

## Safer Main Streets Initiative

### FY 2021 - FY 2023 Projects

### Eligibility Rules and Selection Process

#### Program Purpose

The *Safer Main Streets Initiative* was developed by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) to support infrastructure projects that improve safety and transform urban spaces, especially for vulnerable users. The Initiative is focused on busy arterials within the DRCOG Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area by seeking to support practical, simple and cost efficient projects that transform the way we use streets and adjacent spaces to improve safety.

Importantly, this Initiative also recognizes that we are entering a new normal as the region adapts to changing travel patterns caused by COVID-19.

#### Program Safety Goals and Economic Recovery Benefits

Transform Streets and Street Spaces to:

- Reduce fatal and serious injury crashes on the region's transportation system
- Support a transportation system that safely accommodates all modes of travel
- Improve transit access and multimodal mobility
- Support the development of connected urban/employment centers and multimodal corridors
- Provide safe access to opportunity and mobility for residents of all ages, incomes and abilities, including vulnerable users
- Help communities adjust to the "new normal" travel patterns caused by COVID-19.

Deliver practical, simple projects that offer immediate business and employment opportunities in the construction industry.

#### Applicant Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must be eligible to be direct recipients of federal transportation funds. These include local governments, CDOT, RTD, and other governmental agencies. Nonprofits and transportation management associations/organizations (TMA/Os) are not eligible applicants for projects but may partner with a governmental agency. Private, for-profit companies (e.g., contractors, suppliers, or consultants) are not eligible.
- Applicants must pledge local matching funds.

#### Project Eligibility Requirements

##### Funding background

Three main funding categories are anticipated for this program: State Transit (SB17-267), State Flexible (SB17-267), and Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG). Due to the COVID-19 budget situation, the budget available for SB17- 267 is being finalized, however, the anticipated amounts available from each category are not planned to exceed the following:

- State Transit: Up to \$26,000,000 (available only for projects located within CDOT R1)
- State Flexible: Up to \$25,000,000 (available only for projects located within CDOT R1)
- STBG: Up to \$26,500,000 (available for projects located within the DRCOG MPO boundary)

### Eligible Project Locations

The location of projects is limited to the following:

- State funds from SB17-267 are limited to projects located on arterial State Highways that otherwise meet the program criteria.
- Federal STBG funds are available for projects on the federal-aid-eligible roadways, especially those that are on the high injury network (HIN), that otherwise meet the program criteria.
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian project locations are exempt from the above

### Eligible project types

Applicants must consider the program goals in developing project concepts.

Project components and scopes must adhere to Surface Transportation Block Grant program guidance (<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/>) and should address the specific safety problems at the project location. This funding is for capital projects (infrastructure) only. A non-exhaustive list of example project types is included below.

## **Project and Project component examples**

- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including sidewalks, crossings, pedestrian amenities, and protected bicycle facilities.
- Pedestrian safety enhancements such as pedestrian-actuated crossings, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon, intersection crosswalk improvements, curb extensions, obstruction elimination, etc.
- Traffic calming, complete street improvements, speed reduction measures.
- Systemic problems where you may address some intersections with crash histories and provide upgrades for other similar intersections on the corridor. For example, signal upgrades for an entire corridor instead of only those with a crash pattern.
- Projects with innovative concepts or those that utilize technology to address overall program goals
- Pedestrian-scale lighting and other street lighting enhancements
- Improved access to transit stops
- Raised medians and signal improvements
- Transit amenities: access enhancements such as bus queue jump lanes and bus pads

### Ineligible projects

Roadway through lane capacity projects greater than 1 mile are not eligible under the Safer Main Streets Initiative. Please reach out to CDOT or DRCOG staff if there are questions about eligibility.

### Funding Requirements

Because of the rules in the various funding programs, all **eligible and funded projects must be able to complete all activities and submit all billings by no later than June 1, 2024**. Applicants may specify a preference for state-only funds for projects on state highways, but CDOT and DRCOG cannot guarantee a particular funding source allocation for a particular project.

Each project must request a minimum of \$250,000 and is not allowed to request more than \$10,000,000 from the program, excluding match. Smaller funded and cost efficient projects which can be delivered swiftly for public benefit are strongly encouraged.

A local match goal of at least 20% of the total project cost is requested (total federal and/or state share equals 80%). Additional overmatch is allowable as part of the application (though not tracked within the IGA with CDOT) and given additional consideration within the scoring criteria.

### Application Process

1. **Identify the project concepts to discuss at the pre-application workshop**
2. **Attend a Safer Main Streets Initiative pre-application and funding reimbursement workshop (or other - due to COVID-19 constraints) provided through CDOT**

1. **Complete and submit an application**

Applications should be submitted along with letters of support from impacted or participating entities. Per CDOT requirements, the application requires a mandatory Risk Assessment form to be submitted along with the application. Projects requiring CDOT concurrence (projects on a state highway or within the state rights-of-way) must provide an official CDOT response with the application submittal. Projects requiring RTD concurrence (projects involving RTD service, facilities, RTD maintenance, within RTD rights-of-way, or otherwise in need of RTD involvement) must provide an official RTD response with the application submittal.

### Project Funding Evaluation and Selection Process

CDOT and DRCOG will establish an internal scoring and selection panel to assist with scoring and evaluating projects. Participants may include staff from various CDOT and DRCOG divisions:

- CDOT Region 1 Traffic
- CDOT Division of Transit and Rail
- CDOT Region 1 Engineering Design Representative
- DRCOG Representative
- RTD Representative

Each member of the panel will review the applications and assign points to the criteria based on information contained in the project application forms. The panel will convene to discuss the applications and reach consensus on the final criteria points and total score for each project.

**Project review, scoring and recommendation**

Applications will be reviewed and scored based on the program evaluation criteria. A CDOT/DRCOG final scoring and selection panel will prepare and provide project evaluation information to an advisory panel that includes a staff representative selected by each DRCOG subregional transportation forum and two CDOT representatives. The advisory panel will prepare a recommendation to the scoring and selection panel for final review and recommendation to DRCOG’s Transportation Advisory Committee and Regional Transportation Committee for a recommendation prior to presentation to the DRCOG Board of Directors and Colorado Transportation Commission for approval. **Applicants are notified about approved projects**

[Evaluation criteria](#)

Category	Summary	Weight (%)
Safety	The extent to which the project addresses an identified safety need, especially those located on a High Injury Network	35
Transit and enhanced mobility (vulnerable users)	The extent to which the project improves safe multimodal mobility for vulnerable users or improves safe transit access and/or reliability	25
Other considerations: Innovation, Technology, Devolution, Benefit-Cost, etc.	The extent to which the project involves innovation, technology, state highway devolution, and is cost-effective	10
Public Support/Local Match	The extent to which the applicant demonstrates public support and committed local match	10
Readiness	The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the ability to meet project delivery requirements	20

[Award Conditions](#)

- All project scopes of work are subject to review and approval by DRCOG, RTD (as appropriate), and CDOT. The submitted and approved project scope becomes the work that the applicant at a minimum must complete.
- Each applicant awarded funds will sign an IGA and enter into a contract with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to implement the project depending on the type, location and other characteristics of the project. CDOT is the ultimate steward of these state and federal funds. CDOT will specify requirements for status reporting and reimbursement requests.

- Select applicants may be required to attend a post-project debrief with DRCOG and CDOT staff.
- Projects must be completed and all billings submitted by June 1, 2024. No reimbursements will be provided for work completed or billings submitted after June 1, 2024.
- Applicants will work with DRCOG, CDOT, RTD (as appropriate), and FHWA/FTA to ensure that the project is being implemented in accordance with federal requirements.