

Minnesota State Active Transportation (AT) Program: Infrastructure Solicitation Letter of Intent

2024 Letter of Intent (LOI) Guide



Overview

The Minnesota Active Transportation (AT) Program was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2017 and is defined in [Minnesota Statute 174.38](#). MnDOT State Aid for Local Transportation (SALT) and the Office of Transit and Active Transportation (OTAT) share responsibilities for the administration and oversight of the AT program. SALT administers the AT infrastructure funds on local roads (county, city, township, and Tribal owned roadways), and OTAT administers the non-infrastructure AT funds. Up to \$12.502 million in grant funds are available for this 2024 AT Infrastructure Solicitation.

Program Goal

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) State Aid for Local Transportation (SALT) administers the state AT infrastructure program with guidance from the Infrastructure Work Group (IWG) of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC). The process, criteria, and prioritization for the solicitation are required by statute to establish a geographic equity-based project evaluation and selection process that is competitive, criteria-based, and objective. Projects are selected and approved by the Infrastructure Work Group of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee to provide financial assistance to eligible recipients to construct pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements.

Letter of Intent Purpose

The purpose of the letter of intent process allows program reviewers at MnDOT to gauge the development of proposed projects. This also creates an opportunity for smaller and first-time applicants to understand if they meet the eligibility requirements and if their projects will be able to enter construction within the required timelines. Letter of Intent reviewers at MnDOT will provide a recommendation on whether applicants should proceed with submitting a full application or develop their project further. If an applicant receives a recommendation to further develop a project instead of submitting a full application, they may still submit a full application if they choose to do so.

Applicant Eligibility

The 2024 AT Infrastructure Solicitation is focused on Greater Minnesota as the seven-county Metro and communities therein are receiving large and increasing amounts of AT funding through the metro sales tax (less Chisago County and communities within) and Transportation Advance Account (auto parts sales tax and retail delivery fee).

Townships, non-state aid cities, and registered non-profit entities may submit applications for infrastructure funding with a project sponsor. Note that a resolution of support is required from the applicant entity's governing council and from the project sponsor's governing council or board. Additionally, resolutions of support must be submitted from all entities that will have property or right-of-way impacted by this project. Eligible entities include:

- Greater MN Counties (including Chisago County)
- Greater MN State Aid and non-State Aid Cities (including cities within Chisago County)
- Greater MN Townships (including townships within Chisago County)
- Greater MN Non-profits or tax-exempt organizations (registered as a 501(c)(3)) (including entities within Chisago County)
- Greater MN Federally Recognized Indian Tribes

All infrastructure proposed in any AT infrastructure application must have a usable service life of ten years minimum.

Funding Eligibility

Active Transportation infrastructure funding does not require any local or Tribal match, and grants are paid on a reimbursable basis (the local or Tribal entity finances 100% of the project costs up front and submits state aid pay requests for reimbursement). Grant requests must be between \$50,000 and \$1,000,000.

Eligible Improvements

AT infrastructure funds may be used for projects that serve a transportation purpose to connect communities and/or connect key destinations within a community. Eligible items include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following improvements:

- Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements: pedestrian curb ramps, intersections or midblock crossings, median refuges, raised crossings, raised intersections, speed humps and curb extensions
- Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities: exclusive multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trails, sidewalks, pedestrian bridges, pathways that are separated from a roadway
- On-road facilities: bicycle lanes, bicycle boulevards, and cycle tracks
- Traffic control and safety devices: signs, bicycle and pedestrian activated signals, flexible bollards, pavement markings, pedestrian-scaled lighting *Note: Electronic devices must be permanent - **not** mobile.*

- Basic curb, roadway, or turf replacement due to removals required to install the improvements listed above

Ineligible Improvements

AT infrastructure funds may **not** be used for projects that serve purely a recreational or leisure purpose. Additionally, items that are **ineligible** for AT infrastructure funds include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Landscaping planters, benches, and decorative fences
- Ornamental lighting beyond the standard
- Benches, bike racks or bike parking, fix-it stations, water fountains, wayfinding signs
- Aesthetic treatments above the standard
- Costs associated with engineering, construction administration and inspection, right of way acquisition, and water main, sanitary sewer, or private utility work
- **Work on trunk highways or on trunk highway right-of-way without a letter of support from the MnDOT district engineer. Work on trunk highways is only allowed if this letter is included with the application.**

Funding Types

State AT funds can be used to (1) fund up to 100% of the construction costs of non-federally funded projects, and to (2) provide the required local or Tribal match for projects that have already been selected for federal awards. Construction cannot begin until a grant agreement is executed between MnDOT and the applicant entity.

