



Transportation Alternatives Program Document

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Executive Summary

The current transportation legislation, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), maintains the Transportation Alternatives Program, or TA Program. The TA Program was known as the Transportation Enhancements program before it was rebranded by Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century legislation to focus the funding toward the construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Eligible Activities under the SCDOT-defined TA Program include:

- On-road and off-road trail facilities for transportation purposes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation ("pedestrians" is inclusive of all users of the pedestrian infrastructure, including persons with disabilities.)
- Projects that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs
- Safe Routes to Schools Infrastructure
- Projects listed in an applicable SCDOT, COG/MPO nonmotorized transportation, bicycle, or other related plans
- Projects that meet SCDOT's Complete Streets Departmental Directive
- Projects that connect and develop documented regional or statewide non-motorized transportation networks

Requirements for use of the Transportation Alternatives monies include:

- All projects for the TA program must be competitively applied for, ranked, and funded, with no dedicated allocations to any sub-jurisdiction
- No TA funds may be "banked" by local jurisdictions for use in future years.

Through the IIJA Bill, GPATS will receive a TA Program allocation of \$1,233,320 in 2026 and will have \$901,271 available for new projects.

TA funds are NOT provided up-front by SCDOT, but are *reimbursed* to local jurisdictions upon completion of project milestones, and as with federal funding, require a 20% minimum local match to be provided by the applicant Jurisdiction.

The Application Process shall tentatively proceed as follows:

Announcement of Funding	January
Application Deadline	March
Study Team Recommendation	April
Policy Committee Approval	May

Introduction

History

In 1991, the United States Congress passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) that included a program known as the Transportation Enhancements (TE). This program continued in the subsequent legislation of TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU, and provided funds for South Carolina and regional entities specifically for *non-motorized* transportation improvements.

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, or MAP-21, legislation rebranded the Transportation Enhancements program as the Transportation Alternatives program, or TA. This rebranding altered the eligibility requirements to focus the funding toward the construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

MAP-21 was followed by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act in 2015, which continued the TA program and provided long-term funding from fiscal year 2016 to 2020.

As of 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will fund the TA Program through 2026.

Background

The Transportation Alternatives program (TA) went into effect on October 1st, 2012, along with the rest of the MAP-21 transportation legislation. The Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) worked with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to receive guidance and funding information as to how to transition the TE program into TA. This guidance helped mold the program into the one presented in this document. The program is subject to change each fiscal year to improve efficiency.

GPATS Eligible TAP Activities

Planning, design, and construction of:

- On-road and off-road trail facilities for transportation purposes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation ("pedestrians" is inclusive of all users of the pedestrian infrastructure, including persons with disabilities.)

- Projects that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs
- Safe Routes to Schools Infrastructure
- Projects listed in an applicable SCDOT, COG/MPO nonmotorized transportation, bicycle, or other related plans
- Projects that meet SCDOT's Complete Streets Departmental Directive
- Projects that connect and develop documented regional or statewide non-motorized transportation networks

*All projects must be compliant with all applicable SCDOT departmental, engineering, and planning directives; design, engineering, and construction standards and specifications

All projects for the TA program must be competitively applied for, ranked, and funded, with no dedicated allocations to any sub-jurisdiction.

Funding

The IIJA Bill defines the Transportation Alternatives Program funding areas as Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) and Non-Transportation Management Areas. GPATS is a TMA, which is defined as a Metropolitan Planning organization (MPO) with a population of 200,000 or greater. GPATS shall receive an TA funding allocation of **\$1,233,320 in 2026**.

Local Match

TA funds can fund up to 80% of an eligible activity. TA funds require a 20% **minimum** local match.

For example:

If a TA total project cost \$500,000, the local match would be at least \$100,000.

Excess Funds

Excess funds at the end of an application cycle will roll over to the next fiscal year so long as funding has not lapsed.

