

**El Paso
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

JANUARY 19, 2024

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9:

NMDOT Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025 and 2026 Project Call

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Status report, no action required

SUPPORT INFORMATION:

- NMDOT RTP FFY 25-26 Project Call Schedule

DISCUSSION/OPTIONS:

This item is to be discussed during the Transportation Policy Board meeting.



**EPMPO Timeline for New Mexico Department of Transportation's (NMDOT) Recreational Trails
Program (RTP) Funds
Call for Projects for Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2025-26**

January 3, 2024:	Project Call Announcement
January 3, 2024:	Project Call Opens
February 9, 2024:	Draft RTP project application packets are due by 2:00 p.m. MST. Project application packet: include an electronic version of the application, PFF, PRF forms, resolution of sponsorship and any other backup documentation
February 19-29, 2024:	Agency must schedule to meet with EPMPO and NMDOT during this time to review PFF and PRF forms
March 22, 2024:	Completed RTP project application packets are due by 2:00 p.m. MST. Project application packet: include an electronic version of the application, PFF, PRF forms, resolution of sponsorship and any other backup documentation
March 29, 2024:	Deadline for MPO planners submit complete applications to NMDOT RTP Program Coordinator
April, 2024:	RTP Program Coordinator reviews applications for eligibility and completeness and pre-pares packages for rating and ranking by Recreational Trails Advisory Board (RTAB). RTAB rates, ranks, and selects projects; RTAB rates and ranks RTP projects and makes recommendations to NMDOT.
May, 2024	NMDOT sends out award forms and letters of regret
June, 2024	Awarded projects approved by TPAC and TPB



New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION
MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE

Recreational Trails (RTP) Program Guide

For Projects in Federal Fiscal Year 2025 & 2026

Programs Coordinator

JoAnn Garcia
New Mexico Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 1149
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1149
(505) 372-8358
JoAnn.Garcia2@dot.nm.gov

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1. Introduction and Goals

The Recreational Trails Program Guide (the Guide) is a user-focused handbook for New Mexico Department of Transportation's (NMDOT) Recreational Trails Program (RTP). It is intended to assist potential applicants; Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs); Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs); and other transportation planning partners in identifying and applying for the appropriate funding source based on the specific project type and guidance on project development and implementation. This Guide is for eligible projects applying for funds in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025 and 2026 for Recreational Trails Program. The Guide is most effective in conjunction with the NMDOT Tribal/ Local Public Agency (T/LPA) Handbook, which provides a more detailed description of the federal aid process administered by NMDOT.

In its administration of RTP, New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) intends to leverage these funds to further the multimodal and quality-of-life goals set forth in the Department's long-range plan, *The New Mexico 2045 Plan* (NM 2045 Plan). The NM 2045 Plan provides the strategic framework to guide NMDOT's decision-making in the years to come.

The broad vision of the NM 2045 Plan is "a safe and sustainable multimodal transportation system that supports a robust economy, fosters healthy communities, and protects New Mexico's environment and unique cultures." To this end, the NM 2045 Plan identified five overarching goals:

- Improve safety for all transportation system users.
- Efficiently and equitably invest in infrastructure and technology to provide reliable multimodal access and connectivity, improve mobility, foster economic growth, and minimize transportation's contribution to climate change.
- Deliver transportation programs through approaches and processes that improve resiliency, respect New Mexico's unique cultures, and promote fiscal and environmental stewardship.
- Optimize spending to cost effectively preserve our transportation assets in the best possible condition over the long term.

NMDOT coordinates closely with other agencies that have developed long and short-range transportation plans, bicycle and pedestrian plans, comprehensive land use plans, and other types of plans that include a transportation component. As such, it is NMDOT's goal to respect and coordinate with the plans of tribal and local governments, metropolitan areas, regions, and various State and Federal agencies—provided plans and projects are consistent with the goals and strategies of the NM 2045 Plan. The application scoring criteria for RTP applications outlined in this guide reflect this emphasis on planning as a means of furthering the vision and goals laid out in the NM 2045 Plan.

2. Quick-Reference Funding Guide

Which program should my agency apply for?

The following matrix is a “quick reference” guide for easily identifying the eligible project types for this call for RTP projects. See **Appendix V** for a detailed and complete list of eligible and ineligible projects and activities for RTP program.

Example Projects
• Construction of motorized trails (e.g. for ATVs, snowmobiles, etc.)
• Construction of Non-motorized, paved or non-paved stabilized, shared-use paths
• Equestrian Trails
• ADA Improvements*
• Lighting for bicycle and pedestrian facilities*
• Stormwater projects related to bicycle or pedestrian improvements
• Trail maintenance
• Trailside or trailhead facilities
• Bicycle parking*
• Path/trail and road intersection improvements
• Path/trail connections
• Bridges or tunnels for motorized trails
• Bridges or, tunnels, or overpasses for bicycles and pedestrians (off-road)*
• General educational programs/trainings
• Lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment
• Facilities for E-bikes**
• Statewide recreational trail plans

*Must be directly related to a trail, trailside, or trailhead facility.

**See Appendix V for discussion on e-bike eligibilities.

If a project is in a designated New Mexico MainStreet Community, a State-Authorized Arts and Cultural District, or an official Frontier Community, the applicant must coordinate with the New Mexico Economic Development Department’s MainStreet Program to identify potential overlap between plans and proposed projects. See Appendix VIII for additional information.

3. Program Information

A. What is the Recreational Trails Program?

Background

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a Federal reimbursement program funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), as codified under Title 23 of the United States Code, sections 206, 133(b)(7), 133(h)(4), and 133(h)(5). In New Mexico, RTP is administered by NMDOT’s Active Transportation Programs Team. The program provides funding to eligible entities to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities motorized trail uses.

In addition to their recreational purpose, RTP-funded projects often provide additional multimodal transportation options. Examples of trail uses include walking, hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, and four-wheel driving. Specific questions on project eligibility should be addressed to the Programs Coordinator and/or your MPO/RTPO Planner.

Funding

RTP funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund and represent a portion of the motor fuel excise tax collected from highway and non-highway recreational use recreation vehicles. New Mexico’s **estimated** annual RTP federal funding amount is \$1,296,542.

Per Federal requirements, the RTP apportionment must be awarded according to the following distribution (see Appendix VI for the definitions of RTP project funding categories): 30% of the funds must be used for non-motorized trails (Categories 1 and 2); 30% for motorized trails (Categories 4 and 5); and 40% for diverse-use trails (Category 2, 3, and 5).

Funding	2025 targets
Motorized (4,5)	\$388,963
Diverse (2,3,4)	\$518,617
Non-motorized (1,2)	\$388,963
Total	\$1,296,542

4. Program Requirements

A. Who can apply for funding?

T/LPA recipients of Federal Aid Highway Program (FAHP) funding are referred to as “sub recipients.” The following entities are considered eligible subrecipients for RTP funding, as administered by NMDOT:

- local governments;
- tribal governments;
- regional transportation authorities;
- transit agencies;
- State and Federal natural resources or public land management agencies;
- school districts, local education agencies, and schools; and
- any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails (not including MPOs and RTPOs).

The following entities are **not** considered eligible sub-recipients for RTP funding:

- Non-profits as direct subrecipients of the funds (Non-profits are eligible to partner with any eligible entity on an eligible RTP project, if State or local requirements permit.);
- NMDOT*, MPOs and RTPOs (However, these entities may partner with an eligible entity to carry out a project, if the eligible entity is the project sponsor.); and
- High-risk entities, determined at NMDOT’s discretion, even if they are otherwise eligible (High-risk entities can be defined by financial risk or historical lack of capacity to manage Federally funded projects.).
- Entities that do not meet Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI or financial controls requirements.
- Entities that do not have a Person in Responsible Charge that is certified under NMDOT’s T/LPA Certification Requirements at the time of entering into an agreement with NMDOT (see the next section for more information).

*As the program’s administering agency, NMDOT is an eligible recipient for the Recreational Trails Program and may program RTP funds at its discretion.

B. What are other requirements?

Americans with Disabilities Act

Non-tribal entities applying for RTP funds must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which requires that public agencies with more than 50 employees have an ADA Transition Plan, 28 CFR §35.150(d). Tribal governments are exempt from this requirement, though NMDOT supports ADA plans and policies in Tribal communities. If not already submitted, the applicant must submit a compliant ADA Transition Plan to the [NMDOT ADA Program Coordinator](#), at ADA.TitleVICoordinator@dot.nm.gov. Local Public Agencies (LPA) with fewer than 50 employees must submit an ADA Policy. For additional information please see the [NMDOT T/LPA Handbook](#).

