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Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

DRAFT TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM GUIDEBOOK

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC FACILITIES (DOT&PF)
DIVISION OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & STATEWIDE PLANNING

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Transportation Alternative PROGRAM

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

Acronym	Full Form
AML	Alaska Municipal League
ASATP	Alaska Statewide Active Transportation Plan
ATP	Authority to Proceed
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BIF	Best Interest Finding
BIL	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
DMIO	Data, Modernization, and Innovation Office
DOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
FAST Planning	Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation Planning
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
HAS	Highway Analysis System
LCP	Local Control Plan
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOIA	Notice of Intent to Apply
OTT	Office of Tribal Transportation
PEB	Project Evaluation Board
PL	Metropolitan Planning Funds
ROW	Right-of-Way
RPO	Regional Planning Organization
RTP	Recreational Trails Program
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SHSP	Strategic Highway Safety Plan
SRTS	Safe Routes to School
SSE	Scope, Schedule, and Estimate
STBG	Surface Transportation Block Grant
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TAP	Transportation Alternatives Program
TTP	Tribal Transportation Program
USC	United States Code
VRU	Vulnerable Road User

TAP Guidebook

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Guidebook provides stakeholders with comprehensive information on program processes and requirements. Its purpose is to ensure transparency, assist stakeholders in navigating the program, and support the successful development and implementation of projects that enhance non-motorized transportation infrastructure, increase safety, and promote environmental sustainability.

This Guidebook outlines each program step, from initiating the application process through the Notice of Intent to Apply (NOIA) form to receiving an award determination and beginning project implementation. Additionally, it provides policy guidance to help applicants understand and navigate related processes and considerations. For a complete step-by-step overview of the TAP process, refer to the TAP Process Introduction section.

Overview of the DOT&PF TAP Program

This section provides a high-level overview of the TAP program, with subsequent sections providing further details.

Alaska's statewide TAP program is funded through a set-aside within the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program, a flexible federal funding mechanism that supports state and local transportation projects. DOT&PF will administer and deliver projects on behalf of applicants, apart from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 202(a)9 process. For more details on the 202(a)9 process, refer to the Guidance on 202(a)9 Transfers section.

For more information on the TAP Program, FHWA provides additional information on the **transportation alternatives website**.¹

Alignment with Alaska Transportation Plans

The TAP program advances state transportation planning goals outlined within the draft *Alaska Moves 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan*² (LRTP) and *Strategic Highway Safety Plan* (SHSP); the *Alaska Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Assessment*³ within the SHSP, and the *Alaska Statewide Active Transportation Plan*⁴ (ASATP). While *Alaska Moves 2050*

¹ [DOT&PF TAP Program Webpage](#)





² [Alaska Moves 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan](#)

³ [Alaska Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment](#)

⁴ [Alaska Statewide Active Transportation Plan](#)

provides forward-looking guidance, it has not been formally adopted; the currently adopted LRTP is the *Alaska Statewide Long-Range Transportation Policy Plan: 2036*⁵, The TAP program serves as a key resource for achieving progress towards these goals by implementing projects and activities. The table below details how the TAP program aligns with and supports statewide transportation plans:

Alaska Transportation Planning Alignment

Statewide Plans	Purpose	TAP Program Alignment
Alaska Moves 2050 (2022 Draft) 	Alaska Moves 2050 is the state's long-range transportation and freight plan, guiding investments for a safe, efficient, and resilient system.	The TAP program is the only dedicated funding mechanism Alaska has to advance non-motorized transportation projects that promote progress toward long-range transportation goals.
Alaska Statewide Long-Range Transportation Policy Plan: 2036 	Promotes a performance-based management approach to enhance safety, reduce congestion, and maintain infrastructure while prioritizing modernization and cost-effective construction.	Supports objectives such as safety and system condition improvements, enhances multimodal access (bike/ped), and strengthens infrastructure to increase resiliency and redundancy.
Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) 	The SHSP is a data-driven, statewide strategy to reduce traffic fatalities and injuries through infrastructure improvements, enforcement, education, and collaboration, prioritizing high-risk areas and vulnerable road users.	Supports VRU safety assessments to identify high-risk areas and implement improvements while providing funding for pedestrian and bicycle facilities to reduce fatalities and serious injuries.
Alaska Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Assessment 	Serves as a strategic planning document for transportation safety, guiding decision-making and investments for VRUs, identifying high-risk areas through network screening analysis, and engaging local and Tribal governments in safety consultations.	Funds projects that improve infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists in high-risk areas while supporting community improvements in underserved areas to advance equity considerations.
Alaska Statewide Active Transportation Plan (ASATP) 	The purpose of the Alaska Statewide Active Transportation Plan is to help improve walking, biking, and other non-motorized travel options, enhancing safety, accessibility, and connectivity across the state.	Provides an approach for guiding improvements in pedestrian and bicycle facilities, supporting safe routes to schools, and aligning with community projects to enhance accessibility and promote healthy lifestyles.

⁵ [Alaska Statewide Long-Range Transportation Policy Plan: 2036](#)

DOT&PF Vision Alignment

Through the *Advanced Vision Framework for Transportation in Alaska*⁶, DOT&PF envisions a modern, resilient, and agile transportation system that meets Alaskans' unique mobility needs. This vision is built on trust, teamwork, and results, emphasizing safety, economic vitality, sustainability, and multimodal connectivity. The TAP program directly supports this vision by funding projects that expand mobility options beyond traditional roadways, such as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, trails, and accessibility improvements.

The TAP program improves safety, reduces transportation costs, and implements resilient infrastructure—aligning with DOT&PF's goals for a state of good repair and sustainable development. The TAP Guidebook further reinforces this alignment by providing clear guidelines for project selection, funding eligibility, and implementation strategies. It ensures that TAP-funded projects reflect DOT&PF's core values of integrity, excellence, respect, and safety, creating a transportation network that serves all Alaskans efficiently and equitably.

