

RAMSEY COUNTY-WIDE

# Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan

PRIMER: FUNDING



PRIMER: FUNDING  
*Funding Great Streets*



  
**Active Living**  
*Ramsey Communities*

A Program of  
 RAMSEY COUNTY

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# Funding



## THE RAMSEY COUNTY VISION

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This primer is designed to be a concise and central guide for practitioners and residents on the topic of transportation funding.

*How do pedestrian and bicycle facilities fit into the broader picture of transportation funding?*

Ramsey County's transportation system is built to get people where they need to go, whether by car, bus, train, bike or walking. Does Ramsey County build and maintain all of it? What are the roles of cities and agencies within the county, the State of Minnesota and the United States?

This report discusses the breakdown of funding between different levels of government, as well as the sources of transportation funding to improve conditions for walking and biking.

# *Funding Sources*



# FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

## U.S. Transportation Bill: MAP-21

The current U.S. federal transportation bill is called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). Funding for bicycle and pedestrian transportation has been consolidated into a broader program called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). These funds may be used for a variety of pedestrian, bicycle and streetscape projects including sidewalks, bikeways, multi-use paths, school safety and railroad track to trails conversions.

TAP solicitation in Ramsey County is conducted by the **Metropolitan Council and its Transportation Advisory Board.**

### *What's the Metropolitan Council?*

The Metropolitan Council (also known as the Met Council) is Twin Cities' federally-designated **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**. With its partners on the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), the Met Council plays an essential role in ensuring public resources are invested wisely to advance economic growth.

### *What's a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?*

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) carries out the transportation planning process of a large geographic area. MPOs are required in all urbanized areas of populations over 50,000, as determined by the US Census. Congress created MPOs to ensure that existing and future expenditures of governmental funds for transportation projects and programs are based on a "continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C)" planning process.<sup>1</sup>

### *What's a Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)?*

In 1974, the state legislature created the Transportation Advisory Board, a key participant in the region's transportation planning process, to perform transportation planning and programming for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, as designated by state and federal law. The TAB, along with the Met Council, is responsible for the continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process in the Twin Cities. This qualifies the region for federal transportation planning, operating and construction funds.

*The mission of MAP-21 is to create a streamlined and performance-based surface transportation program.*

See more at:  
[www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21)

*The Met Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region.*

See more at:  
[www.metrocouncil.org](http://www.metrocouncil.org)

<sup>1</sup> The Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book. FHWA. [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/briefing\\_book/part01.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/briefing_book/part01.cfm)

*The mission of the National Park Service is to preserve the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations.*

See more at:  
[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

*Since 2009, Congress has dedicated more than \$4.1 billion for six rounds of TIGER to fund projects that have a significant impact on the nation, a region or a metropolitan area.*

## **National Park Service (NPS)**

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) is located along the Mississippi River through the southern extents of Ramsey County. The National Park Service is constantly looking to improve alternative transportation along and connecting to the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) is a National Park Service (NPS) program providing technical assistance via direct NPS staff involvement to establish and restore greenways, rivers, trails, watersheds and open space. The RTCA program provides only for planning assistance; no implementation funding is available. The RTCA prioritizes projects for assistance based on criteria including conserving significant community resources, fostering cooperation between agencies, serving a large number of users, encouraging public involvement in planning and implementation and focusing on lasting accomplishments.

The County and local jurisdictions along the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area can apply to the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) in partnership with the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. The FLAP was established to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. The Access Program supplements state and local resources for public streets, transit systems and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators.

## **TIGER Discretionary Grants**

The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or TIGER Discretionary Grant program, provides an opportunity for the U.S. Department of Transportation to invest in street, rail, transit and port projects. Bike and pedestrian projects are also eligible for this funding. TIGER grants fund capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure and are awarded on a competitive basis. Eligible applicants for TIGER Grants are state, local and tribal governments, including U.S. territories, transit agencies, port authorities, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and other political subdivisions of state or local governments. Multiple jurisdictions may submit a joint application and must identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact.

See more at:  
[www.transportation.gov/tiger](http://www.transportation.gov/tiger)

## STATE FUNDING SOURCES

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### Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)

MnDOT develops and implements policies, plans and programs for aeronautics, highways, motor carriers, ports, public transit and railroads, as well as bicycle and pedestrian projects.

MnDOT oversees the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds for the state (see federal funding section above). To support the state's system of streets and bridges, MnDOT distributes funds for street maintenance and construction to Ramsey County and cities within the county. The State Aid for Local Transportation (SALT) office works closely with local levels of government to ensure the state maintains a safe, effective and coordinated street network.

