



Northern Arizona
Council of Governments
Apache • Coconino • Navajo • Yavapai



Chris Fetzer
Executive Director

May 13, 2021

NACOG Member Agencies

Re: **NACOG Call-for-Projects – Regionally Significant Projects List**

To whom it may concern:

This letter serves as Northern Arizona Council of Governments' (NACOG's) formal Call for Projects for the **"Regionally Significant Projects List"** for consideration during the Arizona **2022** legislative session.

Funding Background:

Revenues at the state level have been higher than projected since the pandemic shut-downs started in March 2020 and Arizona has been able to stave off deep cuts to the budget in 2021. In addition, revenue projections for the current fiscal year are trending toward a \$2 billion surplus. While the State Legislature has not shown interest in increasing permanent revenue sources for transportation such as the fuel tax or an alternative fuel vehicle fee, they have prioritized earmarks for infrastructure projects in this year's budgeting process. As we look to the next state fiscal year, leadership at the COG and MPO level across the state, as well as local elected officials, would like to be prepared to take full advantage of potential future funding opportunities.

In addition to the funding that may become available at the state level, additional funding may also be directed to the state from the federal level. First, earmarks have seen a rebirth at the federal level under a new name, "designated projects", and our U.S. representatives solicited projects in early April for consideration this spring. Second, President Biden has proposed the American Jobs Plan, which includes a significant infrastructure package that would bring additional funding into the State of Arizona. And finally, the Federal surface transportation funding legislation is up for reauthorization in 2021 and could potentially include increased funding for projects in rural Arizona.

The State Legislature is increasingly demonstrating a growing interest in infrastructure investment. However, that support level has not yet risen to the point of supporting a fuel tax or fee increase to pay for it. Legislators would rather prioritize earmarking surplus general fund revenues for infrastructure projects. The earmarking approach is popular as they get to support the infrastructure without raising taxes. Legislators also get to share the accolades for specific projects rather than directing funding to HURF or some other distribution process where it is not as clear or transparent as to how the funding will actually be used.

As earmarking appears to be the most viable option for securing additional infrastructure funding, the Rural Transportation Advocacy Council (RTAC) Advisory Committee, consisting of the Greater AZ COG/MPO directors, developed a compromise approach. The committee agreed to develop a list of regional priorities consisting of the top projects put forward by all of the COG/MPOs in Greater AZ. The list comprised of projects for Greater AZ totaling \$40 million will be introduced to the state legislators as a *single* piece of legislation for the 2022 session. In this way, legislators would still be advocating for specific projects but they would be the state’s rural regional priorities as determined by Greater AZ’s transportation planning organizations.

The Directors developed the following guidelines for compiling the list of priority projects:

1. The total list value will be \$40 million.
2. Each Greater AZ COG/MPO would be allocated an amount proportional to their population.
3. No COG/MPO or local jurisdiction would be precluded from pursuing separate earmarks for other projects.

Many COG/MPOs did not have time to develop a list of regionally identified projects to pursue funding for the 2021 legislative session, but their lists should be prepared well in advance of the next 2022 session.

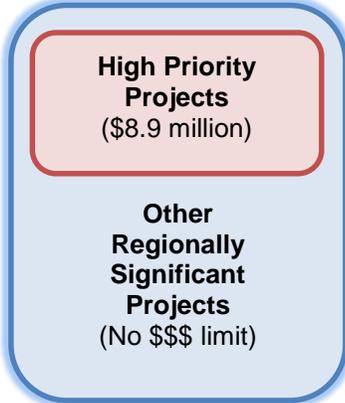
The funding allocations for each COG/MPO for the inclusion of projects on the list is as follows, with a NACOG allocation of **\$8,986,801**:

COG/MPO	POPULATION %	FUNDING SHARE
CAG	5.43%	\$2,173,038
CYMPO	9.32%	\$3,726,190
LHMPO	4.08%	\$1,633,292
METROPLAN	6.29%	\$2,517,567
NACOG	22.47%	\$8,986,801
SCMPO	8.65%	\$3,459,274
SEAGO	10.95%	\$4,379,776
SVMPO	4.82%	\$1,926,277
WACOG	12.18%	\$4,873,673
YMPO	15.81%	\$6,324,112
TOTAL	100%	\$40,000,000

Funding Availability

While RTAC has requested a list of Priority Transportation Projects totaling \$8.9 million that it will use to target state general funds, NACOG has chosen to taken advantage of this planning process to create a broader list of projects that could support additional state and federal funding opportunities. Therefore, this Call for Projects will accommodate two lists – one that is fiscally constrained to be called the **High Priority Project List** and the other which will contain all eligible projects to be called the **Regionally Significant Projects List**. In other words, the Regionally Significant Projects List will include all projects determined as eligible during the project application review process whether or not they are selected for the legislative set-aside funding; the High Priority Project List will be a subset of Regionally Significant Project List. Projects on the High Priority Project List will also be placed in the NACOG TIP under a separate section from the current TIP projects that have designated funding.