Title VI Plan

Non-Tribal entities wishing to apply for Federal funds through RTP must have a Title VI Plan. The plan addresses Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is the LPA's written document outlining how they will ensure no persons will be discriminated against based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, limited English proficiency, or income status with the implementation of programs, services, or projects that utilize Federal funds. While Tribal governments are exempt from these requirements, NMDOT supports plans and policies as a best practice. The Title VI Plan should be formally updated every three (3) years and submitted to the NMDOT Title VI Program Coordinator. If your agency has a Title VI plan already on file with NMDOT, an annual report, due October 1, should be sent to the NMDOT Title VI Program Coordinator, at ADA.TitleVICoordinator@dot.nm.gov, outlining any complaints received and/or changes in procedural or organizational structure. For additional information please see the [NMDOT T/LPA Handbook](#).

Financial controls

2 CFR 200.332(b) requires NMDOT to evaluate a sub recipient's risk of non-compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the award. NMDOT's financial specialists vet each T/LPA for financial fitness. Consideration and reviews include an entity's prior experience with the same or similar awards, whether the entity has new personnel or new or substantially changed financial systems, and results of recent audits to evaluate risk. NMDOT evaluates these factors when determining applicant eligibility and creating a sub recipient monitoring program, if awarded. **NMDOT will not consider a fiscal agent arrangement with an otherwise eligible T/LPA.**

New T/LPA Certification Requirements

To ensure compliance with all federal regulations, requirements, the terms of Cooperative Agreements between NMDOT and a sub recipient, and the requirements outlines in the NMDOT T/LPA Handbook, NMDOT's Construction and Civil Rights Bureau has established a T/LPA Certification process for Federally funded T/LPA-lead projects.

Prior to entering into either a design/ preliminary engineering or construction agreement, the person in responsible charge must be certified through NMDOT. Certification will be required for all new agreements by March 1, 2024 and is mandatory for those involved with Federal Funded T/LPA projects. For consultants hired by T/LPAs for technical assistance, the Engineer of Record and the T/LPA's Construction Project Manager must have a current Certification. *Programmatic projects funded with RTP are not required to have the T/LPA Certification. Please refer to Section 2.C.3 of the NMDOT T/LPA Handbook or contact the RTP coordinator with questions.*

NMDOT's Construction and Civil Rights Bureau is offering in-person trainings through February 2024 and is currently developing online trainings. For more information on the certification and upcoming trainings, contact Danny Sandoval at Danny.Sandoval@dot.nm.gov, or (505) 690-5948.

C. What is the local match?

RTP is a reimbursement program. All eligible costs must be paid by the sub recipient upfront and are reimbursed at 85.44% of the total cost. The remaining 14.56% of the *total project cost* is the local match. See the following example:

Total Project Cost:	\$100,000
Federal (85.44% reimbursable):	\$85,440
Local Match (14.56%):	\$14,560

Tribal entities may use Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) funds for their local match. Federal agency project sponsors may provide matching funds by using other Federal funds apportioned to that agency. However, for RTP projects sponsored by Federal land management and natural resource agencies, combined Federal funds shall not exceed 95% of the total project cost. The remaining 5% match share must come from non-Federal funding sources, often met by utilizing volunteer hours.

An in-kind match may be utilized for all or a portion of the 14.56% local match but must be clearly stated in the project application. Examples of in-kind matches include donations of funds, materials, services, agency force account, right-of-way acquisition, and utility relocation. The local match may also be fulfilled through a combination of cash and in-kind contributions. All in-kind contributions must be quantified, tracked, and reported throughout the project just as matching funds would be. If the project is awarded, the in-kind match must be specifically noted on the Agreement Request Form (ARF) in accordance with the requirements in the [NMDOT T/LPA Handbook](#), or in developing a non-infrastructure agreement with the Program Coordinator. This ensures that the in-kind match is correctly referenced in all agreements. Any approved in-kind match must occur within the project term specified in the agreement; work completed prior to an entity's receipt of a Notice to Proceed will not be reimbursable or accepted as in-kind match.

E. Other Considerations

RTP are Federal-Aid Highway Program (FAHP) funds and must be expended in accordance with all applicable Federal and State regulations. Compliance with Federal and State regulations requires a significant commitment of time and resources on the part of the sub-recipient and can add significant costs to the project.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the following questions prior to submitting an application for RTP funding:

- Does your agency have the necessary staff to administer the project and meet all requirements?
- Does your agency comply with Federal ADA Transition Plan and Title VI Plan requirements?
- Does your agency have the funding to pay all costs upfront, before seeking reimbursement?
- Does your agency have the funding to pay the local match requirement (14.56%) and support any costs that cannot be reimbursed?
- Projects often come in over budget, does your agency have the ability to pay for additional costs?
- Does your project budget and estimate consider the costs for required certifications (NEPA, right-of-way, utilities, ITS, railroad)?
- Has your project management staff attended trainings relating to the NMDOT T/LPA Handbook? While not required at the time of application, the training resources provide valuable information on project requirements and processes. Projects must comply with all applicable Federal and State requirements from project design through implementation/construction, administration, and close-out. If awarded, entities must have a person in responsible charge certified by NMDOT.

What if my project comes in over budget?

Any costs associated with the project, above the awarded amount, are the responsibility of the sub-recipient.

- NMDOT may require local government assistance and/or coordination in performing analyses related to performance measurement (e.g., before-and-after bicycle counts for a new bicycle facility).

5. Application Process and Project Selection

A. What are the timelines and deadlines for applications and selected projects?

All applicants must coordinate with and submit their applications to the appropriate MPO or RTPO based on the location of the applying agency. Appendix X provides a map and contact information for all the MPOs and RTPOs in New Mexico.

In coordination with NMDOT, MPOs and RTPOs will distribute this Guide and provide a schedule of specific dates and deadlines for the call for projects. An agency interested in applying for funds will first request a Project Feasibility Form (PFF) from their MPO/RTPO. The PFF must be filled out and returned to the MPO/RTPO planner before the PFF deadline set by the MPO/RTPO. The MPO/RTPO planner will then schedule a PFF meeting to be attended by the project’s Person in Responsible Charge, the MPO/RTPO planner, appropriate NMDOT staff (District staff, Planning Liaison, Environmental staff, Regional Design Center’s T/LPA Coordinator, Program Coordinator etc.), and others involved in the project. If a project is deemed feasible at the PFF meeting, the local District representative will sign off on the PFF.

Once an entity has an approved PFF, they can begin preparing their application packet, as itemized in Section C below. For projects located in RTPO areas, once a PFF is approved by the appropriate District representative, it must be included on the RTPO’s Regional Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations (RTIPR) according to the RTPO’s adopted procedures, if the entity decides to proceed and submits an application. If the RTIPR update timeline does not allow adequate time for approval prior to application, applicant should include a draft RTIPR showing the project’s inclusion and noting the RTPO’s RTIPR schedule for adoption. Complete application packets must be submitted to the appropriate MPO/RTPO before the specific application deadline set by the MPO/RTPO.

Below is a summary of funding cycle deadlines and activities from the opening of the call for projects through the obligation of funds for awarded projects. Agreements for “non-infrastructure” projects will be administered by the NMDOT Program Coordinator; if awarded funds, these entities will not need to submit Agreement Request Forms (ARF) as described below.

B. RTP Funding Cycle Timeline

<u>Month</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Activity</u>
November	2023	Call for projects open
November February	2023- 2024	<p>PFFs due to RTPO planner (or to MPO planner if MPO is using PFF process); RTPO planner (and MPO planner if MPO is using PFF process) sets own deadline for receiving PFFs.</p> <p>RTPO (or MPO) planner schedules PFF meetings with RTPO (or MPO)/NMDOT liaison/District/Environmental/T/LPA (See T/LPA Handbook for complete list of roles to be invited)</p> <p>MPO planner screens all potential applicants for feasibility, phasing, etc. (if not using PFF process)</p> <p>RTPO/MPO planners set own deadline for completing PFF meetings (or MPO-specific feasibility screening process)</p> <p>Projects in RTPO areas whose PFF is signed off on by the appropriate District representative at the PFF meeting must be included in the RTPO’s RTIPR</p>

<u>Month</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Activity</u>
December-February	2023-2024	T/LPA completes application and submits to MPO/RTPO planner according to deadline set by MPO/RTPO
February-March	2024	MPO/RTPO planner evaluates applications for eligibility and completeness
March 29	2024	MPO/RTPO planners submit complete applications to NMDOT RTP Program Coordinator <u>Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.</u>
April	2024	RTP Program Coordinator reviews applications for eligibility and completeness and prepares packages for rating and ranking by Recreational Trails Advisory Board (RTAB)
April	2024	RTAB rates, ranks, and selects projects; RTAB rates and ranks RTP projects and makes recommendations to NMDOT
May	2024	NMDOT sends out award forms and letters of regret
May - June	2024	Projects added to MPO TIPs and STIP Preview*
May - September	2024	TIPs/STIP public review and approval
August 8	2024	T/LPA Submits Agreement Request Form and timeline to Regional Coordinator (for infrastructure projects)
October 1	2024	2025-2027 STIP becomes active

*Draft TIP/STIP pages for awarded projects can be used to develop Agreement Request Forms, per the NMDOT T/LPA Handbook.