(1) Construction Project (No federal funding)

This option is available for eligible entities that have a project identified in their AT plan or other planning document and need funds to implement the improvements. This option may be used to fund up to 100% of eligible AT construction costs. Projects should be planned for construction in 2025 or 2026.

(2) Local or Tribal Match for Federally Funded Project

Funds may be used for the local or Tribal share on AT federally funded projects already programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). To be considered for a local or Tribal match, the project must already be awarded federal funding, have a federal MnDOT project number, and be listed in an approved STIP for construction in 2025 or 2026.

Federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) or Safe Streets for All (SS4A) funding may also be eligible for use on these types of infrastructure projects. Applicants may want to consider which program best fits the needs of their project.

Project Sponsor

Township, non-state aid city, and registered non-profit applicants will need a state aid city or county to serve as their project sponsor for their infrastructure project. Unless the project is taking place within a state aid city, the applicant entity must work with the county as a sponsor. The sponsor's tasks can include, (see [State Aid Manual](#), Chapter 5.3 Section X.), but are not limited to:

- Serve as the fiscal agent on behalf of the community
- Request an SAP/SP number for the project
- Ensure the project meets milestones and dates for scheduled completion
- Assist local agency/community in execution of any grant agreement
- Develop, review, and approve the construction plan project
- Ensure that any required environmental documents and permits are received, and requirements are followed
- Submit plan, engineers estimate, and proposal to the District State Aid Engineer (DSAE)
- Advertise/let/award the project in accordance with state aid and/or federal aid procedures
- Submit the State Aid Pay Requests to the DSAE
- Communicate progress and updates with the DSAEs and Active Transportation Engineer or State Programs Engineer
- Ensure that the project receives adequate supervision and inspection to ensure that project is completed in conformance with approved plans and specifications
- Assist with project close out and final contract documents
- Retain project documents in accordance with document retention schedule

The Joint Powers Agreement between grantee and sponsor should clearly indicate who is responsible for what. See [sample agreement \(Word\)](#).

Letter of Intent (LOI) Instructions

This LOI is submitted as an online form, which can be accessed on the [AT Infrastructure Grant webpage](#). The online form may not be available until the opening for letters of intent on Monday, September 23, 2024. A link may be generated to save responses until the whole form is submitted. The final date to submit the letter of intent form is Friday, October 18, 2024.

If an entity errantly submits a letter of intent or would like to make changes before the October 18 deadline, they shall send an email to steven.prusak@state.mn.us prior to resubmittal. Be sure that the message includes the first and last name of the entity representative, along with the entity name. Also, include the reason why you may need to resubmit a letter of intent. Unless notice is otherwise given, the latest LOI submittal per project by date will govern.

Related Documents

- [AT Infrastructure Program guide/training presentation \(PowerPoint\)](#)
– includes general AT infrastructure program information, eligibility, funding, and project selection process
- [2024 AT Infrastructure Solicitation FAQs](#)
– includes responses to frequently asked questions regarding the grant program, the application, project selections, design, and construction

Solicitation Timeline

- **Monday, September 23, 2024** – Active Transportation Infrastructure solicitation kick-off. Letter of intent period opens
- **Friday, October 18, 2024** – Deadline for applicants to submit letters of intent
- **Friday, November 1, 2024** – Deadline for MnDOT to review letters of intent. Recommendation to proceed forward with full application or develop further sent to applicants
- **Monday, November 4, 2024** – Opening date for full application submittals
- **Friday, January 17, 2025** – Deadline for applicants to submit full applications
- **By April 30, 2025** – Project selections finalized. Notification letters distributed to selected and non-selected projects.

