



2026-2030 TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM (TAP) GUIDELINES

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APPLICATION SOLICITATION: JUNE 17, 2025, UNTIL OCTOBER 31, 2025





Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Goals

- WisDOT and all partners in TAP project delivery will strive to deliver projects according to the budget and timeline as outlined in complete and accurate project applications.
- WisDOT will select and administer TAP projects in a manner that best reflects national performance goals as established by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) as well as performance measures established by the State of Wisconsin and WisDOT.
- WisDOT will select, administer, and report on TAP projects to best demonstrate the benefits of quality multi-modal projects.

A special thanks to the following individuals and organizations for the front-page photos: (top row from left) Zoe Finney for WI Bike Fed; Dave Schlabowske; (bottom row from left) East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

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1. Purpose and Description

These guidelines provide direction to applicants for funding plans or projects through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) 2026-2030 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) award cycle. TAP is the State of Wisconsin's program for what is now the federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) set-aside Program. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), enacted in November 2021, replaced the FAST Act-era TA Set-Aside guidelines with enhanced funding availability and programming guidelines. Federal TA set-aside funds include all projects and activities that were previously eligible under TAP, encompassing a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, and community improvements such as historic preservation.

All TAP projects require project sponsors to pay 100% of project costs up front and are reimbursed up to 80% of approved project costs after conducting project activity. The federal funding amount on TAP projects is capped at time of award. A TAP project may not be substituted for another project. TAP projects must commence within four years of the award date.

2. Federal and State TAP Funding

Under the IIJA, federal funding in the TAP program has increased by more than 100% over FAST Act limits. Additionally, funding has been delineated by geographic population area and project location. For example, the table below reflects population areas and TA set-aside federal funding levels in the 2025 fiscal year.

Population Area	2025 Budgetary Limit
< 5,000	\$6,272,138
5,000 – 50,000	\$2,578,057
50,000 – 200,000	\$2,818,095
> 200,000	\$7,079,623

The IIJA establishes federal funding levels through federal fiscal year (FFY) 2026. Future funding levels for Wisconsin's TAP program are ultimately contingent on funding made available through federal congressional appropriations acts. After these federal levels are established, Wisconsin program funding levels for TAP and the authority to spend future federal dollars will be established through the state biennial budgeting process.

WisDOT is programming TAP projects for the 2026-2030 award cycle under the assumption that TAP will be funded approximately at State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025 levels throughout the duration of the award cycle. The department will adjust program budget and scheduling according to any future changes in the federal or state TAP funding.

The program requires Wisconsin or an MPO to obligate TAP funds using a competitive process. Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) represent urbanized areas greater than 200,000 in population. TMAs are managed by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and are listed on page 11 of these guidelines. Eligible program applicants with project proposals located within a TMA are eligible to receive funding through MPO selection, while all other sponsors outside of TMA areas compete within their respective population category.

WisDOT undertakes multi-year programming commitments to ensure that projects efficiently use Wisconsin's federal funding resources as funding is made available. Multi-year programming addresses the time necessary to select and approve projects, obtain local funding commitments, acquire real estate if applicable, and design and construct infrastructure projects. State DOTs have flexibility to distribute TAP funding among all eligible categories. WisDOT is not required to distribute TAP funds to any one specific funding category such as Safe Routes to School (SRTS) or Transportation Enhancements (TE), however, committee review and discussion ultimately recommends program awards regardless of activity type.

3. TAP Eligibility

3.1 Local Sponsor Eligibility for TAP Funding

The following entities may sponsor TAP projects: ¹

- Local governments
- Regional transportation authorities
- Transit agencies
- Natural resource or public land agencies (see description below)
- School districts, local education agencies, or schools
- Tribal governments
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) serving less than 200,000 population
- Nonprofit entities
- Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails (i.e., Regional Planning Commissions, Development Boards, etc.)
- The State of Wisconsin, at the request of an eligible entity listed above

Applicants should note the following:

- Natural resource or public land agencies include any Federal, Tribal, State, or local agency responsible for natural resources or public land administration. Examples include:
 - State or local park or forest agencies.
 - State or local fish and game or wildlife agencies.
 - U.S. Department of the Interior land management agencies.
 - U.S. Forest Service.
- Metropolitan planning organizations with a population greater than 200,000 cannot sponsor TAP projects.
- Ineligible sponsors may partner with eligible sponsors to implement TAP projects.

Eligible sponsors must guarantee matching funds to carry out the proposed project. **TAP is a reimbursement program that requires sponsors to finance the project.** For most Federal TA Set-Aside (TAP) projects, the Federal share is generally 80 percent with a 20 percent State or local match, but States can use several flexibilities. Please see the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) TA Set-Aside Implementation Guidance Federal Share and Flexibilities section to explore opportunities to increase federal cost share.

¹ Eligible Entities 23 USC 133 (h)(4)(B) - <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/23/133>

Private entities may apply for funds indirectly through an eligible public sponsor. If a private entity is providing matching project funds, a public-private agreement attached to the TAP application outlines how the private group will transfer funds to the public sponsor. TAP sponsors must guarantee that the project will be maintained.

3.2 Project Eligibility

Program applicants are encouraged to invest in projects that upgrade the condition of streets, highways, and bridges making them safe for all users, while simultaneously modernizing them so that the transportation network is accessible for all users. Doing so provides road users with better choices across all modes of travel, accommodates new and emerging technologies, and increases the system's resiliency and efficiency.

Pursuant to federal requirements as maintained under the IIJA, a proposed project must meet the following criteria to qualify for TAP funding:

- (1) The project must fit within one of the federal eligibility categories and must comply with any additional WisDOT TAP policies as outlined in these guidelines.
- (2) The project must relate to surface transportation.
- (3) The project must have an eligible sponsor.
- (4) The project must be selected through a competitive process.

Federal law permits project sponsors to use TAP funds within the following categories:

- Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation.
- Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers.
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
- Community improvement activities, including:
 - Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising.
 - Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities.
 - Vegetation management practices in transportation right-of-way (ROW); and
 - Archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project.
- Environmental mitigation activity.
- Recreational trails program.
- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program (grades K-12); and
- Planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the ROW of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.
- Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessments

Note: Equipment and materials acquisition are allowable but may be considered construction-related because federal reimbursement will only occur after installation of the materials to ensure that the project is completed.

