



2026-2028 TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-
ASIDE PROGRAM CALL FOR PROJECTS

APPLICATION GUIDE



Applications due: October 18th, 2024, by 3:00PM MDT

IMPORTANT: Federal IIJA funds has very specific requirements for grants management along with detailed reporting. If you are unfamiliar with Federal regulations and grant requirements, or have not received federal funds administered by TxDOT in the past, please review the documents associated with this Call for Projects to determine if your agency is willing, and has the institutional capacity, to comply with the required terms and conditions.

Approximately \$3,223,356 in FY 2026, \$3,000,000 in FY 2027, and \$3,000,000 in FY 2028 is anticipated to be available to fund eligible TA Set-Aside Program projects in the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Area for fiscal years 2026-2028. (Funding is subject to change) The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) of the El Paso Urbanized Transportation Study Area is responsible for selecting projects and authorize funding levels through a competitive process in consultation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Itemized budgets submitted for TA Set-Aside Program funding will be reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), TxDOT, and EPMPO to ensure work activities are eligible and itemized costs are reasonable. Based on available funds, project application requests may not be fully funded. The EPMPO Metropolitan Planning Area for this project call includes El Paso County Texas only. **Project proposals must be received by 3:00 PM, Mountain Daylight Time, on Friday, October 18th, 2024.**

El Paso MPO must have the submitted application “in hand” at the El Paso MPO offices by the October 18, 2024 application deadline. A postmark by the established deadline does not constitute an on-time application. In addition, supplemental information, other than administrative clarifications, will not be accepted after the application deadline. Draft resolutions may be submitted with the application if final is not available by the deadline. However, final resolutions, easement or access agreements must be submitted no later than October 25, 2024. Nomination packages failing to include any of the requested documentation may be considered incomplete and will be evaluated based on the information provided. Project sponsors are encouraged to submit their proposals far enough in advance of the submission deadline to allow El Paso MPO staff to review proposals for completeness.

Project proposals must consist of one (1) signed original Application and one (1) hard copy of the original all including attachments and one (1) electronic copy of all files on a CD, USB drive or SD card.

Project proposals should be mailed or hand-delivered to:

Mail:

El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program
Attn: Gerardo Fierro
211 N. Florence, Suite 202
El Paso, Texas 79901

Physical location:

El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program
Attn: Gerardo Fierro
211 N. Florence, Suite 202
El Paso, Texas 79901

The information in this application is public record. Therefore, applicants should not include information regarded as confidential.

Table of Contents

- A. Program Overview for the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Region
- B. Eligible TA Set-Aside Program Project Categories for the El Paso MPO Region
- C. Eligible Entities to Receive TA Set-Aside Program Funds
- D. Funding and Match Requirements for the El Paso MPO Region
- E. Program Call Sequence of Events
- F. Project Implementation

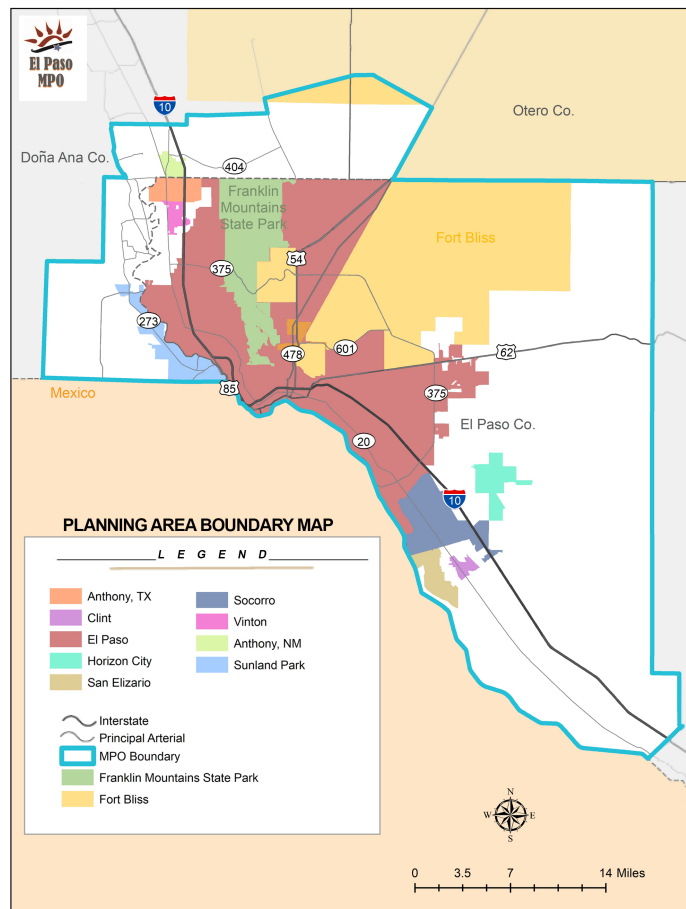
A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW FOR THE EL PASO MPO REGION