Eligibility

Eligible Activities

Planning, design, and construction of:

- On-road and off-road trail facilities for transportation purposes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation ("pedestrians" is inclusive of all users of the pedestrian infrastructure, including persons with disabilities.)
- Projects that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs
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- Projects that meet SCDOT's Complete Streets Departmental Directive
- Projects that connect and develop documented regional or statewide non-motorized transportation networks

*All projects must be compliant with all applicable SCDOT departmental, engineering, and planning directives; design, engineering, and construction standards and specifications

Eligible Applicants

The IIJA bill authorizes the following entities to apply for Transportation Alternatives Funding:

- Local Governments
- Regional Transportation Authorities
- Transit Agencies
- Natural Resource or Public Lands Agencies
- School Districts, Local Education Agencies or Schools
- Tribal Governments
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) that serve population areas of less than 200,000
- Nonprofit entities
- Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails (other than a metropolitan planning organization or a State agency that the State determines to be eligible).
- SCDOT, at the request of an eligible applicant, may sponsor a project; SCDOT may submit a TA application if requested by an

aforementioned eligible entity. SCDOT and an eligible MPO may partner with another eligible applicant to carry out a project.

Eligible Costs

Only certain costs are eligible for reimbursement through the Transportation Alternatives program. TA funds are not obligated on award. Although considerable time and money may have already been spent developing a project, an obligation marks the beginning of project costs which are eligible for reimbursement. Any design and feasibility studies conducted prior to receipt of a Notice to Proceed are not eligible.

After obligation many project specific costs are eligible. Preliminary and final engineering work including project development, environmental work, cost estimates, and construction plans are eligible after approval is received by the administering agency. Utility relocations, construction engineering, and construction costs would also be eligible. Right-of-way property rights required for TAP projects and the acquisition of this ROW may be an eligible expense. **The acquisition of real property is subject to the federal Uniform Act.**

Additional Eligibility Requirements

GPATS, in the course of developing the TA Program, has identified several other criteria to be used in determining eligibility of a project:

- Does the applicant jurisdiction currently have a TE or TA project in progress, and if so, is that project below the “50% completion” threshold?
- Does the project serve a relevant transportation need? Minimum thresholds shall be placed on project ranking, and if the project falls below the identified threshold, the jurisdiction will be asked to revisit the project and increase its significance.

Competitiveness

The results of competitive application may result in the following changes to applications:

- Rejection of an application – Application is denied and sent back to the jurisdiction for reapplication in the next cycle.

- Delay of funding – Application is eligible but not of high enough priority to compete with current projects. The project may be included into the GPATS TIP for future expectant funding, but not eligible for the current fiscal year.
- Adjustment of funding – Application is adjusted to utilize less funding in order to fit it into the current allocation amount.

The applications, when subjected to the competitive process, shall be ranked by GPATS Staff, judged by the TAP Subcommittee, and finally discussed subjectively and judged by the GPATS Study Team. The Study Team shall develop recommendations based upon the rankings for approval, change, or rejection by the GPATS Policy Coordinating Committee.

GPATS Criteria Ranking

The ranking process for TAP projects has been developed by GPATS (Appendix D).

- 1) Project Eligibility
 - a. Applicant is an eligible entity for TAP funding
 - b. Project Meets Eligibility Requirements
 - c. Applicant has no current TE or TAP project below 50% completion
- 2) Project Effectiveness
 - a. Project supporting a community's Complete Streets policy, is on a designated local, state, or national bicycle trail, or is part of a local, regional or statewide initiative, provides connectivity among other facilities or regions of activity, adds to or enhances existing network
 - b. Completes planned corridors, fills gaps in network(s)
 - c. Completes regional planned corridors, fills in gaps in regional network.
 - d. Project has logical beginning and ending points
 - e. Connects users to a destination, acting as an alternate form of transportation that is not for recreational use only.
 - f. Paired with other infrastructure work (e.g., State Resurfacing or Guideshare project)
 - g. Part of an economic development or community improvement initiative (e.g., implementation of completed plan or study)
 - h. One or more jurisdiction (county, city etc.) is partnering on the project (contributing financially)
- 3) Safety and Livability
 - a. Project addresses safety
 - b. Enhances livability, demonstrates quality of experience, improves quality of life, and improves population health
 - c. Total population served and level of exposure or access including the amount or density of nearby population or employment
 - d. Project is located in an area of high need (greater than or equal to 20% of population within census tract in poverty)
 - e. Project has documented community support (letters of support, outside funding)
- 4) Constructability
 - a. Feasibility of project
 - b. Concurrence with SCDOT Design Standards