MnDOT distributes state aid funds through the County State-Aid Highway (CSAH) fund, which is constitutionally mandated by the State of Minnesota. Funding comes from motor vehicle fuel taxes, vehicle registration and vehicle sales. The county state-aid highway system is a network of highways under county jurisdictions. It includes 30,600 miles of roadway throughout 87 counties. Counties receive money from the state to assist in the construction, improvement and maintenance of those highways included in the state-aid system. More information on the CSAH fund can be found on MnDOT's website.

#### *State Funds for Safe Routes to School (SRTS)*

The MnDOT SRTS program provides funding and resources to community and school groups to support students walking and biking to school. In 2012, the Minnesota State Legislature created a state Safe Routes to School program. The state continues to invest in infrastructure projects as well as non-infrastructure programs through competitive grants.

*The vision of MnDOT's multimodal transportation system is to maximize the health of people, the environment and our economy.*

*The mission of MnDOT is to plan, build, operate and maintain a safe, accessible, efficient and reliable multi-modal transportation system that connects people to destinations and markets throughout the state, regionally and around the world.*

See more at:  
[www.mndot.gov](http://www.mndot.gov)

See more at:  
[www.mndot.gov/saferoutes](http://www.mndot.gov/saferoutes)

*The mission of the Department of Natural Resources is to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.*

See more at:  
[www.mndnr.gov](http://www.mndnr.gov)

## **Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**

The Parks and Trail Legacy Grant Program is no longer available through the DNR. However, the Local Trail Connections Program provides grants to local units of government to promote relatively short trail connections between where people live and public resources (e.g. historical areas, open space, parks and/or other trails). The grant funding is made available from “In Lieu Of” lottery proceeds. State legislation requires that sales of state lottery tickets are exempt from sales tax and that the lottery must make payments to the state treasury in lieu of the sales tax, equal in amount to what the sales tax would have been on the gross proceeds of lottery ticket sales.

## **State Bonding**

The State of Minnesota sells General Obligation Tax Exempt and Taxable Bonds, State General Fund Appropriation Bonds and certain Revenue Bonds. The proceeds from the sale of General Obligation bonds are used to pay the cost of building the capital projects that are approved by the legislature. The legislature reviews bills that include bonding for walking and biking projects, including Safe Routes to School infrastructure and regional trail systems.

### *What's a general obligation bond?*

A general obligation bond is secured by a state or local government's pledge to use legally available resources, including tax revenues, to repay bond holders. General obligation bonds give municipalities a tool to raise funds for projects that will not provide direct sources of revenue, such as streets, bridges and parks.

See more at:  
[www.mn.gov/mmb/treasury-bonding](http://www.mn.gov/mmb/treasury-bonding)

# REGIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

## Metropolitan Council Funds

### *Federal Transportation Funds*

The Metropolitan Council runs the solicitation of the Transportation Alternatives Program funding (see above) to improve regional mobility. The Met Council oversees the Regional Solicitation process, which allocates federal transportation funds to locally-initiated projects to meet regional transportation needs.

### *Parks Funding*

“The Met Council allocates state and regional funds for ongoing acquisition, development and non-capital projects such as environmental education for the parks system. Between 1974 and 2014, the Council authorized a total of \$626.9 million in grant funds for those purposes. Funding for the grants comes from state bonds, regional bonds issued by the Council, monies from the Minnesota Environmental Trust Fund, Land and Legacy Fund monies, and interest earnings.”<sup>1</sup> The Council adopted the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan on February 11, 2015. The plan reflects the Council’s vision for the region over the next 30 years, as described in Thrive MSP 2040. One key area of focus in the plan is equitable use of parks by all residents.”<sup>2</sup> Met Council Parks Funding may be available for transportation projects, such as trail plans, in the region.

## Counties Transit Improvement Board

“The Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) is taking regional transit to the next level in the metropolitan area. Since April 2008, five counties – Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington – have utilized a quarter-cent sales tax and a \$20 motor vehicle sales tax, permitted by the Legislature, to invest in and advance transit projects by awarding annual capital and operating grants. The Board works in collaboration with the Metropolitan Council and Carver and Scott counties.”<sup>3</sup> The vision of the Counties Transit Improvement Board is a network of interconnected transitways that allows users to move efficiently and safely, while mitigating congestion, enhancing economic development and improving environmental stability for the region.