Letter of Intent Review Process

Interested grant applicants are strongly recommended to complete a letter of intent for their project prior to submitting a full application. Upon completion, the letter of intent will be reviewed by MnDOT AT Infrastructure program personnel. The reviewing party will either recommend or not recommend that the entity proceed to the full application. The goal of this initial review is to ensure project eligibility and determine project readiness prior to submittal of the full application. A recommendation on how to proceed will be sent to the email address listed in the submitted letter of intent form on or before the review deadline of Friday, November 1, 2024.

Questions

Applicants who have any questions regarding the letter of intent may submit questions by e-mail to: Steven Prusak at steven.prusak@state.mn.us.

Questions must be submitted prior to 4:30 pm on Wednesday, October 16, 2024 in order to provide adequate response time.

Letter of Intent Contents

Applicant Entity Information

1. Applicant Name (First & Last): Provide the name of the contact person at the local or Tribal entity applying for the funds. This person should be the person to contact with questions about the application and who represents the entity submitting the project.
2. Entity Name: The name of the entity submitting the application.
3. Job Title/Position: The job title or position held by the applicant.
4. Phone: The work phone number of the person at the entity applying for the funds.
5. Email: The work email address of the person at the entity applying for the funds.
6. Entity Type: Select the appropriate entity type radio button for the submitting entity: Township, Non-State Aid City (Population < 5,000), State Aid City, County, Federally Recognized Indian Tribe, 501(c)(3) registered non-profit. Note that the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community is not eligible for this grant.
7. Address: The number and street name of entity.
8. City: The city where the entity is located.
9. State: This will always be Minnesota.
10. Zip Code: The zip code where the entity is located.
11. County: For non-Tribal applicants, select the county where the entity is located from the dropdown list. Note that counties and entities within Met Council's seven county jurisdictional boundary are not eligible for this program. Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties have been removed from the dropdown list.
12. MnDOT District: Select the appropriate MnDOT district in which the proposed project would be constructed. Note that Metro District communities are not eligible for this grant unless they reside in Chisago County (or are entities within Chisago County).

Project Information

1. Describe the project seeking state support. Include a description of the project development activities for this project completed to date. Please be detailed and specific with improvements proposed. Provide locations and complete extents. Define project development in terms of plan development – Is it a concept? Has it been studied? Are preliminary plans prepared? Is final design underway? (800 character maximum)
2. Enter the estimated Active Transportation Infrastructure Program funding request. This value must be between \$50,000 and \$1,000,000.
3. Total Project Budget: What is the total estimated cost of this project? Include all capital construction costs only. Do not include engineering, construction administration and inspection, nor right of way acquisition.

Project Location

1. Confirmation of jurisdiction: Answer “yes” if the proposed infrastructure improvements will be constructed on the right-of-way or property of another entity other than the applicant and/or sponsoring entity. Answer “no” if this does not apply.
 - i) List all public entities that are a part of this project. A public entity should be listed if it is partnering on this project or if this project will be constructed at any point within its city/township/county limits.
2. Beginning Point – Latitude: Provide a latitude for the project location. This may be approximated as the beginning point of the project. Please provide latitude in decimal format. See [FAQs](#) for instructions on how to identify your project latitude and longitude.
3. Beginning Point – Longitude: Provide a longitude for the project location. This may be approximated as the beginning point of the project. Please provide longitude in decimal format. See the [FAQs](#) for instructions on how to identify your project latitude and longitude.

Funding Sources

AT Infrastructure grant funds can be used to pay for the local or Tribal match of previously awarded federally funded construction projects. Answer “no” if the proposed project has not been selected for federal funding. Answer “yes” if the project has and identify the following information:

- a) Indicate which federal funding program this project has been selected for
- b) Indicate which STIP version (2024-2027, for example) the project is included in
- c) Indicate the Sequence Number(s) from the STIP
- d) Indicate how much federal funding is programmed

Applicants must ensure they have local or Tribal funds available for the local or Tribal share of this project.

Eligibility Check

Please respond to the questions below to determine if your project is eligible for funding through this program.