- c. Realistic scope and schedule
 - d. Project Readiness – Is the project one that can start with relative ease? Are there complications that will postpone the project, such as excessive right-of-way acquisition? Could these complications postpone the project for 3 years and cause lapsing funds?
- 5) Financials
- a. Realistic expectations and cost that are in agreement with SCDOT estimates
 - b. Local match funding higher than the 20% minimum
 - c. Secured match prior to application
 - d. Other, Non-TAP work determined to be a benefit to the project (e.g., Local funds spent to improve infrastructure adjacent to TAP project)
 - e. Evidence of a strong maintenance plan that includes tasks, schedule, cost, source of maintenance funding, and responsible parties

Please refer to Appendix B for the actual Criteria Ranking Form to be filled for each Application submittal.

The criteria chosen and their values are subject to change based upon their effectiveness and validity, in addition to further guidance from SCDOT.

In all cases, the objective criteria ranking shall be used as a guide and justification for discussion and selection, but not used as an absolute final decision. **The Study Team shall use this criteria and discussion for making recommendations on which projects shall receive TAP funding, but the final decision shall always rest with the GPATS Policy Coordinating Committee.**

Application Process

The following process will be subject to change based upon its effectiveness and ease of compliance.

Announcement of Funding (January)

In each fiscal year cycle, SCDOT shall announce the available funding for the TAP program to be provided for GPATS. GPATS will incorporate this funding number into the TIP as “available” as opposed to “expectant” and inform the Policy Committee and Study Team that the application cycle has started.

Application Submittal (March)

GPATS shall provide the Policy Committee, Study Team, and other eligible recipients for TAP funding with an updated TA Program Document (this document) after receiving the funding announcement from SCDOT.

GPATS Staff shall work with potential applicants on developing eligible and effective projects to ensure that all funds are utilized and that potential projects provide a healthy benefit to the GPATS region.

Applications shall be due in March, in advance of the GPATS Study Team and Policy Committee meetings for that quarter.

The deadline for the 2025 cycle for all Applications to be submitted is March 13, 2026. No applications submitted past this date shall be accepted.

Project Selection (April-May)

The members of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinating Committee (BPCC) shall evaluate each of the Pre-Applications and send the resulting recommendation to GPATS Staff to be presented at the Study Team Meeting.

The GPATS Study Team shall meet for their quarterly meeting to discuss agenda items for the May Policy Committee Meeting, including applications for TAP funding. **In 2025, this meeting will occur on April 13, 2026.** The Study Team shall provide a recommendation for amendment of the GPATS 10-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include the selected projects.

A GPATS Policy Coordinating Committee is held in advance of the end of the federal fiscal year, June 30, and considers amendments to the TIP as requested by the Study Team. **In 2025, this meeting will occur on May 11, 2026.** Once the TAP projects are amended into the TIP, their funding is approved by GPATS.

Project Approval (June-September)

Once amended into the TIP, GPATS will forward approved applications to SCDOT.

The Application form is included in this Program Document (Appendix C).

Please note, approval by SCDOT does NOT constitute a TAP Participation Agreement or Notice to Proceed.

Post-Application

Once GPATS approves a project for funding, the GPATS Staff will take a back seat and the applicant will deal directly with SCDOT for the duration of the project.