The following former Transportation Enhancement project categories are not eligible TAP projects:

- Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists, except SRTS activities.
- Establishment of transportation museums.
- Operation of historic transportation facilities.
- Preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings, structures, or facilities that have no relation to transportation.
- Archaeological planning and research that is not related to impacts of a transportation project.
- Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites; and
- Scenic or historic highway programs.

4. State and Federal Policies

WisDOT has used the flexibility afforded to state DOTs pursuant to federal law to establish the following state policies regarding TAP project eligibility:

4.1 Bicycle-Pedestrian Facilities

WisDOT policies place considerable emphasis on bicycle and pedestrian facilities that will serve at least some utilitarian trips—such as commuting to work or school—that might otherwise be made by automobile. Note that this category includes on-road and off-road facilities. For additional information, the FHWA released updated information regarding the Implementation Guidance Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning priority for safe, comfortable, equitable, integrated multimodal infrastructure for all ages and ability. Please see the list of resources starting on page 27 at the end of the guidelines.

4.2 Outdoor Advertising and Vegetation Management

In the 2026-2030 TAP award cycle, WisDOT will not use TAP funds for outdoor advertising or stand-alone vegetation management projects.

4.3 Recreational Trails Program

TAP funds are targeted toward daily, utilitarian transportation uses rather than purely recreational activities. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) administers the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and its funding. The TA set-aside includes an approximately \$2 million annual allocation for RTP. The RTP program is an alternate option for applicants seeking funding for recreational trail facilities. Local entities interested applying for recreational trails are encouraged to visit the WDNR [website](https://dnr.wi.gov/Aid/RTP.html).² Motorized trail funding is discussed further below in the paragraph titled 'Motorized Access: All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and Snowmobile'.

4.4 Historic Preservation Project Requirements

Only preservation and rehabilitation are eligible activity. Operation is an ineligible expense. TAP eligibility is limited to historic transportation facilities as described in the bullet points below.

- Restoration and reuse of historic buildings with strong link to transportation history.

² <https://dnr.wi.gov/Aid/RTP.html>

- Restoration and reuse of historic buildings for transportation related purposes.
- Interpretive displays at historic sites.
- Access improvements to historic sites and buildings.
- Restoration of railroad depots, bus stations, and lighthouses; and
- Rehabilitation of rail trestles, tunnels, bridges, and canals.

Applicants must use application materials to demonstrate a historic project's relationship to surface transportation. Historic preservation and rehabilitation projects must involve a historic transportation facility.

WisDOT requires historic projects to meet the additional test of eligibility for the National or Wisconsin Register(s) of Historic places, or an official local historic register based on an adopted local landmarks ordinance. If a project does not already have register status, applicants may submit requisite documentation to the Wisconsin Historical Society to determine if the project would be deemed eligible for such status. The form for requesting determination is available at: <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS2843>.

Historic projects must meet this register status requirement **at the time of application** for TAP funding. More specifically, properties should clearly show historical status in the property record database available at: [https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records?facets=CATEGORIES%3a\"National+or+State+Register+of+Historic+Places](https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records?facets=CATEGORIES%3a\).

Applicants interested in historic transportation projects should note the following:

- Historic tourist and welcome center facilities are not eligible TAP projects.
- Historic planning and research projects are ineligible for TAP funds.
- Eligible archaeological projects are limited to mitigation of impacts from a specific transportation project.

4.5 Motorized Access: All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and Snowmobile

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA) and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program funds may be used for motorized trail projects.

- Motorized or nonmotorized projects eligible under the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) are also eligible under the TA Set-Aside (23 U.S.C. 133(h)(3)(A)) and STBG (23 U.S.C. 133(b)(7)).
- Trails that previously used Transportation Enhancement, Transportation Alternatives Program, or Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside funds for a nonmotorized trail cannot be converted to allow motorized use, except as permitted under 23 U.S.C. 217(h):
 - Permitting motorized vehicles on an otherwise nonmotorized trail can be determined with the exception under the Framework for Considering Motorized Use on Nonmotorized Trails and Pedestrian Walkways under 23 U.S.C. 217, which establishes a process for allowing motorized use where there are exceptional circumstances.
 - STBG and TA Set-Aside funds cannot be used to add motorized use to previously nonmotorized trails. But the State could build a parallel motorized trail in the same corridor.

Note: ATVs are not allowed on trails previously funded by WisDOT TAP funds.

Snowmobiles are allowed only by local ordinance. Sponsors must decide whether to allow snowmobiles and factor this into the surface type chosen for the facility and its maintenance policies.

Sponsors who are seeking funding for year-round motorized trails should contact WisDOT and WDNR contacts found on the following webpages to verify project scope and cost eligibility prior to the application deadline.

- WisDOT TAP webpage: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/tap.aspx>.
- WDNR RTP webpage: <https://dnr.wi.gov/Aid/RTP.html>.

Please note that project agreements for TAP projects within the SRTS eligibility category will require year-round facility maintenance due to SRTS program goals of providing means of transportation for students, including those with disabilities. WisDOT may reserve the right to require winter snowplowing for certain projects outside of the SRTS eligibility category where year-round bicycle and pedestrian use seems particularly warranted, such as an urban trail that is used for commuting purposes.

4.6 Equestrian Use Policy

As a matter of policy, WisDOT discourages shared equestrian usage, though it is not forbidden by FHWA.

4.7 Trail Fees

In addition, WisDOT considers trail usage fees as a hindrance to use of a trail for daily transportation purposes. FHWA has determined that trail fees are permissible only if all fees are used to maintain the trail facility. Applications must clearly indicate whether sponsors intend to charge fees or allow shared equestrian usage on the proposed TAP project.

5. State and Federal Requirements

WisDOT administers federal TA set-aside program funding based on statutory and regulatory requirements and in cooperation with FHWA. As such, all TAP project sponsors must comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations for each project phase. The WisDOT region staff listed at the end of these guidelines may provide some technical assistance and documentation for applicable requirements. For example, bicycle-pedestrian projects must comply with the [WisDOT's Bicycle Facilities Handbook](#) and all TAP infrastructure projects must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).³ For a list of resource materials, see page 28 of these guidelines.