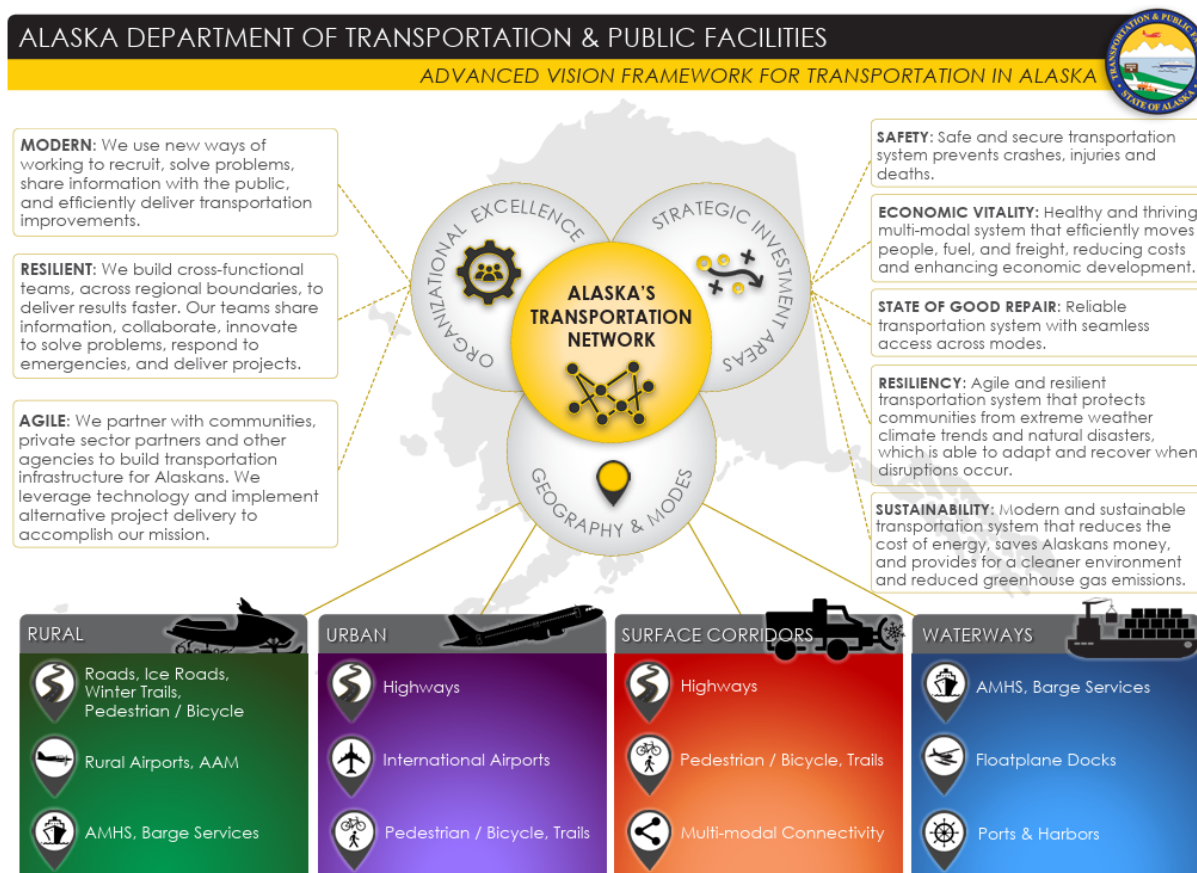


Figure 1: Advanced Vision Framework for Transportation in Alaska

⁶ [Advanced Vision Framework for Transportation in Alaska](#)

Project Selection and Typical Funding Limits

The TAP program is competitive, and DOT&PF is responsible for selecting projects through a fair and transparent process. The program does not directly issue grants but instead works with eligible entities that submit projects for consideration.

Eligible entities can submit up to two projects, with a federal share ceiling of \$5,000,000 per construction project (subject to change based on funding availability). For non-construction projects, the award range is typically between \$50,000 and \$200,000 (again subject to change).

Eligible Entities

Eligible Entity	Description
Local Government	Any unit of local government below a state government agency, except for MPOs representing urbanized areas with a population over 200,000 (e.g., city, town, [borough]).
Regional Transportation Authority	Considered the same as Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) defined in 23 U.S.C. 135(m). DOT&PF is piloting the RTPO program and calling it Regional Planning Organizations (RPO). Regional Transportation Authority can also mean a federally recognized Economic Development District for a region, as well as state designated Alaska Regional Development Organization.
Transit Agency	Any agency responsible for public transportation eligible for funds as determined by the Federal Transit Administration.
Natural Resource or Public Land Agency	Any Federal, Tribal, State, or local agency responsible for natural resources or public land administration (e.g., state/local park, forest, or fish/wildlife agencies).
School District, Local Education Agency, or School	Public or nonprofit private schools or districts benefiting the public, not only private entities.
Tribal Government	Any recognized Tribal government.
Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)	MPOs serving urbanized areas with a population of 200,000 or fewer (MPOs for larger areas are not eligible).
Nonprofit Entity	Nonprofit entities are eligible entities but must partner with a local government agency who will sponsor and submit the project on their behalf.
Other Local/Regional Governmental Entity	Any local or regional governmental entity responsible for or overseeing transportation or recreational trails, as determined by the state, excluding large MPOs serving urbanized areas with a population of 200,000 or more.
State DOT (Upon request)	A state DOT, when requested by an eligible entity listed above. To maintain the TAP Program community-focused, DOT&PF generally limits sponsoring projects to two per region.