The applicant shall be required to either allow SCDOT to manage the TAP project (incurring additional costs for administration) or complete the Local Public Agency (LPA) process to certify the project complies with all federal procurement and implementation policies. Please note that the LPA process requires a significant amount of time and expertise to qualify (see SCDOT LPA website <https://www.scdot.org/business/lpa.aspx>)

Once the Application is fully vetted by SCDOT and the project administration has been identified (and certified, if LPA), SCDOT and the applicant shall enter a Participation Agreement, and a Notice to Proceed shall be issued. From this time, it is required that all substantive work on the

TAP project be completed within two (2) years of the Notice to Proceed. If a project has not been issued a notice to proceed in three years after the funds were awarded, the project will be cancelled unless given special permission to continue. This is to avoid the lapse of TAP funds after the three year mark. Previously awarded projects will be grandfathered.

Application Process Summary

Below is the tentative schedule highlighting the milestones for the FY2024 TAP Application Cycle:

Announcement of Funding	January
Application Deadline	March 13, 2026
Study Team Recommendation	April 13, 2026
Policy Committee Approval	May 11, 2026

Additional Information

Feel free to provide feedback and comments on the program to GPATS staff listed below, and we shall work to improve the program in future years.

Links

GPATS Transportation Alternatives Program Website

<http://www.gpats.org/programs/tap>

SCDOT Transportation Alternatives Program Website

<https://www.scdot.org/projects/community-transportation-alternatives.aspx>

Local Public Agency Website

<https://www.scdot.org/business/lpa.aspx>

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SCDOT TAP Program

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Appendix A

GPATS Criteria Ranking Form

GPATS Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Criteria Ranking Form

Project name:

1). ELIGIBILITY

A project must meet the following three eligibility requirements in order to be considered:

- Applicant is an eligible entity for TAP funding
- The project meets eligibility requirements
- The applicant has no current TAP or Transportation Enhancement-funded project below 50 percent completion

2). EFFECTIVENESS

A. Project supports a community's Complete Streets policy, is on a designated local, state or national bicycle trail, is part of a local, regional, or statewide initiative, and/or provides connectivity to other facilities or regions of activity

_____ (3 points)

B. Completes planned corridors, fills in gaps in network(s)

_____ (3 points)

C. Completes regional planned corridors, fills in gaps in a regional network

_____ (3 points)

D. Project has logical beginning and ending points

_____ (1 point)

E. Connects users to a destination, acting as an alternate form of transportation that is not for recreational use only

_____ (1 point)

F. In conjunction with other infrastructure work (e.g., State resurfacing or a Guideshare project)

_____ (1 point)

G. Part of an economic development or community improvement initiative (e.g., implementation of completed plan or study)

_____ (1 point)

H. One or more jurisdiction (county, city etc.) is partnering on the project (contributing financially)

_____ (1 point)

3). SAFETY AND LIVABILITY

A. Project addresses safety

_____ (2 points)

B. Enhances livability, demonstrates quality of experience improves quality of life, and/or improves population health

_____ (2 points)

C. Serves and would benefit the local population and/or employees

_____ (1 point)

D. Project is located in an area of high need ([greater than or equal to 20% of population within census tract in poverty](#))

_____ (1 point)

E. Project has documented community support (letters of support, outside funding to support project, etc...)

_____ (1 point)

4). CONSTRUCTABILITY

A. Project feasibility

_____ (1 point)

B. Concurrence with [SCDOT Design Standards](#)

_____ (1 point)

C. Realistic scope and schedule

_____ (1 point)

D. Project readiness – Is the project one that can start with relative ease? Are there complications that will postpone the project, such as excessive right-of-way acquisition? Could these complications postpone the project and cause lapsing funds?

