of not less than 10% of the total project cost is required</p>
<p><b>ADA Self-Evaluations and Transition Plans</b></p> <p>This program provides funding for consultant assistance to local governments interested in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collecting data on the condition of all sidewalks, curb ramps, street crossings, bus stop loading areas, and pedestrian signals along public rights of way, in addition to paved multi-use paths.</li> <li>• Developing a municipal ADA policy statement, ADA Coordinator, and Complaint or Grievance Process.</li> </ul> <p>Transition plans have been funded in multiple Capital Region communities, most recently in the City of Rensselaer, Town of Clifton Park and Village of Menands. See the ADA <a href="#">Transition Plan</a> webpage for additional resources and links to Transition Plans. Requests for ADA Self-Evaluations and Transition Plans will be evaluated using a different methodology than Community Planning/Linkage Program plans.</p>	<p><b>\$150,000 (maximum)</b></p> <p>Match requirements: A cash match contribution of not less than 10% of the total project cost is required.</p>

**Cost Estimates**

Cost estimates for consultant led planning work through this solicitation are capped at \$150,000 per project. The Transportation Council reserves the right to confirm or modify cost estimates based on past planning project experience. Costs for ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plans should be estimated assuming \$550/sidewalk mile. Project costs should be provided on the

submission form as 90% federal and 10% cash. (i.e. a \$100,000 total project cost would be \$90,000 federal and \$10,000 local cash).

### **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 FHWA and FTA. 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:

- 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, 2025, 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 led planning studies are expected to be completed within eighteen (18) months of the date of contract execution. The following recommended schedule has been established:
  - Execute the MOU with the Transportation Council no later than September 30, 2024.
  - Within six (6) months of the date of the fully executed MOU, select a consultant.
  - Hold a study kick-off meeting within two (2) months of consultant contract execution.

- Consultant completes 100% of the scope of work within eighteen (18) months of contract execution.

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

- The Transportation Council will invoice sponsors for cash match contributions no later than December 1, 2025. Sponsors should ensure the availability of cash matches in calendar year 2025 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 cash match.
- Federal funds for all project awards 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**

Consultant led planning initiatives expected to result in recommendations or actions that directly or indirectly impact the public must provide opportunities for public input. The magnitude of a project and the Transportation Council's [Public Participation Plan](#) requirements will determine the extent of the public participation process. At a minimum, ADA Transition Plans must allow an opportunity for public comment. The Transportation Council will make the final determination on the need for public involvement for all proposed planning initiatives.

## **Title VI and Nondiscrimination**

The Capital Region Transportation Council (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, or national origin as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d). Additionally, the Transportation Council will provide meaningful access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in accordance with Executive Order # 13166. The Transportation Council is also committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, its transportation planning process on the basis of sex, age, or disability as protected by Section 162 (a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 U.S.C. § 324), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It is also the policy of the Transportation Council to ensure that all programs, policies, and other activities do not have disproportionate adverse effects on minority and low-income populations in accordance with Executive Order #12898.

## Pre-Application Resources

Transportation Council staff are 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 17, 2024, at 12 p.m. via Zoom.

**Sponsor attendance is encouraged.** Register at [ADD REGISTRATION LINK]. 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 6, 2024, 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 Community Planning/Linkage Program projects, apply at [ADD JOTFORM LINK]. Within the electronic application for 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 project sponsor does not own the facility, to the project (.pdf format).
4. Letters from project partners providing matching funds. Do not include general letters of endorsement (.pdf format).

For ADA Self-Evaluations and Transition Plans, apply at [ADD JOTFORM LINK]. Within the electronic application for ADA related initiatives, sponsors will need to upload the following:

1. A letter of commitment signed by the lead elected official or chief executive stating the commitment of local elected leaders to complete the Self-Analysis and Transition Plan and to implement the Transition Plan over time. The letter should include a commitment to the local match requirement (.pdf format).
2. Any and all required ADA-related documents the municipality has. This may include existing ADA Self Analysis and/or Transition Plans, and any other document that contains the municipal ADA policy statement, ADA Coordinator, and Complaint or Grievance Process (.pdf format).
3. If desired and applicable, provide a map of multi-use trail locations (.pdf format).
4. Attach any maintenance or ownership agreement files for pedestrian infrastructure on state and/or county roads (.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](mailto: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.

Evaluation Criteria for Community Planning/Linkage Program:

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)

Evaluation Criteria for ADA Self-Evaluations and Transition Plans are:

1. Reach and reasonableness of public outreach list provided, should include presentation of people who have a disability (20 points max)
2. Amount of match in relation to municipal sidewalk miles (20 points max)
3. Percent of municipal population that are people of color or have low incomes (10 points max)

4. Participants for Kick-Off Meeting – range of positions and ability to ensure success (20 points max)
5. Geographic balance amount counties, urban/rural, municipal type (10 points max)
6. Overall rating of application and supporting materials (20 points max)

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

### **Timeline for Project Selection**

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|-------------------|---|
| October 7, 2024:  | Call for projects released  |
| October 17, 2024: | Sponsor workshop  |
| December 6, 2024: | Applications due  |
| December 2024:    | Transportation Council staff evaluates and prioritizes projects/studies   |
| January 8, 2025:  | Staff shares list of proposed projects and funding recommendations with the Transportation Council’s Planning Committee |
| January 29, 2025: | Planning Committee reviews, approves, and releases Draft 2025-2026 UPWP for public review                               |
| March 6, 2024:    | Transportation Council Policy Board adopts Final 2025-2026 UPWP   |

### **Award Notification**

Project sponsors will be notified as to the status of their proposals prior to the January 8, 2025, Planning Committee meeting at which projects will be recommended for funding. Recommended projects will be added into the draft 2025-2026 UPWP to be approved at the January 29, 2025, Planning Committee meeting. The Transportation Council’s Policy Board will approve a final 2025-2026 UPWP on March 6, 2025, following a minimum 25-day public review process. Project funding will not be available for use until April 1, 2025, and the ability of planning initiatives to move forward will be dependent on Transportation Council staff availability.

Following Policy Board approval, sponsors awarded funding for Community Planning/Linkage Program projects or ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plans 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.