



**Surface Transportation Block Grant
2026 Regular Call for Projects**

The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program is a federal-aid transportation program, which provides flexible funding that may be used by states and localities for transportation improvement projects. Eligible projects range from general planning, planning and constructing projects on Federal-aid highways, bridge projects, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, transit capital projects, or Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.

The last regular STBG call for projects occurred in 2023 with project selections in January 2024. A special call for projects was also completed in 2024. Between both calls for projects funding awards were provided for 10 projects. In late 2025 the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) received redistributed and sanctioned funds (“additional allocation”) for delivering more than the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025 annual obligation target. This call for projects is intended to select projects for two fiscal years (FFY 2028 and 2029) and distribute the one-time additional allocation received last year.

Funding Available

The 2025 allocation was \$1,679,714. About 55% is available to be spent in the Longview Urban Area (population over 50,000), 6% percent in the Woodland Urban Area (population 5,000 to 50,000), 18% percent in rural areas (population less than 5,000), and 22% anywhere in the county. The estimate of STBG funds available to be programmed through this regular call for projects is **\$3,633,502** (see table below for more information).

Surface Transportation Block Grant Available Funding

	Urban Areas > 50,000	Urban Areas > 5,000 < 50,000	Rural Areas < 5,000	Any Area	Total
Redistributed/Sanctioned Funding (“Additional Allocation”) ¹				\$1,937,118	\$1,937,118
FFY 2028	\$920,703	\$92,133	\$294,291	\$372,587	\$1,679,714
FFY 2029	\$920,703	\$92,133	\$294,291	\$372,587	\$1,679,714
Less Existing Projects with Obligation Scheduled 2027 or Later	(\$117,000)	(\$36,500)	(\$36,500)	(\$1,473,044)	(\$1,663,044)
Total Estimated STBG Funds Available	\$1,724,406	\$147,766	\$552,082	\$1,209,248	\$3,633,502

¹ WSDOT has not provided a funding split for the redistributed/sanctioned funding. Should a funding split other than ‘Any Area’ be provided at a later date a rebalancing of funds available by area may be necessary.

Please be aware that all funds programmed through this regular call for projects are subject to modification, pending Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) confirmation of funding availability.

Screening Criteria

To be eligible for STBG funding, a project must meet the **screening criteria** outlined in this section. The criteria below follow federal and state funding requirements. Projects not meeting these criteria will not be considered for funding.

- Submission must include a completed CWCOC application form and vicinity map. Other documents such as a detailed cost estimate, photos, maps, and/or conceptual designs are recommended, but not required. An application must be submitted online using the form available at this link (<https://wkf.ms/47oOkzh>). The online form will allow required, and recommended, documents to be uploaded as attachments.
- Project must be consistent with the goals and policies of the Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan. Please visit the CWCOC website and click on Document Library under the Resources menu to review Moving Forward 2050, the Metropolitan & Regional Transportation Plan, or alternatively use this direct link (https://www.cwcog.org/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/2023/12/ADOPTED_MovingForward2050.pdf).
- STBG projects must be located on a road functionally classified as equal to or higher than rural minor collectors (bicycle and pedestrian projects can be located on any public roadway or off-road trail). For more information on eligible project locations, please refer to 23 U.S. Code § 133(c).
- Project must be locally administered. By submitting a project, the municipality or local government entity is committing funds to sponsor said project. The applicant (if awarded) shall be responsible for all federal and state reporting requirements associated with STBG funding. The local government entity is also expected to make annual reports to CWCOC when requested.
- Applicant must be an eligible agency. All projects shall be administered by a Certification Acceptance (CA) agency. Non-CA agencies may apply for STBG funds but must have a CA agency sponsor for the project. For non-CA agencies, a letter must be provided at the time of application to confirm the CA agency has agreed to sponsor the project.
- Project proposal includes a minimum local match of 13.5 percent unless requesting use of toll credits in lieu of the non-federal share. Should toll credits no longer be available after a project is selected, a 13.5 percent match will be required. Agencies that receive funding are responsible for providing matching funds.
- All projects on, or crossing, a WSDOT facility must provide a concurrence letter indicating that WSDOT is in support of the project.

Project Review, Prioritization, and Award Process

CWCOC has the responsibility to administer STBG funds in a way that supports the Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan (M/RTP) and established funding priorities. Projects must be regionally significant or considered important to the local transportation network. The intent of the project review, selection, and award process is to provide the opportunity to fund regional/countywide funding priorities, while implementing the

M/RTP's goals, policies, and strategies.

