

Transportation Alternatives FAQ

	Question	Response
Project Maintenance	Who is responsible for operation and maintenance (O&M) of TA projects?	It will be the responsibility of the sponsoring agency to operate and maintain the facility, including facilities located within MDT rights-of-way. O&M responsibility could change (by agreement with MDT) during project development, but the sponsoring entity will assume responsibility from the beginning. For pavement preservation projects, if the facility is currently owned and maintained by MDT, MDT will consider retaining maintenance responsibility.
Match	Why will a match be required for local off-system projects, but not on-system projects? Does this mean MDT favors on-system projects?	<p>A match is required for most TA projects as per federal law (23 U.S.C. 120).</p> <p>Per federal law, eligible projects within reservation land will not need to have a match provided by the local entity sponsor.</p> <p>MDT will follow its standard match policies for programs administered by MDT which is to provide the match for all on-system projects (projects located on a designated state highway system and within MDT's right of way. Responsibility for maintenance does not factor into whether MDT can provide the match.)</p> <p>NOTE: Due to current stresses on the Highway Special Revenue Account, projects having State matching funds could be delayed or canceled in the event that needed State revenue is unavailable. Replacing State matching funds with local matching funds should be considered to increase the likelihood of your project advancing to completion. A project's source of matching funds will not affect it's ranking in the selection process.</p> <p>Whether a project is on or off-system is not part of the selection criteria, and will have no effect on project scoring. Communities are encouraged to nominate projects that fit local priorities.</p> <p>Off-system projects outside of reservation lands will be required to provide a local match of 13.42%.</p>
Match	Will the match requirement be reduced for projects that are managed by local governments or have volunteer labor?	No partial, soft, or in-kind matches will be accepted. A cash match is required.

Match	Will MDT absorb the match for projects that would have formerly have been eligible under SAFETEA-LU programs such as CTEP and SRTS?	No, MDT will not absorb the match for any off-system projects.
Project Management	Who will be responsible for project design and administration?	MDT will decide on a project by project basis whether to use MDT staff or consultant services. MDT's Consultant Design Bureau will administer most TA projects, though some may be administered by in-house MDT Engineering staff.
Project Management	Can my community manage the project rather than MDT?	Communities that become certified through the Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) program may manage their own federal aid projects.
Fund Allocation	Why not continue to allocate funding to local entities as was done in the CTEP process?	Per the FAST Act TA funds must be obligated through a competitive process (23 U.S.C. 133(h)(2)), MDT, therefore cannot allocate funds as CTEP funds were allocated.
Fund Allocation	How will funds be distributed fairly?	Beyond the population distribution requirements in the FAST Act, MDT will strive to ensure fair geographic distribution of projects and balance between urban and rural areas (i.e. not all projects in one region of the state.)
Fund Allocation	How does population figure in the allocation process?	Funding will be allocated to improvements in areas consistent with the FAST Act, as follows: 25%-areas with population over 5,000 25%-areas with population under 5,000 50%-available for use in any area of the state. <i>23 USC 213(c)</i>
Fund Allocation	Why not allocate all funds based on population?	TA funds must be obligated to eligible projects submitted by eligible entities through a competitive process. (23 U.S.C. 213)(c)(4)(A). Allocating funds based entirely on population is not compliant with federal law. Projects will be awarded based on the competitive application process.

Cost	How will engineering and administration costs be determined?	Engineering and administration costs should be included as project costs in the application. For the purposes of the application and estimating costs of the project, local agencies should determine and add preliminary engineering to the project estimate. On previous TA projects we've seen PE costs in the range of 20-30% of construction costs. Construction administration costs of 12-20% of the estimated construction cost should also be added to the project cost estimate. These costs will be charged to the individual project. These costs will not be a consideration during project selection, but will be added to the construction estimate to determine the total project cost.
Cost	How will cost overruns be handled?	MDT will keep the local project sponsor informed of updated cost estimates throughout the development of the project and when bids are received. If a local project sponsor has a cap on their local funding amount MDT can design a project with additive alternates in order to not exceed the local funding amount. Communities should plan their budgets with a contingency included. MDT typically awards projects in accordance with our Guidelines for Award. These guidelines allow MDT to award projects from between 10% to 30% over the Engineer's Estimate depending on the estimate amount. If overruns are encountered on a project with local funding, they will typically require additional local match at the 13.42% matching share.
Cost	How will MDT's Indirect Costs (IDC) be handled?	MDT is required by MCA Section 17-1-106 to identify and recover its indirect costs. These costs are in addition to direct project costs. The 13.42% local match is subject to the indirect cost rate. The current indirect cost rate is 10.97% for federal fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017). This rate may change yearly.
Cost	What size of project will be considered?	Traditional TA projects will be capped at \$1,500,000 of requested TA funding including all phases (PE, CN, and CE, etc.) and contingency and indirect costs. Pavement Preservation projects will be capped at \$200,000 of requested TA funding including all phases (PE, CN, and CE, etc.) and contingency and indirect costs. Projects with requested TA funding requests over this capped amount must indicate additional funds being added. If this is not done, it will be considered a fatal flaw and the project will be removed from further consideration. Typical past Traditional TA projects have been in the \$200,000 - \$500,00 range. MDT doesn't have enough history with pavement preservation projects on pedestrian facilities to give a project cost range.