TAP project sponsors are responsible for ensuring that their staff or consultants have the expertise to complete the entire project in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations. If a project is sponsored on behalf of a private organization, the public sponsor will enter into a legal agreement with the private organization to ensure that the private party complies with the requirements and provides local match funding, but the public sponsor is ultimately responsible for the project.

To further ensure that local sponsors comply with applicable requirements, WisDOT and FHWA have a project oversight agreement that requires certification of local government units to handle Local Let Contracts. Local sponsors must agree to undergo certification training for approved projects. In addition, WisDOT must pre-approve local sponsors to undertake any Local Force Account (LFA) work.

³ <https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/projects/multimodal/bike/facility.pdf>.

Further information regarding sponsor certification and the corresponding [WisDOT Sponsor's Guide to Non-Traditional Transportation Project Implementation](#) is available on the WisDOT TAP [website](#).⁴

6. MPOs and TMAs

If a proposed project is in an area represented by an MPO, it must be ranked by the MPO. **The deadline for MPO applications will be sooner than the program deadline to allow adequate time for review.** Please refer to your respective WisDOT region contact and the MPO for further information. WisDOT region and MPO contact information can be found on pages 24 and 26. A map of Wisconsin's Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) and MPOs can be found on page 29.

6.1 TMAs

WisDOT will distribute TAP funds consistent with federal and state legislative guidance. MPOs who oversee TMA areas will select projects based upon funding availability.

Metropolitan Planning Organization	TMA or Urbanized Area
East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission	Appleton
Green Bay MPO	Green Bay
Madison Area MPO	Madison
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission	Milwaukee
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission	Round Lake Beach-McHenry-Grayslake

WisDOT will accept applications from any location within the State. WisDOT and MPO selection committees will consider TAP budgets when selecting projects.

⁴ <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/tap.aspx>.

7. 2026-2030 Solicitation and Selection Timeline

Note: Project review and selection timeline is an anticipated schedule and is subject to change.

ACTIVITY	DATE
2026-2030 TAP Solicitation for Application is posted	June 17, 2025
2026-2030 TAP Application Deadline	October 31, 2025
MPO Project Ranking/Prioritization Deadline	<i>Refer to your respective WisDOT region and MPO contacts</i>
Eligible Applicants within TMAs move to the MPO Selection Process	October 31, 2025
Local Resolution due to WisDOT Local Program Manager	December 29, 2025
Statewide Applicant Selection Process Begins	January - February 2026
Statewide Selection Committee meets and recommends 2026-2030 TAP Cycle projects	March – April 2026
WisDOT Secretary Award Notification of Solicitation Awards	May – June 2026

8. TAP Application Guidelines

The WisDOT Division of Transportation Investment Management (DTIM) will administer project review and selection by first assessing the application for eligibility. Projects that are deemed eligible will then compete for funding by a selection committee of various stakeholders. Based on project location, selection will be conducted either by statewide or MPO committee if located within a TMA. WisDOT is soliciting projects in calendar year 2025 for SFY 2026-2030 projects.

9. TAP Funding Availability

WisDOT will award TAP projects according to the available budget. Projects that have already gone through the selection process are listed on the WisDOT website. Projects currently programmed in each SFY reduce the total available budget left for project applications as part of the SFY 2026-2030 program.

10. Application Form and Instructions

NEW For the 2026-2030 TAP application cycle, applicants are encouraged to use the new TAPWeb online platform for submitting applications. The TAPWeb manual and recorded webinars are available for download on the WisDOT TAP website. The online portal will open for submissions on Tuesday, June 17, 2025. By **October 31, 2025**, at 5:00 pm, the application portal will close and no longer accept submissions.

The TAP application form and instructions are available for download on the WisDOT website for sponsors who are unable to access TAPWeb. Applications are available on the WisDOT TAP website as of June 17, 2025. By **October 31, 2025, at 5:00 pm**, applicants must email complete applications to the appropriate WisDOT region provided at the end of these guidelines.

Sponsors must provide realistic and accurate project schedule dates and timeframes in TAP project applications. Local sponsors are responsible for project cost overruns, so it is important that TAP applications include an accurate project timeframe and cost estimate that takes into consideration foreseeable problems.

10.1 Project Type

For TMAs representing Urbanized Areas $\geq 200,000$, which include Appleton, Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, and Round Lake Beach, project selection must be made competitively, using a process set by the MPO. Projects not selected by the MPO may compete for funding made available statewide. WisDOT will accept applications from any location within the State. Applicants located within the jurisdiction of a TMA, will follow TAP project obligation limits.

For Areas $< 5,000$, 5,000-50,000, and 50,000-200,000, selection will be administered by WisDOT through a statewide competitive process. The Statewide process involves scoring and ranking all eligible projects regardless of area size based on various criteria including, but not limited to, project

planning and local support, utility and connectivity, project benefit, and history of sponsor success. Then, during the statewide selection meeting the projects are parsed into their requisite population sub-categories for review and award recommendation.

10.2 TAP STARS

TAP Safe Transportation Alternatives for Rural Schools (STARS) is an ongoing initiative, established during the IIJA 2023-2026 TAP Supplemental cycle, to enhance the application and delivery processes of SRTS infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects to applicants in the rural census-designated population subcategory of < 5,000. It focuses on SRTS programming, planning studies, and small infrastructure improvements in rural communities. All eligible TAP sponsors are encouraged to apply.

To find out if you are eligible to apply for TAP STARS, click the following link:
<https://wisdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=381e0ea4576f48c3bd302e60cf291384>

10.3 Project Cost Guidelines

TAP projects receive a capped amount of federal funding. Applicants should note that TAP sponsors are responsible for all project costs that exceed the approved federal project award amount. Local project sponsors are responsible for cost overruns regardless of the cause for excess project costs, including inaccurate project costs and estimates and/or impacts to timelines or unforeseen issues.

1. Minimum / Maximum Project Funding Amounts

WisDOT suggests the below-listed minimum TAP project costs to ensure efficient use of local and state administrative resources and to promote projects with significant impacts.