_____ (1 point)

5). FINANCIAL ELEMENTS

A. Realistic expectation and cost that are in agreement with SCDOT estimates

_____ (1 point)

B. Local-match funding higher than the 20% minimum

_____ (1 point)

C. Local match secured

_____ (1 point)

D. Other, non-TAP work determined will benefit project (e.g., Local funds spent to improve infrastructure adjacent to TAP project)

_____ (1 point)

E. Evidence of a strong maintenance plan that includes tasks, schedule, cost, source of maintenance funding, and responsible parties

_____ (1 point)

TOTAL (of 30 possible points) _____

Appendix B

SCDOT TAP Application



SCDOT USE ONLY

Received: _____

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES
SET-ASIDE PROGRAM (TAP) APPLICATION**

Due Friday, March 14, 2025

Please review the application in its entirety. Responses must fit in the space provided. All required attachments must be provided at time of application submittal.

Applicant Name and Address: _____

Contact Person and Title: _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

UEI Number: _____

Project Title: _____

Project Location (i.e., County; Road name; address; You must attach a detailed map of the exact project location, including project termini.)

Project Budget:

TAP Request \$ _____ (Min. Request = \$400,000; Should be no more than 80% of total project cost)

Match Amount \$ _____ (All match sources and amounts to be provided on Page 7)

Total Cost \$ _____

Note: Please see pages 6 and 7 for additional information on cost estimate requirements and matching funds.

Email application to: AStewart@greenvillecounty.org

Detailed Project Description (Also include all work phases needed to complete the project (i.e., ROW, PE.))

Existing Conditions (i.e., Nearby land uses – schools, neighborhoods, businesses; Existing bike/pedestrian facilities; Existing utilities; You may attach photos of existing conditions to support your narrative.)

Project Purpose and Need (Why is the project needed? Who and how many will it benefit?)

Completed Project Phases (Leave blank if not completed; must attach documentation if required.)

Item	Date Completed	Supporting Documentation Required
Planning		
Preliminary Design		Yes
Environmental Review / Permitting*		Yes
Final Design		Yes
Right-of-Way Acquisition		Yes
Utility Relocation		Yes
Other (Describe)		

* If no previously approved environmental documentation is available, the applicant must complete applicable studies and have them approved prior to project implementation. This requirement does not apply if the application is for planning or feasibility studies only.

If no environmental documentation is available, indicate in the table below any potential impacts the project is expected to cause.

Item	Impact	
	YES	NO
Displacement of residences or businesses		
Disruption of neighborhoods		
Impacts agricultural or recreational lands		
Impacts historical or archaeological sites		
Impacts wetlands, streams, lakes, floodplains, or floodways		
Within coastal zone		
Endangered species		
Air / water quality		
Noise		
Hazardous waste site		
Other (Describe)		

Property Ownership: Attach documentation listing ownership of ALL property involved in the project. If additional property must be acquired to complete the project, identify ownership and value of property. Acquisitions must comply with applicable state and federal laws.

For all projects on SCDOT rights-of-way, attach either a copy of the approved SCDOT Encroachment Permit, a letter from the appropriate SCDOT County Maintenance Office, or a letter from the appropriate SCDOT District Office indicating that the project appears feasible in concept with specific details to be approved in an Encroachment Permit.

Project Schedule (If a phase has been completed or is not part of the project, please leave the row blank.)

Phase	Estimated Start Date	Estimated End Date
Planning		
Preliminary Design		
Environmental Review / Permitting		
Final Design		
Right-of-Way Acquisition		
Utility Relocation		
Construction		
Other (Describe)		

Who will administer the project?*: ___SCDOT ___Applicant will apply to be Local Public Agency (LPA)

*SCDOT may utilize external entities to administer the project. Allowable and allocable oversight and administration costs will be charged.

Application to become an LPA does not guarantee approval. If not approved, SCDOT will administer the project.

Cost Estimate

Attach a detailed cost estimate that itemizes all project elements and costs. Cost estimates over a year old **will not** be accepted. The estimate must list item, description, quantity, unit price, amount, etc. To ensure that the costs will satisfactorily complete all of the work anticipated, please include an appropriate contingency. Also include the costs for project oversight, including project administration and management, engineering, inspection, and testing in accordance with state and federal requirements.