Eligible Projects and Activities

Eligible Project or Activity	Description
Transportation Alternatives (23 U.S.C. 101(a)(29) as prior to FAST Act)	Projects related to transportation alternatives, including the following:
On-road and off-road trail facilities	Construction, planning, and design of pedestrian, bicycle, and other nonmotorized transportation facilities, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, traffic calming, and safety-related infrastructure.
Safe Routes for Non-drivers	Infrastructure for non-drivers (children, older adults, individuals with disabilities) to access daily needs.
Conversion of Abandoned Railroad Corridors	Conversion of abandoned railroad corridors into trails for nonmotorized transportation users such as pedestrians and bicyclists.
Turnouts, Overlooks, and Viewing Areas	Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
Community Improvement Activities:	
Outdoor Advertising Control	Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising.
Historic Preservation	Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities.
Vegetation Management	Vegetation management for safety, invasive species prevention, and erosion control within transportation rights-of-way.
Archaeological Activities	Activities related to the impact of transportation projects on archaeological sites.
Environmental Mitigation Activities:	
Stormwater Management	Addressing stormwater management, water pollution prevention, and abatement related to highway construction or highway runoff.
Wildlife Mortality and Habitat Connectivity	Reducing vehicle-caused wildlife mortality and restoring connectivity between terrestrial and aquatic habitats.
Recreational Trails Program (RTP) (23 U.S.C. 206)	Projects eligible under RTP are also eligible under the TA Set-Aside.
Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program (23 U.S.C. 208):	
Infrastructure-related Projects	Projects eligible under section 1404(f)(1) of SAFETEA-LU, now under 23 U.S.C. 208(g)(1).
Non-infrastructure-related Activities	Activities eligible under section 1404(f)(2) of SAFETEA-LU, now under 23 U.S.C. 208(g)(2).
SRTS Coordinators	Coordinators eligible under section 1404(f)(3) of SAFETEA-LU, now under 23 U.S.C. 208(g)(3).
Boulevards and Other Roadways in Former Interstate Right-of-Way	Planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and roadways in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.
Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment (23 U.S.C. 148(a))	Activities in furtherance of a vulnerable road user safety assessment.
Improving Accessibility and Efficiency (23 U.S.C. 133(h)(6)(C))	Projects aimed at improving accessibility and efficiency, as per the BIL amendment.

TAP Process Introduction

DOT&PF has developed an inclusive TAP program that emphasizes a data-informed and consistent evaluation process. The TAP process can be broken down into three main parts:

1. NOIA & DOT&PF Screening
2. Project Application & DOT&PF Evaluation
3. PEB Board Evaluation, Awards, & Implementation

Throughout the TAP process, area planners are available to provide guidance on the TAP process. For the most up-to-date DOT&PF contact information please visit the Area Planner Contact Map⁷.

General overview

The TAP application process begins when eligible applicants submit a **project concept**, using the DOT&PF platform designed to manage TAP and other transportation project submissions, evaluations, and communications. A project concept is an initial project idea that outlines the basic scope, purpose, and anticipated benefits of a proposed transportation improvement. It serves as the first step in the TAP application process and helps determine whether the project aligns with the goals and eligibility requirements of the TAP.

If the project is flagged for TAP, applicants are prompted to complete TAP-specific screening questions, which serve as the **Notice of Intent to Apply (NOIA)**. These questions help identify project needs, assess program eligibility, and evaluate feasibility, alignment with program goals, and overall project readiness. Once the NOIA is submitted, applicants meet with area planners to review eligibility and requirements.

The online platform supports a **rolling intake model**, allowing communities to submit project concepts year-round—not just during formal calls for projects. However, a formal **TAP call for projects** will still be announced periodically to ensure transparency and to align with statutory and funding cycle requirements.

Upon notification of project advancement, applicants submit their full project application, which is initially evaluated by area planners based on four project selection criteria: fiscal considerations, economic need, public support, and technical quality. The DOT&PF Data, Modernization, and Innovation Office (DMIO) reviews the preliminary evaluation results for

⁷ [Area Planner Contact Map](#)

consistency, while DOT&PF field chiefs conduct an additional review from an agency-wide perspective.

The project is then presented to the statewide Project Evaluation Board (PEB) for final scoring and funding recommendations. The PEB recommendations are forwarded by the DOT&PF project delivery deputy director to the commissioner for final approval. Applicants are notified of the outcome, and if awarded, the project is included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Once the STIP is approved, applicants collaborate with area planners to draft a match and maintenance (M&M) agreement, and a project manager is assigned to oversee implementation. Projects that do not receive funding are added to DOT&PF's needs list for future opportunities.

For deadlines and application requirements, visit the DOT&PF TAP webpage⁸. See the TAP program map below for a snapshot of the TAP process. for more information the following section provides additional detail.

⁸ [DOT&PF TAP webpage](#)

Alaska's Transportation Alternatives Program Map



PROJECT ADVANCEMENT AND COMPLETION

Once the M&M is executed, a DOT&PF Project Manager is assigned, and the project advances to implementation and completion.

DOT&PF Transportation Funding Opportunity Hub

The DOT&PF Transportation Funding Opportunity Hub⁹ is an online platform for submitting, evaluating, and managing TAP and other transportation projects. It supports year-round project concept submissions through a rolling intake model, though periodic TAP calls will still be announced to maintain transparency.

For applicants in rural areas with limited internet access, DOT&PF planners can assist by entering project information into the Hub on the community's behalf. Additionally, alternative submission methods such as providing paper versions of the TAP application.

How to Access the DOT&PF Transportation Funding Opportunity Hub

Steps 1 & 2: Create an Account

Register on the Hub with one designated representative per eligible entity.

Steps 3 & 4: Log In & Navigate

Once approved, log in to the Hub, access the TAP portal, and follow system prompts for eligibility screening, project details, and document uploads.

Submit a Project Concept & NOIA

Submit the project concept. If flagged for TAP, a NOIA form will be requested for initial screening. DOT&PF will review eligibility before granting access to the full application.