	Infrastructure Projects	Non-Infrastructure Projects
> 5,000 Census Designated Population Areas (i.e., TAP Urban (5,000 – 50,000), TAP Urban (50,000 – 200,000), TAP TMA (>200K+))	Minimum project cost of \$300,000, including any design work. \$100,000 minimum for any federally funded real estate costs.	Minimum project cost of \$50,000.
< 4,999 Census Designated Population Areas (i.e., TAP Rural (<5K))	Minimum project cost of \$50,000.	Minimum project cost of \$20,000.

There is no maximum project cost threshold. WisDOT is limited in its ability to fund projects requesting \$1 million or more. However, projects greater than \$1 million that do provide a statewide benefit will be considered for funding.

These project cost policies apply to Locally Let and State Let projects. WisDOT assumes that TAP projects will be Locally Let unless the local sponsor and WisDOT region agree to undertake the project as a State Let.

2. Non-infrastructure Projects

Applicants may apply for non-infrastructure or planning projects with a project minimum of \$50,000. Eligible non-infrastructure projects still include SRTS planning and bicycle-pedestrian plans such as County or City-wide planning that doesn't relate to a specific project.

SRTS non-infrastructure project eligibility was enhanced under the IIJA to include high school (grades 9-12) participation. Please refer to the following webpages for more information and for specific examples of eligible non-infrastructure SRTS projects:

- FHWA SRTS webpage: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/safe_routes_to_school/
- WisDOT TAP webpage: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/tap.aspx>

Please note that WisDOT will not award multi-modal projects that propose stand-alone preliminary engineering work such as developing project-specific design or environmental documents.

3. Project Costs and Timeline Recommendations

If an applicant proposes project construction in phases throughout multiple years, applications should list and schedule the project costs as appropriate and describe costs in the narrative project description. Applicants may check with appropriate WisDOT region staff to determine if commitments to previous years' projects allow scheduling as proposed in Sponsor's applications. Finally, applicants must attach a detailed breakdown of proposed project costs as part of the additional allowed attachments.

11. Application Tips

- Use narrative aspects of the application to demonstrate local political and financial support to provide the 20% local project match. All potential project sponsors and other involved parties should agree to the project scope, local match shares, roles and responsibilities, and other project details well in advance of submitting the application.
- Applicants should submit a separate application and budget for each project or stand-alone project segment. For example, potential sponsors should apply for each bike trail segment that could function as a separate facility.
- Applicants should develop an accurate project cost estimate with assistance from professional staff or contracted expert(s), if necessary. Consultants who develop a TAP application are generally not able to compete for design work if that sponsor is ultimately awarded for the same TAP project. However, a sponsor could start their qualification-based selection (QBS) consultant selection process early enough and make the application part of a scope of service.
- Bicycle-pedestrian project cost estimates must consider American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Public Right of Way requirement and design standards, including WisDOT's Bicycle Facilities Handbook as well as the Facilities Development Manual (FDM) facility standards. Links to these resources are provided on page 27 of these guidelines. Again, local sponsors are

responsible for cost overruns, so it is important that TAP applications include an accurate project timeframe and cost estimate that takes into consideration foreseeable problems.

- Common sources of project delay include the presence of protected historical, natural resource or archeological resources, contaminated soils, and circumstances that require the purchase or use of railroad ROW, including railroad crossings. Sponsors should resolve such issues prior to application submission, or at the very least demonstrate thorough consideration of these issues in TAP project applications. WisDOT may deem ineligible any applications that do not address such issues, precluding applications from further consideration for funding.
- If a proposed project involves a state or federal highway, either crossing, within or parallel to the ROW, WisDOT region staff must review the proposal. The local sponsor must obtain any necessary permits and determine compliance with all applicable standards.
- TAP applications should indicate if a state project with Context Sensitive Solutions funding is already partially funding the proposed project. Indicate the project ID number and amount if available.
- Projects that are sponsored by the WDNR on state-owned land should work with the Department of Administration (DOA) Division of Facilities Development. Since the DOA must co-sign the Project Agreement, contact DOA immediately to coordinate on the project.

12. Project Application Review Process and Schedule

TAP is subject to two requirements that affect how WisDOT selects TAP projects and distributes TAP funding:

- 1) All state DOTs must distribute TAP funding to MPOs who oversee Transportation Management Area (TMAs). TMAs are listed on page 11 of these guidelines.
- 2) MPOs who oversee TMAs must independently rate, rank, and select projects submitted within their jurisdiction. All applicants must complete WisDOT application documentation as WisDOT ultimately administers all approved TAP projects, regardless of geographic location, and as such the department must obtain certain information from all project applicants.

12.1 Application Review Process

The sponsor must submit their applications via TAPWeb, which will direct it to the appropriate WisDOT region, or they must submit to the appropriate WisDOT region email address listed on the application form. The WisDOT region will determine the eligibility of the project.

After a review of eligibility, applications will then be forwarded either to the applicable MPO or to the Statewide Selection Committee for scoring. The MPOs and the Statewide Selection Committee will review, and rank projects based on criteria or guidelines provided by WisDOT, the quality of responses to the major application questions, and local priorities. Each application advanced to the Statewide Selection Committee will be scored based upon a single set of criteria. Overall rank will be based on the sum of scores using those criteria.

The Statewide Selection Committee's and MPOs' recommendations for TAP funding are sent to the WisDOT Secretary. The Secretary issues final approval of TAP projects, which are announced to locals via letter and email.

12.2 Local Priorities

Before some projects are submitted to WisDOT they must be ranked locally if that project sponsor is submitting more than one application or if the project falls within a MPO area. WisDOT will factor rankings into the overall project scoring process.

All local sponsors who intend to submit more than one TAP application must review and prioritize proposed projects using appropriate fields provided in the WisDOT TAP application. The sponsor will rank each project in priority order, e.g., 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest).

Additionally, if a project is in an urbanized area, the sponsors must also submit their applications to the appropriate MPO staff for ranking. MPO staff will rank each project in priority order, e.g., 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest). See pages 25 and 27 for WisDOT region and MPO contact information.