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside Program was authorized under Section 1109 of Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) (the current transportation funding and authorization bill and provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives. The TA Set-Aside Program is similar to the former Transportation Alternatives Program, Transportation Enhancement, and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs.

Please review the rules and become familiar with the requirements for the **2026 - 2028 TA Set-Aside Program Call for Projects for the El Paso MPO Region**. General types of projects eligible in the El Paso MPO Region include on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure associated with Safe Routes to School projects that will substantially improve safety and the ability for students to walk and bicycle to school.

Approximately \$9,223,356 is anticipated to be available to fund eligible TA Set-Aside Program projects in the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Area (for FY 2026 through FY 2028). The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) of the El Paso Urbanized Transportation Study Area is responsible for selecting projects through a competitive process in consultation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The EPMPO Metropolitan Planning Area for this project call includes El Paso County Texas only.

El Paso Metropolitan Planning Area



The following list is not all inclusive; it identifies the most basic program facts. Please contact El Paso MPO early in the process for questions related to submitting a nomination package.

- **There is no limitation on the number of unique applications that may be submitted by an eligible entity.** However, entities submitting more than one application in the Active Transportation project category **must rank** the projects by priority. The same project application cannot be submitted in both categories.
- **Federal guidance states that projects must be principally for transportation rather than purely recreational and must have logical termini.** For example, if a project proposes a looped trail system within a city park, this would be considered recreational and would not be considered eligible.
- **Consistent with other Federal-aid highway programs, TA Set-Aside Program funds require oversight by TxDOT.** After project selection, a determination will be made as to whether the project will be let for construction by TxDOT or the local entity. The local entity is required to implement the project.
- **The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program is not a grant.** The funds provided are on a cost reimbursement basis. Therefore, it is important to understand that the applicant will need adequate cash flow to accommodate the payment of 100 percent of the project costs. Applicants will be reimbursed with the Federal portion after the work has been accomplished. Note: If the project is let for construction by TxDOT, the outstanding local match and 100 percent of any estimated cost overages will be due to TxDOT 60 days prior to advertising for construction.
- **The local match must be cash.** A resolution of local cash-match commitment from the eligible entity project sponsor (e.g., local government/agency) must be provided with the application. Non-cash donations can be used on a project but will not count towards the required local match and should not be included in the project budget. A separate resolution of local cash-match commitment from the eligible entity project sponsor (e.g. local government/agency) must be provided for **each** submitted application.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).** An MOU or Resolution of Support is **strongly recommended** for projects located in multiple jurisdictions or applications with multiple supporting entities.
For Safe Routes to School project applications, an MOU or Resolution of Support is **required** in order to confirm the support by the supporting entity, such as the School Board or Superintendent of the school(s) benefiting from the project. The nominating entity submitting a project application is the designated project lead and is solely responsible for implementation of that project if federal funds are awarded. The MOU/Resolution can be submitted with the application or a letter of commitment signed by the Chief Administrator, City Manager or Elected Official to provide the resolution by October 28, 2022.
- **The eligible entity project sponsor is responsible for any and all cost overruns.**
- **The Transportation Policy Board will select projects and authorize funding levels.** Itemized budgets submitted for TA Set-Aside Program funding will be reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), TxDOT, and EPMPO to ensure work activities are eligible and itemized costs are reasonable. Based on available funds, project application requests may not be fully funded.
- **Right-of-Way.** All proposals must provide documentation of the project sponsor's property rights by title of ownership, long-term lease, or easement for all property within the project limits. Properties without full ownership lease and right-of-way documentation will be ineligible. TA Set-Aside funds will not be eligible for right of way or easements.

