

# Greater Minnesota HSIP Solicitation (2009-2010)

## FAQ

### **Why the new process for selecting projects?**

Both FHWA and Mn/DOT's Office of Traffic Safety took a strong stand to ensure that these HSIP funds be set aside for locals beginning in FY2009. We did this based on Minnesota's crash data. We also pointed out that the HSIP process must meet the purpose as stated in SAFETEA-LU, which reads as follows: "The purpose of the Highway Safety Improvement Program shall be to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads". SAFETEA-LU goes further by requiring Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSP) and discusses the need to prioritize safety projects to achieve the greatest results in lives saved.

The new HSIP process means that all of the Districts and counties take a fresh look at their crash data and SHSP information and propose safety projects in FY2009 which directly address their safety problems.

We all put a terrific amount of effort into improving the HSIP process to meet the SAFETEA-LU provisions. Minnesota's HSIP solicitation process is a great opportunity for the counties to make a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and injuries on local roads.

### **Why are there 2 sets of crash data, i.e. Minnesota Crash Mapping Analysis Tool (MnCMAT) and Mn/DOT – Transportation Information System (TIS)?**

The MnCMAT application allows everyone to conduct preliminary route selection, but history has shown by using a central clearing house approach a more consistence and uniform dataset can be provided to all partners, ideally providing a better apple to apple comparison.

Differences may occur because of assumptions made by the person or persons developing the filtering groups, by processing all crash data centrally the same assumptions will be made for each crash data query.

### **How can I gain access to the MnCMAT?**

This application is available to the counties and cities of Minnesota through SALT website: [www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/res\\_crash\\_map\\_tool.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/res_crash_map_tool.html). Mn/DOT is asking all other agencies to contact their Mn/DOT District Traffic Engineer for additional information on this application.

### **Who will be attending the Area Transportation partners (ATP)/Districts concurrence meeting (March 10<sup>th</sup> – March 21<sup>st</sup>)?**

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Members from the Office of Traffic, Safety and Operations, District Planners and the State Aid Division will be attending these meetings and selected ATP members. Total group should be no more than 8 people.

### **Are school districts excluded from participating in this solicitation?**

Projects pertaining to school zones can be submitted, but the “Safe Routes to Schools Program” was developed for exclusively funding projects of this nature. For this solicitation, projects of this type will be competing directly with all other project types with the best projects being selected.

### **Are “check marks” (consult SHSP Appendix IV) required for a project to eligible for funding?**

No, the check marks in conjunction with MnCMAT are to be used for generating ideas for submission. Prioritization will be given to project by comparing the following criteria, not listed in order of importance:

Previously Stated Need - SHSP Appendix IV “check marks”  
Crash History - number of K and A crashes  
Exposure - Average Daily Traffic (ADT)  
Magnitude of Impact - Cost/Mile and/or Cost/Intersection

### **If several projects similar in nature are submitted, will the county/project with the greatest number of “check markers” be given the highest priority for selection?**

Possibly, one prioritizing criteria is the number of “check marks” for a particular emphasis area, but three other criteria are also used. It is possible for a project with fewer “check marks” to score better overall. The objective of this program is to apply these FEDERAL monies to the greatest safety need in each ATP by funding the best projects submitted in each ATP.

### **In your example (see PowerPoint presentation “2007 Greater Mn Combined Solicitation for Federal Funds”) Pennington County does not have any K (fatal) or A (serious) injury crash when segments are prioritized by ADT. Are K and/or A crashes required for a project to eligible for funding?**

No, just as in the example, the SHSP provided county wide data highlighting head-on crashes on the local system as the area of greatest concern, but MnCMAT did not provide an obvious route or routes for selection for this reason a SYSTEMATIC PROACTIVE approach has been used based on Average Daily Traffic (ADT), rather than directly to crash history; however, one prioritizing criteria is number of crashes. Projects with no crashes will probably not score as well as similar projects with a demonstrated crash history.

