

# REGIONAL CALL FOR PROJECTS

## SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

### TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE

### CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM

The Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) Transportation Policy Board will select projects for funding in the Skagit region at their meeting in July 2023. The funding decision will select projects for Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), an STBG set-aside called Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA) and Carbon Reduction Program (CR) federal funds. For this project selection, each project will be evaluated based on approved criteria and weights.

The Skagit Council of Governments, as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Skagit County, has been given the authority by Washington state to select projects for funding using these sources of federal funds. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has a summary of these funding sources on their website, along with the funding formula used statewide to allocate funds and the role of MPOs in the process. Following are links to each WSDOT webpage for these funding programs:

- [Surface Transportation Block Grant Program](#)
- [Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside](#)
- [Carbon Reduction Program](#) (Federal Highway Administration link; WSDOT webpage pending)

SCOG last selected projects for federal funding in 2021. At that time, the Transportation Policy Board selected projects for \$3.2 million in funding through STBG and TA, with additional projects totaling \$1.5 million selected for the contingency list. There was no selection for CR, as the program was not created until late 2021.

## FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Funding levels to the Skagit region change year to year as federal allocations change, projects obligate or deobligate funds, and projects are deprogrammed. Future funding available is estimated with every project selection process at SCOG, with project-selection decisions based on these estimates. Selection decisions are contingent upon federal authorizations and appropriations.

Estimates of funds available for the 2023 project selection are derived using past allocations and obligations for the Skagit region. Future anticipated allocations through the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (2028–2029), Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (2024–2029) and Carbon Reduction Program (2024–2028) are estimated to be available through the Call for Projects. Programming projects after selection is expected to align with the ranges of years for each program identified in this paragraph, though may be adjusted to other years in SCOG’s Regional Transportation Improvement Program if practicable.

### SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

For Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funding, a total of \$5.50 million should be selected for projects. A minimum of \$2,090,000 should be selected in the Urban Medium Area, a minimum of \$570,000 should be selected in the Urban Small Area, and a minimum of \$640,000 should be selected in the Rural

Area. \$2,200,000 may be selected in any area (urban areas or Rural Area). Thresholds for all urban and rural areas are estimated based on anticipated funding that must be used in these geographies, per federal requirements.

Estimated Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funding available through the Call for Projects is included in the following table.

Urban Medium Area (minimum)	Urban Small Area (minimum)	Rural Area (minimum)	Any Area (Urban Areas or Rural Area)	Total Available
\$2,090,000	\$570,000	\$640,000	\$2,200,000	\$5,500,000

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE**

For Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside funding, a total of \$1.42 million should be selected for projects. A minimum of \$300,000 should be selected in the Urban Medium Area, a minimum of \$0 should be selected in the Urban Small Area, and a minimum of \$440,000 should be selected in the Rural Area. \$680,000 may be selected in any area (urban areas or Rural Area). Thresholds for all urban and rural areas are estimated based on anticipated funding that must be used in these geographies, per federal requirements.

Estimated Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside funding available through the Call for Projects is included in the following table.

Urban Medium Area (minimum)	Urban Small Area (minimum)	Rural Area (minimum)	Any Area (Urban Areas or Rural Area)	Total Available
\$300,000	\$0	\$440,000	\$680,000	\$1,420,000

**CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM**

For Carbon Reduction Program funding, a total of \$1.49 million should be selected for projects. A minimum of \$560,000 should be selected in the Urban Medium Area, a minimum of \$380,000 should be selected in the Urban Small Area, and a minimum of \$550,000 should be selected in the Rural Area. Unlike STBG and TA, there is no Any Area funding that can be used in any urban or rural areas. Thresholds for all urban and rural areas are estimated based on anticipated funding that must be used in these geographies, per federal requirements.

Estimated Carbon Reduction Program funding available through the Call for Projects is included in the following table.

Urban Medium Area (minimum)	Urban Small Area (minimum)	Rural Area (minimum)	Total Available
\$560,000	\$380,000	\$550,000	\$1,490,000

**NON-ROADWAY FUNDING SET-ASIDE**

At the discretion of the Transportation Policy Board, a minimum of 5% of STBG funding is anticipated to be set-aside for non-roadway projects. Examples of eligible non-roadway projects include: transit

capital projects; ferry boats and terminals; and safe routes to school programs. A complete list of eligible STBG projects, including non-roadway projects, is located at [23 USC 133\(b\)](#).

This set-aside is not specific to any one mode of transportation and is intended to ensure a minimum level of funding to projects that may not otherwise be competitive with roadway projects due to the criteria and weights used in the evaluation process. Non-roadway projects may also be eligible for funding through Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside and/or Carbon Reduction Program if they meet eligibility requirements of these other funding sources.

There is no federal nor state requirement that funds be reserved in this way for non-roadway projects. The 5% set-aside is a regional decision consistent with past project selection processes at SCOG to set aside funding in this manner.

