

## **SEMCOG's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)?**

SEMCOG TAP is a competitive federal grant program that funds transportation projects, such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities and transportation-related environmental mitigation.

### **How much money is available?**

The SEMCOG region is expected to receive approximately **\$10 million annually**. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) also administers its own [statewide TAP](#).

### **Who is eligible for TAP funding?**

Eligible TAP applicants include all Act-51 eligible agencies in SEMCOG's seven-county region. Act-51 agencies are those agencies with the authority under state law to receive federal transportation funds. They include incorporated cities, incorporated villages, county road commissions, and public transit agencies. Other agencies, including Townships can apply, but must be [sponsored](#) by an Act-51 eligible agency.

### **How does an agency apply?**

Starting in January 2025, agencies interested in SEMCOG TAP funding need to use [SEMCOG's TAP application](#), located on [SEMCOG's TAP Webpage](#). Application preparers are encouraged to gather all the necessary information in advance and complete the application in one web session. An applicant guide and sample application are also available on the TAP webpage.

### **What is eligible for SEMCOG TAP funding?**

SEMCOG TAP funding is available for:

- 1) Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicyclists
  - a. Shared-use Path and Sidewalk Modernization Projects;
  - b. Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Improvements, including New and/or Enhanced Roadway Crossings, Town Center Streetscapes and Traffic Calming Projects;
  - c. New Shared-Use Paths, Sidewalks and On-Road and Off-Road Bicycle Facilities;
  - d. Complete Streets Amenities that increase usability, comfort, and safety of bicycle and pedestrian facilities such as way-finding signage, pedestrian-scale lighting, bike racks, permanent bicycle and pedestrian counters, etc.
- 2) Green Stormwater Infrastructure
  - a. Green Streets Projects that address roadway safety and complete streets elements while also reducing public roadway runoff, improving water quality; and/or reducing localized flooding;
  - b. Standalone Green Stormwater Projects that specifically address public roadway runoff, improve water quality, and/or reduce localized flooding; but do not directly address complete streets elements.

## **How will the application be evaluated?**

The evaluation process will consist of multiple phases:

- **Pre-application meeting:**

It is highly encouraged for applicants to schedule a meeting with SEMCOG and MDOT staff in advance of a project being submitted for consideration. This will ensure project eligibility and give the applicant advice on project competitiveness. These meetings can be set up throughout the year based on applicant and SEMCOG & MDOT staff schedules.

- **Application Review:**

SEMCOG has three application cycles per year with deadlines in February, June, and October. These dates match the MDOT TAP application deadlines for applicant convenience. You can check SEMCOG's TAP webpage or the MDOT [Application Schedule](#) for the exact dates each year. Projects submitted by the deadline will have a two-part review.

1. Technical review by SEMCOG staff

SEMCOG staff will review applications to ensure eligibility and completeness. Inclusion of supporting documents, such as maps, photographs, and regional plans that support the project, if applicable, are encouraged (letters of support are welcome but not required). SEMCOG staff may request additional information to ensure an accurate review.

2. Final selection by the Regional Review Committee

The [Regional Review Committee \(RRC\)](#) is a SEMCOG committee of local elected officials responsible for making project selection. The RRC approves projects and sets project eligibility and selection criteria. The RRC is currently seeking projects that promote holistic and regionally significant outcomes and are consistent with and implement regional plans.

Priority projects include those that:

1. Address a gap and/or provide connections to identified [Regional Corridors](#).
2. Enhance existing Regional Corridors to increase safety, accessibility, use, and/or comfort.
3. Enhance walking and biking in an identified [Equity Emphasis Area](#).
4. Enhance walking and biking in regional [Demand Areas](#), especially in areas identified as gaps in access to walking or biking infrastructure.
5. Improve [safety](#) and mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists to access public spaces, downtowns, core services, and quality of life amenities.
6. Integrate [Green Infrastructure](#) to improve water quality and/or reducing localized flooding along roadways, especially in regional Equity Emphasis and Demand areas.