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**If a rumble stripe project is selected, must I remove the existing stripe (A rumble stripe is cut into the pavement COINCIDING WITH THE CENTER LINE STRIPE OR WITH THE EDGE LINE STRIPE. For additional information, see Mn/DOT Tech Memo 07-09-T-03: Edgeline Rumble StripEs Guidance for Rural Trunk Highways)?**

No, several states have allowed the existing stripe to fade with time, but the existing stripe can also be removed. The removal of the existing stripe would be eligible for reimbursement with this program.

**Can project partnerships be formed across ATP boundaries (e.g. Grant (ATP 4), Ottertail (ATP 4) and Todd (APT3) counties would like to implement an intersection lighting strategy at 22 points along county road 82)?**

Yes, partnerships are encouraged. This is reinforced by the increased maximum project funding for joint project in this solicitation from \$300,000 last year to \$750,000 in this solicitation.

**If several projects similar in nature are submitted, will the project with the greatest amount of participating local funds be given a higher priority for selection?**

No, a MINIMUM of 10% “hard” match is required for a submitted project to be eligible for selection, but preference will not be given to projects funded with a greater amount of local funding.

**If several systematic projects similar in nature are submitted, will the project with the greatest number of K and A crashes have a higher priority for selection?**

Generally speaking...yes, the objective of this program is to apply these FEDERAL monies to the greatest safety need, the higher number of K and A crashes in this example, in each ATP by funding the best projects submitted in each ATP. However, depending on the other prioritizing criteria, a project with fewer crashes could score higher.

**Is priority given to any project?/What are the project selection criteria?**

Prioritization will be given to projects by comparing the following criteria, not listed in order of importance:

Previously Stated Need - SHSP Appendix IV “check marks”

Crash History - number of K and A crashes

Exposure - Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

Magnitude of Impact - Cost/Mile and/or Cost/Intersection

The objective of this program is to apply these FEDERAL monies to the greatest safety need in each ATP by funding the best projects submitted in each ATP.

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**Our agency has several high occurrence intersections where K and A crashes only happen every 3 to 4 years, but we believe that these locations are still opportunities for improvement. How can we show this if we are only using 3 years of crash data for reactive projects?**

Three (3) years of crash data for reactive crash is the “industry” standard by which crash data is compared; by reporting on a set number of years, all submitted projects can be compared equally.

If you feel that this method is missing an area of concern in your APT, please submit your completed application and provide substantial information for supporting your position, i.e. existing crash data showing that this is an area of great concern.

**Our agency would like to partner with the local Mn/DOT District, but we have been told that our funding cycles (currently HSIP Solicitation 2009-2010) is not aligned with this program, i.e. Mn/DOT is currently planning for FY 2011 – 2012. Are we still able to partner with our local Mn/DOT District?**

Yes, you are still able to form partnerships with your Mn/DOT District, but your funding cycles will not be aligned for this solicitation.

**Where can I find information on the High Risk Rural Road Program (H3RP)?**

Please click on the following link additional information about H3RP: [www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/SALT\\_Traffic\\_Safety.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/SALT_Traffic_Safety.html), scroll down until you find the “High Risk Rural Roads Program (H3RP)” heading.

Click on the “Methodology for Eligible Segment Selection” for additional information about how these routes were chosen.

Click on the “List of Eligible Segments: 2006” heading for a detailed listing of these routes.

**Wayne Fingalson, Wright County Engineer spoke about intersection lighting policies differing from Mn/DOT’s currently warrants for lighting. Where can I find additional information about Wright County’s intersection lighting program?**

This information can be found at the following link:

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/hes/index.html>

By posting this information on OTSO website, Mn/DOT is not condoning or condemning the use of this alternative lighting policy over the current Mn/DOT Policy on intersection lighting.

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### **What are the cost splits required for this solicitation?**

A MINIMUM of 10% of local funds (“hard match” i.e. not county labor costs) must be used on these projects. The federal funds awarded on these projects are capped lump sums, ESTIMATE CAREFULLY - NO ADDITIONAL FUNDING WILL BE AWARDED AFTER PROJECTS HAVE BEEN SELECTED. Do not forget about inflation of construction costs, a reasonable inflation factor should be used. If applicable, please provide the factor which has been chosen.