13. Evaluation Guidelines or Criteria

13.1 Stage 1- Eligibility

In order to proceed to the second stage of project scoring, a project must be eligible. Eligibility will be based on three main criteria: 1) sponsorship, 2) activity, and 3) ability of the project to timely commence. Each of these criteria will be assessed in two ways in that 1) the application provides enough information to discern whether the criteria can be met and 2) from the information given the criteria can be met.

13.1.1 Sponsorship

Applicant is an eligible sponsor as defined on page 6 of the Transportation Alternatives Program Guidelines.

13.1.2 Activity

- 1.) Applicant provides a clear connection to surface transportation as defined on page 6 of the TAP Guidelines.
- 2.) Applicant is proposing an eligible activity as defined on page 6 of the TAP Guidelines.
- 3.) If there is land acquisition and/or ROW, it meets all FHWA requirements.

13.1.3 Ability to Timely Commence

[WIS. STAT. § 85.021\(2\)\(b\)](#) states that "a planning project is commenced when a planning study is begun, and an infrastructure project is commenced when construction is begun."⁵ The timeline for commencement is measured from the date of the award letter.

⁵ <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/85/021>

For the purposes of the eligibility, WisDOT will presume that:

- A planning study is 'begun' on the execution date of the planning contract between the local and their planning vendor.
- Construction of an infrastructure project is 'begun' on the execution date of the construction contract between the local and their construction vendor; and
- Non-infrastructure projects that do not fall within either of the above categories commence on the date that the project sponsor submits the first reimbursement request to WisDOT, as noted on form [DT1713](#) in the "Date Received" field Reimbursement Request Programs using Local Let Contract (LLC) Process).

Before submitting an application, it is recommended that the applicant reviews and has completed the following to ensure that a project can timely commence, if awarded:

- 1.) Applicant defines a scope of work, studies and information on land acquisition or construction such that it is evident that general issues and costs associated with the project can be known. Details in the application are sufficient to evaluate eligibility and ability to commence.
- 2.) Timeline establishes commencement requirement can be met given available funding and schedule.
- 3.) Applicant does not face delays because of ROW, Rail Coordination, or Environmental factors that make it unlikely that the applicant would meet commencement.
- 4.) The applicant's scope of work is reflected accurately in the budget.
- 5.) Applicant demonstrates availability of matching funds throughout the funding period.
- 6.) There is no other reason this project will not timely commence.

13.2 Stage 2 –Ranking

The selection committee will assess the following criteria:

13.2.1 Project Planning and Preparation

- 1.) Sponsor has planned for project prior to application by including the improvement in bicycle-pedestrian or similar municipal planning process.
- 2.) Sponsor has prepared for project by resolving any potential obstacles (real estate, etc.) to project execution, or the project would not cause any such obstacles.
- 3.) Sponsor is prepared for project as evidenced by application that demonstrates community support and/or regional collaboration with respect to proposed project.

13.2.2 Project Utility and Connectivity

The project serves utilitarian rather than recreational purposes.

- 1.) The project connects existing multi-modal transportation networks.
- 2.) The project is within proximity to a school and/or commercial center.
- 3.) Application includes data demonstrating that project would go beyond community enhancement to address a specific community need
 - a. "Communities of concern"
 - b. Economics
 - c. Safety, supported by crash statistics

13.2.3 Project Benefit – Environmental, Livability, Economic, Public Health, Historic Preservation, and Safety

Beyond connectivity, it is advantageous that a potential TAP project demonstrates a tangible contribution to a community benefit. Possible examples include:

- 1.) Project increases likelihood of modal shift to biking, walking or transit from utilitarian car travel.
- 2.) Project increases access and connection to the natural environment.
- 3.) Project would have a demonstrable impact upon public health of community.
- 4.) Project would go beyond enhancement to address a specific “communities of concern,” including children, elderly, disabled, minority, and low-income population.
- 5.) Project addresses a specific safety concern.
- 6.) Project would have strong historical or preservation benefit.

13.2.4 History of Sponsor Success

- 1.) Sponsor has previously received WisDOT multi-modal transportation improvement funding and has demonstrated the capacity to use such funding in a timely and compliant manner.
- 2.) Project sponsor is a new applicant to TAP but has demonstrated throughout the application an understanding of program rules and capacity to carry out the project.
- 3.) Project innovation.

Note: All project sponsors and projects are held to the same standard of deliverability regardless of whether they have received previous awards.

14. Project Issues and Post-Approval Process

After WisDOT announces a group of approved TAP projects, local sponsors will receive and sign a state-municipal project agreement from WisDOT. WisDOT region staff will notify sponsors of approved projects when a project phase is authorized for expenditure of federal funding. **Local project sponsors will not receive reimbursement for any expenses incurred prior to receipt of notification that the relevant approved project phase is authorized for charges by FHWA.**

Project sponsors with approved TAP applications for projects agree to participate in an online certification training as a condition of receiving project funding. WisDOT offers online certification training to successful applicants after the announcement of TAP projects. Further information about [certification training](#) is available online.⁶ Project applicants must complete this certification training prior to receipt of a project state-municipal agreement.

For project sponsors wishing to pay for design using 100% local funds, the project sponsors must fully fund the necessary state oversight and review of any 100% locally funded design work. Although locally funded design projects are not subject to the availability of federal funds for design and may begin right away, local design work must meet all applicable federal and state requirements and standards.

⁶ <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/lpm/guide-man.aspx>

Approved TAP infrastructure projects will involve one or more of the following project phases, each phase with specific applicable requirements and processes. Applicants should reference the WisDOT 2023 Cost Estimate Table at <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/highway/tools.aspx> for assistance and information regarding estimating accurate project costs for the below project phases.

14.1 Preliminary Engineering and Design

Sponsors of TAP infrastructure projects may use qualified staff or staff from other government units to prepare the project Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PS&E). Alternatively, sponsors may contract with a qualified private consultant who is familiar with state and federal laws, regulations, and procedures.

Local project sponsors must follow federal QBS procedures when contracting with private consultant(s) and expecting federal reimbursement for consultant costs. Sponsors are not permitted simply to contract with a local engineer and/or architectural firm with whom the sponsor is familiar. WisDOT region staff are the first point of contact for sponsors with questions about federal and state preliminary project requirements, such as filling out the appropriate environmental documents.