Refer to the [NMDOT T/LPA Handbook](#) for project development timelines after the STIP has become active.

C. What needs to be included with my application?

Applicants must submit the following documents (as a single PDF) in the order listed below as part of the RTP application process:

- **Cover Page**
- **Table of contents**
- **Project Feasibility Form (PFF)** signed by District representative – see Appendix I (MPOs that conduct a different process for determining feasibility do not need to include a signed PFF)
- **Project Prospectus Form (PPF)** – see Appendix I
- **TAP/RTP Application** – see Appendix I
- **Resolution of Sponsorship** indicating 1) proof of match, 2) budget to pay all project costs up front (funding is by reimbursement), and 3) acknowledgement of maintenance responsibility – see Appendix IX; alternatively, an official letter signed by the entity’s chief executive or official with budget authority, indicating the same information, may be submitted in lieu of a resolution.
- **Letter(s) of support** regarding right(s)-of-way from all entities whose right-of-way/jurisdiction is tied to the project; this requirement only applies when a project is not located entirely within the jurisdiction of the T/LPA. The letter(s) must also address which entity will take on the maintenance responsibility for the proposed project.
- **Basic map** of project location (not required for non-infrastructure projects).

- Any **additional documentation** in support of scoring factors – see section 5D.

MPO/RTPO planners are responsible for submitting complete application packages to NMDOT no later than close of business (COB) on **March 29, 2024**. Application packets must be submitted as single PDF documents and must be uploaded to NMDOT’s FTP site. Emailed, faxed, or mailed submissions will not be accepted. Late or incomplete applications will also not be accepted.

D. Application Scoring Factors

Applications for RTP will be rated and ranked according to the following factors.

1. Planning

The Planning factor is intended to ensure that RTP projects are consistent with adopted plans, policies, and studies. If a project is identified in an adopted local, regional, or state: plan, study or other document (e.g. ICIP), this indicates a level of public involvement and support for the project. This factor will be demonstrated with supporting documentation. Rather than attaching the entire plan or document, applicants must provide a copy of the title page of the document and the page(s) identifying the proposed project. A list of potential planning documents is below. If a project is in an MPO area, it is required to be *consistent* with the MTP—thus, no points are awarded for a project that is solely consistent with the MTP. However, if a project is specifically listed in the MTP, it may be used for planning points. Applications are awarded two (2) points for each plan in which the project is listed or with which it is consistent (demonstrated through supporting documentation), up to a maximum of six (6) points for this factor.

Eligible Planning Documents:

- Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP)
- Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTP)
- Regional Transportation Plans (RTP)
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans
- Economic Development Plans
- Comprehensive Plans
- Land-Use Plans/Studies
- Master Plans
- Sector Plans
- Safety Plans
- ADA Transition Plans
- NM MainStreet Plans
- And other documents deemed eligible by Program Coordinator.

The remaining factors will be scored according to the following scale:

3 points: The application demonstrates a thorough understanding of how the factor applies and provides clear and compelling documentation on how the project meets and exceeds the factor.

2 points: The application demonstrates a basic understanding of the factor and provides minimal documentation on how the project meets the factor.

1 point: The application demonstrates very little understanding of the factor and does not provide any documentation on how the project meets the factor.

0 points: The application does not meet the factor.

2. Economic Vitality

In addition to achieving transportation and/or recreational goals, RTP projects may provide positive economic impacts to a community. The economic vitality of an eligible project is measured through economic impact to local, regional, or statewide economic development efforts. Consider how the project interacts with activity centers, employment generators, or other economic development activities. For example, a potential project, such as a regional trail, could provide economic benefits to nearby local businesses by attracting tourists.

Application Question:

Provide detailed information on how your eligible project will benefit local, regional, and/or state economic development efforts. Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

3. Safety and Security

The livability of a community is related to safety and security. A community where it is safe to walk, bicycle, use transit, and access and enjoy recreational trails will have more people on the streets interacting with neighbors, visiting businesses, walking to school, and enjoying local amenities like parks and natural areas. For example, installing solar lighting along a sidewalk or path to a park or school could increase the safety and security of children walking to the facility.

Application Question:

Please explain any safety issues you are trying to address and provide any available data. Describe how your eligible project will increase the safety and security of different user groups by making it safer for them to walk, bicycle, access public transit, and/or access and enjoy recreational trails. Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

4. Accessibility and Mobility through Integration and Connectivity

Access to destinations and people's mobility are defined by the integration and connectivity of a community's transportation system (including recreational trail facilities). Gaps exist in our transportation systems, creating congestion and making it difficult for people to access necessary services such as a grocery store, hospital, or employment centers. Integrating alternative transportation networks into a community or fixing gaps in existing systems can increase people's mobility and access to necessary services and recreational opportunities. This factor also considers intermodal connectivity between pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, and park-and-ride infrastructure. For example, the completion of a sidewalk between a transit stop and a nearby employment center would address an existing gap in the system, making the employment center more accessible and increasing mobility of transit-users. In addition, this would address intermodal connectivity.

Note: all Federally funded transportation projects must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

Application Question:

Please describe how your eligible project will increase accessibility and mobility through integration and connectivity of transportation and recreation networks. Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

5. Protection and Enhancement of the Environment

This factor emphasizes how eligible projects can protect and enhance the environment, whether through the promotion of energy or water conservation, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, quality-of-life improvements, or the funding of improvements that are consistent with land management plans or local land-use plans. Projects may

promote environmental conservation in diverse ways, from reducing motorized vehicle usage, to erosion control along transportation rights-of-way or wilderness trails. Projects can also provide a broad array of quality-of-life improvements, such as access to culturally or historically significant sites, or improved community health due to increased opportunities for bicycling, walking, and other recreation activities.

Through local planning processes, governments and community members articulate land-use visions and goals to improve or enhance community quality of life. These are incorporated into local planning documents. RTP projects may help communities achieve desired land-use patterns and goals as described in local planning documents. Examples of such projects could include a paved, multi-use path that increases multimodal access to a school, thus reducing motor vehicle congestion, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and providing opportunities for daily physical activity—all of which helps improve quality of life and overall community health.

Application Question:

Please provide information as to how your eligible project will:

- a) promote environmental and energy conservation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.*
- b) improve the quality-of-life for community residents; and*
- c) help achieve the community's desired land-use goals, as described in local planning documents.*

Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

6. Efficient System Management and Operations

RTP funds are FAHP funds. The project sponsor must acknowledge in the Resolution of Sponsorship, or official letter (see Appendix IX), both the short-term and long-term maintenance of the RTP project. The community may also have processes and maintenance plans in place that would benefit the maintenance and overall efficient system management and operation of the project. For example, your community may have a maintenance plan for inspecting and re-painting crosswalks on an annual basis and a new trail crossing built with RTP funds would be integrated into this maintenance plan.

Application Question:

Please describe how your eligible project will promote efficient system management and operation, particularly regarding the maintenance of the RTP-funded improvement. Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

7. System Preservation

The costs of maintaining existing infrastructure can be burdensome to communities. As such, building new infrastructure in certain communities is not always the most appropriate course of action. Certain projects may preserve or enhance existing infrastructure, thus eliminating additional costs to local communities. Potential projects may include safety improvements to existing infrastructure or adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure. For example, your community has a closed bridge that is no longer safe for motor vehicles, but the community wants to convert the use of the bridge to a pedestrian and bicycle facility.

Application Question:

Please explain how your eligible project will enhance, preserve, or offer an adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure. Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

8. Equity

NMDOT strives to support community prosperity and vitality through a multimodal transportation and recreational system that provides options to residents and visitors, regardless of income, race or ability.

Application Questions:

- a) Describe how this project or elements of the project proactively address racial equity, workforce development, economic development, and/or removes barriers to opportunity including automobile dependence in both rural and urban communities as a barrier to opportunity or to redress prior inequities and barriers to opportunity.
- b) Is the project located in a Disadvantaged Community (DAC), as defined by the US Department of Transportation? Please reference the [USDOT's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) to identify if the project is located in a census tract that is considered disadvantaged. Provide the Census Tract Number, or numbers, of the project location and list the indicators identified in that tract.

Point Deductions- Inactive Projects

For each inactive Federal Aid project for which an entity is the lead agency, five (5) points shall be deducted from the proposed project. An inactive project is a Federal Aid project for which no expenditures have been charged against federal funds during the past nine months. Evaluation of project inactivity will occur during the project application review process, approximately March 2023.