### **How many copies do I need to submit?/Where should I send my completed application packet?**

**Six (6) copies of the application, postmarked no later than February 1, 2008** must be mailed to:

Julie Witcher  
Assistant State Traffic Safety Engineer  
Mn/DOT  
1500 County Road B2  
RTMC/MS 725  
Roseville, MN 55113

### **Will the ATP be given a chance to review the submitted solicitation packets?**

The Area Transportation partners (ATP)/Districts will be provided with the HSIP selection committee’s prioritized list of projects for their APT/District for concurrence (March 10<sup>th</sup> – March 21<sup>st</sup>). Copies of all submitted information pertaining to the list of prioritized projects will also be furnished.

### **Are representatives from local units of government going to be on the selection committee?**

No. The County Safety Committee was asked in the 2006 CHSP solicitation if representatives from the local units of government should be asked to participate in the selection of these projects. The committee felt an unbiased selection would occur given the members of the selection committee were all from Mn/DOT Central Office and FHWA.

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### **How will the Cities fewer than 5,000 and the townships be notified of this solicitation?**

Cities under 5,000, townships and tribal nations were provided notification of this solicitation by email, fax, and/or new letter and website posting. Information pertaining to this solicitation was provided for posting on the following websites: League of Minnesota Cities, Tribes and Transportation and Minnesota County Engineers.

### **How do proactive and reactive strategies differ?**

Proactive strategies are those strategies which are designed to address problems which are not site specific, but have been proven by data analysis to be a system wide crash issue. Proactive strategies focus on reducing fatal and serious injury crashes. Therefore, strategies must be deployed over numerous locations or miles of roadway to be effective. To that end, low cost systematic strategies should be implemented first.

Reactive strategies focus on site specific issues, where a crash problem is easily identified and specific strategies can be employed. To identify crash patterns, all crashes are considered in the analysis. Oftentimes, these strategies are of a higher cost.

### **How many years of crash data should I use for proactive projects?**

Ten (10) years of fatal and serious (A) injury crash data (1997 – 2006) should be used for all proactive projects.

### **How many years of crash data should I use for reactive projects?**

Three (3) years of ALL (fatal through property damage) crash data (2004 – 2006) should be used for all reactive projects.

### **What if our APT is unable to come up with a maximum of 30% of reactive projects?**

This is only the upper limit for funding for REACTIVE. If less than 30% of the funding is used on REACTIVE projects the remaining portion will be used for funding PROACTIVE project. If no REACTIVE projects are selected, a 100% of the funding would be used to fund PROACTIVE projects. The local portion of HSIP funding by ATP is available in the solicitation announcement.

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### **Will someone be performing before and after studies, so we can know if our efforts are making an impact?**

Before and after studies are being completed by OTSO, please use the short data collection form. The information provided on this form will be used by OTSO to track and conduct before and after studies.

Before and after summaries must be completed by the selected agency. These summaries will be used by State Aid for future funding efforts (e.g. the Local Road Improvement Program, Routes of Regional Significant, etc.).

### **What is the maintenance life of a rumble stripe?**

10 years

### **What is the cost of grooving in pavement markings?**

Approximately, \$0.33 per linear foot.

### **Are the Mn/DOT Districts eligible to submit projects?**

No, only project's OFF the Trunk Highway system are eligible for this solicitation. Non-eligible routes include Interstate trunk highways, U.S. trunk highways and Minnesota trunk highways.

### **Where can I find the 2007 Annual HSIP: 5% Report?**

The 5% Report can be accessed at the following link: [www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/hes/index.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/hes/index.html), click on the "Top 5% Report" heading for a PDF of the list of selected routes. Click on the following link for the complete report: <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/fivepercent/07mn.htm>.

### **Where can I find the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)?**

The SHSP can be accessed at the following link: [www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/shsp/index.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/shsp/index.html)

### **At a RR crossings, the counties are currently unable use rail safety funds for this type of improvement because it is located off Rail ROW. Your thoughts on the use of vinyl pavement markings for RR crossings?**

It is unlikely these types of projects could be supported with crash data, which would result in them being a higher priority than other SHSP strategies (lane departure, intersections).

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### Where can I find Crash Reduction Factors?