- **A proposed project on right-of-way maintained by TxDOT is referred to by TxDOT as “on-system” and must follow TxDOT procedures.** Projects that include State right-of-way or have a direct effect on an existing State-maintained roadway must have a letter from the TxDOT District Engineer offering consent for the proposed project. The final project design will be subject to TxDOT approval. If awarded funding, project sponsors will be responsible for securing a land-use permit from TxDOT prior to construction.
- **Regardless of whether the projects are located within the right-of-way of a Federal-aid highway, the treatment of projects will require:** project agreements, authorization to proceed prior to incurring costs, prevailing wage rates (Davis-Bacon), Buy America, and competitive bidding.
- **Projects should benefit the general public.**
- **Project sponsors must be willing to execute an Advanced Funding Agreement (AFA) with TxDOT and comply with all federal and state procedures and requirements applicable to development of federal-aid transportation projects. The AFA must be executed by the project sponsor within one year of project selection and advance to construction within three years from the date of selection or risk the loss of funding.** Nominating entities must report a realistic timeframe for project implementation. Because TxDOT will have oversight of funded projects, project sponsors are recommended to review the project’s timeline with a local TxDOT District Office prior to submitting an application. Each District Office has a District Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator available to assist applicants with questions related to Active Transportation. Below is the contact information for each District Office’s point of contact:
 - Adriana Rodriguez
Email: adriana.rodriguez@txdot.gov
Phone: 915-790-4221
 - Jose Bocanegra
Email: jose.bocanegra@txdot.gov
Phone: 915-790-4365
- **Project timelines should be realistic.** Applicants are encouraged to complete and submit a project schedule using the Excel template as part of completing the “Projected Time Estimate” section of the application. The Excel project schedule templates are online with the 2022 TA Set-Aside Call for Projects application materials at www.elpasompo.org.
- **Incidental costs should be kept to a minimum.** In order to implement a bicycle and pedestrian project, it may be necessary to relocate a water line, replace a street light, and replace or install a crosswalk as part of the project. These items of work would be considered incidental activities. The total amount necessary for incidental costs may not exceed 30 percent of the project’s total itemized construction budget. Additionally, if a sidewalk project includes pedestrian lighting on state right-of-way, TxDOT’s policy dictates that such lighting must also be adequate for the adjacent roadway system. It is essential that the project sponsor consult with the TxDOT District Office to make sure that the project budget allows for this additional cost and that the proposed lighting meets TxDOT’s requirements.

B. ELIGIBLE TA SET-ASIDE PROGRAM PROJECT CATEGORIES FOR THE EL PASO MPO TEXAS REGION

The Federally-funded TA Set-Aside Program helps to expand transportation choices and enhance the transportation experience through several categories of activities related to the surface transportation system. Please contact EPMPO staff in advance of application submission for any questions concerning project eligibility under the TA Set-Aside Program Call for Projects for the El Paso Region.

1. Facilities for Active Transportation (Pedestrians and Bicycles)

Active transportation projects are those that make non-motorized transport safe, convenient, and appealing. Such projects eligible for TA Set-Aside Program funding include the following activities:

- a. Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic-calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).
- b. Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
- c. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.