14.2 Real Estate

TAP project sponsors must locally fund any real estate costs under \$100,000. Compliance with state and federal real estate laws is less complicated when a local sponsor owns the land for the proposed project. Applicants and sponsors should consult with the Local Public Agency (LPA) coordinator in the appropriate WisDOT region to ensure compliance with all requirements of the real estate acquisition process, especially when a project involves private property owned by third parties. Failure to follow proper real estate procedures will jeopardize reimbursement of eligible project costs. TAP applicants for projects that involve real estate should thoroughly address project cost and timeline implications in the appropriate fields within the WisDOT TAP application. WisDOT Real Estate contacts are listed at the end of these guidelines.

WisDOT recommends sponsors and applicants review of the real estate webpage at: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/lpa-re-info.aspx>.

14.3 Railroad Crossing

TAP projects that cross or are near a rail line will necessitate separate project procedures to address construction-related work involving railroad tracks and ROW. Sponsors proposing project(s) that involve railroad facilities should coordinate with WisDOT region staff using the contact information on pages 24-25 of these guidelines. Based upon federal and state rules, a project need not physically cross an active rail line for railroad requirements to apply to a project.

14.4 Construction

Most TAP projects will be locally let to the lowest cost qualified bidder. Applicants and sponsors should consult appropriate WisDOT region staff listed on pages 24-25 of these guidelines for more information regarding construction rules and regulations, including but not limited to advertising; disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) goals; federal and state wage rates; and awarding bids.

Projects located in federal highway ROW must comply with federal Davis-Bacon wage rate requirements that require paying prevailing union wage rates for labor. For projects where Davis-Bacon wage rates do not apply, project sponsors should be cognizant of all other wage requirements which may impact their projects.

WisDOT may administer a TAP project as a state let when the project may be completed more efficiently as part of a larger state highway project, such as installing a local bicycle or pedestrian facility in conjunction with a state highway project. For large projects estimated at \$1M or more, or for complex projects, WisDOT may require state letting.

Local project sponsors who wish to perform construction work with their own forces must obtain approval from WisDOT region staff through a federal cost effectiveness finding demonstrating that the sponsor can carry out the project for less cost and that it's in the public's interest to have local forces facilitate the construction work. As stated above, FHWA policy requires that local sponsors be certified as adequately staffed and suitably equipped to handle local force account (LFA) work. Furthermore, applicants should note that WisDOT is restricted in its ability to enter LFA agreements impacting WisDOT's ability to allow sponsors to use LFA work on TAP projects.

Delivery and oversight are funded as any other project costs, typically 80% federal and 20% local or according to the percentage split requested by the sponsor funding more than 20% of project costs.

Local sponsors are expected to keep accurate records and reports, such as payroll documents and material specifications pertaining to construction activities, in case of audit. Federal law generally requires record retention for seven years from the date a project sponsor requests final reimbursement, with exceptions in the instance of project audit, negotiation, or litigation.

Once the project is in a sponsor's budget and approved in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and, if applicable, a local MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the sponsor must enter into a Project Agreement with WisDOT. WisDOT Region Staff initiates paperwork to authorize infrastructure projects for federal charges, whereas WisDOT DTIM generates and executes non-infrastructure contracts.

The federal government will not reimburse for costs incurred prior to authorization of a project. Sponsors will be responsible for any costs incurred prior to federal authorization and notification by WisDOT that a project phase is authorized to incur charges. Please note that receipt of the Governor's letter announcing the project award does not carry with it the authority to begin work on the project.

14.5 Financial Procedures for Approved Projects

TAP sponsors must pay for project costs and then submit reimbursement requests, along with sufficient supporting documentation, to WisDOT for payment of the federal share of 80% project costs, to the limit of the federal funding amount. Sponsors must submit requests to WisDOT on a periodic basis—no less than once every six months—to receive reimbursement for the federal share of funds the sponsor has spent to date. Generally, submission of monthly reimbursement requests to WisDOT is preferable. Failure to submit reimbursement requests may result in the project being placed on a federal inactive list and therefore, risks losing federal funding. As such, reimbursement requests should be submitted quarterly to indicate continued activity on the project.

WisDOT ensures consistency with federal requirements by following a reimbursement process that requires the sponsor to pay the full amount of the contractor's interim billing as a project progresses.

14.6 Matching Requirements

TAP is operated as a reimbursement program – it is not a traditional grant program. Project sponsors must pay for project costs prior to requesting reimbursement and must commit 20% of the project's cost through the appropriate local budget process. Because TAP projects receive a capped amount of federal funding, any project costs more than the approved project amount will be funded entirely by the local sponsor.

In keeping with historical WisDOT multi-modal program requirements, project sponsors cannot use a 'soft match' (i.e., anticipated donations or volunteer hours, etc.) to fund the requisite 20% local match. However, sponsors are encouraged to defer local costs with fundraising and soft match donations if sponsors can ultimately translate these efforts into a cash match to pay for 20% of TAP project costs.

Sponsors have very limited ability to use other federal funds to pay the local portion of project costs. Successful applicants receive 80% federal funding to the cap of the project award. Only MPOs with TMAs may choose to fund TAP projects as low as 50% federal share to the limit of the award. Please see the FHWA TA set-aside Implementation Guidance for more information on matching requirements. Links to the FHWA website can be found under Resources on page 27.

14.7 Commencement Statute

There is a statutory requirement that TAP project commencement occurs within four years from the date of project award.⁷ It states that "a planning project is commenced when a planning study is begun, and an infrastructure project is commenced when construction is begun."⁸ **Applicants should note that WisDOT is not afforded any statutory flexibility with respect to this provision and cannot grant exceptions to the commencement requirements.** State Municipal Agreements (SMA) for approved TAP projects will memorialize a sponsor's commitment to commencing a project in compliance with state budget requirements. The commencement deadline for projects in this cycle will likely be sometime in July or August of 2030.

14.8 Sunset/All Work Complete Date – Rolling Deadline per Revised Sunset Policy

In accordance with WisDOT policy, project sunsets are memorialized within the SMA. The sunset date is the FHWA mandated anticipated all work complete date. The project has a six-year sunset from the original schedule date.

