

FY 2025 - FY 2031

Call for Projects

Program Overview & Project Selection



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The purpose of this document is to provide information about the process used by the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) to prioritize and award MACOG-allocated federal funds from the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to projects with merit that further the goals of continuing, coordinated, and comprehensive transportation planning towards implementation. This process discusses only awards over which MACOG has the direct ability and duty to make under guidance from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). This packet summarizes funding programs, applicant and project eligibility criteria, the project selection process, and regional funding availability.

Overview

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law on November 15, 2021, continued many funding programs authorized by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. Every year, our region is allocated federal funding in several different categories including Surface Transportation, Highway Safety Improvement, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality, and Transportation Alternatives. The IIJA aims to provide sustainable funding for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, as well as research, technology, and statistics programs. Below is a brief description of each of the programs:

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG): STBG is the largest allocation MACOG receives and has the most flexible eligibility. All projects eligible for the following funding types, are also eligible for STBG. Federal guidance regarding STBG funds can be found here: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/docs/surface_transportation_block_grant.pdf

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP): HSIP is intended to be used for safety projects that are consistent with the State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), can correct or improve a hazardous road location or feature, and address a highway safety problem. Eligibility guidance can be found here: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/docs/hsip.pdf>

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ): CMAQ funds can be used for projects and programs that are intended to meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. This includes activities that reduce congestion and improve air quality in areas that are nonattainment or maintenance for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter standards. MACOG's planning area is considered a maintenance area. Eligibility guidance can be found here: www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/docs/cmaq.pdf

Carbon Reduction Program (CRP): This program funds projects designed to reduce transportation emissions (CO₂). Projects include but are not limited to, bike and pedestrian trails, projects to replace street lighting and traffic controls with energy-efficient alternatives, efforts to reduce the environmental impacts of freight movement, and projects that support the deployment of alternative fuel vehicles, such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Further guidance can be found here: www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/docs/crp_fact_sheet.pdf

Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost Save Transportation (PROTECT): This program is intended to make surface transportation more resilient to natural hazards, through planning activities and resilience improvements. Further guidance can be found here: www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/docs/PROTECT_Discretionary.pdf

Transportation Alternatives (TA): TA funds cover smaller scale transportation projects that provide facilities for walkers and bike riders. In addition to bike and pedestrian facilities, recreational trails, and safe routes to school projects, the program also can fund improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, as well as environmental mitigation. Further guidance can be found here: www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/docs/transportation_alternatives.pdf

The remainder of this document is divided into three sections:

Section I. Application Schedule and Funding Availability – Information regarding the timetable for the current call for projects and amount of funding available in each urbanized area.

Section II. Eligibility – General terms and requirements for federal funding.

Section III. Project Evaluation & Programming Process – Description of the planning factors and associated maximum point values.

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Section I. Application Schedule and Funding Availability

APPLICATION SCHEDULE: Fall 2024

Date	Description
September 2024	Applications sent-out and available online. Applications are due to MACOG by November 15, 2024.
December 2024	MACOG staff review and evaluate projects submitted.
January 2025	Recommended new projects and additional funding requests presented to the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and Policy Board.
February 2025	Staff to meet with Local Public Agencies to discuss selected projects and processes for inclusion into the FY 2026 - FY 2030 TIP.

Each fiscal year, MACOG is allocated federal funds from INDOT and FHWA. Through the current transportation authorization, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, this equates to roughly \$10.2 million in federal funding for the South Bend Urbanized Area and \$6.1 million in federal funding for the Elkhart-Goshen Urbanized Area. While the current legislation is authorized through September 2026, it is assumed that these funding levels will remain consistent through FY 31.

Estimated Funding Availability

	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31
South Bend Urbanized Area	-	-	-	\$4,800,000	\$10,200,000	\$10,200,000
Elkhart Goshen Urbanized Area	200,000	\$1,800,000	-	\$1,200,000	\$200,000	\$6,100,000

To date, MACOG has projects programmed through FY 30. The above table outlines funding availability based on projected funding minus currently programmed projects. These numbers are subject to change based on project needs and future awards.