E. Application Scoring Matrix

Scoring Factors	Possible Points
Planning: Must provide documentation (cover of plan and page[s] identifying or supporting the project); 2 points per plan, maximum of 6 points	6
Economic vitality	3
Safety and Security	3
Accessibility and Mobility through Integration and Connectivity	3
Protection and Enhancement of the Environment:	
a) Promote environmental and energy conservation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions	3
b) Improve quality-of-life for residents	3
c) Achieve community's land-use goals	3
Efficient System Management	3
System Preservation	3
Equity	3
Total	33

F. Best Practices and Feedback for Applicants

The following is a list of general attributes of higher-scoring and lower-scoring applications from previous RTP funding cycles. It is intended to aid entities in ensuring that their application is as strong as it can be.

Attributes of Higher-Scoring Applications

- Project appeared in numerous planning documents, and the supporting documentation was provided.
- Application included supporting documentation for all or most of the narrative questions contained on the application, allowing it to score maximum points for each question.
- Application demonstrated a thorough understanding of the application questions and was able to effectively explain how the project would contribute to the goals of each scoring factor.

Attributes of Lower-Scoring Applications

- Project did not appear in planning documents; or supporting documentation was insufficient or not provided.
- Application did not include supporting documentation for many of the narrative questions on the application, receiving minimal or no points for each question.
- Application demonstrated a minimal understanding of questions or did not effectively explain how the project contributed to the goals of each scoring factor.
- Application did not include responses to all questions on RTP application.
- Application was not edited and included spelling and grammatical errors.

The competitive process is not intended to evaluate the *inherent* merit of a particular project, but rather to be a forum for entities to *demonstrate* the merit of their project. All prospective projects have merit. The competitive evaluation process provides a mechanism for selecting projects given limited funding.

Finally, when projects are included in planning documents or studies, it demonstrates a depth of community support, and illustrates how a project helps meet the goals of a community or region. Adopted plans go through robust public involvement processes, and are formally adopted by councils, commissions, and or agencies. To provide the greatest benefit to communities, as well as to help ensure successful projects, NMDOT’s goal is to fund projects that meet local needs and desires and that have broad community support.

G. How are applications selected?

After MPO/RTPO planners submit application packages to the NMDOT Program Coordinator, applications undergo additional review by NMDOT for eligibility and completeness. Once confirmed, all eligible and complete applications are rated and ranked by the New Mexico Recreational Trails Advisory Board (RTAB). RTAB members are appointed by the Governor or designee. The board represents a diversity of trail user groups, including, equestrian, motorized, and non-motorized trail uses.

Scoring factors and point criteria are detailed above, in Section 5D. Higher ranked projects are more likely to receive funding. However, funding is limited by the total RTP allocations as well as project categories (RTP). See sections 3A of this guide for program-specific sub-allocation and category information. At its discretion, the RTAB scores and ranks RTP applications and makes funding recommendations to NMDOT; however, as the administering agency, NMDOT may program RTP funds at its discretion.

After projects are selected, the NMDOT Program Coordinator sends out award forms to the sub-recipient Person in Responsible Charge. Applicants whose projects were not selected will also be notified through letters of regret. The NMDOT Program Coordinator will work with MPO staff and NMDOT STIP Bureau to ensure that selected projects are programmed into the metropolitan TIPs (for MPO projects) and the STIP (for RTPO projects).

6. The Award

A. Agreement Development and Project Management

Once your project has been awarded, you will work with the Active Transportation Coordinator or the NMDOT Project Oversight Division (POD) and Regional Design Center project manager to develop an agreement.

Non-infrastructure or programmatic projects such as soft-surface recreational trails, educational programs, bicycle or pedestrian plans, or other “non-infrastructure” activities are generally managed through the Active Transportation Coordinator. Each award will indicate your project’s manager and contact information.

Infrastructure projects that involve design and/or construction are overseen by NMDOT's Project Oversight Division (POD) and follow the NMDOT Tribal/Local Public Agency (T/LPA) agreement process in coordination with the appropriate NMDOT Regional Design Center, as described in the [NMDOT T/LPA Handbook](#). For the purposes of RTP, the word "construction," as used here, does not include construction of soft-surface trails; oversight and agreements for these projects will typically be handled directly by NMDOT's Active Transportation Coordinator. **See Section 4B for requirements for the NMDOT T/LPA Certification prior to entering into an agreement with NMDOT.** Infrastructure projects will require separate agreements for the design and construction phases, each of which must be in a separate Federal fiscal year. For example:

- **Year 1—Planning, design, and certifications.** Required of all T/LPA infrastructure projects unless the applicable NMDOT Regional Design Center grants an exception. T/LPAs with pre-approval from the applicable NMDOT Regional Design Center are not required to complete this phase using Federal funds and may apply for construction funds.
- **Year 2—Construction**

Sub-recipients should be careful to schedule appropriate time to complete the design phase of infrastructure projects. Right-of-Way and Environmental certifications can be particularly time consuming. Design requirements and estimated time to complete all certifications should be discussed together with NMDOT staff during the PFF meeting to identify appropriate phasing of projects. If an applicant anticipates these certifications cannot be acquired within a single year timeframe, they should propose two years to complete the process. Similarly, NMDOT may propose two years for design if it anticipates complications in the certification process or to successfully fund a high rated proposal. Any proposed changes to project timelines will be discussed with applicants prior to the awarding of funds. Detailed project schedules are required for all awarded projects before a project agreement is developed, as described in the [NMDOT T/LPA Handbook](#). The [NMDOT T/LPA Handbook](#) has more information on planning, design, certification, and construction requirements (see Appendix II).

Alternatively, some projects may be further along in the project development process and may be eligible for construction funding without also applying for a planning/design/certifications phase; however, this is an exceptional circumstance, and any project applying for construction funds only **must receive prior approval from the appropriate Regional Design Center**. Often, these projects previously received Federal funds for the design phase of the project and therefore were designed to the standards required for Federal funds.

B. How will my agency receive funds?

Once a subrecipient agency has received an award, entered into an agreement with NMDOT, and met other program requirements, NMDOT submits the project to FHWA for obligation. Once obligated by FHWA, the sub-recipient receives a Notice to Proceed from NMDOT, addressed to the designated Person in Responsible Charge (PRC). At this point, all project specific responsibilities of the sub-recipient are to be led by the PRC. The PRC must be a staff member of the sub-recipient agency, who is able to answer questions and make decisions about the project in a timely manner. The subrecipient can designate a new PRC via email notification to the NMDOT Project Manager due to staffing needs or additional circumstances.

Upon receipt of the Notice to Proceed, work on the project may officially begin. Any work completed before the Notice to Proceed is not eligible for reimbursement. For example, the T/LPA cannot be reimbursed for costs associated with completing an application or for engineering/design work completed before the subrecipient receives a Notice to Proceed.

As RTP is a federal aid *reimbursement* program, the sub-recipient is responsible for paying all costs incurred up front and then requesting reimbursement from NMDOT via (minimum) quarterly requests, including proof of payment. The subrecipient submits reimbursement requests to NMDOT Active Transportation Coordinator, JoAnn Garcia JoAnn.Garcia2@dot.nm.gov, documenting 100% of the costs incurred during the specified reimbursement request

pay period, including any agreed upon in-kind match, and is reimbursed for 85.44% of the total cost of the reimbursement request. All costs submitted for reimbursement are subject to federal and state eligibility requirements. **Any costs in excess of the federal award amount are the responsibility of the subrecipient agency.**

C. How long are the funds available?

The official project term (that is, the fiscally constrained timeframe during which eligible project costs and activities are reimbursable) will be spelled out in the project's Cooperative Project Agreement, or Grant Agreement. Such agreements generally anticipate two years for each phase of a project; if a project exceeds this timeframe, NMDOT will require an amendment to the existing agreement. Further, the obligation of construction funds is contingent upon completion of the design phase of a project, including all required certifications; therefore, entities must complete the design phase within the appropriate timeframe for NMDOT to obligate construction funds in the Federal fiscal year in which they are programmed. Close coordination with your NMDOT project manager will ensure your project is delivered efficiently.

7. Appendices

I. Forms

To apply for RTP funds, eligible entities must complete the NMDOT Project Prospectus Form (PPF) and then the RTP Application Form. Projects located in an RTPO area (or an MPO area that used the PPF process) must also include a Project Feasibility Form (PFF) signed by the appropriate NMDOT District representative.

Editable, electronic versions of the PFF and PPF are available from the [NMDOT Project Oversight Division](#) webpage. The RTP Guide and Application Form are available from the [NMDOT Active Transportation Programs](#) webpage. Once applications are complete, please submit materials to your MPO/RTPO planner as a single PDF document.