Evaluation	The application states that project costs will be used as criteria-what does this mean?	<p>Project costs are only considered to determine if a project is fundable within the program. If a project has costs that exceed the annual TA funding or of a scale that prevents compliance with the suballocation provision of federal law it will not be considered. This is not an evaluation criteria that will be awarded points. This determination will be made before the scoring process begins to determine if a project advances to the scoring process.</p> <p>Eligible projects of all sizes that are fundable through the program will be considered based on the competitive application process.</p> <p>Refer to the previous section about project cost caps.</p>
Evaluation	Will the project location affect the score?	<p>For shared-use path projects within MDT right-of-way (Traditional new infrastructure projects), projects within 3 miles of the city limits of an incorporated city or within 3 miles of the geographical center of an unincorporated town will score higher than those more than 3 miles from the city limits or geographical center of a town, respectively. The reason for this is paths within 3 miles of cities/towns have shown to have a higher transportation use than paths more than 3 miles from cities/towns which tend to have more of a recreational use. Therefore we are encouraging projects that have an emphasis on transportation useage. One exception is if a project extends more than 3 miles from a city limit line or more than 3 miles from the geographical center of an unincorporated town, but the project ends at a logical destination, then that project will not have a reduced score.</p> <p>For the Pavement Preservation category, the location of the existing path and whether it is within 3 miles or more than 3 miles from a city/town will not have an affect on the score of those projects, it will only affect the score of the new infrastructure projects.</p>
Evaluation	Do projects with public involvement score higher than projects without public input?	<p>Public involvement is one part of the “project risk analysis” criteria. Projects that can demonstrate public involvement and public support will likely receive higher “project risk analysis” scores than projects that cannot.</p>
Evaluation	Will selection criteria favor projects that will serve low and middle income citizens?	<p>Individual communities are encouraged to submit projects for consideration that fit local priorities, as well as demonstrate local involvement or support. If a community has prioritized projects that support low and middle income citizens they are encouraged to submit projects that achieve those goals.</p>
Evaluation	Why aren't there specific provisions for non-infrastructure projects in the scoring?	<p>MDT feels that projects that don't have a construction cost element are covered in the scoring. This type of project that is well planned, able to demonstrate that it improves safety or ADA access and inclusion provides benefits to the local transportation environment for all users may do well in scoring.</p>

Evaluation	Why isn't there an environmental mitigation category?	The scoring criteria are designed to be general enough that a wide range of projects can demonstrate merit. If an environmental project or stormwater management is the goal a narrative can be created detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -how it fits into the local transportation plan or how it rehabilitates existing infrastructure - how it addresses safety or ADA issues - how it benefits the local transportation environment - demonstrated public involvement - complete plans with ROW acquisition issues and utilities impact
Evaluation	Can funds be used to acquire Right-of-Way?	Acquisition of Right-of-Way is eligible, however will likely not score highly on it's own given the criteria, timeline, and limited funding within the TA program.
Evaluation	Will a certain type of pavement preservation treatment score better than another type of treatment? (ex. overlay vs. fog seal vs. crack seal)	No. The committee will be looking for projects that will rehabilitate the facility and improve the surface condition and life of the facility. A thorough discussion of the proposed treatment and rational and proposed design life is expected in the application. A cost-benefit calculation of the proposed treatment vs. another treatments is encouraged.
SRTS	Why doesn't MDT renew the SRTS coordinator position.	MDT is not an eligible applicant for TA funding, as such, is not in a position to create a state SRTS coordinator position using TA funds.
Timeline	What will the timeline be for the application?	The solicitation for TA applications will be announced December 16, 2016. Applications will be due March 31, 2017. Applications will be reviewed during Spring/Summer 2017 and application will be scored and selected during Summer/Fall 2017.
Selection Team	Who will make up the selection team?	Planning, engineering, maintenance, and civil rights staff from MDT and FHWA.
Application Process	Why can't MPO's apply for funds?	MPO's are not an eligible entity for TA funds under the FAST Act (23 U.S.C. 133(h)(4)(B)). MPO's are not however barred from partnering with eligible entities such as city or county governments.
Application Process	Will MDT provide support during the application process?	Yes, MDT will be available for support through the application process.
Application Process	Can my community put in applications for more than one project?	Yes, communities may apply for multiple projects on separate applications.
Application Process	Will electronic applications be accepted?	Only electronic applications will be accepted. Details will be provided in the solicitation. Paper applications will not be accepted.