Section II. Eligibility

Eligible Project Sponsors

Eligible project sponsors include the following:

- local governments;
- regional transportation authorities;
- transit agencies;

All project sponsors applying for the MACOG funds must have a certified Employee in Responsible Charge (ERC). To become ERC certified, please visit:

<https://www.in.gov/indot/doing-business-with-indot/local-public-agency-programs/erc-certification-and-training>

Please note, for most federal funds, other organizations such as non-profits or advocacy groups are not eligible as direct grant recipients but may work with an eligible agency to apply. The eligible recipient must be the lead project sponsor.

Eligible Activities

Based on FHWA Guidance, the following are a general summary of the eligible activities under the IIJA that MACOG can award:

1. Enhancement of Highways, Intersections, and Bridges

- Improve conditions through construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, resurfacing, preservation or operational upgrades
- Training and research, such as that for bridge inspectors
- Installation of safety measures like barriers, hazard eliminations, and railway-highway grade crossings
- Other projects meant to enhance use, flow, safety or condition, including:
 - Infrastructure-based ITS capital improvements (including vehicle-to-infrastructure communication equipment), congestion pricing, minor collector enhancements in close proximity to National Highway Safety (NHS) routes, and improvements to intersections with high accident rates or congestion

2. Alternative Transportation Options

- Infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists, including:
 - Recreational trails projects, bicycle transportation, pedestrian walkways and modifications of public sidewalks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Infrastructure for public transportation, alternative fuel vehicles, or carpooling, including:
 - Fringe and corridor parking, electric and natural gas vehicles (with priority along designated corridors), and capital costs for vehicles and facilities used to provide intercity passenger bus service.
- Activities to reduce fine particulate matter emissions in nonattainment and maintenance areas including:
 - diesel retrofits
 - installation of diesel emission control technology on non-road diesel equipment that is operated on highway construction projects

3. Transportation Planning, Development, and Monitoring

- A wide range of planning activities meant to maintain functional and efficient transportation systems, including:
 - Establishment of management systems, a State asset management program for the NHS and other public roads, surface transportation planning, a feasibility study/alternatives analysis, and capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring, management, and control facilities and programs

4. Environmental Activities

- Any activity meant to preserve or improve environmental integrity, including:
 - Environmental restoration and pollution abatement, control of noxious weeds and aquatic noxious weeds and establishment of native species, mitigation efforts, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and traffic control measures listed in the Clean Air Act
 - Stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or runoff

5. Other Eligible Activities

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- Other eligible activities defined in the IIJA but not specifically listed here are generally not competitive. Consideration will be given to projects in certain circumstances where significant benefit to the region or community is demonstrated.

Matching Funds

MACOG federal funding requires matching funds of at least 20 percent of the eligible project cost. Preliminary Engineering (PE), Right-of-Way (RW), Construction Engineering (CE) and Construction (CN) phases are eligible for funding. Additional consideration may be given to projects whose match exceeds the minimum required.

Regional Complete Streets Policy

MACOG adopted a Regional Complete Streets Policy in July 2019. Through a Complete Streets Policy, MACOG requires all projects receiving MACOG-attributable funds to comply with this policy to account for the needs of all transportation users. If a project does not account for all users, justification will need to be included that aligns with an approved exemption. The full Regional Complete Streets policy can be found at

http://www.macog.com/docs/transportation/active/RegionalCSpolicy_2019.pdf

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Section III. Project Evaluation & Programming Process

Project Evaluation

The Project Evaluation Process provides an analysis of the region's transportation needs versus the project applications submitted. Although preserving and improving conditions and performance on highways, bridges, and alternative transportation infrastructure is the primary focus of MACOG's federal funding, other factors are important and considered by this process. A total of 100 points based on the following planning factors:

1. **Plan and Policy Support** – Maximum of 15 Points are awarded to projects that are locally or regionally significant, being supported by Plans and Policies. Projects that have been previously identified in the long range Transportation Plan, Active Transportation Plan, or various comprehensive plans, as well as projects that continue a phase of a larger, multi-phase project will be given consideration.
2. **Safety Enhancement** – Maximum of 15 Points are awarded to projects that address and improve the safety of the transportation system. Project location annual injury to crash ratio is analyzed to develop the severity of risk matrix at the location. Consideration is given to projects that address specific known safety issues, projects that align with INDOT Strategic Highway Safety Plan Objectives, as well as projects that improve both motorized and non-motorized safety.
3. **Economic Development** – Maximum of 15 Points are awarded in this planning factor to projects that improve economic development, tourism or quality of life. Consideration will be given to projects that serve existing employment centers and improve multimodal access to high employment areas, job or retail centers, or planning infill and growth areas. Additional points are awarded to regionally significant corridors, as well as, projects that enhance access of minority or poverty population centers to jobs.

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4. **Connectivity** – Maximum of 10 Points are awarded in this planning factor to projects that improve mobility options serving a community as well as provide intermodal connections. Points are awarded based on the number and extent for which connectivity is enhanced to the following destinations within ½ mile:

- Community Center/ Civic Center/ Library
- Social Service
- School/ Child Care
- Grocery Store/ Farmers Market
- Park/ Playground
- Laundry/ Dry Cleaner
- Restaurant/ Retail/ Entertainment
- Medical Office/ Pharmacy
- Police/ Fire Station

Additional points are awarded if the project extends or completes a gap in a transportation facility or network and/or if the project is regional in nature.

5. **Congestion** – Maximum of 10 Points are awarded to projects that address the impact congestion has on the environment. Consideration will be given to projects that aim to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or vehicle hours traveled (VHT).
6. **Environmental Justice** – Maximum of 10 Points are awarded in this planning factor to projects that will have an overall net benefit to Environmental Justice Populations including low-income, minority, disabled, aging, carless households, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations, and Hispanic populations. Considerations will be given to projects that provide an enhanced quality of access for these populations. Additionally, projects that provide American with Disabilities (ADA) accommodations and address deficiencies will be considered. These should be identified in the eligible sponsor's adopted ADA transition plan.
7. **Cost** – Maximum of 10 Points are awarded to projects that exhibit reasonable costs compared to similar sized projects, projects that exceed the 20 percent local match requirement, and projects that are part of a multi-phase project.
8. **Health** – Maximum of 5 Points are awarded to projects that will impact public and environmental health by providing opportunities for increased physical activity or the ability to use alternative modes for transportation.
9. **Multi-Jurisdictional** – Maximum of 5 Points are awarded in this planning factor to projects that are collaborative and positively impact multiple communities.

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10. LPA Priority – Maximum of 5 Points will be awarded to projects based on the LPA's priority ranking.

Project Programming

- MACOG advertises a local Call for Projects to eligible sponsors via email and on the MACOG website (<http://macog.com/tip.html>). The Call for Projects will occur as needed or defined by funding availability and the need for project review.
- Eligible sponsors submit complete project applications online to MACOG by the deadline specified in the Call for Projects.
- MACOG reviews the proposed projects for initial project eligibility under STBG, HSIP, CMAQ, CRP and TA program guidelines, and develops a prioritized and fiscally constrained list of eligible projects to be reviewed by INDOT for final eligibility determination.
- MACOG e-mails the project applications and other supporting documentation to the INDOT Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Liaison. MPO Liaison will assure that the appropriate INDOT staff reviews and provides an eligibility finding.
- Once MACOG receives notification of eligibility, MACOG will meet with Local Public Agencies to discuss the selected projects and will process appropriate updates to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- The Project Sponsor and MPO will work with the INDOT District LPA Coordination to advance the programmed projects towards construction based on the procedures contained in the INDOT LPA Process Guidance Document.