[Project Feasibility Form \(PFF\) \(2021 version\)](#)

[Prospectus Form \(PPF\) \(2021 version\)](#)

[RTP Application Form \(2023 version\)](#)

II. NMDOT Resources

New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Tribal/Local Public Agency (T/LPA) Handbook and recorded trainings

<https://www.dot.nm.gov/business-support/project-oversight-division/t-lpa-documents-and-information/>

III. Sample Programmatic Boilerplate Agreement

Agreements for non-infrastructure, programmatic projects will be handled directly by the program-Active Transportation coordinator at NMDOT. A sample boilerplate programmatic Grant Agreement is linked below. Please be aware the Grant Agreements change from time to time, and the agreement your entity receives may vary from this boilerplate. NMDOT is finalizing an agreement template for use with the United States Forest Service. Please contact the Program Coordinator for more information, if needed.

[Sample Grant Agreement](#)

IV. Sample Design/Construction Boilerplate Agreement

Agreements for infrastructure projects such as paved, multi-use paths, sidewalks, etc., which have separate phases for design and construction, will be handled by NMDOT's Project Oversight Division (POD). These projects may use the boilerplate agreements linked below. These boilerplate agreements are meant for sample purposes only and are subject to change.

[Sample Cooperative Project Agreement](#)

V. Eligible and Ineligible Projects and Activities

Eligible projects and activities under RTP include:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails to include any kind of trail maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation, or relocation, provided the work is completed within the time outlined in the Cooperative Project Agreement or Grant Agreement.
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside, trailhead facilities, and trail linkages (including but not limited to drainage, crossings, stabilization, parking, benches, signage, traffic control, water, and access facilities). Rehabilitation can include extensive repair needed to bring a facility up to standards suitable for public use (not routine maintenance). Trailside and trailhead facilities should have a direct relationship with a recreational trail; **a highway rest area or visitor center is not an eligible project.**
- Lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment to construct and maintain recreational trails during the time outlined in the Cooperative Project Agreement.
- Construction of new trails, where allowed on Federal, State, county, municipal, and private lands provided trails are publicly accessible.
- Construction of rail trails on abandoned railroad corridors, and construction of "rails with trails."
- Improvements to roads and/or bridges specifically designated for recreational use by the managing agency. Eligible high clearance primitive roads/bridges may include old rights-of-way no longer maintained for general passenger vehicle traffic, provided the project does not open the road to general passenger vehicle traffic.
- Planning, design, and certifications specific to an RTP-eligible construction project. NMDOT reserves the right to deny requests for planning, design, and certifications from State or Federal natural resource or public land agencies.
- Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to the use of recreational trails (NMDOT may use up to 5% of the total annual apportionment for educational programs, per Federal guidelines).
- Statewide trail planning.

Ineligible projects and activities under RTP include:

- Acquisition of right-of-way
- Purchase of trail construction and maintenance equipment.
- Improvements to roads/bridges intended to be generally accessible by low clearance vehicles, i.e. regular passenger cars.
- Condemnation of land
- Feasibility studies
- Law enforcement

- Planning that is not of a statewide nature. Trail planning as a relatively small portion of a specific trail project is allowed.
- Sidewalks, unless part of a trailhead facility or specifically providing a critical trail link. FHWA defines a sidewalk as a path parallel to a public road or street.
- Conversion from Non-Motorized to Motorized Use - Applicants shall not use RTP funds to expand, convert, or otherwise facilitate motorized use or access to trails predominately used by non-motorized trail users, and on which, as of May 1, 1991, motorized use was either prohibited or had not occurred.
- Circuit racetracks (circular or elliptical race tracks)
- Major structures (e.g. Restrooms or other projects requiring permits)
- Construction of any recreational trail for motorized users on Bureau of Land Management or National Forest Service lands, unless such lands:
 - Have been allocated for uses other than wilderness by an approved agency resource management plan or have been released to uses other than wilderness by an act of Congress, and
 - Such construction is otherwise consistent with the management direction of such approved land and resource management plan.

Electric Bicycles and Scooters (E-bikes)

This section describes federal definitions of e-bikes and usage eligibilities for projects funded with RTP funds, as well as recent New Mexico legislation defining e-bikes.

Applicable Federal definitions for projects funded with Federal-Aid Highway Funds including RTP funded projects.

The text below is adapted from the 2022 FHWA Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Implementation Guidance as Revised by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act¹, emphasis is added.

The BIL changed the definition of an electric bicycle in [Section 217\(j\)\(2\) of Title 23 of the US Code](#) to specify 3 classes of electric bicycles. However, the IIJA did not amend section 217(h) which restricts the use of motorized vehicles on nonmotorized trails and pedestrian walkways under most Federal aid funded facilities. Section 217(h) does not apply to on-road facilities. Therefore:

- States may allow electric devices on on-road facilities.
- States may allow electric bicycles on nonmotorized trails and pedestrian walkways if the bicycles meet the classes defined under 23 U.S.C. 217(j)(2). States and local governments may specify which classes they choose to allow.
- Electric scooters are not permitted on nonmotorized trails and pedestrian walkways that use Federal-aid highway program funds.
- *The BIL did not change the definition of motorized use under the RTP, therefore, electric bicycles are motorized use under the RTP, and cannot be permitted on RTP-funded trails designated for only nonmotorized use.*

The definitions on electric bicycles from [23 USC 217\(j\)\(2\)](#) are as follows (only changes were formatting for ease of reading):

- “electric bicycle” means a bicycle that is
 - equipped with fully operable pedals, a saddle or seat for the rider, and an electric motor of less than 750 watts;
 - that can safely share a bicycle transportation facility with other users of such facility; and
 - that is a class 1 electric bicycle, class 2 electric bicycle, or class 3 electric bicycle.

¹ [Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Implementation Guidance as Revised by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(dot.gov\)](#)

- Classes of electric bicycles
 - Class 1 electric bicycle.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(iii), the term “class 1 electric bicycle” means an electric bicycle, other than a class 3 electric bicycle, equipped with a motor that—
 - provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling; and
 - ceases to provide assistance when the speed of the bicycle reaches or exceeds 20 miles per hour.
 - Class 2 electric bicycle.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(iii), the term “class 2 electric bicycle” means an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that
 - may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle; and
 - is not capable of providing assistance when the speed of the bicycle reaches or exceeds 20 miles per hour.
 - Class 3 electric bicycle.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(iii), the term “class 3 electric bicycle” means an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that—
 - provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling; and
 - ceases to provide assistance when the speed of the bicycle reaches or exceeds 28 miles per hour.

Electric Bicycles in New Mexico

In 2023, the New Mexico legislature established label, standards, and operation requirements for electric-assisted bicycles. Below are excerpts from the current New Mexico statutes, edited for readability. Please work with your legal counsel on the impact of these new definitions and operation requirements to your organization’s bicycle network.

[66-3-708](#). Electric-assisted bicycles; labels; standards.

- A. Every manufacturer or distributor of new electric-assisted bicycles intended for sale or distribution in New Mexico shall permanently affix to each electric-assisted bicycle, in a prominent location, a label that contains the classification number, top assisted speed and motor wattage of the electric-assisted bicycle. The label shall be printed in arial font in at least nine-point type.
- B. A person shall not knowingly modify an electric-assisted bicycle so as to change the speed capability or motor engagement of the electric-assisted bicycle without also appropriately replacing, or causing to be replaced, the label indicating the classification required by Subsection A of this section.
- C. An electric-assisted bicycle shall comply with the equipment and manufacturing requirements for bicycles adopted by the United States consumer product safety commission and codified at 16 CFR 1512 or its successor regulation.
- D. A class 2 electric-assisted bicycle shall operate in a manner so that the electric motor is disengaged or ceases to function when the brakes are applied. Class 1 and class 3 electric-assisted bicycles shall be equipped with a mechanism or circuit that cannot be bypassed and that causes the electric motor to disengage or cease to function when the rider stops pedaling.
- E. A class 3 electric-assisted bicycle shall be equipped with a speedometer that displays, in miles per hour, the speed that the electric-assisted bicycle is traveling.

[66-3-709](#). Operation of electric-assisted bicycles.