2. Facilities that Improve Safe Routes to School

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/safe_routes_to_school/guidance/#toc123542197

Safe Routes to School projects improve the safety and ability of students to walk and bicycle to and from a public or private primary or middle school (grades K - 8). Schools with grades that extend higher than grade 8, but which include grades that fall within the eligible range, are eligible to receive infrastructure improvements. Projects must be within a two-mile radius and within the attendance boundary (if applicable) of the school or schools being proposed for the improvements.

Eligible infrastructure-related projects include infrastructure-related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school, including:

- sidewalk improvements
- pedestrian and bicycle-related signalization/traffic control and signage
- traffic-calming and speed-reduction improvements
- pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements
- on-street bicycle facilities
- off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- secure bicycle parking facilities
- traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools
- pedestrian lighting (safety)
- Promotional activities and/or SRTS non-infrastructure implementation activities related to education, encouragement, and enforcement.

Projects including a paved shared-use path (trail) must at a minimum comply with the guidelines set forth by the *American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (2012, Fourth Edition)* and the *Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (2011, Revision 2)* (for example, minimum width of a shared-use path (trail) is 10 – 14 feet). Projects including an on-street bicycle facility must at a minimum comply with the guidelines set forth by the *National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide (Second Edition)* and/or the *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide*.

Projects implementing innovative or new treatments and technology are encouraged to apply and serve as a model for the El Paso region. Many of these innovative facilities are featured in the above referenced guidance documents, including: separated bike lanes, protected intersections, bicycle facilities with interim approval by FHWA (e.g. bike boxes, bicycle signals, colored pavement, etc.), median crossing islands, Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons, pedestrian hybrid beacons, additional crossing treatments, traffic calming measures, and bicycle and pedestrian traffic count equipment.

NOTE: The following elements of Eligible Projects will not be considered for funding under the 2022 TA Set-Aside Program Call for Projects for the El Paso Region:

- General recreation and park facilities, playground equipment, sports fields, campgrounds, picnic areas and pavilions, scenic overlooks and viewing areas, etc.
- Routine maintenance and operations.

C. ELIGIBLE ENTITIES TO RECEIVE TA SET-ASIDE PROGRAM FUNDS

The Eligible Entities to receive TA Set-Aside Program funds are:

- Local governments
- Regional transportation authorities
- Transit agencies
- School districts, local education agencies, or schools
- Tribal governments
- Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails

Nonprofit organizations are not eligible as direct recipients for TA Set-Aside Program funds. However, nonprofits are allowed to partner with an eligible entity on a TA Set-Aside Program funded project.

D. FUNDING AND MATCH REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EL PASO REGION

Minimum Local Match Requirements

The minimum local match requirement is 20 percent with projects eligible for reimbursement of up to 80 percent of allowable costs. **The local match must be cash.**

E. PROGRAM CALL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Nomination Submission to the EPMPO TASA Staff Office

Project nominations must be coordinated with and delivered to the EPMPO office. Project nominators are limited to local and regional entities eligible to receive and manage Federal transportation funds.

Evaluation and Selection Process

The EPMPO will review each project to ensure that all of the requested documentation has been included. Nomination packages failing to include any of the requested documentation may be considered incomplete and will be evaluated based on the information provided. Supplemental information may not be provided after the Call for Projects closing deadline. EPMPO will coordinate Federal eligibility with TxDOT and FHWA.

The EPMPO will evaluate eligible projects that are submitted by eligible entities through a competitive process. EPMPO reserves the right to award partial funding based on project-specific factors or to combine projects into one award. Recommended projects and specific funding allocations will be made available at public meetings, such as the Transportation Project Advisory Committee and the Transportation Policy Board (TPB). The TPB will make final selection of projects and funding allocations. EPMPO will notify all selected project nominating entities. Consistent with other Federal-aid highway programs, TA Set-Aside Program funds are administered by TxDOT. Projects that are not initially awarded funds through the competitive process will be placed on a Conditional Award List. In the event that funds become available during the period covered by the project call, EPMPO may elect to assign those extra funds to projects on the Conditional Award List.