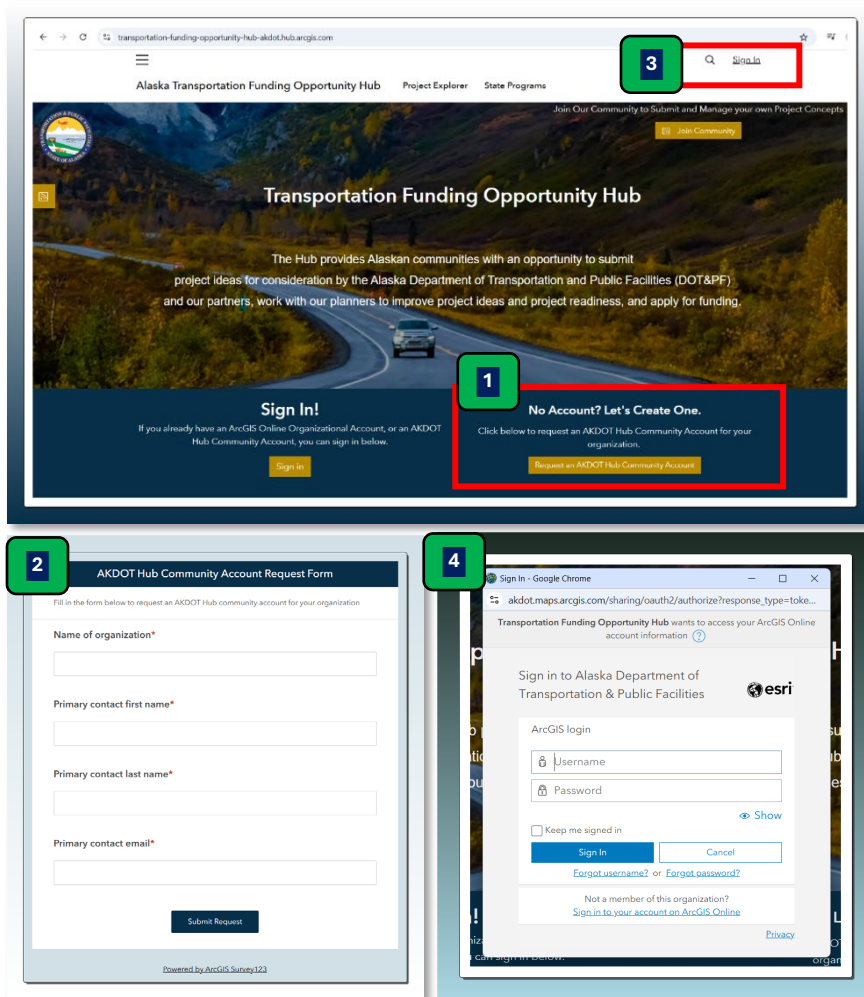


Figure 2: DOT&PF Transportation Funding Opportunity Hub

⁹ [Transportation Funding Opportunity Hub](#)

Notice of Intent to Apply (NOIA) & Screening

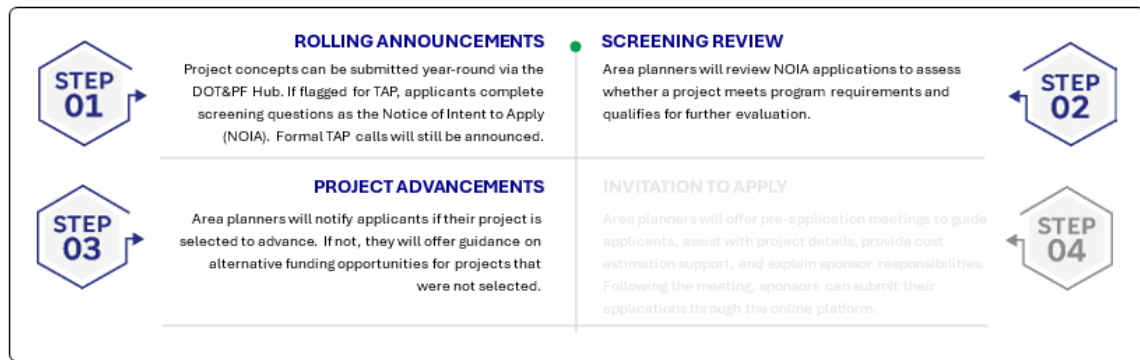


Figure 3: TAP Process NOIA overview

To apply for TAP funding, eligible entities begin by submitting a project concept through the online platform. If the project is flagged for TAP, applicants will be prompted to complete TAP-specific screening questions, which serve as the NOIA. This form helps eligible entities identify their project needs and assess program eligibility. As part of this process, these screening questions will be used to assess project feasibility, alignment with program goals, and overall project readiness.