1. For non-Tribal applicants, the applicant must have a **full resolution** (not just a letter of support) from their council or governing board supporting the project and application for AT infrastructure grant funds. The applicant understands this eligibility requirement and can execute and attach the signed resolution to the application by the submittal deadline of Friday, January 17, 2025.
2. Township, non-state aid city, and registered non-profit applicants will need a state aid city or county to serve as their project sponsor. If a project sponsor is required, the applicant must have a **full resolution** (not just a letter of support) from the sponsoring entity’s council supporting the project and agreeing to act as the project sponsor. The applicant understands this eligibility requirement and will obtain and attach the signed resolution to the application by the submittal deadline of Friday, January 17, 2025.

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3. The applicant must have a **full resolution** (not just a letter of support) from all entities other than the applicant entity or project sponsor whose property or right-of-way will be impacted by the proposed project. The applicant understands this eligibility requirement and will obtain and attach the signed resolution(s) to the application by the submittal deadline of Friday, January 17, 2025.
4. Projects constructed with this grant funding must have an expected service life of 10 years minimum. The applicant affirms to the best of their current knowledge and belief that this requirement will be met.
5. Projects are required to be ready for construction in 2025 or 2026. The applicant understands this eligibility requirement and will complete design, bidding, and construction by December 31, 2026.
6. Active Transportation infrastructure grant funds cannot be used on impacts to trunk highways or trunk highway right-of-way without an explicit letter of support from the MnDOT District Engineer. If applicable, the applicant understands this eligibility requirement and will obtain and attach the letter of support to the application by the submittal deadline of Friday, January 17, 2025.
7. Only construction costs are eligible for the program. Development of engineering and construction plans are not eligible nor are right-of-way acquisition costs. All selected projects must follow the State Aid process, which includes identifying applicable design standards and developing a construction plan set signed by a licensed engineer. The applicant must have the ability to develop this plan set or the funds to pay a consultant to develop this plan set. Exhibits from engineering studies do not qualify as a construction plan set. The applicant understands this requirement and has the ability or funds to develop the plan set.
8. Active Transportation funds cannot be used to pay local entity or Federally Recognized Indian Tribe staff time to construct or install any improvements. Local entity or Federally Recognized Indian Tribe staff time is not an eligible cost for AT Infrastructure funds. All selected projects must be put out to bid and awarded to a contractor. The applicant understands this program requirement and plans to bid the project out to a contractor.
9. Has the project received an earmark from any other State Aid administered program (Safe Routes to School Infrastructure, Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) or Local Bridge Replacement Program (LBRP))?

Project Improvements

1. Describe how your project would improve safety concerns and provide public health benefits for your community. Please be detailed and specific with existing safety hazards. Provide locations and supporting explanations. Define public health improvements from the lens of improving connectivity of destinations and/or how this project will increase safety and comfort for active transportation modes. (800 character maximum)

Planning, Experience, & Public Engagement

1. Has the proposed project been developed from an existing transportation planning document(s)? If “yes” please list the title of these documents and include a year of publication for each.

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2. Describe your entity's and/or the project sponsor's history with delivering infrastructure projects. If not applicable, identify the key steps and strategies that will be used to deliver the project via the State Aid process. Will the project be designed in-house or employ consultant support? How does the entity advertise and bid construction projects? Who will administer construction and inspect the project? (800 character maximum)
3. What has resulted from conversations with stakeholders, elected officials, registered non-profit representatives or from the general public? Is there written support for the project? If a project sponsor is needed, are they receptive to supporting the project and State Aid's process? Please provide specific instances of public engagement or political discussion to demonstrate interest and support in the project. For entities requiring sponsors, describe your history and comfort working cooperatively with your project sponsor. Has verbal or written acceptance of their role been secured? (1600 character maximum)

Letter of Intent Submittal

1. Please affirm the following statement by clicking the "Yes" radio button: "The applicant affirms to the best of their current knowledge and belief that this letter of intent submittal is accurate and complete."
2. Click "Submit Form" to complete your letter of intent. A message stating "Thank you. The form was submitted successfully" should appear on your screen. The email address entered within the Applicant Entity Information section should receive a PDF version of the submitted responses. Please reach out to steven.prusak@state.mn.us if this PDF is not received.