See more at:  
<http://www.metrocouncil.org/Parks/Grants-Funding>

*“The Grant Evaluation and Ranking System (GEARS) Committee evaluates all capital and operating grant applications, compiling a list of ranked potential projects for the Counties Transit Improvement Board to review. Each county is represented, along with cities from within the counties.”*

See more at:  
[www.mnriderides.org](http://www.mnriderides.org)

1 Parks Funding & Finance. Metropolitan Council. <http://www.metrocouncil.org/Parks/Grants-Funding.aspx>  
2 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan. Metropolitan Council. <http://www.metrocouncil.org/Parks/Publications-And-Resources/2040-Regional-Parks-Policy-Plan.aspx>  
3 Counties Transit Improvement Board Votes to Support Local Sales Tax Increase for Transit. Counties Transit Improvement Board. <http://www.mnriderides.org/transit-projects/transit-news/counties-transit-improvement-board-votes-support-local-sales-tax-incre>

# LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

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## Ramsey County

*The mission of Ramsey County is to provide high quality services in a fiscally responsible and cost effective manner.*

Ramsey County, through its finance department, strives to continually maintain or improve its financial condition through prudent financial management practices that receive broad support from the public and professional review organizations.

In the first year of a biennium, a budget is established for two years. In the second year of the biennium, a supplemental budget is adopted that includes recommended budget changes and updated information on department critical success indicators and performance measures.

### *What's a Biennium?*

A biennium is a specified period of two years. Biennial budgeting is the practice of preparing and adopting budgets for two-year periods.

### *Capital Improvement Program (CIP)/Capital Budget*

As described by Ramsey County, the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a six-year plan for the provision of the County's capital facility, equipment and infrastructure needs. The capital budget consists of those projects funded in the first two years of the CIP. An advisory committee consisting of up to 14 citizens appointed by the County Board, along with County staff, reviews requests and makes recommendations to the County Board.

The 2014-2015 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget and 2014-2019 Plan are presented at the same time as the Operating Budget to emphasize the importance of long-range capital planning as a necessary context for the annual operating budget. The operating budget provides for the funding mechanisms, while the Capital Improvement Program Plan document provides the detailed background and analysis for the approved capital expenditures.

See more at:  
[www.co.ramsey.mn.us/ba](http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/ba)

*Neighborhood Revitalization*

The entities eligible to apply for funds available through the competitive funding pool are municipalities, property owners, agencies and organizations who may be seeking funds to reduce the local costs of infrastructure construction and other capital improvements that principally benefit suburban Ramsey County’s low and moderate income residents. In the past, funds have been used to build sidewalks from affordable rental housing to a neighborhood commercial center, including in Maplewood at Frost & Larpenteur.

See more at:  
[www.co.ramsey.mn.us/ced/neighborhood\\_revitalization](http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/ced/neighborhood_revitalization)

**City Examples**

In addition to standard budgets, cities may have other ways to fund facilities for walking and biking. A couple of examples are shown below.

*St. Paul 8-80 Vitality Fund*

The St. Paul 8-80 Vitality Fund provides funding for city projects such as street reconstruction, new and improved bicycle infrastructure and green space development along the Green Line. Money for this funding source came from the Mayor’s budget, after Mayor Chris Coleman called for major investment in bicycle infrastructure in the 2015 budget.

*Roseville*

In Roseville, money from city parks bonding can help to pay for sidewalk and path projects. While Roseville’s policy is to assess 25% of the street reconstruction costs to residential properties and 50% of the street reconstruction costs to non-residential properties (e.g., churches or businesses), the city does not include pathway and utility costs in the assessment totals. The city will also plow paths in the winter.

*Saint Paul’s 8-80 Vitality Initiative promotes economic development through investments that enliven the public realm by connecting residents and visitors with the city, promoting walking and bicycling and creating great public spaces. The results will attract residents, employees, businesses and visitors to Saint Paul for years to come.*

# *Cost Participation Policies*



## RAMSEY COUNTY

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The intent of Ramsey County's Public Works Cost Participation Policy is to equitably distribute the cost of construction and major maintenance projects between the County and its partner communities. The policy defines the County's contributions to locally-initiated projects. The Public Works Cost Participation Policy is available for the reconstruction and major maintenance costs of County-owned roads and County State-Aid Highways. All County cost contributions are subject to project feasibility and availability of funding.

Ramsey County has a commitment to develop a safe and effective multi-modal transportation system for users of all abilities and incomes. Upon that foundation, the Public Works Department works with partnering agencies to ensure investments in construction and major maintenance accommodate an appropriate mix of motorized and non-motorized travel options. The County cost participation levels have been selectively increased in recognition of the growing importance of integrating Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and pedestrian, bicycle and transit features into transportation planning and implementation.