Completion is defined as submission of a project completion certificate form provided by WisDOT. WisDOT may grant an extension for extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis, and only with FHWA concurrence. Per the FHWA implementation guidance, a period of performance is required for

⁷ Wis. STAT. § 85.021(2)(b).

⁸ Id.

all federal-aid highway projects, and costs incurred after the project end date will not be eligible for federal reimbursement.

14.9 Schedule and Scope Changes

WisDOT may consider project scope change requests from sponsors who wish to change the project scope as outlined in an approved TAP application. Submission and approval procedures for extension and scope change requests are outlined in the [*WisDOT Sponsor's Guide to Non-Traditional Transportation Project Implementation*](#), the most current version of which is maintained on the [WisDOT TAP website](#).

Similarly, WisDOT may consider changes to project schedules. WisDOT permission is required for a change to schedule. Changes will be granted if there are sufficient funds available for the newly requested time and wherein commencement and sunset requirements will not be violated.

14.10 Maintenance

Sponsors are required to maintain their project to allow year-round facility access.

Failure to maintain the facility, or the sale of the assets improved with FHWA funds will subject the sponsor to partial repayment of federal funds or additional stipulations protecting the public interest in the project.

15. WisDOT Region Contacts

15.1 WisDOT Region Contact List

To determine which region should receive your application, consult the WisDOT region map available at <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/about-wisdot/who-we-are/dtsd/dtsd-region-offices.aspx>

WisDOT Region	Contact	Phone	Email
SE Region	Tyler Beinlich	(262) 548-5856	tyler.beinlich@dot.wi.gov
SW Region	Brandi Workman	(608) 785-9047	brandi.workman@dot.wi.gov
	Rob Winterton	(608) 789-7879	robert.winterton@dot.wi.gov
NW Region	Chuck Hubbard	(715) 833-9809	charles.hubbard@dot.wi.gov
	Randy Kirk	(715) 635-5014	randall.kirk@dot.wi.gov
NC Region	Evan Maves	(715) 365-5778	evan.maves@dot.wi.gov
NE Region	Kelsey Lorenz	(920) 492-0142	kelsey.lorenz@dot.wi.gov
Statewide	Stephanie Mertens	(608) 266-9507	Stephanie.mertens@dot.wi.gov

15.2 Region Email Address for Application Submission

Note: These email addresses are intended only for Word Doc application submissions. All applications submitted via TAPWeb will be directed to the appropriate WisDOT region for review.

WisDOT Region	Email
SE Region	DOTDTSDSETEBPFP@dot.wi.gov
SW Region	DOTDTSDSWTEBPFP@dot.wi.gov
NW Region	DOTDTSDNWTEBPFP@dot.wi.gov
NC Region	DOTDTSDNCTEBPFP@dot.wi.gov
NE Region	DOTDTSDNETAP@dot.wi.gov

15.3 Other WisDOT Contacts

15.3.1 WisDOT LPA Real Estate Coordinators⁹

WisDOT Region	Contact	Phone	Email
SE Region	Nicole Mauch	(262) 521-5295	nicole.mauch@dot.wi.gov
SW Region	Angie Kneip	(608) 245-2623	angela.kneip@dot.wi.gov
NW Region	Kathy Bruflat	(715) 836-3908	kathryn.bruflat@dot.wi.gov
NC Region	Sara Jewell	(715) 365-5799	sara.jewell@dot.wi.gov
NE Region	Joua Dorner	(920) 492-5997	joua.dorner@dot.wi.gov
Statewide	Megan Munden	(715) 392-7962	megan.munden@dot.wi.gov

15.3.2 WisDOT Region Railroad Coordinators¹⁰

WisDOT Region	Contact	Phone	Email
SE Region	Jason Kazmierski	(262) 548-6700	jason.kazmierski@dot.wi.gov
	Rachel Nuetzel	(262) 548-5931	rachela.nuetzel@dot.wi.gov
SW Region	Teri Beckman	(608) 733-1923	teri.beckman@dot.wi.gov
NW Region	Anna Davey	(715) 392-7960	anna.davey@dot.wi.gov
NC Region	Caleb Herrin	(715) 712-8856	caleb.herrin@dot.wi.gov
NE Region	Jared Kinziger	(920) 492-7713	jared.kinziger@dot.wi.gov

⁹ <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/lpa-re-info.aspx>

¹⁰ <https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/doing-bus/real-estate/permits/contact-rrc.pdf>.

16. MPO Contacts

MPO Name	Contact	Email
Bay Lake RPC (Sheboygan)	Heena Bhatt	hbhatt@baylakerpc.org
Brown County Planning Commission (Green Bay)	Lisa Conard	Lisa.Conard@browncountywi.gov
Capital Area RPC (Dane)	Jason Valerius	jasonv@capitalarearpc.org
Chippewa-Eau Claire MPO (WCWRPC – Eau Claire)	Eric Anderson	eanderson@wcwrpc.org
Dubuque Metropolitan Area Planning Study	Chandra Ravada	cravada@ecia.org
Duluth/Superior Metropolitan Interstate Committee (Superior)	Ron Chicka	rchicka@ardc.org
East Central Wisconsin RPC (Appleton, Oshkosh)	Melissa Kraemer Badtke	mbadtke@eastcentralrpc.org
Fond du Lac MPO (Fond du Lac)	Melissa Kraemer Badtke	mbadtke@eastcentralrpc.org
Janesville MPO (Janesville)	Ahnaray Bizjak	bizjaka@janesvillemi.gov
La Crosse Area Planning Committee	Bob Gollnik	rgollnik@lacrossecounty.org
Madison Area MPO (Madison)	Alexandra Andros	pandros@cityofmadison.com
Marathon County MPO (Wausau)	Laurie Miskimins	Laurie.Miskimins@co.marathon.wi.us
Southeastern Wisconsin RPC (SEWRPC - Waukesha)	Ryan Hoel	rhoel@sewrpc.org
Stateline Area Transportation Study (Beloit)	T.J. Nee	neet@beloitwi.gov

Applicants should use this map to determine if a proposed project is in an MPO area:

<http://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/doing-bus/local-gov/plning-orgs/map.pdf>

17. Acronym Database

ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
BPFP	Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program
DBE	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
DTIM	WisDOT Division of Transportation Investment Management
FAST	Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act
FDM	Facilities Development Manual
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
IJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