- A. A person may ride a class 1 electric-assisted bicycle on a bicycle or pedestrian path where bicycles are authorized to travel; provided that a political subdivision of the state may prohibit the operation of a class 1 electric-assisted bicycle on a bicycle or pedestrian path within its jurisdiction.
- B. A person shall not ride a class 2 or class 3 electric-assisted bicycle on a bicycle or pedestrian path unless:
 - (1) the path is within a street or highway; or
 - (2) a political subdivision of the state permits the operation of a class 2 or class 3 electric-assisted bicycle on a path under its jurisdiction.
- C. A person under sixteen years of age shall not operate a class 3 electric-assisted bicycle upon any street, highway or bicycle or pedestrian path, except that a person under sixteen years of age may ride as a passenger on a class 3 electric-assisted bicycle that is designed to accommodate passengers.
- D. This section does not apply to a trail that is specifically designated as non-motorized and that has a natural surface tread that is made by clearing and grading the native soil with no added surfacing materials. A political subdivision of the state or a state agency having jurisdiction over a trail described in this subsection may regulate the use of an electric-assisted bicycle on that trail.

VI. RTP Project Categories

There are five categories of RTP projects. Categories 1 and 2 count toward the 30% funding target for non-motorized single-use and diverse-use projects; Categories 2, 3, and 5 count toward the 40% funding target for diverse-use projects; and Categories 4 and 5 count toward the 30% funding target for motorized single-use and diverse-use projects.

Category 1: Non-motorized, single use

This category includes projects primarily intended to benefit only one mode of non-motorized recreational trail use, such as pedestrian only or bicycling only. Projects serving various pedestrian uses (such as walking, hiking, wheelchair use, running, birdwatching, nature-interpretation, backpacking, etc.) constitute a single use for the purposes of this category. *(Note: wheelchair use by mobility-impaired people, whether operated manually or powered, constitutes non-motorized, pedestrian use.)* Projects serving various non-motorized, human-powered snow uses (such as skiing, snowshoeing, etc.) constitute a single use for this category.

Category 2: Non-motorized, diverse use

This category includes projects primarily intended to benefit more than one mode of non-motorized recreational trail use, such as walking, bicycling, and skating; pedestrian and equestrian use; or pedestrian use in summer and cross-country skiing in winter. *(Note: electrically powered bicycles, scooters, and personal mobility devices—such as the Segway—are considered motorized uses for the purposes of the RTP under 23 U.S.C. 206(g)(4). The sole exception is a motorized wheelchair.)*

Category 3: Diverse use including both motorized and non-motorized.

This category includes projects intended to benefit both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail use. This category includes projects where motorized use is permitted but is not the predominant beneficiary. This category also includes projects where motorized and non-motorized uses are separated by season, such as equestrian use in summer and snowmobile use in winter.

Category 4: Motorized, single use

This category includes projects primarily intended to benefit only one mode of motorized recreational trail use. A project may be classified in this category if the project also benefits some non-motorized uses (it is not necessary to exclude non-motorized uses), but the primary intent must be for the benefit of a single motorized use.

Category 5: Motorized, diverse use

This category includes projects primarily intended to benefit more than one mode of motorized recreational trail use, such as motorcycle and ATV use, or ATV use in summer and snowmobile use in winter. A project may be classified in this category if the project also benefits some non-motorized uses (it is not necessary to exclude non-motorized uses), but the primary intent must be for the benefit of motorized uses.

VII. State and Federal Requirements and Guidelines

The Person in Responsible Charge should review and regularly reference [NMDOT's T/LPA Handbook](#) to understand the obligations and procedures for Federal and State funding. The Handbook provides guidance to entities working to develop and construct roadways and other multimodal transportation related projects.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Requirements

As detailed above in Section B, applicants must have compliant ADA Transition Plans on file with NMDOT's Construction and Civil Rights Bureau. See Eligibilities section of this Guide and NMDOT's T/LPA Handbook for additional information.

Projects located on US Forest Service (USFS) lands must comply with the following:

Forest Service Trails Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG)

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/FSTAG-2013-Update.pdf>

RTP Projects located on State or Federal natural resource or public land agency (other than USFS) lands and T/LPA projects that are NOT connected to a Federal-Aid highway right-of-way must comply with the Access Board's Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, published on September 26, 2013, under the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968.

- Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas
<https://www.access-board.gov/files/aba/guides/outdoor-guide.pdf>

Infrastructure projects (paved, multi-use trails; sidewalks; transit facilities, etc.) located on public right(s)-of-way are required to meet standard ADA requirements as outlined in NMDOT design guidelines and standards provided by the NMDOT Design Centers.

ADA/Accessibility Guidelines and Resources

- US Access Board Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas:
<https://www.access-board.gov/files/aba/guides/outdoor-guide.pdf>
- US Access Board information on Public Rights-of-Way Access Guide (PROWAG) and Shared-Use Path accessibility guidance
<https://www.access-board.gov/webinars/2021/08/05/accessible-pedestrian-trails-and-shared-use-paths/>

Buy America and Build America, Buy America

Buy America requirements have changed! NMDOT is currently developing guidance on the implementation of the changes to Buy America, expanding list of items that are covered under Buy America, the Waiver for De Minimis Costs and Small Grants, and required tracking.

NMDOT utilizes the “step” certification process for all projects using steel or iron. NMDOT does not pursue Buy America waivers.

On August 16, 2023, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) published in the Federal Register a public interest [Waiver for De Minimis Costs and Small Grants](#). The public interest waiver is for projects funded under DOT-administered financial assistance programs for iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials under a single financial assistance award for which:

- The total value of the non-compliant products is no more than the lesser of \$1,000,000 or 5% of total applicable costs for the project*; or
- The total amount of Federal financial assistance applied to the project, through awards or subawards, is below \$500,000.

*This bullet does not apply to iron and steel subject to the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 313 on financial assistance administered by FHWA. The de minimis threshold in 23 CFR 635.410(b)(4) continues to apply for steel and iron.

- FHWA Buy America resources:
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/construction/cqit/buyam.cfm>

Design Guidelines and Resources

- Federal Highway Administration bicycle and pedestrian guidance resource website:
https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/
- Federal Highway Administration Memorandum, *Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design Flexibility*:
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/design_flexibility.cfm
- Federal Highway Administration Trails Construction and Maintenance Notebook:
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232806
- Federal Highway Administration Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_transit/fhwasa21130_PedBike_Access_to_transit.pdf
- Forest Service Equestrian Design Guidebook:
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/t-d/pubs/htmlpubs/htm07232816/toc.htm>
- Resources for specific trail features:
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications
- US Forest Service Standard Trail Plans and Specifications:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/trail-management/trailplans/index.shtml>

Design Guidance Websites and Publications

- *Small Town and Rural Design Guide*
<https://ruraldesignguide.com/introduction>

- *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach*, 2010. Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1627 Eye Street, N.W, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20006, Phone: (202) 785-0060
- *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, Fourth Edition*, 2012. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), 444 N. Capitol St NW, Suite 249, Washington, DC, 20001, Phone: (202) 624-5800
- *Guide to the Development of Pedestrian Facilities*, 2004. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), P.O. Box 96716, Washington, DC, 20090-6716, Phone: (888) 227-4860
- *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*, 2014. National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), 55 Water St, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10041
- *Urban Street Design Guide*, 2013. National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), 55 Water St, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10041

Project Reporting

For RTP projects, NMDOT requests before and after photos and may request prior and post counts for pedestrian and bicycle projects, depending on available equipment.

NMDOT administers a Bicycle Count Program for T/LPAs, free of charge. Counter equipment is available for loan to conduct prior and post project bicycle and pedestrian counts. For additional information please contact Angelica Trujillo (mail to: AngelicaN.Trujillo@dot.nm.gov) for program information.

- Bicycle Count Lending Program Guide:
[NMDOT Bicycle Count Program Guide](#)

VIII. New Mexico MainStreet Program

If your RTP project is in a community with any of the three following designations, you are required to coordinate with the NM MainStreet Program on project development.

- NM MainStreet Communities
- State-Authorized Arts and Cultural Districts
- Frontier Communities

Please review the map linked below to see whether your project is within one of these communities. If so, please contact Director of NM MainStreet, Daniel J. Gutierrez, e-mail: Daniel.Gutierrez2@edd.nm.gov or (505) 629-5270

- **NM MainStreet Program**
<http://nmmainstreet.org>

IX. Sample Resolution of Sponsorship

Applicants may reference the sample Resolution of Sponsorship linked below. If an entity opts to submit an official letter (generated and signed by the appropriate official) in lieu of the Resolution of Sponsorship, the letter must include the same information as the Resolution of Sponsorship.