The application and supporting documents points you to the Kentucky Report, which can be found at:

[http://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/hes/kentucky\\_report.pdf](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/hes/kentucky_report.pdf)

Since the application was developed a newer source of Crash Reduction Factors has been identified, The Desktop Reference for Crash Reduction Factors, Publication No. FHWA-SA-07-015. This document is located at:

<http://www.transportation.org/sites/safetymanagement/docs/Desktop%20Reference%20Complete.pdf>

**PLEASE USE THE DESKTOP REFERENCE FOR CRASH REDUCTION FACTORS AS YOUR FIRST SOURCE FOR FACTORS IF POSSIBLE.**

### Is upgrading guardrail end treatments an eligible project? What about new guardrail?

The turned down end treatment is not a crashworthy guardrail terminal and should be upgraded during future construction or when guardrail maintenance is performed. There is no system-wide crash data to support a focused effort on removing turned down guardrail terminals with stand alone safety projects. FHWA has mandated that turned down guardrail terminals be removed from high speed high volume roadways such as the Interstate System. The mandate requires that they be removed when construction work is scheduled in the area or when maintenance of the guardrail is necessary. This approach balanced the risk to safety and the cost to upgrade to a crashworthy terminal. This approach recognized that the risk of a vehicle striking a turned down terminal and overturning is very low.

Taking the above information into consideration, HSIP funds should not be used to fund stand alone projects to replace turned down guardrail terminals. HSIP projects are to be selected based on a system-wide review of crash data and the priorities listed in the SHSP. This process ensures that the projects selected are the highest priority safety projects which will result in the greatest number of lives saved.

Applicants should demonstrate that they have reviewed their crash data and the priorities listed in the SHSP. If after doing that, they propose a HSIP project to protect bridge abutments as a high priority safety need, we will have to evaluate and rank it during the solicitation process.

Bridge abutments are a little different than upgrading guardrail terminals. They are a fixed object that we know will result in a serious crash if it is struck. The

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same argument holds true however, that on lower volume facilities, the risk of someone striking the bridge rail/abutment is low. Most States have volume thresholds that dictate when to shield bridge rail/abutments and so if the highway volume has reached a level where shielding is warranted, maybe it becomes a higher priority. Shielding bridge ends is not a bad safety project, but it is not likely to be the best use of HSIP funds based on the SHSP recommendations. The HSIP requirements state that we prioritize the projects to select the ones that have the greatest chance of reducing fatal and life changing crashes.

#### **Should have all existing projects previously funded with HSIP monies and programed for construction in 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012 been removed from the STIP?**

All local projects will have to be submitted through the solicitation process for prioritization and approval for HSIP funding for fiscal years 2009 and beyond. State projects will have to be submitted to this office for approval prior to inclusion in the STIP. Local projects for 2011 and 2012 can be listed as a placeholder in the new STIP.

#### **If the above statement is correct, will all HSIP funded projects (Proactive and Reactive) for 2011 and 2012 be selected in a manner similar to the current process later this year?**

At this time, we anticipate soliciting for local projects in the same manner as the current process. Since this is a new process, there will probably be some changes in how projects are prioritized and selected. The timing for the next solicitation is not known at this time.

#### **Is it true that all REACTIVE PROJECTS must meet the following criteria? YES**

A Benefit/Cost greater than one (1) using Mn/DOT crash history, crash costs and standard crash reduction factors.

#### **Is re-lamping of traffic signals to LED or upgrading signal heads eligible projects?**

No, these projects would be considered refinements to existing elements.

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#### Is there a standard Mn/DOT detail for the safety wedge?

No.

The Federal Highway Administration has recently published an article on this topic. It is available at the following link:

<http://www.tfhrc.gov/pubrds/07sep/01.htm>.

The following verbiage had been used in the past on projects that have installed the safety wedge:

#### **Bituminous Wedge**

This work shall consist of constructing a 45 degree bituminous wedge along the pavement edge (see detail on typical section sheet). This bituminous wedge shall be constructed at the same time each pavement course is placed and extend at a 45 degree angle from the top of each paving course to the existing shoulder.

Any additional labor or equipment necessary to place this bituminous wedge shall be considered incidental to the plant mixed asphalt pavement and no direct compensation shall be made therefore. The additional quantities have been added to the bituminous quantities