

FY 2021

Transportation Alternatives Program

INSTRUCTIONS

AND GUIDELINES

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) APPLICATION

- I. Conception
 - A. Determine a project scope of work. Thorough planning efforts are necessary because scope changes will rarely be considered.
 - B. Review the project for eligibility. The project must meet at least one of the eligible activities.
(See the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Activities on page 2)
- II. Complete the Project Application
 - A. The order of the application that you send to the Huntsville MPO should be as follows:
 - 1) Cover Letter, 2) Application Cover Page, 3) General Information, 4) Project Description Information, 5) Project Budget and 6) Attachments.
 - B. Explanations should be thorough, yet concise. Fully complete applications receive higher ratings. Do not provide voluminous information.
 - C. If a section is not applicable to your proposed project, mark "NA" in the appropriate space.
 - D. Complete the application in its original format.
 - E. If mailed, attachments larger than 8½" x 11" must be folded to the 8½" x 11" format so that they can be accessed when stapled in the upper left corner.
- III. Prepare for the MPO **one** original project application. Keep a copy for your files.
- IV. If mailed, staple each project application in upper left corner. **Please do not send a bound project application.**
- V. Email or mail the project application to:

Email to:

Dennis Madsen
Manager, Huntsville Metropolitan Planning
Organization
dennis.madsen@huntsvilleal.gov

Mail to:

Huntsville Metropolitan Planning
Organization
ATTN: Dennis Madsen
P.O. Box 308
Huntsville, AL 35804

by 5:00 PM on June 25, 2021

NOTE: Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for funding. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. Applications should be sent only to Dennis Madsen.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) ACTIVITIES

Eligible Activities: Eligible activities under TAP are as follows;

1. Construction of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian lighting, downtown streetscape (combination of sidewalks, pedestrian lighting and landscaping), and other transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
2. Construction of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
3. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.
4. Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
5. Community improvement activities, including-
 - i. inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising;
 - ii. historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;
 - iii. vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control; and
 - iv. archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under Title 23.
6. Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to-
 - i. address storm water management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff.
 - ii. reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.

PROJECT APPLICATION ANALYSIS AND SELECTION

The following 5 steps are utilized by ALDOT to analyze the project applications and to determine which applications get selected for TAP funding. The first two steps are carried out by the MPO:

- Step 1. The first review, conducted by the TAP Eligibility Committee, is to determine project eligibility. An application must meet the following criteria for eligibility to be considered for funding:
 - Application is submitted on time.
 - Proposed work complies with one or more of the 6 eligible TAP activities.
 - An application must include all requested information.
- Step 2. The second review, conducted by the TAP Review Committee, rates and ranks all of the eligible TAP applications.
- Step 3. The applications are then approved for funding by the Transportation Director and/or the Governor.
- Step 4. The Governor or the Transportation Director notifies the sponsor, in writing, that the application has been approved for funding.
- Step 5. The Bureau of Transportation Planning & Modal Programs notifies sponsor of nonselection and of applications that have been deemed not eligible.

REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

- For additional information concerning TAP from the FHWA's perspective, go to https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/guidance/guidance_2016.cfm This website provides FHWA'S Guidelines for TAP eligibility and other vital information concerning TAP.
- Since TAP funds are federal funds, all applicable federal regulations apply. Failure to follow federal regulations will jeopardize funding.
- The project must have a local governmental sponsor and must be submitted by the local government sponsor. The MPO and ALDOT will not accept applications submitted by private non-profit agencies, coalitions, consultants, or grant writers. Also, due to limited funding, a local government sponsor can submit only one application for possible funding.
- The project sponsor (a town, city, or county in the MPO) must have the fiscal, managerial and engineering capabilities to manage a project consistent with federal and state requirements.
 - Sponsor is responsible for developing plans, specifications and cost estimate (all preliminary engineering activities) in accordance with ALDOT's latest requirements. **Time Limit:** The SPONSOR shall have no more than two (2) years from the date of execution of the project agreement to have the project authorized by ALDOT. If this stipulation is not met, ALDOT will notify the SPONSOR in writing that the project will be terminated.
 - Sponsor is responsible for compliance with all federal design regulations applicable for the type project (i.e. AASHTO Guide for Bicycle Facilities, ADA, Architectural Guidelines, etc.).
 - Sponsor is responsible for 20 percent of the project cost (there is no allowance for use of donated property or in-kind service as the local share).
 - Sponsor is responsible for any environmental assessments which may be required.
 - Sponsor is responsible for professional project oversight (construction engineering and inspection) and it is eligible for federal reimbursement.
 - Any cost incurred relating to this project which is determined to be not eligible will be borne and paid for by the sponsor.
- The planned intent of the project must be for public use. Admission fees are discouraged, but are allowed if used for maintenance of the facility.
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requirements and USDOT regulations must be met.
- **The Huntsville MPO has a maximum cost amount for a TAP project which is \$400,000.00. Applications that exceed this amount will be ruled ineligible.**
- **The federal share of a TAP project cost is 80% and the sponsor's share is 20%.**