The cost estimate **must** be developed or reviewed by a Professional Engineer certified in the State of South Carolina. Documentation certifying/confirming this **must** be attached. Please remember that all TAP funds must be obligated within 4 years of their awarded federal program year, or they will lapse.

Matching Funds

Typically, the TA Set-Aside program may fund up to 80% of a project's future eligible costs, with the applicant funding at least 20% in non-federal funds, i.e. local, state, or private funds. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have their match available upon award, as the applicant will be required to pay their match up front before work on their project may begin. "In-kind" matches are not acceptable.

SCDOT recognizes that the capacity to provide matching funds varies among communities statewide, especially rural, high need areas. Therefore, SCDOT may provide up to 100% of the non-federal share for projects located in [Tiers III and IV counties](#). SCDOT may also consider providing match for projects located in Tiers I and II counties on a project-by-project basis. If you have been tentatively approved to receive SCDOT match assistance, please list the SCDOT match below, as well as provide documentation of preliminary approval from SCDOT.

Local Match Source*	Amount	Percentage
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
TOTAL	\$	

*Total must be the same amount listed on page 1 "Match Amount." You **must** attach a letter of commitment from each source listed. The commitment letter should specify the amount of funds being provided, when the funds are available, and any restrictions or conditions for the use of the funds. For the applicant's commitment, attach a letter from the chief executive (or resolution, council minutes, etc. if a county or city council is committing the funds) specifying the source of funds, when the funds are available, and any restrictions or conditions for the use of the funds.

Maintenance (What agency will maintain the infrastructure (if SCDOT, provide supporting documentation)? Describe level of maintenance. How will maintenance be funded on an ongoing basis?)

GPATS TAP Applications will be scored based on the [GPATS TAP Ranking Criteria](#)

Please hyperlink or attach relevant supporting documentation when referencing items such as the STIP, LRTP, bike / plan study, etc. Responses (minus supporting documentation) must fit within the space provided for each Competitive Factor. All questions below must be answered.

How does the project address Safety? (Is it a documented safety issue? Does it align with [SCDOT's Complete Streets Policy](#), and if so, how? How will the project significantly reduce serious and fatal injuries?)

Discuss the project's feasibility. (What level of engineering has occurred? Are certain project components currently being funded? How will the project be successfully completed on time and within budget?)

Describe the project's planning and connectivity elements. (Is the project in the TIP, STIP, LRTP, or other planning document? Does the project connect to an existing network of sidewalks or trails? Does the project fill a gap, complete a corridor, and have logical beginning and ending points?)

Describe previously-awarded TAP, TAP-eligible, or TAP-like projects. (What TAP or TAP-like projects have you successfully completed on time and within budget in the past 5 years? What TAP or TAP-like projects are you currently maintaining? Have you terminated/cancelled a TAP or other federally-funded project in the past 5 years? If so, please explain.)

Describe public involvement related to the project. (How have you engaged community members and other relevant stakeholders in the development of the project? Describe community support, including any partnerships.)

Explain how the project positively impacts a high-need area. (How will the project provide far-reaching economic and community impacts, including access to educational and employment opportunities? How will the project enhance livability and improve quality of life?)

CERTIFICATION:

The undersigned has authority to sign on behalf of the applicant and certifies that the applicant has legal authority to enter into an agreement to implement this project and that all information provided is complete and accurate to their best knowledge.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Title**For SCDOT Staff Use Only**

SC House District _____	Population _____ Less than 5,000	County Tier (I, II, III, or IV) _____
US Senate District _____	_____ 5,000 – 49,999	
US Congressional District _____	_____ 50,000 – 199,999	

Project Category (Check all that apply)

_____ Provisions for bicyclists	_____ Provisions for Safe Routes to Schools infrastructure
_____ Provisions for pedestrians	_____ Traffic calming projects
_____ Provisions for streetscaping/lighting	_____ Transit-related projects
_____ Other (Describe _____)	

Staff Notes