Project Application & Evaluation

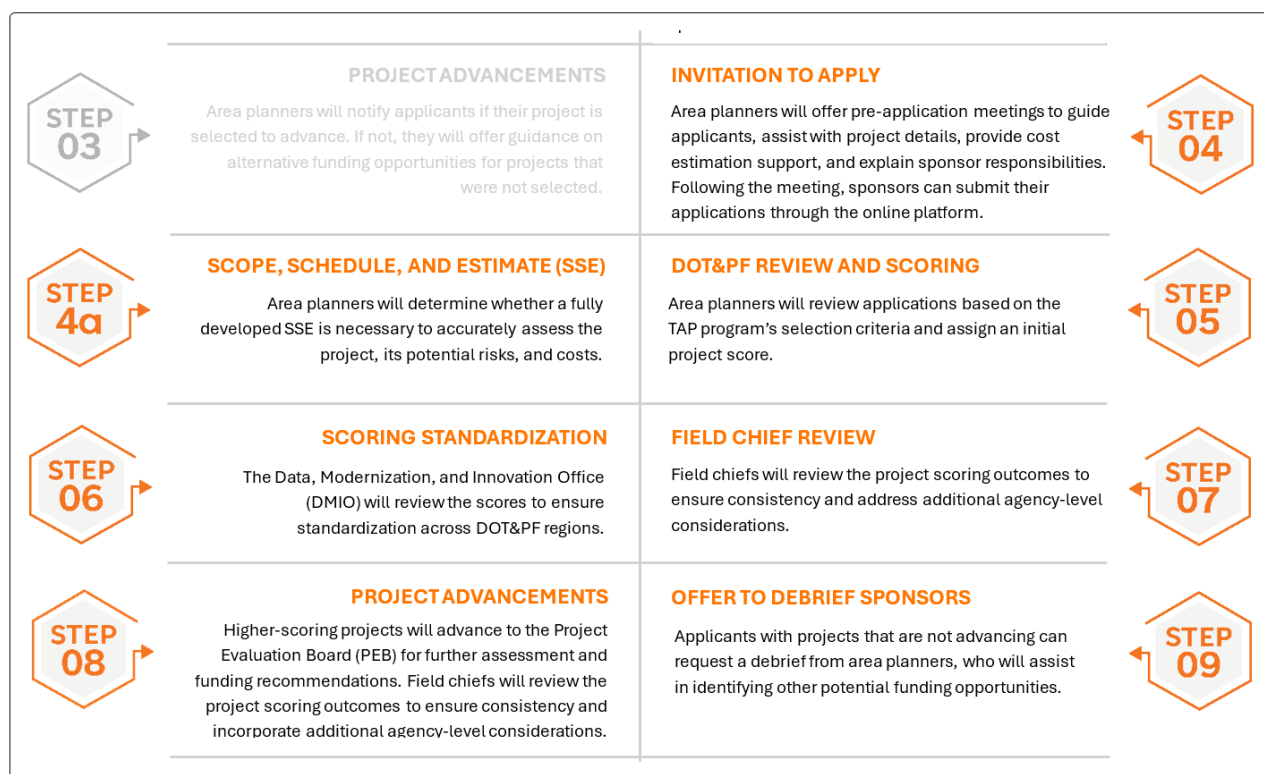


Figure 4: TAP Process Application overview

Project Application

Area planners will invite applicants who pass the NOIA screening to submit a full TAP program application. Applicants will receive support from area planners through a pre-application meeting, which helps refine project concepts to ensure alignment with funding criteria and competitiveness within the evaluation framework. For more complex projects, a targeted SSE effort may be required to clarify project details and costs.

Key elements for the TAP project application include:

- **Project Type:** Applicants must indicate if their project meets the criteria for TAP funding, such as constructing trails for pedestrians and cyclists, enhancing transportation safety, or preserving historic transportation facilities.
- **Project Status:** Information about the project's current development stage, such as design work or environmental approvals.
- **Cost and Schedule:** Project applicants must provide estimates for the total project costs, including planning, design, construction, and indirect costs, and outline a target schedule for completion.

- **Facility Owner Endorsement:** If the applicant is not the owner of the facility or land where the project is located, a formal endorsement or confirmation from the facility owner is required.



Evaluation

The project evaluation process determines which projects will advance for funding. Once applications are submitted, projects are assessed based on the project selection criteria, which include:

Focus Area	Criteria	Rating Method	Required Information
Fiscal Considerations	Cash contribution	Cash contribution level	The cash contribution based on DOT&PF approved estimate
	Ownership, management responsibility, maintenance, and operations	Full, partial, or no transfer of ownership	DOT&PF facility ownership
	Quality of Cost Estimate	Quality of unit cost and quantity justifications and size of contingency	Cost estimate with supporting documentation, including justification for unit costs, quantities, and contingency amounts.
Economic Need	Median household income	The project location's percentile ranking for household income among Alaskan households.	Census data and GIS layer of the project location
Community Support	Public Involvement and Support	Number of letters, resolutions, or other records of support	Support materials uploaded with project application
	Plan alignment	Identified as a high priority project in state, tribal, or local plans	Plans identified in or uploaded with the project application
Proposed Scope of Work	Technical Quality of Scope	Degree to which all scope considerations are articulated and addressed.	Scope information from the application

Preliminary Review & Scoring

Area planners conduct preliminary reviews and scoring, as they are most familiar with local needs and project priorities, making them well-positioned to assess the projects.

DMIO provides a consistency review which compares preliminary scoring results to identify potential systematic differences in evaluation outcomes between regions.

Field chiefs review the project evaluation outcomes also for consistency and alignment with agency-wide priorities. They provide an additional layer of oversight by considering broader agency goals and perspectives, ensuring that the evaluation process reflects DOT&PF's overall objectives.

During their review, with input from DMIO, field chiefs provide feedback to area planners, which may include suggestions but generally does not require adjustments to the scores. After considering the consistency feedback, area planners finalize their preliminary scores, and the top-performing projects are advanced to the PEB.

PEB Board Review, Awards, & Implementation



Figure 5: TAP process project evaluation scoring overview

The PEB is a team of evaluators comprising DOT&PF leadership such as the deputy commissioner, the planning director, and regional directors. The PEB evaluates and

finalizes project scores based on established criteria, providing funding recommendations that align with TAP priorities and program goals.

PEB members individually review the preliminary scores and audit consistency feedback, assigning their own scores based on the evaluation criteria. They are encouraged to consider the initial score results but retain the discretion to adjust scores as needed.

During the PEB consensus meeting, individual scores are reviewed collectively, with discussions focusing on addressing any scoring variances. The meeting follows a consent agenda format, where pre-screened projects are usually accepted without significant changes unless discrepancies are identified. The meeting concludes with the calculation of final scores, which are the weighted averages of all evaluators' scores. The PEB's recommendations are then sent to the project delivery deputy director.