Regionally Significant Projects List



For the High Priority Project List, NACOG used the same population data/formula as RTAC to allocate the funding to the sub-regions as shown before. The proposed funding source for High Priority Projects is the state general fund.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING (JULY 2019 CENSUS ESTIMATES)			
SUB-REGION ⁽¹⁾	Census Population (July 2019 Est.)	Percent of Sub-regional Population	Funding Allocation
Apache	71,887	21.47%	\$1,929,497
Coconino ⁽²⁾	52,409	15.65%	\$1,406,694
Navajo	110,924	33.13%	\$2,977,277
Yavapai ⁽³⁾	99,600	29.75%	\$2,673,333
TOTAL	334,820	100.00%	\$8,986,801

(1)- Sub-Region is defined as all NACOG members (county, municipal, tribal) within the designated NACOG planning boundary. Members are further grouped per county territory.

(2) - The Coconino Sub-Region population reflects the total population within Coconino County minus the estimated Flagstaff MPO population.

(3) - The Yavapai Sub-Region population reflects the total population within Yavapai County minus the estimated Central Yavapai MPO population.

Eligible Projects:

All projects must meet the definition of Regionally Significant: *Projects that enhance connectivity between communities and/or increase access to regional services or employers.* Jurisdictions may submit more than one project application; if more than one project is submitted, the jurisdiction should rank their projects on the applications.

High Priority Projects

For the High Priority Project List, RTAC is looking for projects that will resonate with state legislators. Eligible projects for the High Priority Project List include:

- Capital improvement projects (bridges and roadways)
- Capital improvements must be on a federal functional classified road
- Requested funding amount may not exceed the amount available to the sub-region (see above)

Regionally Significant Projects

Eligible projects for the Regionally Significant Project List include all of the categories from the High Priority Project List, as well as:

- Capital projects for transit (bus and bus facilities)
- Roadways designated as “local” streets under the state road-way classification
- Roadway design, planning projects, and projects that are in the conceptual phase
- No limit to the funding amount requested

Due Date and Timeline:

Agencies must submit their applicants for this Call for Projects by **Friday, June 11th, 2021**, which includes completing the **online application** and **submitting backup documents** as a single PDF via email to NACOG. The online application is available here: <https://forms.gle/627FRrJtbKMLQuhm7>.

Projects will be reviewed & ranked by the NACOG Supplemental Funding Planning Committee, a subcommittee of the Transportation Technical Subcommittee (TSC). NACOG will then bring the ranked list of projects to the Sub-regional TSC meetings and elected officials for comments before submitting the draft High Priority Project List to the TSC and Regional Council for approval in August.

See next page for Call for Projects Timeline.

Call-for-Projects Timeline

Date	Who	What
May 14	NACOG Staff	Call for Projects is released (online form)
May 17 & 18	NACOG Staff and Technical Subcommittee (TSC) Members	Sub-regional meetings to discuss process, criteria, and timeline.
June 11	ALL PARTICIPATING AGENCIES	PROJECT SUBMISSIONS DUE BY 5:00PM
June 14-16	NACOG Staff	Preliminary review of applications
June 17-24	Supplemental Funding Planning Committee	Application-review for projects in their sub-region
July 5-14	NACOG Staff	Sub-regional meetings to discuss application scores and the final ranking of projects
July 15-25	NACOG Staff	Share draft High Priority Project List with elected officials and regional transportation committees
July 26	NACOG Staff	Finalize ranked list
August 4	Transportation Technical Subcommittee (TSC)	Review and approve final lists
August 26	Regional Council	Review and approve final lists
August 31	NACOG Staff	Submit final list to RTAC for 2022 Legislative session

Application Resources

The following links are intended to provide additional information about this Project Prioritization Process, previous studies that identified potential projects, and best practices for estimating project cost and developing project design. The FAQ will answer additional questions you may have and will be updated on the NACOG website as questions arise. The Scoring Criteria Table shows the established scoring categories, criteria and weights that will be used in scoring applications; the online application directly reflects the scoring criteria.

NACOG Priority Projects FAQ and Scoring Criteria Table: <https://nacog.org/departments/Regional-Planning/page/regionally-significant-project-list.html>

ADOT Cost Estimate form: <https://azdot.gov/sites/default/files/2019/06/adot-cost-estimate-form.xls>

Estimated Engineering Construction Costs (E2C2): <https://apps.azdot.gov/e2c2/HistoricalPrice.aspx>

HSIP Construction Pricing Examples: <https://azdot.gov/sites/default/files/media/2020/03/HSIP-Construction-Pricing-Examples.pdf>

ADOT Functional Classification Map:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7910e9ddd68b43f3a5b86aaf19119081&extent=-12511135.2617%2C3935973.0116%2C-12437755.7145%2C3971783.7594%2C102100>

NACOG Rural Strategic Transportation Safety Plan: <https://nacog.org/fileLibrary/nacog%20final%20rstsp.pdf>

FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures: <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures>

FHWA Pedestrian Countermeasures and Design:

https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/step/docs/STEP_Guide_for_Improving_Ped_Safety_at_Unsig_Loc_3-2018_07_17-508compliant.pdf

FHWA Bike Lane Countermeasures and Design:

https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/docs/fhwasa18077.pdf

Application Submittal

Applicants are to submit their application [online](#) and their supporting documents (**PDF Format**) via email to:

Mandia Gonzales
NAOCG Transportation Planner
mgonzales@nacog.org

Should you have any questions or corrections, please feel free to give me (928-543-9144) or Mandia Gonzales (928-433-4633) a call.

Sincerely,

Jennifer O'Connor
NACOG Acting Planning Director
(928) 543-9144