



Clean Transportation Pilot Program

Full Application Meeting January 4, 2021 - Questions and Responses

- **Question:** Can a 501c6 non-profit organization in Minnesota with a stated mission involving transportation and clean energy apply? If not, how about a subsidiary 501c3?
- **Response:** Yes, a 501c6 non-profit organization is an eligible applicant. MnDOT intended both 501c3 and 501c6 nonprofit organizations to be eligible, and the guidance will be updated (on page 4) to reflect this.
- **Question:** It appears the budget template was created for a program type vs. a capital improvement. We are seeking clarification on how this form should be used for a capital project?
- **Response:** The Excel template is intended to be an example and starting point. Applicants are welcome to adapt the template as needed to describe project costs as simply and clearly as possible.
- **Question:** It sounds like there will be additional cycles for funding. If we have met eligibility standards for this round, will applications for subsequent rounds also be accepted?
- **Response:** MnDOT will evaluate the progress of the Clean Transportation Pilot Program and provide updates by the fall of 2021 about the process that applicants will follow to apply for additional funding cycles.
- **Question:** To get the equity points, does the project have to be located exclusively in the designated EJ are? What if it crosses over?
- **Response:** No, the project does not have to be located exclusively in a designated EJ area to receive all 15 points for equity.
- **Question:** Based on what we submitted within our LOI, if we want to expand on our original project plan to include some other activities, is that allowable at this time?
- **Response:** Clarifications and additional activities are allowable additions to project proposals, as long as they are eligible activities according to the [Program Guide](#) and the activities originally described in the Letter of Interest are still included. Substantially revised projects should be submitted during a different cycle.
- **Question:** Do you have a sense for how many projects you'll fund in Greater MN and Metro?
- **Response:** Approximately half of the \$2 million annual grant award amount will be reserved for projects in Greater Minnesota and the other half for projects in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (the seven counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington).
- **Question:** If a project is not awarded in this round, does that preclude it from applying in the next round?

- **Response:** No.
- **Question:** For a capital project, what if a project vendor requires a 30% down payment to hold 2021 hardware PRIOR to grant award? Can JUST THE DOWNPAYMENT BE DIS-ALLOWED from being covered by grant funding, and the 30% be counted as additional cash contribution to enhance cost effectiveness?
- **Response:** If a grant is awarded, payments made after the grant contract is executed can be covered. The down-payment cannot be considered a match given the requirement that payments made before the grant contract is executed cannot be applied to the project costs.
- **Question:** Is it \$2M in funding per year, or \$2M in total over the three years?
- **Response:** \$2 million in funding per year
- **Question:** Could you clarify, is it the Sustainability Committee or staff (or both) that will be evaluating the full applications?
- **Response:** MnDOT staff will evaluate the full applications.
- **Question:** The response we received didn't give us much to work with on which aspect needed to be clarified "the proposed activity requires additional clarifications and refinements to meet the criteria that will be used to score full applications" Not sure what aspect to beef up. Can you provide any more specificity?
- **Response:** Our evaluation and scoring data are considered protected nonpublic data until the grant agreements are signed, so we are limited in our ability to provide specific feedback. We encourage applicants to review the [Program Guide](#) and the scoring factors for their next submission, with particular attention to Factors 1 and 2, which make up 60% of the available points in the application. Factor 1 scores the cost-effectiveness of GHG reductions. Zero emissions projects will therefore score higher than projects that incorporate fossil fuels. Applications that present specific information, methods, and assumptions about how greenhouse gas emissions reductions will be achieved will be scored higher than applications that are less specific and/or do not present a reasonable rationale for the GHG reductions that are anticipated. Factor 2 scores the scalability and replicability. Similarly, applications that provide details about the plans for implementation and collecting, analyzing, and publicly sharing the information learned through the pilot will receive more points.
- **Question:** Will recipients be reimbursed or will the funds be provided upfront? What will reporting look like?
- **Response:** Recipients will be reimbursed. Reporting requirements may look different depending on the source of federal funds used for the grant. More information will be provided to applicants about the invoicing process when the funds are awarded.
- **Question:** Does the funding have to be used in a year?
- **Response:** The 12-month window starts after the final agreement is signed between MnDOT and the receiving entity. The program is not currently designed to provide multi-year grants, but contracts can be amended to provide additional time to spend the funds if necessary.
- **Question:** If an awardee is unable to execute the grant contract, can back-up projects be used?

- **Response:** If an awardee is unable to execute the grant contract, MnDOT may select the next highest scoring applicant(s) based on available funding and geographic location.
- **Question:** How many projects were moved forward to submit a full application? How will they be scored against each other? Specifically, how will equity be scored?
- **Response:** 27 applicants were invited to submit a full application. Applications will be scored based on the 7 factors in the [Program Guide](#). Factor 1 (cost-effectiveness of GHG emissions) and Factor 2 (scalability and replicability) make up the majority of the points in the application. Points awarded to projects sited in areas of environmental justice concern, as defined and identified by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Projects sited in areas of environmental justice concern will receive 15 points, while projects not sited in areas of environmental justice concern will receive 0 points.
- **Question:** Can MnDOT release project descriptions?
- **Response:** Project descriptions are considered protected nonpublic data until the grant agreements are signed. MnDOT can post project descriptions after the grant agreements are signed this spring.
- **Question:** How will projects be scored that are in Greater Minnesota and the Metro area?
- **Response:** We encourage applicants to specify the portion of the project that is in Greater MN versus the Metro in terms of requested grant funding and greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Question:** Greenhouse gas emissions calculations are subjective. Is there standard guidance for calculating emissions reductions? Will emissions calculations be vetted? What is the timeframe for emissions reductions estimates?
- **Response:** Standard guidance will not be provided as a single method may not be applicable or well-suited to a particular project, but there are existing resources that can assist with calculating greenhouse gas emission reductions, including:
 - [Minnesota Infrastructure Carbon Estimator](#)
 - [EPA GHG Equivalencies calculator](#)
 - See "[model assumptions](#)" for additional detail
 - [AFLEET](#), Clean Cities Coordinator contact: lisa.thurstin@lung.org

Please email supporting calculations and references as PDF file (not exceeding 2 pages) to siri.simons@state.mn.us. The application review committee, which includes members with experience conducting GHG emissions analysis, will vet GHG emissions estimates. Please state emissions reductions estimates in terms of metric tons of CO₂e and list annual and total estimated reductions.