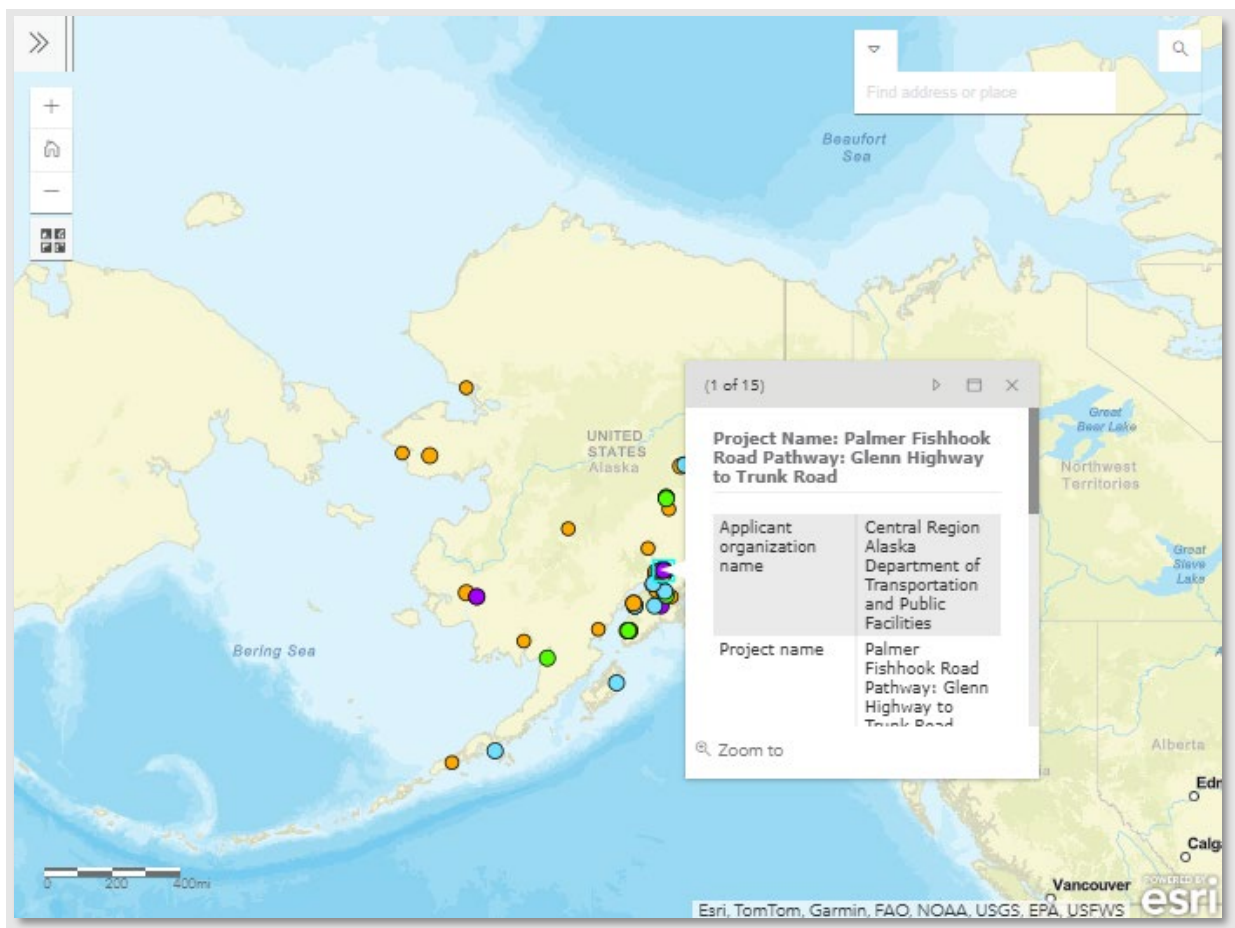


Figure 6: Project information and PEB scoring results are made available online through the TAP project map¹⁰

¹⁰ [TAP Project Map](#)

Project Awards and Implementation

The project delivery deputy director submits an award recommendation memorandum to the commissioner for approval. This memorandum includes a prioritized list of TAP projects recommended for funding based on available resources. While the PEB finalizes scores and provides funding recommendations, the commissioner retains the discretion to finalize the list of projects selected for funding awards.

Determination Letters

Area planners send determination letters to applicants. A funding award does not mean the project will begin immediately; it must first be programmed into the STIP. Additionally, all applicants, regardless of the funding decision, may request a debrief from the assigned area planner. These debriefs provide constructive feedback to help improve future project submissions and are valuable for upcoming applications.

Projects that are not selected for funding are logged on DOT&PF's needs list. DOT&PF continually seeks additional funding for projects on the needs list, including coordinating with Alaska Municipal League (AML) to secure available discretionary grant funding.

Post-Award Actions

After STIP approval, DOT&PF area planners will collaborate with applicants to guide them through the post-award steps, starting with the M&M agreement and concluding with the assignment of a DOT&PF project manager.

Post-award actions include:

- **Drafting and Finalizing the match and maintenance (M&M) agreement:** Awardees, in coordination with DOT&PF, will begin drafting the M&M as part of the project agreement process. The M&M may be subject to future revisions.
- **Providing Match Funding:** The project sponsor must supply the necessary matching funds, including contingency amounts for each project phase, to DOT&PF. However, exceptions to this requirement exist under the 202(a)(9) process.
- **Project Manager Assignment:** Once the M&M is finalized, a project manager will be assigned to oversee project implementation and ensure all project details are properly aligned.

Policy Guidance

This section outlines policies for MPOs regarding the use of state funds for early right-of-way (ROW) acquisition, the management of applicant matching funds between the state and local sponsors, ROW maintenance responsibilities, and the process for transferring funds to Tribal Transportation Programs (TTP) for 202a(9) transfers. Each process emphasizes eligibility verification, required documentation, and compliance with both federal and state guidelines.

Guidance on MPO Coordination

In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 135(m), the state decides how funds will be allocated to counties, MPOs, and regional transportation planning organizations. To ensure that these federal requirements are met, the TAP manager will be involved as an observer to the MPOs TAP application and selection process to enhance the ability to report on compliance and provide guidance if needed. The TAP manager will also coordinate the annual report submission.

