

Transportation Enhancement Application Guidelines

District 2

Minnesota Department of Transportation
District 2 Area Transportation Partnership (ATP 2)



August 2011

INTRODUCTION

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) passed in August 2005, provides for funding of eligible transportation enhancement projects under the Surface Transportation Program apportionment. The transportation enhancement (TE) program is intended to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the transportation system. A listing of eligible projects or activities for TE funds is listed in this packet of information along with qualifying criteria. To learn more about the program, please visit the FHWA website at:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/index.htm>

ATP 2 is soliciting projects for construction in 2014 & 2015. The expected targets are \$224,000 in 2014 and \$500,000 in 2015.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

1. Overview

This information is designed to help potential Transportation Enhancement Fund applicants determine types of eligible projects and outline the steps required to complete the application process. A cover sheet and checklist are provided to ensure all required materials are included in your application (Appendix C).

A **Project Coordinator** is required for each project application. The project coordinator will be the primary contact person between ATP 2, Office of State Aid, and the sponsoring agency. This person will be responsible for ensuring the application guidelines are followed and all ATP 2 and project development deadlines are met. The State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) can be changed to accommodate projects encountering problems or progressing ahead of schedule. The project coordinator will provide progress updates as requested by ATP 2. Any changes in project status should be reported to one of the contact persons (see Section 6).

Note: Applicants will be given an opportunity to make a short presentation before ATP 2 on February 2, 2012. The location of this meeting will be at the McIntosh Community Center in McIntosh. Additional instructions will be sent out to each applicant prior to the meeting date.

2. Eligibility

ATP 2 will consider the following types of projects for funding:

1. Scenic or historic highway programs
2. Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles
3. Acquisition of scenic easements and/or scenic/historic sites
4. Landscaping and other scenic beautifications.
5. Historic preservations
6. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals). **Final use must be for public areas.**
7. Preservation of abandoned railway corridors.
8. Control/removal of outdoor advertising.
9. Archaeological planning and research.
10. Mitigation or water pollution caused by highway runoff or projects to reduce vehicle caused wildlife mortality.
11. Safety education activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
12. Establishment of transportation museums.

In addition to meeting one of the 12 eligibility requirements, applications are required to:

- Assure at least a 20% match for projects from either local or federal sources.
- Agree to operate and maintain facilities for the useful life of the project.
- Receive project application development guidance from the RDC/MPO.
- Be a state-aid city, county, state/local government agency, or Indian reservation.
- Request at least \$50,000 in federal funds.
- Demonstrate the project has a substantial relationship with the transportation system.
- Assure the project is not mitigation associated with the implementation of other transportation projects.

3. Application Materials

The completed application must include:

- Cover page (Appendix C)
- Project description
A brief narrative describing the project including location, proposed activities, projected use of facilities, budget breakdown including a budget sheet (Appendix D).
- Narrative
Please address each of the six qualifying criteria (Appendix A) and each of the four ranking criteria (Appendix B).
- Resolution Page
See Appendix E.
- Location Map
General project area and project site location.
- Photographs
Project location and/or conceptual site plans/details.

4. Policies

ATP 2 has established a number of policies it will use to evaluate enhancement projects:

- Any one project will be discouraged from obtaining over \$500,000 of enhancement funding over a five-year period.
- Geographic equity throughout ATP 2 will be promoted without compromising overall project quality.
- Projects having substantial impact on the overall transportation systems will be encouraged.
- Projects that complete and/or are constructed in conjunction with larger transportation construction efforts/projects will be encouraged.
- Projects that exhibit good planning and design will be encouraged.
- Projects that leverage funds from other sources or can demonstrate a high level of confidence of a 20 percent match will be encouraged. ATP 2 will assess match requirements on a case-by-case basis as necessary. Less than 20 percent match with explicit NWATP approval may be possible in cases where there are extenuating circumstances.

5. Deadlines

Thirteen (13) copies of the application must be **postmarked no later than January 18, 2012.**

Please mail completed application to:

Joe McKinnon
Planning Engineer
Mn/DOT Northwest District
3920 Highway 2 West
Bemidji, MN 56601

6. Further Assistance

Applicants having questions or requiring assistance with this application should contact:

Joe McKinnon
Planning Engineer
Mn/DOT Northwest District
3920 Highway 2 West
Bemidji, MN 56601
(W)218-755-6554, (Fax)218-755-6512
joseph.mckinnon@state.mn.us

Troy Schroeder, Transportation Planner
NW Regional Development Commission
115 South Main
Warren, MN 56762
(W)218-745-6733, (Fax)218-762-6438
tschroeder@nrwdc.org

Mathew Dyrdaahl, Transportation Planner
Headwaters Regional Development
Commission
P.O. Box 906
Bemidji, MN 56601
(W)218-333-6531, (Fax)218-444-4722
mdyrdaahl@hrdc.org

Earl Haugen, Executive Director
EGF/GF Metropolitan Planning
Organization
255 North 4th Street, PO Box 5200
Grand Forks, ND 58206-5200
(W)701-746-2657, (Fax)701-746-1871
ehaugen@grandforksgov.com

Applicants are strongly encouraged to check with one of these individuals early in the process regarding the eligibility of their project. An early determination of eligibility could save applicants a substantial amount of work.

