

REGIONAL CALL FOR PROJECTS

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

The Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) Transportation Policy Board will select projects for funding in the Skagit region at their meeting in July/August 2021. The funding decision will select projects for Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), Transportation Alternatives Set-aside (TA) and potentially Highway Improvement Program (HIP) 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 three 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 sources:

- [Surface Transportation Block Grant Program](#)
- [Transportation Alternatives](#)
- [Highway Infrastructure Program](#)

SCOG last selected projects for federal funding in 2019. At that time, the Transportation Policy Board selected projects for \$5.9 million in funding through STBG and HIP, with additional projects totaling \$3.3 million selected for the contingency list. In addition, the Transportation Policy Board continued the practice of setting aside 10% of STBG funds for SCOG administration out to 2025.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Funding levels to the Skagit region change year to year as federal allocations change, projects obligate or de-obligate 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 2021 project selection are derived using past allocations and obligations for the Skagit region. Future anticipated allocations through the Surface Transportation Block Grant program (2026 & 2027), Transportation Alternatives (2024–2027) and a potential one-time allocation from the Highway Infrastructure Program (2024) are estimated to be available through the Call for Projects.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT

For Surface Transportation Block Grant program funding, a total of \$2.81 million should be selected for projects. A minimum \$790,000 should be selected in Rural Areas and \$2,020,000 may be selected in any area (Urban Areas or Rural Areas). Due to the estimated Urban Areas funding already programmed by SCOG in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, there is not a need to select additional projects in Urban Areas, though these projects may utilize funds that could go to either Urban Areas or

Rural Areas. Thresholds for Urban Areas and Rural Areas are estimated based on anticipated funding that must be used in these areas, per federal requirements.

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

Urban Areas (minimum)	Rural Areas (minimum)	Any Area (Urban Areas or Rural Areas)	Total Available
\$0	\$790,000	\$2,020,000	\$2,810,000

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

For Transportation Alternatives funding, a total of \$660,000 should be selected for projects. The estimated \$660,000 may be selected in any area (Urban Areas or Rural Areas). The minimum thresholds for Urban Areas and Rural Areas are estimated based on anticipated funding that must be used in these areas, per federal requirements.

Minimum estimated Transportation Alternatives funding available through the Call for Projects is included in the following table.

Urban Areas (minimum)	Rural Areas (minimum)	Any Area (Urban Areas or Rural Areas)	Total Available
\$0	\$0	\$660,000	\$660,000

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

SCOG staff is waiting to hear from WSDOT Local Programs Division staff about whether or not funding will be made available to SCOG through the Highway Infrastructure Program. As of February 2021, WSDOT and Federal Highway Administration staffs plan to meet to discuss eligibility requirements for this funding program. SCOG staff expects to receive more information from WSDOT during the project selection process, and will incorporate HIP funds into the 2021 selection process if these funds are allocated to SCOG for project selection.

NON-ROADWAY FUNDING SET-ASIDE

At the discretion of the Transportation Policy Board, a minimum of 10% of STBG funding is anticipated to be set-aside for non-roadway projects. Examples of eligible non-roadway projects include: transit capital projects; recreational trails; 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 if they meet eligibility requirements under this funding source.

There is no federal nor state requirement that funds be set-aside in this way for non-roadway projects. The 10% set-aside is a regional decision that has continued in past project selection processes at SCOG.

FEDERAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Most roadway projects can only be funded using STBG and HIP funds if the roadway has a federal functional classification. Projects on Rural Minor Collectors can only receive up to 15% of the Rural Areas funding (\$118,519) per the special rule at [23 USC 133\(g\)](#).

Transportation Alternatives 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 23–May 14. 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 28 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. 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 17–26. Project evaluations will be based on approved criteria and weights. These criteria and weights were approved by the Transportation Policy Board at their April 21 meeting.

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

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

TOTAL: **100 POINTS**

BONUS¹: +10 POINTS

Individual 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/August meeting.

CONTINGENCY LIST

A contingency list of projects will be prepared for projects that can easily move forward if the 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 6 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 6 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 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. Written questions received, if any, will be posted to the SCOG website with staff responses.

¹ Bonus applies to project sponsors that utilized SCOG Obligation Authority Procedures in 2020, strategies #1 or #2, by moving projects forward and obligating federal funds by August 1, 2020.

SCHEDULE

March 2, 2021:.....	Non-Motorized Advisory Committee recommendations (if any) to Technical Advisory Committee on evaluation process
March 4, 2021:.....	Technical Advisory Committee recommends evaluation process, including evaluation criteria and weights, to Transportation Policy Board
March 17, 2021:.....	Transportation Policy Board discusses Technical Advisory Committee recommendation on proposed evaluation process and releases evaluation process for public review and comment
March 19–April 2, 2021:	Public comment period on proposed evaluation process
April 21, 2021:.....	Transportation Policy Board approves evaluation process, after consideration of any public comments received
April 23–May 14, 2021:.....	Applications submitted to SCOG
May 17–26, 2021:	Evaluation of applications
May 25, 2021:.....	Project presentations to Technical Advisory Committee from project sponsors
May 26, 2021:.....	Project evaluations due to SCOG from Technical Advisory Committee
June 1, 2021:.....	Non-Motorized Advisory Committee recommendations (if any) to Technical Advisory Committee on project selection
June 3, 2021:.....	Technical Advisory Committee recommends project selection to Transportation Policy Board
June 16, 2021:.....	Transportation Policy Board discusses Technical Advisory Committee recommendation on proposed project selection
June 18–July 2, 2021:.....	Tentative public comment period on recommended project selection from Technical Advisory Committee
July 21 or August 18, 2021:.....	Transportation Policy Board makes project-selection decision, after consideration of any public comments received