Florida Department of Transportation

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program Guidance and Procedures

Fiscal Year 2020

Effective June 2019

FDOT

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Important Information for Project Sponsors

- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) is a federal cost reimbursement grant program-- no money is provided upfront.
- Normally, the federal share for TA Set-Aside projects is the same as for the general Federal-aid Highway Program: 80 percent federal/20 percent state and/or local match. However, the State of Florida has elected to utilize toll credits to serve as the state and local match for the TA Set-Aside program. Therefore, project sponsors are not required to provide the 20 percent match. For "over 200,000 population" funds, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) within Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) may solicit a local match as part of their program guidelines.
- Projects must conform to one of the 10 categories of eligibility, as described on page 13 of this guidance.
- Effective December 2015, with the passing of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, nonprofit organizations that oversee the administration of local transportation safety programs are now eligible project sponsors. All other non-profits remain ineligible.
- FDOT requires infrastructure projects be implemented by a Local Agency Program (LAP) certified agency; this includes phases of work leading to construction, or activities specifically identified in the definition of "construction" in Title 23 of the United States Code, Section 101(a)(4). Non-profit organizations are not eligible for LAP certification. Note: In limited circumstances, planning studies and research studies would not require LAP certification.
- If the project sponsor is not LAP certified, they may partner with a LAP certified agency to serve as the implementing agency. The implementing agency must be LAP certified at the time the project is programmed. An overview of the requirements of federally funded projects and FDOT local project implementation process can be found in the FDOT LAP Manual at https://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LAP/LAP-TOC.shtm.
- Non-infrastructure projects do not require LAP certification; this includes equipment purchases. These projects will be treated as non-traditional federal awards. Please see the FDOT Work Program Instructions for more information on non-traditional federal awards.
- FDOT is a decentralized agency, and each FDOT district office is responsible for administering their share of TA Set-Aside funding in compliance with the FAST Act. For district TA Set-Aside information and contacts, see Appendix A of this guidance.
- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects are eligible for TA Set-Aside funding but will need to comply with the Florida SRTS program requirements if FDOT SRTS program funds are to be used on any phase of the project. For more information, visit https://www.fdot.gov/safety/2A-Programs/Safe-Routes.shtm.

Purpose

This Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) Guidance was developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in response to the changes resulting from the passage of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. This document was developed to provide guidance for the consistent implementation of TA Set-Aside across the State and will be updated annually.

This document provides information on how FDOT administers TA Set-Aside funding, including:

- Eligible project sponsors
- Eligible project activities
- Project applications
- Project selection, and
- Other regulatory requirements

Background

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside is a continuation of a federal transportation funding program first established as the Transportation Enhancement Program under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). The Transportation Enhancement Program saw little to no changes from 1991 to 2012 as it was carried forward through two subsequent transportation funding bills: The Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21 Century (TEA-21), and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

However, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) signed into law in 2012 established a new program to provide for a variety of alternative transportation projects. The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) consolidated funding from Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to School, and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which were separately funded programs under SAFETEA-LU, into a single funding source. RTP funding was made a set-aside from the TAP funds; unless the Governor opts out, the RTP apportionment was to be set aside from the State's TAP funds specifically for RTP.

In December 2015, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was passed, eliminating MAP-21 TAP and replacing it with "a set-aside of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program funding for transportation alternatives (TA)." The new program, referred to as the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside or TA Set-Aside, includes all the same provisions as TAP, with one notable change: nonprofit organizations that oversee the administration of local transportation safety programs are now eligible project sponsors. In Florida, RTP is set-aside from the State's TA funds.

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Overview

The TA Set-Aside program provides funding for programs and projects consistent with details described under 23 U.S.C. 133(h)(3), including 1) Transportation Alternatives, 2) Recreational Trails Program, 3) Safe Routes to School Program, and 4) planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.[1]

Florida administers TA Set-Aside funds through the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); the Florida Department of Environmental Protection manages the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds. For more information on the administration of RTP funds, visit https://floridadep.gov/lands/land-and-recreation-grants/content/recreational-trails-program. This program guidance will focus on how the remaining TA Set-Aside funds are administered by FDOT for Transportation Alternatives. Note that FDOT includes Safe Routes to School as eligible projects under Transportation Alternatives.

1 Note that Florida has opted not to use TA Set-Aside funds for planning, designing or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

Transportation Alternatives Funding

Nationally, $850 million is available for eligible projects through the TA Set-Aside program in FY2020.[2] As defined in the FAST Act, each state receives the same proportionate share of these funds as they received in FY2009 through the Transportation Enhancement Program. This translates into an overall apportionment of $51,733,446 in TA Set-Aside funds for the State of Florida in FY2020, including Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funding.[3]

Funding Allocations

Per the legislation, Florida has set aside $2,602,532 for the RTP in FY2020, and the remaining $49,130,914 is allocated to Transportation Alternatives and then divided into two categories:

1. Fifty (50) percent of the funds are allocated to any area of the State ("any area").
2. Fifty (50) percent of the funds are sub-allocated to areas based on population ("by population").