APPENDIX A: Qualifying Criteria

Applicants must address 6 qualifying criteria.

1. Project Eligibility

Explain why your project is eligible for enhancement funding (see "Application Guidelines" Section 2, Eligibility). All applications are sent to the federal highway administration (FHWA) regional office for concurrence of eligibility with ATP 2.

2. Project Costs and Local Funding Match

Estimate as closely as possible, costs of your project for each of the following activities and describe the sources and amounts of your projects assured local funds.

-land acquisition	-easements	-planning	-engineering
-construction	-staffing	-operation	-other

Federal funds request must be at least \$50,000 and can only be used for construction purposes. All pre-construction and ancillary costs are the responsibility of the sponsoring agency. For the project to be competitive, the applicant will need to commit to at least a twenty percent cash match of the construction costs. Applicants unable to commit matching funds are encouraged to contact any one of the persons listed in "Application Guidelines" Section 6 to discuss alternatives.

There are substantial federal processing requirements that come with federal funds; therefore it is not feasible for Mn/DOT or the applicant to use enhancement funds for projects that have a federal share smaller than \$50,000. Applicants can bundle projects together to elevate the total cost to \$50,000. An example could be signing and lighting different bike trails in several communities.

3. Facility Operation and Maintenance*

Describe assurance of operation and maintenance of the property and/or facility for the useful life of the improvement. State the project(s) estimated useful life.

The applicant must agree to operate and maintain the facilities constructed with enhancement funding for the useful life of the improvement. Most physical construction projects have a useful life of 20 years. Bridge construction and total reconstruction projects typically have useful lives of 50 years. The applicant must also agree to not change the use of the right-of-way acquisitions without the written approval from FHWA.

**A long-term maintenance agreement will be included as a part of the funding award.*

4. Submitting Agency

Indicate the project sponsor.

State statutes require all federal funds allocated to Minnesota be accepted and distributed by a designated state agency. Mn/DOT is the state agency designated to administer enhancement funds. Cities over 5,000 population, counties, state agencies, and Indian reservations are eligible to submit application for these funds. Others may submit projects provided they are sponsored by one of the above agencies.

5. Relationship to the Transportation System

Describe the relationship between the proposed project and the past or present transportation system. Address the issues of function, proximity, and expected impacts described below.

Enhancement projects are to have substantial relationships to the transportation system. Such relationships include:

1. Function of the project

Projects must have a connection to transportation or meet some primary need of transportation system users. Transportation services provided by the project must be made available to the public at no charge.

2. Proximity to existing system*

Project must be contiguous to or within site of a current transportation system.

3. Impact on overall transportation system

Projects must deal with the interrelationships between transportation systems/users and the surrounding environment. How does the project enhance the current transportation system?

**Proximity alone does not constitute a substantial relationship to the intermodal transportation system. All three relationships must be addressed in the application.*

6. Transportation Mitigation Projects

Describe any aspect of your project that may be considered mitigation of an existing or proposed transportation project.

Enhancement funds are not be used to mitigate impacts caused by other transportation projects.

APPENDIX B: PROJECT RANKING

Applicant must address all four of the following criteria:

1. Impact on the Transportation System

Score = 0-20POINTS

Describe the impact of your project and its relationship to the existing transportation system.

Projects with anticipated high levels of use that demonstrate strong relationships and function with the transportation system would be awarded the most points. Higher scores will also be given to projects that can demonstrate substantial positive impacts on the transportation systems and its users including safety, economic development and aesthetic/environmental improvements.

2. Part of a Larger Project Concept

Score= 0-10 POINTS

Describe the relationship between the activities proposed in this project and any larger projects or conceptual comprehensive plan. Why is this project important to a larger project concept (if any) or comprehensive plan?

Multi-dimensional projects and projects that use enhancement funding as a part of a larger, unified or comprehensive project(s) have the potential to score better on this criteria than stand alone projects. For example, an application for bicycle facility improvement that is the final link of a larger bike route system, or an application for an interpretive facility, which completes a larger complex, will be given higher weighting.