Funding allocation

The State selects projects through a competitive process for all funds, except those allocated to metropolitan areas with populations greater than 200,000 or MPOs representing urbanized areas of 50,000–200,000 with an approved Local Control Plan (LCP) (23 U.S.C. 133(h)(4)(B)). DOT&PF suballocates TAP funds to eligible MPOs using the same method as Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds, ensuring MPOs receive a proportionate share of Alaska’s TAP funding based on population.

Local Control Plans (LCP)

The requirement for an LCP is established under 23 U.S.C. 135, which governs statewide and metropolitan transportation planning. This statute mandates that state DOTs ensure a fair and transparent process for the allocation of federal funds. Approved LCPs can be found on DOT&PF’s TAP program webpage¹¹

Since DOT&PF suballocates a portion of TAP funds for areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000, FHWA requires the state to establish a formalized LCP. This process must detail the framework for suballocation, including:

¹¹ [DOT&PF TAP Program Webpage](#)

LCP Component	Description
Allocation Process	Define distribution of funds to cities, boroughs, and MPOs (RTPOs, or local governments).
Competitive Project Selection	Ensure receiving entities conduct a competitive process for project selection in alignment with TAP eligibility. Receiving entities must report selected projects to DOT&PF for tracking and reporting.
Capacity Demonstration	Prior to initiating a project solicitation, submit a memo to DOT&PF describing the legal, financial, and technical capacity of receiving entities to manage TAP funds. Example: Staffing levels, financial systems, and prior experience managing federal funds.
Stakeholder Input	Document how DOT&PF gathered input from receiving entities regarding compliance ability.
Reporting Compliance	Detail how DOT&PF and receiving entities will fulfill FHWA reporting requirements for TAP, including project obligation, fund utilization, and performance metrics.

TAP annual report

According to 23 U.S.C. 133(h)(8) DOT&PF is responsible for consolidating one fiscal year report that includes all project applications and project selections for the state DOT, the MPOs responsible for selecting projects, and the state agency responsible for the RTP. DOT&PF must collect the information from partner agencies and submit one final document to the FHWA Division office. The TAP-manager coordinates this submission on an annual basis and invites representatives from the MPOs and Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to a coordination meeting at the beginning of December. The annual report is typically submitted in the middle of January. This coordination process will ensure timely submission of the TAP annual report.

Guidance on ROW Acquisition as Credit for Match

DOT&PF Procedure 09.01.090¹² addresses the use of state funds for early right-of-way (ROW) acquisitions that can be credited toward the non-federal share of a federally funded transportation project's construction costs.

Purpose

This policy formalizes the use of state funds for early acquisition of real property, which can be used as a credit towards the non-federal match for a project's construction phase under

¹² [Policy and Procedure 09.01.090 Match Credits for Federal-aid Highway Early Right-of Way Acquisition](#)

23 CFR 710.501. This helps accelerate project delivery by enabling property acquisition before the completion of the environmental review process.

Policy Overview

- State funds are used for early ROW acquisition, with the goal of accelerating project delivery.
- The acquired property must be incorporated into the proposed transportation project, and the federal-aid highway funds must cover the construction phase.
- The early acquisition costs, including the purchase price of the property, must be less than or equal to the state's required match for the project's construction phase.

Eligibility Criteria

DOT&PF Eligibility

- The project must be eligible for federal-aid funds.
- The state must fully fund the ROW appraisal and acquisition phases.
- The early acquisition must accelerate project delivery and be incorporated into the project.
- The federal funds must fund the construction phase.
- The total early acquisition cost should not exceed the required state match for the construction phase.

FHWA Eligibility (23 CFR 710.501(c))

- The property must be lawfully obtained and not subject to federal restrictions (23 U.S.C. 138).
- The property must be acquired, and any relocation must follow the Uniform Act and relevant federal regulations.
- The acquisition must comply with Civil Rights regulations.
- The early acquisition must not interfere with the environmental review process, including decisions on the project's necessity, alternatives, and design.
- The acquired property must be incorporated into the federal-aid project for which match credit will be applied.

Approval Process

- **DOT&PF Approval:** Requests for early acquisition funding must be submitted by the relevant department officials and must include necessary documentation, including the project's eligibility for federal funds, how the acquisitions will accelerate delivery, and the estimated match required for the construction phase.

- **FHWA Approval:** While FHWA approval is not required for early acquisition, DOT&PF must certify that the acquisition did not influence the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process before seeking authority to proceed with construction.

Documentation and Compliance

- DOT&PF must ensure that all acquisitions are documented following NEPA and records retention policies.
- When submitting the Authority to Proceed (ATP) for construction, DOT&PF must include a statement that outlines the early acquisition and the credit being applied toward the project's match.

Guidance on Matching Funds

Policy 09.01.040¹³ outlines cost-sharing requirements between the state of Alaska and local applicants for federally funded surface transportation projects. It ensures that state matching funds are prioritized for projects that serve broader state interests, while local sponsors contribute to projects primarily serving local purposes. The minimum required match is 9.03 percent, but applicants can contribute additional local funding to the project (see the Evaluation section for more information). Policy and procedure updates are common, and revisions to this policy are currently in progress. The Guidebook will be updated accordingly to reflect these changes.

Purpose

This policy is designed to allocate limited state matching funds efficiently and effectively, ensuring resources are directed to areas of greatest need. It aims to strengthen collaboration between the state of Alaska and local sponsors, aligning funding responsibilities with the benefits of each project. Furthermore, the policy ensures federal funding opportunities are fully utilized while maintaining a balance between state and local priorities.

Guidance Overview

The policy applies to all new project phases and cost increases authorized after June 30, 2003. For projects authorized for construction before this date, the state provides a 100% match for federal funding, ensuring full financial support under the earlier framework.