The "any area" funds may be used on any project within the state, while "by population" funds must be spent in the region to which they are allocated. The "by population" sub-allocations are based on the share of the population located in the following areas of the State according to the most recent Census:

- Areas with a population of 5,000 or less;
- Areas with a population between 5,001 and 200,000;
- Areas with an urbanized area population greater than 200,000

The funding allocations are further explained below. Figure 2 provides a flowchart of Florida's distribution of FY2020 TA Set-Aside Program funds.

Statewide TA Set-Aside or "Any Area"funds - FDOT work program fund code TALT

The FAST Act allocates funding to be used statewide at the discretion of the state.

- Approximately $24.5 million has been allocated to FDOT for "any area" funds in FY 2020.
- Funding can be used anywhere in the state.
- TALT (any area) funds are apportioned to districts using a statutory formula that is based on population and fuel tax.
- The competitive application round for these funds is open to all eligible sponsors within FDOT districts, including sponsors located in urbanized areas that receive TA Set-Aside funding allocations

"By Population" funds

Areas with less than 5,000 Population - FDOT work program fund code TALN

The FAST Act allocates funding to areas with less than 5,000 population. Approximately $3 million has been allocated to FDOT for this population category in FY 2020.

Areas with greater than 5,000 but less than 200,000 Population - FDOT work program fund code TALL

The FAST Act allocates funding to areas of greater than 5,000 but less than 200,000 population. Approximately $3.3 million has been allocated to FDOT for this population category in FY 2020.

Areas with greater than 200,000 Urbanized Population - FDOT work program fund code TALU

The FAST Act allocates funding directly to urbanized areas with a population greater than 200,000, otherwise known as Transportation Management Areas (TMAs).

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2 https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/factsheets/transportationalternativesfs.cfm

3 Estimate based on 2019 distribution: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/notices/n4510832/n4510832_t2.cfm

- According to the Federal Register, Volume 77, No. 138[4], there are 15 designated TMAs in Florida: Miami, Tampa-St. Petersburg, Orlando, Jacksonville, Sarasota-Bradenton, Cape Coral, Palm Bay-Melbourne, Port St. Lucie, Palm Coast-Daytona Beach-Port Orange, Pensacola, Florida-Alabama, Kissimmee, Bonita Springs, Lakeland, Tallahassee, and Winter Haven.
- Florida has 27 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) serving metropolitan areas with a wide range of population sizes. In Florida, MPOs are also referred to as Transportation Planning Organizations (TPO) and Transportation Planning Agencies (TPA); for the purposes of this document, they will collectively be called MPOs. Eighteen (18) of the State's 27 MPOs are represented within the State's fifteen 15 TMAs (Figure 1).
  - » Approximately $19 million in "over 200K population" funds for TMAs has been allocated to FDOT for FY2020. This amount is divided among the 15 TMAs based on population (Figure 2).
  - » Eligible entities (Project Sponsors) within TMAs submit eligible projects which are prioritized and selected through a competitive process administered by the MPOs in consultation with their FDOT district office.

FDOT is a decentralized agency, and each FDOT district office receives an apportionment of TA Set-Aside funds to administer through a competitive process in compliance with the FAST Act. The FY2020 funding apportionment by FDOT district is detailed in Table A.

Table A: Florida Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Funding Apportionment by FDOT District, FY2020

District	Any Area Funds (FDOT Fund Code TALT)	Population < 5K (FDOT Fund Code TALN)	Population > 5K but < 200K (FDOT Fund Code TALL)	Population > 200K (FDOT Fund Code TALU)	Total
1	$3,461,501	$384,463.05	$545,541	$2,544,874	$6,936,378
2	$2,777,848	$689,377.01	$687,280	$1,391,796	$5,546,301
3	$1,824,492	$739,743.56	$608,347	$750,009	$3,922,592
4	$4,557,648	$105,532.22	$182,987	$4,432,039	$9,278,206
5	$5,180,441	$267,635.92	$819,011	$3,431,663	$9,698,750
6	$3,108,324	$52,693.40	$63,890	$3,248,608	$6,473,515
7	$3,655,204	$58,849.85	$370,744	$3,190,373	$7,275,171
FDOT Total	$24,565,457	$2,298,295	$3,277,801	$18,989,362	$49,130,914

Source: FDOT Work Program and Budget, October 30, 2018. Figures do not include Recreational Trails Program funding. Figures may vary slightly from Federal Register (Figure 2) due to rounding.

Note: Table A describes federal funding that has been allocated for FY2020 via legislation and apportioned to FDOT districts. However, FDOT operates under a 5-year work program in order to maximize production and service capabilities. Project applications submitted in FY2020 will be tied to FY2025 planning and funding. Check with your district and/or MPO for more information on amounts available for project applications.