3. Planning Integration/Quality

Score = 0-50 POINTS

Outline the planning that has been undertaken in preparation prior to submitting the application. Include descriptions of the process and any integration of this project with other planning efforts. Outline your entire planning process and describe where you are currently in the process.

The intent of these criteria is not merely to have the project listed in a plan. Applicants having well thought out and well designed projects will receive higher scores. Projects showing a relationship to other activities, programs, or facilities will also score higher. Applicants should address the need for right of way, what environmental and project issues may be discussed in the Project Memo, the project timeline, what impacts there are to adjacent properties, and alternatives considered.

4. Financial Considerations

Score = 0-20 POINTS

Describe the amount of match, and the variety of non-federal funding sources that are, or will be, a part of this project. Describe the commitment of the local share.

Preference will be given to projects exhibiting a high degree of assurance the project will be delivered within a specific time frame. Part of this assurance is reflected in the guarantee and amount of local match. Applicants that do not obtain resolutions from appropriate entities sponsoring the project will not be accepted.

Total maximum score a project can receive is 100 points.

**APPENDIX C
Transportation Enhancement Application Cover Page**

Instructions:	Complete and return thirteen copies to Joe McKinnon, Planning Engineer, MNDOT, 3920 Highway 2 West, Bemidji, MN 56601
Deadline:	Postmarked no later than January 18, 2012 for funding of projects to be constructed in 2014 or 2015
Have you applied for enhancement funding from ATP 2 previously?	YES or NO, If yes, when did you submit the application?

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applicant							Date
Project Name:							
Mailing Address:							
City:		State:		Zip Code:		County:	
Contact Person:				Title:			Phone:()

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Manager/Coordinator:	Title:	Phone: ()
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Eligible activity in application (check one only):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Scenic or Historic Highway Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation of abandoned railway corridors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Control/removal of outdoor advertising.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acquisition of scenic easements and/or scenic/historic sites.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Archaeological planning and research.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Landscaping and other scenic beautifications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mitigation of water pollution caused by highway runoff or projects to reduce vehicle caused wildlife mortality.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic preservation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safety education activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rehabilitation and operation of transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals).	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establishment of transportation museums.

Costs		Project Year: Please indicate	
Amounts requested:		2014 _____	
Local match:		2015 _____	
Total project cost		2014 or 2015 _____	

Checklist

Project Description (including Budget Sheet)	Site Map
Narrative Responding to Qualifying Criteria	Resolutions (Submittal and Maintenance)
Narrative Responding to Project Ranking Criteria	Photographs
Project Location Map (s)	

Signature of Authorized Individual	Title	Date
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BUDGET BREAKDOWN

A. Construction Costs (eligible for Enhancement Funding)	\$ _____
B. Acquisition-Related Costs (legal and appraisal fees, etc. - not eligible for enhancement funding)	\$ _____
C. Administrative Costs (preliminary design, engineering, architectural fees – not eligible for enhancement funding)	\$ _____
D. Total cost of proposed project: Lines A, B, and C Totaled:	\$ _____
E. Items not eligible for enhancement funding: Lines B and C Total:	\$ _____
F. Total of eligible costs (minimum of \$50,000): Line A:	\$ _____
G. Applicants contribution towards the eligible enhancement project costs:	\$ _____
H. Total amount requested in enhancement funds: (Lines F – G):	\$ _____

APPENDIX E

Resolution Accepting Responsibility as the Sponsoring Agency

Be it resolved that (sponsoring agency) _____ act as sponsoring agency for a Transportation Enhancements project identified as _____ and acknowledges herewith that it is willing to be the project sponsor; knowing full well that such sponsorship includes a willingness to secure and guarantee the local share of costs associated with this project and responsibility for seeing this project through to its completion, with compliance of all applicable laws, rules and regulations.

Be it further resolved that (name of primary contact person) _____ is hereby authorized to act as agent on behalf of this applicant.

Agreement to Maintain Facility

WHEREAS: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires that states agree to operate and maintain facilities constructed with federal transportation funds for the useful life of the improvement and not change the use of right of way acquired without prior approval from the FHWA; and

WHEREAS: Transportation enhancement projects receive federal funding from the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Program (STP) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991; and

WHEREAS: The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) has determined that for projects implemented with transportation enhancement funds, this requirement should be applied to the project sponsor; and

WHEREAS: (City, County or Agency Name) _____ is the project sponsor for the transportation enhancement project identified as _____.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Project Sponsor hereby agrees to assume full responsibility for the operation and maintenance of property and facilities related to the aforementioned transportation enhancement project.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by _____ on this _____ day of _____ 20_____.
(City , County or Agency Name)

SIGNED:

WITNESSED:

(Signature)

(Signature)

(Title)

(Title)