¹³[Policy and Procedure 09.01.040 Local Match for CIP \(effective 07/01/2005\)](#)

Local Match Requirements

Local sponsors are required to contribute to project costs, with obligations determined by several factors:

- Ownership of the infrastructure,
- Functional classification (e.g., whether the project involves a state or local road),
- Project type, and
- Sponsorship responsibilities.

Exceptions to local match requirements are granted in specific situations, such as:

- Projects with a demonstrated state interest, or
- Minimal preventive maintenance on state-owned infrastructure.

Procedure Overview

Before a federal-aid agreement can be executed, an M&M must be signed between the state and the project sponsor. This agreement must specify:

- The project scope, costs, and completion schedule, and
- The payment methods for the local match.

If there are changes to the project's scope, schedule, or budget, the M&M must be amended to reflect these adjustments.

Non-compliance with the policy's requirements by the sponsor may lead to:

- Delays in project implementation,
- Imposition of sanctions, or
- Suspension of funding.

Sponsors have the option to appeal to local match determinations to the Commissioner. Appeals are reviewed based on:

- Whether the project demonstrates state interest, or
- The presence of exceptional circumstances that justify an adjustment.

Certain situations allow for exemptions from local match requirements. These include:

- The transfer of ownership and maintenance responsibilities,
- Donations of ROW or usable materials,
- Local match contributions sourced from other federal or state programs, or
- Projects that demonstrate significant state interest, such as those resulting in reduced state service costs.

Guidance for Maintenance and Management Responsibilities

Policy 07.05.095¹⁴ establishes the guidelines for acquiring Right-of-Way (ROW) for management and maintenance. This policy ensures that no agreements are finalized until funding is approved and secured. Below is an overview of the key points from the policy:

Purpose

This policy ensures that any ROW acquisition agreements with local governments or agencies for management and maintenance responsibilities are not finalized until funding has been provided. This safeguards the department from taking on unfunded maintenance and operations (M&O) responsibilities.

Policy Overview

- **Approval Required:** ROW acquisitions must receive written approval from the deputy commissioner.
- **Funding Secured First:** Additional M&O responsibilities will only be assumed after funding is appropriated and in place.
- **Cost Calculations by Roadway Features:**
 - ROW width and length
 - Surface and shoulder types (asphalt or gravel)
 - Traffic volume (average annual daily traffic)
 - Structures such as bridges, barriers, and drainage systems
 - Utilities (above ground and underground), signage, vegetation, and environmental issues

Procedure Overview

1. **Request Initiation:** A petition is submitted to the regional office, which forwards it with an explanation memo to the deputy commissioner for approval.
2. **Stakeholder Communication:** Engage with affected parties to discuss ownership, service needs, and funding sources.
3. **Cost Estimation:** Prepare a detailed cost estimate based on roadway features, calculating per lane mile costs.
4. **Approval and Budgeting:** Submit the cost estimate for approval. If approved, funding is requested through the normal budget process.
5. **Final Documentation:** Once funding is in place, document the ROW in the Highway Analysis System (HAS) for tracking and statistical purposes.

¹⁴ [Policy and Procedure 07.05.095 Acquisition of Right-of-Way for the Purpose of Management and/or Maintenance](#)

Guidance on 202(a)9 Transfers

The 202(a)(9) funding transfer process¹⁵ facilitates cooperation between DOT&PF and Tribes by enabling states to transfer funding to a Tribe's Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) through the Office of Tribal Transportation (OTT) or the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). This process allows any funds received from a state DOT to be credited to appropriations available for TTP.

Policy Overview

The policy outlines the process and requirements for Tribes to apply for and secure fund transfers under the TTP. The goal is to provide a clear pathway for Tribes to access funding for eligible projects, ensuring alignment with federal guidelines and state approval processes. The fund transfer process involves layers of review to ensure eligibility and compliance:

- **Tribal Eligibility:** Confirm that the applicant is a federally recognized Tribe and not a local government.
- **Regional and Federal Notifications:** Area planners will consult with the DOT&PF regional planning chief and FHWA Alaska Highway Division for project eligibility verification.
- **Federal Confirmation:** Secure written agreement from the OTT or BIA to oversee the project and accept funds.
- **Final Approvals:** Ensure the project complies with federal and state requirements and aligns with the project nomination cycle.

Procedure Overview

The fund transfer process involves a series of structured steps to ensure that projects meet eligibility requirements, financial feasibility, and administrative compliance.

Key considerations in the fund transfer process include important guidelines. Local governments cannot pursue funds via a 202(a)(9) Transfer but can collaborate with Tribes for project nominations. Additionally, projects located on state-managed routes are ineligible for consideration under this process. To ensure consistency, a standardized fund transfer agreement template is required to formalize all agreements related to the fund transfer.

¹⁵ [The 202\(a\)\(9\) funding transfer process](#)

Below is a step-by-step guide:

Step	Action	Details
Step 1	Preliminary Discussion	The process begins with Tribal applicants initiating a discussion with the DOT&PF Regional Planning Field Office. This initial step determines whether the project aligns with program goals and has preliminary support for a fund transfer.
Step 2	Submission of Tribal Documentation	<p>Once preliminary support is confirmed, the Tribe submits key documentation to move the process forward. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding agency concurrence, verifying that the project qualifies for the Tribal TTP. • A project cost estimate and schedule, confirming the Tribe's understanding of financial constraints since no additional funding will be provided beyond the allocated amount.
Step 3	Preparation of Best Interest Finding (BIF)	If the project is supported, the Planning Field Office prepares a Best Interest Finding (BIF) to document why the project is in the state's interest. The BIF is submitted to the state's Director for approval.
Step 4	Funding Availability	<p>Funding for eligible projects is allocated in two phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design phase funding • Construction funding <p>Once funds are available, an additional six to eight months (but can take less time) is required to complete administrative actions for transferring the funds.</p>
Step 5	Administrative Actions	For projects that rank highly and are selected for funding, the final stage involves completing all administrative steps necessary to transfer the funds. This includes collaboration with federal and state agencies to finalize the transfer process.