Review. Each project submitted will be evaluated first by CWCOG staff using the screening criteria. All projects meeting the screening criteria will be forwarded to the Cowlitz Area Technical Advisory Committee (CATAC) for the second level of evaluation. CATAC members will review, and rank, projects based on the applicable evaluation criteria in this guidance document (see pages 6 and 7).

Please note CATAC members will not be able to evaluate their own projects. The evaluation criteria for both programs are based on the M/RTP's goals, policies, and strategies as well as project readiness. The weights used for each criterion were determined based on CATAC discussion about current project priorities. Weighting is different for the rural and urban STBG evaluation criteria.

Prioritization. Projects will be ranked based on how well they meet the applicable evaluation criteria.

Award. Staff and CATAC members will make funding recommendations based upon the estimated amount of available STBG funds, the project's rank/prioritization, the funding requested by each project, and whether a project requests funding under one or either program. All ranked/prioritized projects will be forwarded to the CWCOG Board of Directors for consideration. The CWCOG Board of Directors has the sole authority to make project selections.

Recipients of STBG funds will receive written notification of funding approval within 1 – 2 weeks of the CWCOG Board of Directors decision. All projects funded with STBG funds must be included or amended into the Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (M/RTIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) showing full phase/project funding prior to being able to receive authorization for the federal funding. It is the responsibility of the applicant to coordinate with CWCOG to request an M/RTIP amendment. Selected projects will also need to enter into a Local Agency Agreement (LAA) with WSDOT's Local Programs office to authorize the federal funding.

Project Scope Changes

Any project scope changes will need to be approved by CWCOG staff or the CWCOG Board of Directors. The applicant is responsible to notify CWCOG staff of any scope changes. Minor scope changes will be reviewed by CWCOG staff. A major scope change will need to be reviewed by the CWCOG Board of Directors. The difference between a minor or major scope change is explained below.

- A minor scope change is when there is no change to the project limits and no request for additional STBG funds.
- A major scope change is when there is a change to the project limits and/or a request for additional STBG funds.

Contingency List

A list of contingency projects may be developed in addition to the selected project list. A project from the contingency list may be chosen to move forward if an existing project fails to obligate, an existing project returns the funds, or a new project is needed quickly to fill a regional obligation target shortfall. CWCOG is not required to provide funding for any project listed on the contingency list. The CWCOG Board of Directors may consider projects for funding through a new call for projects or by selecting contingency list projects. Any contingency list is only in place until the next regular call for projects.

Project Programming and Obligation

Programming. Projects awarded STBG funding through this regular call for projects will primarily be programmed in 2027 - 2029. Project readiness will be considered in the award process. The award letter

will specify the year(s) that a project’s phases are programmed and the amount of STBG funds. It is important to note the year(s) STBG funds will be programmed in the M/RTIP and STIP is for fiscal constraint purposes. Projects may obligate early and are strongly encouraged to do so.

Obligation. The timely obligation of awarded funds is critical for the CWCOG to meet the regional obligation authority delivery target set by WSDOT. To ensure delivery targets are met, the award letter will list the year obligation is planned. CWCOG wants local agencies to work towards having final authorization packets submitted to WSDOT Local Programs by June 30th of the year obligation is planned. Submittal to Local Programs by June 30th allows for potential delays in processing by WSDOT/FHWA. In no case shall an obligation occur later than September 15th of the year programmed. Failure to obligate funds by September 15th of the year programmed may result in the unobligated portion of an STBG award being lost.

Timeline

Date(s)	Description
February 26, 2026	CWCOG Board of Directors Consideration of 2026 STBG Regular Call for Projects Guidance
March 5, 2026	Call for Projects Opens
April 20, 2026 @ 12:00 Noon	Call for Projects Closes
April 20 – 23, 2026	CWCOG Staff Completes Initial Review / Forwards to the CATAAC
May 7, 2026	CATAAC Reviews, Ranks, & Prioritizes Applications During Regular Meeting
May 28, 2026	CWCOG Board of Directors Reviews CATAAC Recommendations / Makes Project Selections
By June 11, 2026	Award Letters Mailed
By July 9, 2026	Signed Award Letters Returned to CWCOG
January 2027 & Annually Thereafter Until Project Closed by WSDOT	CWCOG Annual Report to be Completed and Submitted