Sample Resolution of Sponsorship

X. MPO and RTPO Contact Information and State Map

Farmington Metropolitan Planning Organization (FMPO)

City of Farmington
800 Municipal Dr.
Farmington, NM 87401
Phone: (505) 599-1449

Peter Koepfel, MPO Officer

Phone: (505)599-1449

E-mail: pkoeppel@fmtn.org

Olivia Groeber: Associate Planner

Phone: (505) 599-1392

E-mail: ogroeber@fmtn.org

Santa Fe Metropolitan Planning Organization (SFMPO)

Monica Roybal Center
737 Agua Fria Street
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Erick Aune, MPO Director

Phone: (505)955-6664

E-mail: ejaune@santafenm.gov

Hannah Burnham, MPO Planner

Phone: (505) 955-6716

E-mail: haburnham@santafenm.gov

Leah Yngve, MPO Planner

Phone: (505) 955-6614

E-mail: lyngve@santafenm.gov

Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO)

Mid-Region Council of Governments 809 Copper Ave. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: (505) 247-1750
Fax : (505) 247-1753

Dewey Cave, Executive Director/MPO Administrator

Phone: (505) 724-3624

E-mail: dcave@mrcog-nm.gov

Kendra Montanari, Transportation Planning and Technical Services Manager

Phone: (505) 724-3601

E-mail: kmontanari@mrcog-nm.gov

Steve Montiel, Transportation Program Manager- Finance and Administration
(Finance and Administration)
Phone: (505) 724-3633
E-mail: smontiel@mrcog-nm.gov

Mesilla Valley MPO (MVMPO)

City of Las Cruces
P.O. Box 20000
Las Cruces, NM 88004
Phone: (575) 528-3043

Andrew Wray, MPO Officer
Phone: (575) 528-3070
E-mail: awray@las-cruces.gov

Dominic Loya, Transportation Planner
Phone: (575) 528-3043
E-mail: dloya@las-cruces.gov

El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (EPMPO)

211 N. Florence Street, Room 202 El Paso, TX 79901
Phone: (915) 212-0258
Fax: (915) 212-0257

Eduardo Calvo, Executive Director
Phone: (915) 212-0258
E-mail: ecalvo@elpasompo.org

Harrison Plourde, Associate Director
Phone: (915) 491-3067
E-mail: plourdeht@elpasompo.org

George Inostroza, MPO Program Administrator
E-mail: ginostroza@elpasompo.org

Sonia Perez, Regional Transportation Planner
E-mail: sperez@elpasompo.org

Gabriela Lopez, Transportation Financial Analyst
Phone: (915) 212-7114
E-mail: glopez@elpasompo.org

Northwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NWRTPO)

Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments
(San Juan, McKinley and Cibola Counties)
106 West Aztec Avenue Gallup, NM 87301
Phone: (505) 722-4327
Fax: (505) 722-9211

Evan Williams, Executive Director

Phone: (505) 722-4327
E-mail: ewilliams@nwnmcog.org

Robert Kuipers, RTPO Program Manager
Phone: (505) 722-4327
E-mail: rkuipers@nwnmcog.org

Northern Pueblos Regional Planning Organization (NPRTPO)

North Central New Mexico Economic Development District (NCNMEDD) (Rio Arriba, Taos, Los Alamos, and Santa Fe Counties)
3900 Paseo Del Sol Santa Fe, NM 87507 Phone: (505) 356-9694

Monica Abeita, Executive Director
Phone: (505) 395-2668
E-mail: monicaa@ncnmedd.com

Felicity Fonseca, Community Development Director
Phone: (505) 356-9098
E-mail: felicityf@ncnmedd.com

Paul Sittig, Transportation Planner
Phone: (505) 356-9694
E-mail: pauls@ncnmedd.com

Eastern Plains Council of Governments (EPCOG)

Covers NERTPO in collaboration with NCNMEDD, and SERTPO in collaboration with SNMEDD NERTPO: Union, Harding, Guadalupe, and Quay Counties
SERTPO: De Baca, Curry and Roosevelt Counties
418 Main St.
Clovis, NM 88101
Phone: (575) 762-4505
Fax: (575) 762-7715

Sandy Chancey, Executive Director
Phone: (575) 762-7714
E-mail: schancey@epcog.org

Vincent Soule, Deputy Director
North Central New Mexico Economic Development District (NCNMEDD)
(Colfax, Mora and San Miguel Counties; the rest are covered by EPCOG)
3900 Paseo Del Sol Santa Fe, NM 87507
Phone: (505) 356-9694

Paul Sittig, Transportation Planner
Phone: (505) 356-9694
E-mail: pauls@ncnmedd.com

Mid-Region Rural Transportation Planning Organization (MRRTPO)

Mid-Region Council of Governments

(Sandoval, Bernalillo, Valencia, southern Santa Fe and Torrance Counties) 809 Copper Ave. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: (505) 247-1750
Fax: (505) 247-1753

Bianca Borg, Regional Planning Manager

Phone: (505)724-3608

E-mail: bborg@mrcog-nm.gov

Southeast Regional Planning Organization (SERTPO)

Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District / Council of Governments (Lincoln, Chaves, Otero, Eddy, and Lea Counties; the rest are covered by EPCOG)

1600 SE Main Suite D Roswell, NM 88203

Phone: (575) 624-6131

Fax: (575) 624-6134

Dora Batista, Executive Director

Phone: (575) 624-6133

E-mail: dbatista@snmedd.com

Mary Ann Burr, SERTPO Planning Program Manager

Phone: (575) 624-6131

E-mail: mburr@snmedd.com

South Central Regional Planning Organization (SCRTPO)

South Central Council of Governments

(Socorro, Sierra and Dona Ana Counties)

600 Highway 195 Suite D

P.O. Box 1072

Elephant Butte, NM 87935

Phone: (575) 744-0039

Fax: (575) 744-0042

Jay Armijo, Executive Director

Phone: (575) 740-0726

E-mail: jarmijo@sccog-nm.com

Angela Rael, RTPO Planning Program Manager

Phone: (575) 740-2895

E-mail: arael@sccog-nm.com

Southwest Regional Planning Organization (SWRTPO)

Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments

(Catron, Grant, Hidalgo and Luna Counties)

P.O. Box 2157

Silver City, NM 88062

Phone: (575) 388-1509

Fax: (575) 388-1500

Priscilla Lucero, Executive Director

Phone: (575) 388-1509

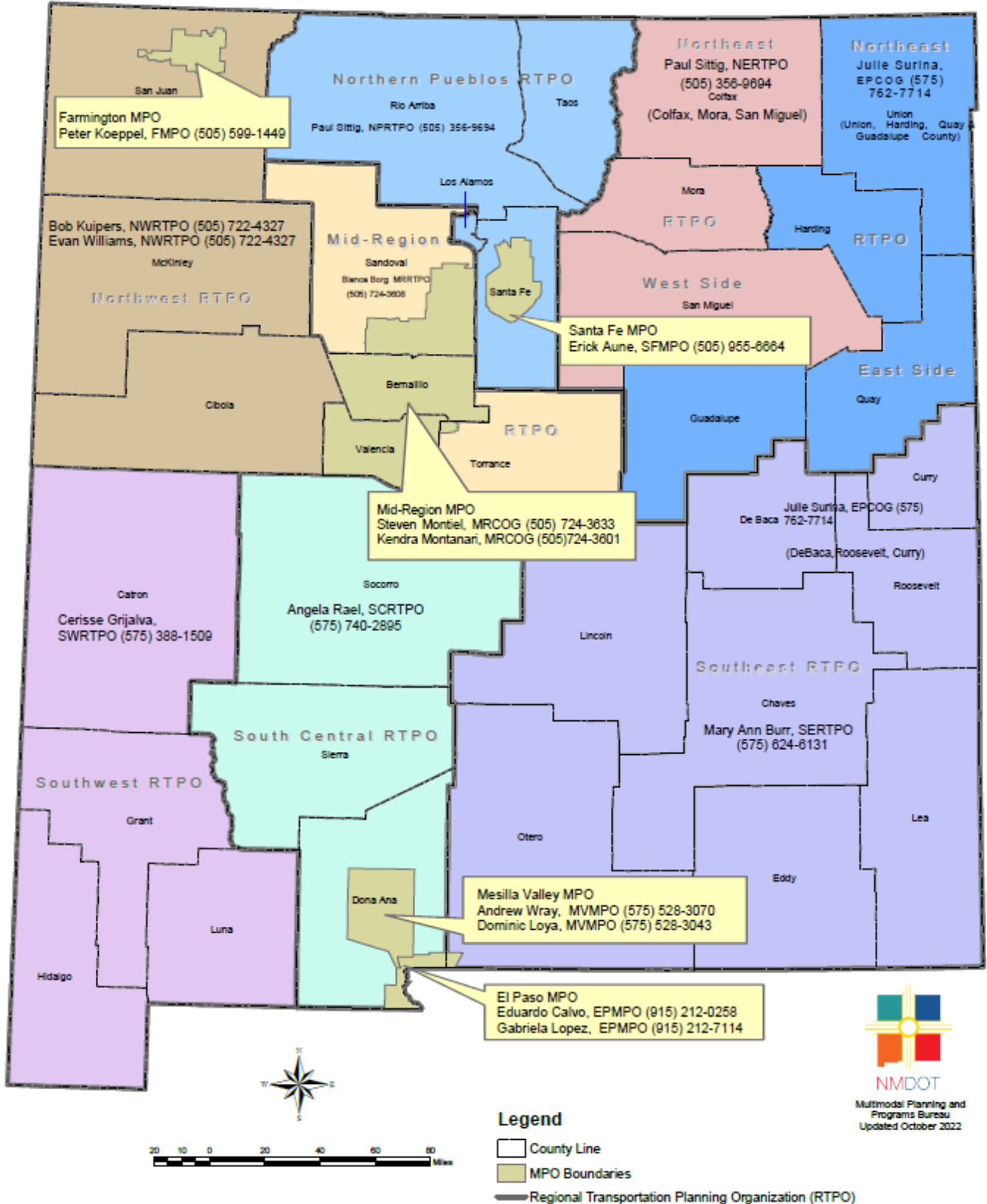
E-mail: priscillalucero@swnmcog.org

Cerisse Grijalva, RTPO Planning Program Manager

Phone: (575) 388-1509

E-mail: grijalvac1@swnmcog.org

2023 Statewide Planning Areas Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations



XI. NMDOT District Offices and Regional Design Centers

District 1:

2912 E. Pine St.
Deming, NM 88030
Main: (575) 544-6530

District 2:

4505 W. Second St.
Roswell, NM 88201
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1457
Roswell, NM 88202-1457
Main: (575) 637-7200

District 3:

7500 Pan American Blvd.
Albuquerque, NM 87199
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 91750
Albuquerque, NM 87199-91750
Main: (505) 798-6600

District 4:

28 Industrial Dr.
Las Vegas, NM 87701
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 10
Las Vegas, NM 87701-10
Main: (505) 454-3600

District 5:

7315 Cerrillos Rd.
Santa Fe, NM 87502
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 4127
Santa Fe, NM 87502-4127
Main: (505) 476-4100

District 6:

1919 Pinon Dr.
Milan, NM 87021
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 2160
Milan, NM 87021-2160
Main: (505) 285-3200

North Regional Design Center (D4 & D5):

1120 Cerrillos Rd.
Room 225
Santa Fe, NM 87504
T/LPA Coordinator:
Dana Garcia (Acting)
(505) 231-7663
dana.garcia@dot.nm.gov

Central Regional Design Center (D3 & D6):

7500 Pan American Freeway NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
T/LPA Coordinator:
J. Miguel Archuleta
(505) 252-1707
Juan.Archuleta@dot.nm.gov

South Regional Design Center (D1 & D2):

750 N. Solano Dr.
Las Cruces, NM 88001
T/LPA Coordinator:
Judith Gallardo
(575)323-4242
Judith.Gallardo@dot.nm.gov

Please be aware that all NMDOT state employee email addresses have changed:

From: ...@state.nm.us
To: ...@dot.nm.gov

Please refer to NMDOT's website for information on District boundaries:

<http://dot.state.nm.us/content/nmdot/en/Districts.html>



Recreational Trails Program Application

For Projects in Federal Fiscal Years 2025 & 2026

Instructions

Thank you for your interest in the Recreational Trails Program. Applicants should read the New Mexico Recreational Trails Program Guide (the Guide) prior to completing this application. Refer to the Guide when completing this application. The Guide provides detailed information on the Scoring Factors, overall RTP processes, timelines, project eligibilities and applicant requirements. When finalized, submit this application and all required documents as one PDF to your RTPO or MPO planner.

Introduction

As outlined in the Guide, this application is used by the Recreational Trails Advisory Board (RTAB) to score and rank all eligible projects. The process is statewide and competitive. Due to funding limitations, not all eligible projects can be selected.

Applicants located within Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO) boundaries are required to complete the Project Feasibility Form (PFF) process and receive District recommendation prior to submitting this application.

Applicants located within Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) boundaries must first consult with your MPO planner to ensure project feasibility and eligibility.

Applicant Information

Date of Submittal:

RTP funding, select a project category (motorized, non-motorized, diverse):

Tribal/Local Public Agency:

T/LPA Person in Responsible Charge:

Address:

County:

Phone:

E-mail:

MPO or RTPO:

NMDOT District:

US Congressional District:

ADA/Title VI Compliance (Tribal Governments exempt)

Agency has an approved ADA Transition Plan/Policy registered with NMDOT's Construction and Civil Rights Bureau (yes or no):

Agency has approved Title VI Plan registered with NMDOT's CCRB (yes or no):

If you answered “NO” to either of those questions, please contact NMDOT’s Construction and Civil Rights Bureau at ada.titlevicoordinator@dot.nm.gov.

Project Information

Project name:

Project Scope of Work *(Include major components, project deliverables, and pertinent project details):*

Project Location and Ownership *(include general location, current land ownership, and a site map):*

If located within an RTPO, was the project recommended by the District via the PFF process?

If not, please contact your RTPO and begin the PFF process or work to further develop the project.

Project Budget and Timeline

Briefly explain the estimated project budget and timeline *(include which Federal Fiscal Years you are applying for):*

In the table below, please itemize the total project cost by phase and funding source.

Project Phase	Federal	Local***	Tribal	Other	
Preliminary Engineering*					
Utilities					
Right-of-Way					
Construction Management**					
Construction					Project Total
Totals					

* Preliminary Engineering total includes planning, environmental review, and design.

** Construction management total includes bidding, observation and material testing.

*** Local funds can be used for match and to increase project total.

Scoring Factors

Applications will be rated and ranked according to the following factors. See the Guide section 5D for detailed explanations of each scoring factor. In your application packet, include any supporting documentation that is referenced in your responses.

1. Planning

Applications are awarded two (2) points for each plan in which the project is listed or with which it is consistent for up to a maximum of six (6) points. Please list each plan name below, provide a link if it is available online, and include the cover sheet and the page(s) where the project is referenced. Do not send entire plans. For a list of eligible planning documents, refer to section 5D of the Guide.

Plan 1:

Plan 2:

Plan 3:

Other:

The remaining factors (2-7) will be scored according to the following scale, please limit responses to 1,000 characters for each factor:

- 3 points: The application demonstrates a thorough understanding of how this factor applies and provides clear and compelling documentation on how the project meets and exceeds the factor.
- 2 points: The application demonstrates a basic understanding of this factor and provides minimal documentation on how the project meets the factor.
- 1 point: The application demonstrates very little understanding of this factor and does not provide any documentation on how the project meets the factor.
- 0 points: Does not meet factor.

2. Economic Vitality

Provide detailed information on how your eligible RTP project will benefit local, regional and/or state economic development efforts. Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

3. Safety and Security

Please explain any safety issues you are trying to address and provide any available data. Describe how your eligible project will increase the safety and security of different user groups by making it safer for them to walk, bicycle, access public transit in their community and/or access and enjoy recreational trails. Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

4. Accessibility and Mobility through Integration and Connectivity

Please describe how your eligible project will increase accessibility and mobility through integration and connectivity of transportation and recreation networks. Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

6. Efficient System Management and Operation

Please describe how your eligible project will promote efficient system management and operation, particularly regarding the maintenance of the RTP-funded improvement. Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

7. System Preservation

Please explain how your eligible project will enhance, preserve, or offer an adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure. Please cite and provide supporting documents or studies as necessary.

8. Equity

- A. Describe how this project or elements of the project proactively address racial equity, workforce development, economic development, and/or removes barriers to opportunity including automobile dependence in both rural and urban communities as a barrier to opportunity or to redress prior inequities and barriers to opportunity.

- B. Is the project located in a Disadvantaged Community (DAC), as defined by the US Department of Transportation? Please reference the [USDOT's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) to identify if the project is located in a census tract that is considered disadvantaged. Provide the Census Tract Number, or numbers, of the project location and list the indicators identified in that tract.*

Application Submission

Applicants must submit the following items as a single PDF to their MPO/RTPO Planner:

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- [Project Feasibility Form \(PFF\)](#) signed by District representative, if applicable
- [Project Prospectus Form \(PPF\)](#) – see Appendix I of the Guide
- RTP Application Form
- Resolution of Sponsorship indicating proof of match, budget to pay all project costs up front (funding is by reimbursement), and acknowledgement of maintenance responsibility – see Appendix XI; alternatively, an official letter signed by the entity’s chief executive or official with budget authority, indicating the same information, may be submitted in lieu of a resolution.
- Letter(s) of support regarding right(s)-of-way from all entities whose right-of-way/jurisdiction is tied to the project; this requirement only applies when a project is not entirely located within the jurisdiction of the sponsoring agency. The letter(s) must also address which entity will take on the maintenance responsibility for the proposed project.
- Map of project location (not required for non-infrastructure projects)
- Any additional documentation in support of scoring factors, per section 5D of the Guide.