The RRC may also consider these additional competitiveness factors:

- Geographic distribution
- Mix of project types
- Cost of project
- “Shovel readiness”
- Community’s TAP Award History

- **Award decisions**

Should SEMCOG have all the information needed to properly review a project, the RRC may approve a project three to four months after the application deadline. Should more information be needed, RRC may defer action to a future application cycle. Approved applications will be added to the SEMCOG TIP for the specified fiscal year.

- **Project Implementation:**

Both SEMCOG and MDOT awards are contingent on the project being obligated within the project’s specified award year. Awards may be rescinded should the project not be obligated in time. Applicants should plan accordingly to ensure the project can be obligated on time, keeping in mind that:

- While a variety of information changes the obligation deadline, generally projects should be obligated by July 1<sup>st</sup> of the project’s award year.
  - This means final plans should be completed by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the award year.
  - A grade inspection meeting should take place by December of the previous calendar year.
  - Section 106 and NEPA documents should be submitted nine months before the grade inspection meeting date.
  - MDOT, usually MDOT LAP, will make the determination when a project is ready for obligation and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will make the decision to release TAP funding.
  - SEMCOG’s TAP obligation authority may run out earlier than expected.
  - Project obligation is first come, first served.
  - Failing to meet obligation, could delay the project multiple months or jeopardize its TAP funding.
- Quarterly Reports are required for all project to ensure projects are on track for their intended fiscal year.

**Is there a per-project limit?**

No specific dollar limit has been set, but historically projects have ranged between \$100,000 and \$2.5 million. SEMCOG intends to award funds to several projects each year that promote holistic and regionally significant outcomes.

**Is there a matching requirement?**

Yes. All projects require a cash match of at least 20 %.

**Are there specific rules required for TAP funded projects?**

Yes. Like most federal funding, the project must be let by MDOT and follow their design guidelines and processes. For more information, please reach out to SEMCOG and MDOT TAP coordinators using the contact information at the end of this document.

**Can a project be considered for both SEMCOG and MDOT TAP funding?**

Should SEMCOG and MDOT TAP coordinators agree that a project is generally eligible and competitive for both programs and co-funding is a real possibility, applicants must first apply for MDOT TAP funding through the [MDOT Grant System \(MGS\)](#) and note they are also applying for SEMCOG TAP. Should MDOT agree to fund part of the project, SEMCOG's RRC can then potentially take action to fund the remaining amount of the full grant request.

**What about Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and Historic Preservation Projects?**

These projects are much better suited to MDOT TAP and should be submitted via the [MDOT Grant System \(MGS\)](#). SEMCOG staff can assist communities in advance of a MDOT submittal.

**Who can I contact for more information or to schedule a pre-application meeting?****SEMCOG Project Eligibility & Project Development Assistance**

Brian Pawlik

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**MDOT Project Eligibility & Project Development Assistance**

Caitlin Yost

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**MDOT Project Letting Process (Obligation)**

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### **Additional Information**

SEMCOG's TAP Webpage

- <http://www.semcoq.org/Transportation-Alternatives-Program-TAP>

MDOT's TAP Website:

- [https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621\\_17216\\_18231---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621_17216_18231---,00.html)

Safe Routes to School

- <https://saferoutesmichigan.org/>

Local Agency Programs at MDOT

- <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/business/local-government/local-agency-program>

Federal Highway Administration TAP Guidance

- <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/factsheets/transportationalternativesfs.cfm>

### **Relevant Regional Plans & Tools**

- [Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan for Southeast Michigan](#)
  - [SEMCOG's Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Map Hub](#)
- [Southeast Michigan Transportation Safety Plan](#)
  - [Transportation Safety Hub](#)
- [Equity Emphasis Areas](#)
- [Multimodal Tool](#)
- [Southeast Michigan Regional Climate Resilience Framework](#)
  - [Green Infrastructure Vision and Great Lakes Green Streets Guidebook](#)
- [Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan](#)
  - [Placemaking](#)