LFA	Local Force Account
LPA	Local Public Agency, also known as local project sponsor or project sponsor
MAP-21	The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 st Century Act
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NTAC	National Transportation Alternatives Clearinghouse
PS&E	Plans, Specifications and Estimates
QBS	Qualifications Based Selection
ROW	Right-of-way
RPC	Regional Planning Commission
SFY	State Fiscal Year
SMA	State Municipal Agreement
SRTS	Safe Routes to School
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TAP	Transportation Alternatives Program
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TE	Transportation Enhancements
TMA	Transportation Management Area
WDNR	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
WisDOT	Wisconsin Department of Transportation

18. Definition of State Fiscal Years

State Fiscal Year	Timeframe
2026	July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026
2027	July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027
2028	July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2028
2029	July 1, 2028 to June 30, 2029
2030	July 1, 2029 to June 30, 2030

19. Resources

ADA Standards for Streets and Sidewalks (Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines and Shared-Use Paths)

<http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks>

FHWA Transportation Alternatives Guidance

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/

US Code, Title 23 – Highways

<http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/usc.cgi?ACTION=BROWSE&title=23usc>

WDNR Recreational Trails Program

<http://dnr.wi.gov/Aid/RTP.html>

WisDOT Facilities Development Manual (FDM)

<http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrces/rdwy/fdm.aspx>

WisDOT Bicycle Facility Design Handbook

<http://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/projects/multimodal/bike/facility.pdf>

WisDOT Bicycle Planning Guide for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Communities

<http://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/projects/multimodal/bike/guidance.pdf>

WisDOT Guide to Pedestrian Best Practices

<http://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/projects/multimodal/ped/guide-chap5.pdf>

WisDOT Rural Bicycle Planning Guide

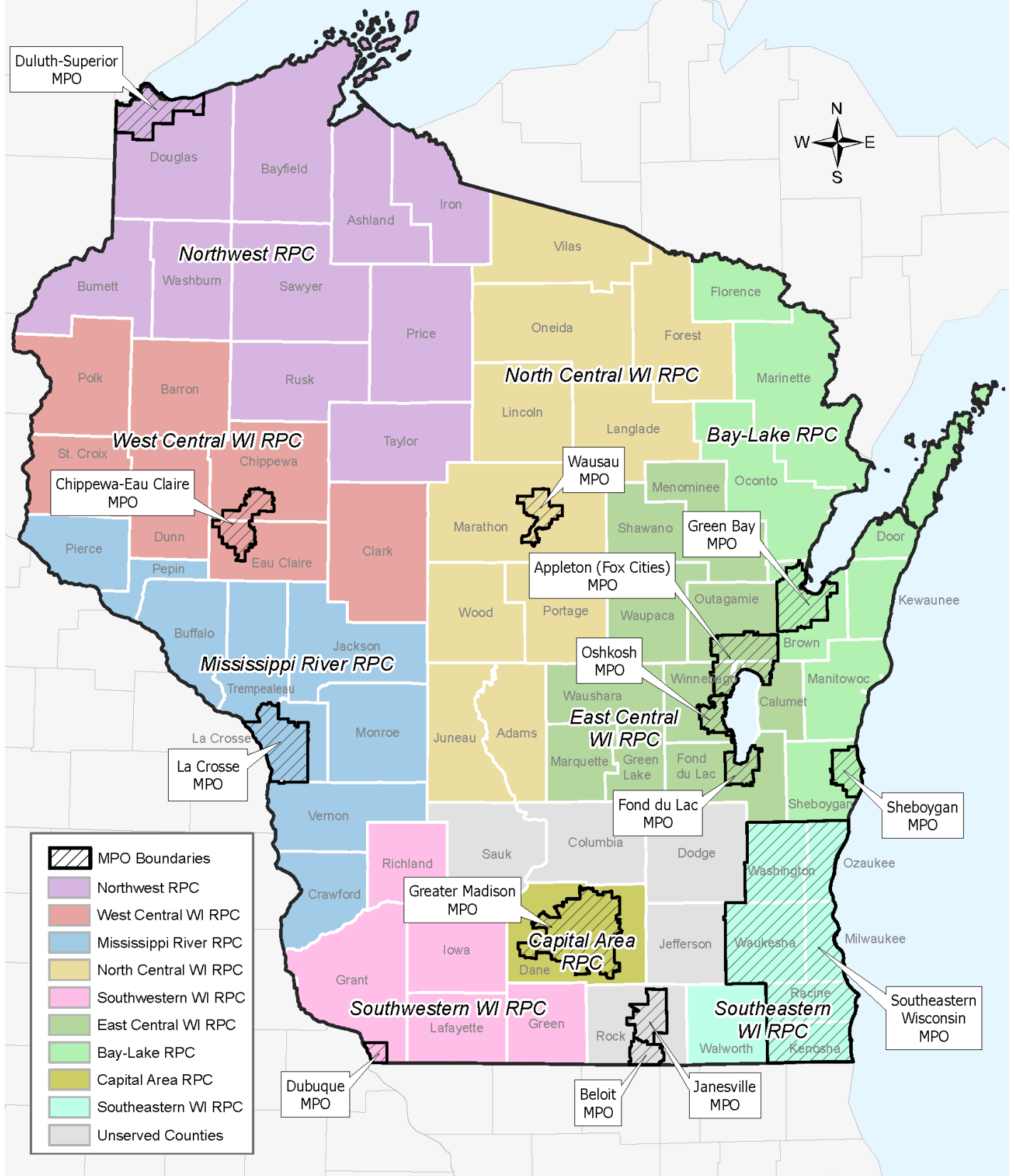
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/projects/multimodal/bike/rural-guide.pdf>

WisDOT Sponsor's Guide to Non-Traditional Transportation Project Implementation

Current version of the Sponsor's Guide maintained on the WisDOT TAP website at

<http://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/sponsors.pdf>

Wisconsin RPCs and MPOs



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Figure 1. Fox River Trail in Green Bay, WI. Source: Matt Clark, National Transportation Alternatives Clearinghouse / www.ta-clearinghouse.info.



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

2026-2030 Transportation Alternatives Program Guidelines

UPDATED: JUNE 2025