Through this program, the TPB seeks to prioritize investments in multi-modal transportation projects including facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-drivers. Projects submitted under this Call for Projects will be evaluated to identify the projects or programs that represent the best use of available TA Set-Aside Program funds. Additional resources for applicants are available online at www.elpasompo.org.

Category	Max. Points	Point Guidance	Description	Factors
Regional Network Connectivity	25	High: 25 Medium: 15 Low: 5 None: 0	Improves connectivity of regional paths and bikeways between cities and counties.	Improves connectivity of alternative transportation networks, including completing gaps between existing paths and extensions of the existing network.
Mobility	20	High: 20 Medium: 10 Low: 5 None: 0	Improves connections and access to transit.	Implements facilities (sidewalks, paths, on-street bikeways) providing first/last mile access to transit stations and stops.
Safety	15	High: 15 Medium: 10 Low: 5 None: 0	Improves safety and provides facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists with a high level of comfort and suitable for users of all ages and abilities.	Improves safety in documented high crash areas through safety countermeasures recommended by a safety report or study such as crossings, bicycle/pedestrian signalization, traffic calming, and separate facilities for various transportation modes.
Reducing Barriers	10	High: 10 Medium: 6 Low: 3 None: 0	Provides safe crossing of existing travel obstacles such as major roadways, interchanges, railroads, and bodies of water.	Provides grade-separated or other barrier crossing improvements with a high level of comfort and suitable users of all ages and abilities.
Congestion Reduction	10	High: 10 Medium: 6 Low: 3 None: 0	Provides alternative travel options in lieu of motor vehicle trips in areas with greater opportunity for walking and bicycling.	Implements projects in areas with high vehicle congestion areas identified in the Active Transportation System. Implements projects in areas with a high density of short car trips.
Destination Density	5	High: 5 Medium: 3 None: 0	Provides access to areas with a high density of major employers and destinations.	Improves access to major destinations (schools, employment districts, major employers, high density residential, shopping, entertainment, and other special trip generators.)
Air Quality Benefits	5	High: 5 Medium: 3 Low: 1 None: 0	Improves air quality by supporting non-motorized facility usage.	Improves air quality based on the forecasted bicycle and pedestrian traffic counts resulting from the project.
Equity	5	Yes: 5 No: 0	Improves access to disadvantaged populations and underserved communities.	Improves access for areas with greater percentages of minorities and low income households compared to the regional average, and areas with a high density of zero car households.
Local Network Connectivity	5	Yes: 5 No: 0	Implements locally planned priorities.	Implements a locally-planned facility identified in an on-street bicycle/pedestrian plan, trails plan, SRTS plan, or other related community master plan adopted by the governing authority.
Total	100			

Bonus Points Available				
Constructability and Feasibility	10	High: 10 Medium: 5 None: 0	Project readiness/ability to obligate funds without issues related to environmental review/RR/ROW/historic issues. Estimated costs seem reasonable.	Status on environmental/RR/ROW/historic issues Consideration of potential issues that might delay the project
Total	10			

F. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Projects must be implemented as approved by the TPB and as included in the project agreement with TxDOT. Changes in items of work or project scope that occur without advance TxDOT approval will not be reimbursed, and **the eligible entity project sponsor is responsible for any and all cost overruns**. The construction contractor will, in all cases, be chosen through a competitive bidding process approved by TxDOT.

Please remember that the project may be eliminated from the program if:

- Implementation of the project would involve significant deviation from the activities as proposed in the nomination form;
- The project agreement with TxDOT is not executed within **one (1) year** after the project is selected by the TPB; or
- A construction contract has not been awarded or construction has not been initiated by the local entity within **three** years from the date of selection.

The TPB reserves the right to remove funding from a project for which the local sponsor is unable or unwilling to sign an agreement to implement the project or cannot provide the required minimum local match.