## **FEDERAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION AND CRITICAL RURAL FREIGHT CORRIDORS**

Most roadway projects can only be funded using STBG funds if the roadway has a federal functional classification. Projects on roads classified as Rural Minor Collectors or local roads can only receive up to 15% of the Rural Area funding (\$96,000) and Urban Small Area funding (\$85,500) per the special rule at [23 USC 133\(g\)](#), and [Critical Rural Freight Corridors](#) designated under [23 USC 167\(e\)](#) also qualify.

Transportation Alternatives and Carbon Reduction Program projects do not require federal functional classification.

## **APPLICATION FORMS**

Application forms include project details for each project that will be considered for funding. Each project being submitted requires a separate application form. There is no limit to how many forms applicants submit to SCOG.

- [Project Application Form](#)
- [Contingency List Project Application Form](#)
- [Project Endorsement Form](#) (required for every project)

## **TIMEFRAME TO SUBMIT**

Applications will be accepted by SCOG from April 21–May 12. Any incomplete applications will be flagged by SCOG staff and applicants will be notified as soon as possible of any required materials not submitted. May 26 is the final deadline to submit any application materials to complete application packets.

## **HOW TO SUBMIT**

Application materials must be submitted to Mark Hamilton at SCOG, by email only, at [markh@scog.net](mailto:markh@scog.net). Paper application materials will not be accepted. All applicants will receive confirmation of materials received via email.

## PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA & WEIGHTS

Projects submitted will be evaluated from May 15–24. Project evaluations will be based on approved criteria and weights. These criteria and weights were approved by the Transportation Policy Board at their April 19 meeting.

The categories for the evaluation criteria, and their associated points, are listed below:

- Economic Vitality – **10 points**
- Safety – **25 points**
- Mobility – **15 points**
- Regional Nature – **10 points**
- Project Funding & Readiness – **15 points**
- Preservation & Maintenance – **15 points**
- Technical Advisory Committee Priority – **10 points**

**TOTAL: 100 POINTS**

**BONUS<sup>1</sup>: +5 POINTS**

Evaluation criteria, and points available per criterion, are included in the Project Application Form. Technical Advisory Committee members are not permitted to evaluate any project from the government they represent. The final action of selecting projects for funding will be taken by the Transportation Policy Board at their July 19 meeting.

## CONTINGENCY LIST

A contingency list of projects will be prepared for projects that can easily move forward if the Skagit region is expected to fall short of its annual obligation target. Inclusion of any project on the contingency list does not guarantee the project will be funded. Projects on the contingency list must be able to obligate funding quickly, often in less than six weeks. Sponsors of contingency list projects may also submit the proposed project as part of the general Call for Projects.

Contingency list submissions will be prioritized according to the following criteria:

- What is the regional issue the project will address?
- What is the desired outcome from the project?
- Does the project address an issue identified in the Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan?
- What is the project’s expected level of regional impact?
- Can the project reasonably obligate funding in six weeks if necessary?

Projects proposed for the contingency list will be distributed to the Technical Advisory Committee for evaluation. A prioritized contingency list, with rank-ordered projects, will be recommended to the

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<sup>1</sup> Bonus applies to project sponsors that utilized SCOG Obligation Authority Procedures in 2021 or 2022, strategies #1 or #2, by moving projects forward and obligating federal funds by August 1 of the respective calendar year.

Transportation Policy Board for consideration. Technical Advisory Committee members are not permitted to evaluate any project from their own organization.

## QUESTIONS

Any questions about the Call for Projects should be submitted in writing to Mark Hamilton at [markh@scog.net](mailto:markh@scog.net). Written questions received, if any, will be posted to the SCOG website with staff responses.

## SCHEDULE

February 28, 2023:.....	Non-Motorized Advisory Committee recommendations (if any) to Technical Advisory Committee on evaluation process
March 2, 2023:.....	Technical Advisory Committee recommends evaluation process, including evaluation criteria and weights, to Transportation Policy Board
March 15, 2023:.....	Transportation Policy Board discusses Technical Advisory Committee recommendation on proposed evaluation process and releases evaluation process for public review and comment
March 17-29, 2023:.....	Tentative public comment period on proposed evaluation process
April 19, 2023:.....	Transportation Policy Board approves evaluation process, after consideration of any public comments received
April 21-May 12, 2023:.....	Applications submitted to SCOG
May 15-24, 2023:.....	Evaluation of applications
May 23, 2023:.....	Project presentations to Technical Advisory Committee from project sponsors
May 24, 2023:.....	Project evaluations due to SCOG from Technical Advisory Committee
May 30, 2023:.....	Non-Motorized Advisory Committee recommendations (if any) to Technical Advisory Committee on project selection
June 1, 2023:.....	Technical Advisory Committee recommends project selection to Transportation Policy Board

- June 21, 2023:..... Transportation Policy Board discusses Technical Advisory Committee recommendation on proposed project selection and releases project selection for public review and comment
  
- June 23–July 5, 2023:..... Tentative public comment period on recommended project selection from Technical Advisory Committee
  
- July 19, 2023:..... Transportation Policy Board makes project-selection decision, after consideration of any public comments received