STBG - Rural Evaluation Criteria	Weight	Score ²	Weighted Score
Economic Vitality (Maximum Points - 10)			
A. Provides access to new economic opportunities	1	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	5 Points Max.
B. Aligns with the regional goals for growth in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	1	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	5 Points Max.
System Preservation and Enhancement (Maximum Points – 30)			
A. Preserves/rehabilitates existing facilities and networks	3	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	15 Points Max.
B. Improves/rebuilds existing facilities and networks	2	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	10 Points Max.
C. Improves the design and operation of intersections	1	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	5 Points Max.
Safety (Maximum Points – 40)			
A. Reduces frequency and/or severity of roadway crashes	4	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	20 Points Max.
B. Eliminate or minimize other safety hazards within the system	4	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	20 Points Max.
Choice and Mobility (Maximum Points – 10)			
A. Creates or improves connection to park and ride lots, local bus routes, and/or bicycle and pedestrian facilities	1	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	5 Points Max.
B. Improves connection of population centers with employment and activity centers	1	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	5 Points Max.
Project Readiness (Maximum Points – 10)			
A. Project application included a detailed cost estimate.	1	Yes = 2 No = 0	2 Points Max.

² Applications may receive a score of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0 under the Economic Vitality, System Preservation and Enhancement, Safety, Choice and Mobility, and Project Readiness 'E' sections of the evaluation criteria.

B. Project application has provided a schedule with at least 12 – 18 months between preliminary engineering and construction obligation (see 'C' and 'D' for additional time that may need to be added to the project schedule).	1	Yes = 1 No = 0 Planning Projects = 1	1 Point Max.
C. Project would require coordination with a railroad.	1	Yes = 1 (if project schedule has provided an additional 12-18 months allowing time to coordinate) No = 1 Planning Projects = 1	1 Point Max.
D. Project will require acquisition of one or more properties, permanent easements, or temporary easements.	1	Yes = 1 (if project schedule has provided an additional 24-30 months allowing time to complete all right-of-way certification requirements) No = 1 Planning Projects = 1	1 Point Max.
E. Project application has provided a detailed description of all requirements to obligate FHWA STBG funds (if selected) and to successfully manage the federal-aid transportation project from beginning to end.	1	Excellent Response = 5 Good Response = 3 Average Response = 1 Not Satisfactory Response = 0	5 Points Max.
Maximum Points			100

STBG - Urban Evaluation Criteria	Weight	Score³	Weighted Score
Economic Vitality (Maximum Points - 15)			
A. Provides access to new economic opportunities	1	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	5 Points Max.
B. Aligns with the regional goals for growth in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	2	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	10 Points Max.
System Preservation and Enhancement (Maximum Points – 35)			
A. Preserves/rehabilitates existing facilities and networks	3	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	15 Points Max.
B. Improves/rebuilds existing facilities and networks	2	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	10 Points Max.
C. Improves the design and operation of intersections	2	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	10 Points Max.
Safety (Maximum Points – 25)			
A. Reduces frequency and/or severity of roadway crashes	3	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	15 Points Max.
B. Eliminate or minimize other safety hazards within the system	2	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	10 Points Max.
Choice and Mobility (Maximum Points – 15)			
A. Creates or improves connection to park and ride lots, local bus routes, and/or bicycle and pedestrian facilities	2	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	10 Points Max.
B. Improves connection of population centers with employment and activity centers	1	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	5 Points Max.
Project Readiness (Maximum Points – 10)			
A. Project application included a detailed cost estimate.	1	Yes = 2 No = 0	2 Points Max.

³ Applications may receive a score of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0 under the Economic Vitality, System Preservation and Enhancement, Safety, Choice and Mobility, and Project Readiness 'E' sections of the evaluation criteria.

B. Project application has provided a schedule with at least 12 – 18 months between preliminary engineering and construction obligation (see 'C' and 'D' for additional time that may need to be added to the project schedule).	1	Yes = 1 No = 0 Planning Projects = 1	1 Point Max.
C. Project would require coordination with a railroad.	1	Yes = 1 (if project schedule has provided an additional 12-18 months allowing time to coordinate) No = 1 Planning Projects = 1	1 Point Max.
D. Project will require acquisition of one or more properties, permanent easements, or temporary easements.	1	Yes = 1 (if project schedule has provided an additional 24-30 months allowing time to complete all right-of-way certification requirements) No = 1 Planning Projects = 1	1 Point Max.
E. Project application has provided a detailed description of all requirements to obligate FHWA STBG funds (if selected) and to successfully manage the federal-aid transportation project from beginning to end.	1	Excellent Response = 5 Good Response = 3 Average Response = 1 Not Satisfactory Response = 0	5 Points Max.
Maximum Points			100