For example, the County covers:

- 50% of new sidewalks
- 100% of replacing sidewalks
- 50% of new trail
- 100% of trail replacement

Grading, aggregate base, surfacing and pedestrian ramps are included in these percentages.

*The Ramsey County Public Works Cost Participation Policy recognizes that projects undertaken by the County should benefit the county as a whole, and also provide local benefits to the communities in which they are completed.*



*MnDOT recognizes sidewalks, bikeways and shared use paths as important elements of the transportation system. MnDOT will participate in costs associated with these items when they are affected by a trunk highway project or to promote the safe and efficient operation of these facilities as part of the trunk highway system.*

**Sidewalks**

MnDOT is responsible for up to 100% of the construction costs of new, standard-width sidewalks and pedestrian ramps where MnDOT determines that a new sidewalk is necessary for the safe operation of the trunk highway and accommodation of pedestrians, and it is included in the scope of the project. MnDOT will participate in costs for sidewalk on bridge replacement and new bridge projects in the same ratio as MnDOT participation in the rest of the bridge project when MnDOT and the local jurisdiction determine that it is necessary to provide a sidewalk on a bridge. The local government of the region in which the project is taking place will be responsible for 100% of the construction costs for a new sidewalk where MnDOT determines that the sidewalk is not necessary for the safe operation of the trunk highway or the safe accommodation of pedestrians.

For an existing sidewalk that is not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), MnDOT is responsible for up to 100% of the construction costs of sidewalk and pedestrian ramps that are constructed within the trunk highway right-of-way where MnDOT determines they are not ADA compliant per the MnDOT ADA Transition Plan.

**Bikeways**

When developing a trunk highway improvement project, MnDOT determines what facilities are necessary to safely include bicycles and other non-motorized transportation modes in accordance with the MnDOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual.

MnDOT is responsible for up to 100% of costs of facilities which MnDOT determines are necessary to accommodate bicycle and other non-motorized transportation modes within the trunk highway right-of-way as part of its planning, scoping and design procedures of a MnDOT project.

 See more at:  
[www.mndot.gov/policy/financial.html](http://www.mndot.gov/policy/financial.html)

*Other  
Opportunities  
to Improve  
Bike and  
Pedestrian  
Projects*



## Construction Projects



Planned street construction projects provide an opportunity to assess current pedestrian and bicycle facilities and determine how they can be included within the project. The overall design of street reconstruction projects can incorporate modern bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

## Mill and Overlay

Since it takes many decades for total street reconstruction projects to come along, it is often considered too long to wait for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure upgrades. As Ramsey County and other Responsible Governmental Units plan mill and overlay projects on their respective streets, there are opportunities to provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities as inexpensive, high-benefit improvements, such as striping new bike lanes or adding crosswalks.

### *What is Mill and Overlay?*

Mill and overlay is a form of street maintenance that removes the top layer (approximately two inches) of a street by grinding it off with a large milling machine. After the top layer is removed, a new layer of asphalt pavement is put in its place. Major streets, such as county roads, are good candidates for mill and overlay maintenance to extend their operational lives. Projects are typically chosen based on pavement condition and traffic volume.

Mill and overlay projects are maintenance projects and, therefore, do not completely remove and reconstruct an entire street. However, there are many opportunities to change the operation of the street during these types of projects. Replacing the entire asphalt surface of the street removes all of the previous lane stripes. Typical projects include lane striping, which can allow for the provision of dedicated bicycle lanes along the streets. Additionally, ADA requires that non-compliant pedestrian curb ramps within the project limits be replaced, following the principle of “you touch it, you fix it.”

## Legal Requirements

Access to civic life by people with disabilities is a fundamental goal of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To ensure that this goal is met, [Title II of the ADA](#) requires state and local governments to make their programs and services accessible to persons with disabilities.

Accessibility requirements are not new; obligations have been around well before the ADA in 1990. States and localities were first required to place curb ramps at street crossing in 1973 by the Rehabilitation Act. Currently, the Department of Justice specifies that resurfacing a street (including mill and overlay) is an alteration; this triggers the requirement to place curb ramps at street intersections. This applies to all streets, regardless of which jurisdiction owns the roadway.

Without required curb ramps, traveling along a sidewalk and through an intersection is impossible for people who use wheelchairs and other mobility tools. The only other choice is to travel in streets and put themselves in harm's way.

Accessible pedestrian projects are broadly eligible for funding from almost all the major Federal-aid highway, transit, safety and other programs.

*Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department is developing an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan to make all parks and recreation facilities accessible.*