- Only property acquisition, actual construction costs and construction engineering and inspection are eligible for federal participation.
- Professional fees (architectural, engineering, landscaping, etc.) for preliminary engineering are not eligible for reimbursement. Also, administration cost for the project are not eligible for reimbursement.
- Change of use or ownership during the expected life of the project is strongly discouraged. No change in use or ownership is permitted without written justification and written concurrence from ALDOT. In the event of a change of ownership, the sponsor can expect to reimburse an appropriate share of the federal funds.
- The program is a cost reimbursement program, not a grant. The sponsor must pay the project expenses and request reimbursement for eligible expenditures from ALDOT.
- Any cost incurred prior to written authorization from ALDOT is not eligible for reimbursement. Sponsor must receive approval, in writing, from ALDOT prior to advertising for bids. Sponsor must also receive approval, in writing, from ALDOT prior to awarding the contract.
- A TAP Project must be let to competitive bid unless prior approval is obtained from ALDOT and FHWA to use another method of construction, such as force account.
- A TAP project cannot result in private gain or profit for an individual or private group.
- **The project must be authorized within two years from the date of execution of the project agreement. If the sponsor does not meet this requirement, then the project funds will be withdrawn and the funds will then be used for other TAP projects.**
- ALDOT endorses, but does not require, the use of Xeriscaping techniques and the use of native plants for TAP projects that include landscaping in their proposed scope of work. Xeriscaping is the application of sound horticultural practices in the development of quality landscapes using native and drought tolerant plants that conserve water and protect the environment.
- **Project oversight (construction engineering and inspection) is an eligible TAP activity. If the sponsor chooses to hire a consultant for project oversight and pay for the consultant with federal funds through the project, then they must follow ALDOT's latest consultant selection procedures.**

- Sidewalk – The portion of a highway, road, or street designated for exclusive use by pedestrians. Sidewalks must comply with ADA guidelines and must have a minimum clear width of 4 feet.
- Bike/Ped Facility, shared-use or multi-use path is an off-road facility developed for use by non-motorized vehicular users such as bicyclists, pedestrians, skaters, wheelchairs, runners, etc. Such facilities are commonly designed for two-way travel. The recommended paved width for a two-directional shared-use path is 10 feet. In some instances, a reduced width of 8 feet can be adequate. Where use is expected to be high, the width of the path should be increased to 12 or 14 feet. The path must comply with ADA guidelines. The purpose of bike/ped facilities must be for transportation, not recreation.
- Please include in the application the length in linear feet of the sidewalk or the bike/ped facility that is to be constructed with TAP funds.

ELIGIBLE ITEMS

Modest Parking Facilities in conjunction with a trail head where the trail is several miles long.

Lighting when it is decorative landscape or pedestrian lighting. **Lighting is limited to 30% of the project cost.**

Signs if there is a direct relationship to the project. Examples include historic interpretation or destination/distance/direction signs.

Fencing for safety purposes only.

Paving is approved on a case-by-case basis for repair of a street that may have been unavoidably damaged in the course of the TAP project.

Drainage is approved on a case-by-case basis where it is required for construction of the project. Drainage is limited to a small percentage of the overall project.

Project Oversight – Construction engineering and inspection. (CE&I) Examples include: certified concrete, architectural, landscaping, and construction inspection, etc. **Oversight is limited to 15% of the project cost.** If the sponsor chooses to hire a consultant for project oversight, they must follow ALDOT's latest consultant selection procedures.

Streetscape Improvements are eligible and can include items such as sidewalk replacement, landscaping, pedestrian lighting, etc. These enhancements must be located in the downtown area (central business district in front of store fronts). **This is the only instance where replacement of deteriorated sidewalks is an eligible item.**

INELIGIBLE ITEMS

Vegetation Management project must include the purchase and application of herbicides and will be let to bid. No force amount will be allowed nor the purchase of herbicides only.

Hardscapes (e.g. signs at entrances to cities and towns, fencing, waterfalls, towers, flag poles, statues, etc.)

Landscaping and scenic enhancement as an independent project.

Landscaping along minor roads/streets (residential areas)

Street lighting, traffic signals, flashers

Parking lots (stand alone)

Amphitheaters

Pavilions

Recreational trails, walking tracks, circular paths, etc.

Enhancements (such as the installation of exercise equipment, trails, sidewalks, walkways) in parks, playgrounds

Curb and gutter (unless absolutely necessary for sidewalk construction or as an integral part of a streetscape)

Preliminary engineering design (consulting engineering fees, architectural & professional landscaping fees)

Curb & gutter islands

Sidewalks along dirt roads

Sidewalks in residential areas (unless the sidewalks lead to businesses, schools, public use facilities, etc.)

Sidewalk rehabilitation (repair of damaged sidewalks) outside of the downtown CBD.

Replication of historic structures

Legal fees, realtor fees

Architectural & professional landscaping fees

Utility relocation

Operations or maintenance activities

Annual plants

Roadway & bridge construction (resurfacing, milling, concrete islands, etc.)

Utilized as matching funds for other federal projects

Enhancements on proposed projects, streets, roads, etc.

In-Kind Services cannot be used for local match

Profit, overhead and taxes

Workmanship warranties

Safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicycles

Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites

Scenic or historic highway programs

Transportation museums

Safety related infrastructure

TAP funds cannot be used as a supplement to another funded project (such as a roadway project)