Funding and Matching Requirements

Normally, the federal share for TA Set-Aside projects is the same as for the general Federal-aid Highway Program: 80 percent federal/20 percent state and/or local match. However, the State of Florida has elected to utilize toll credits to serve as the state and local match for the TA Set-Aside program. Therefore, project sponsors are not required to provide the 20 percent match.

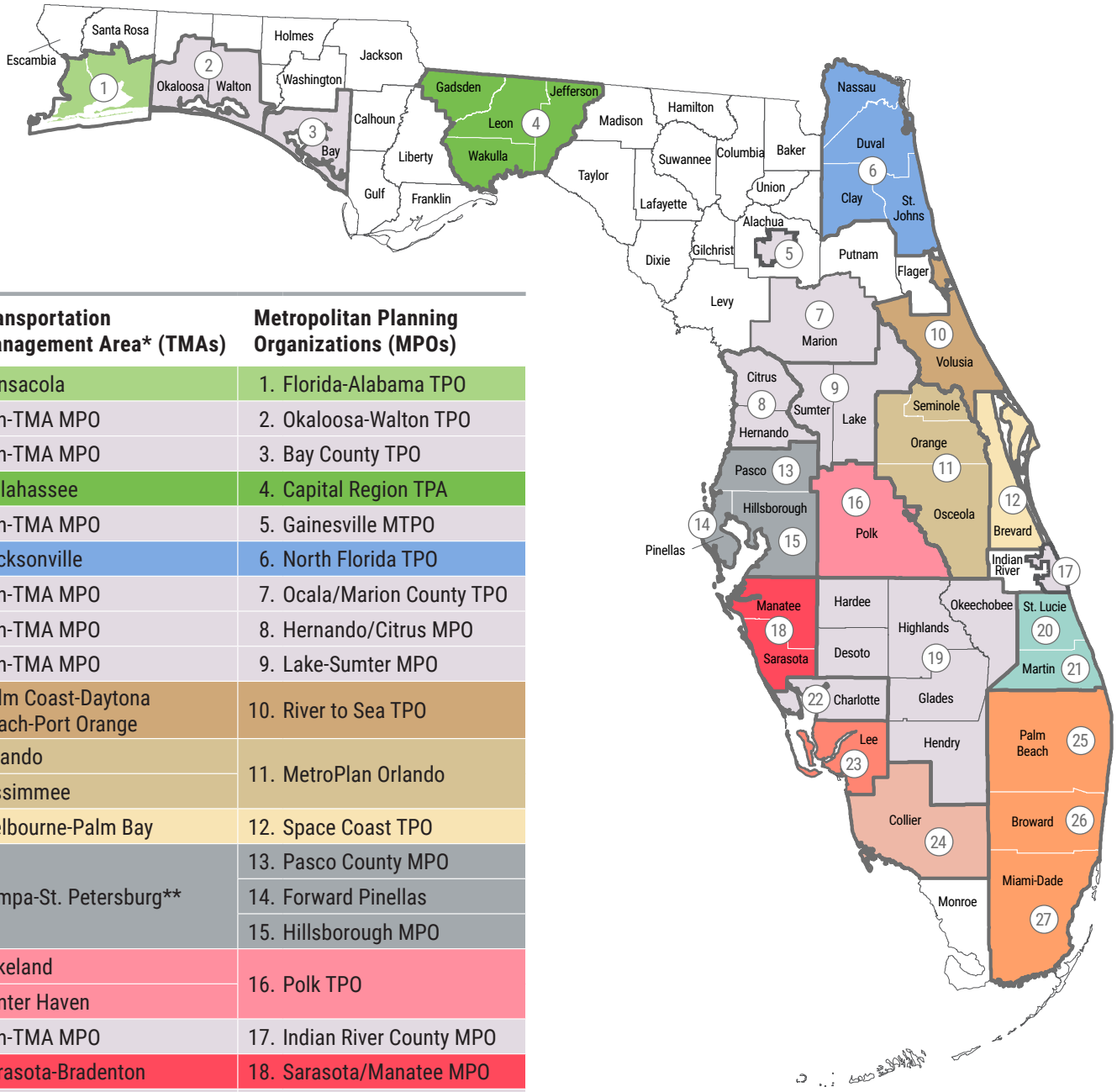
FDOT generally administers TA Set-Aside projects through the Local Agency Program (LAP). Information on the LAP can be found on FDOT's LAP webpage at https://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LAP/LAP-TOC.shtm.

Cost Reimbursement of Approved Expenses

TA Set-Aside is a cost reimbursement grant program. Projects must go through multiple levels of review and approval to become eligible for reimbursement. Once the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has authorized a project and the project sponsor has entered into an agreement with FDOT, project costs may be incurred and ultimately reimbursed. Note that costs incurred prior to FHWA authorization and execution of the agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.

4 https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2012-07-18/pdf/2012-17514.pdf

Figure 1: Map of Florida Metropolitan Planning Organizations

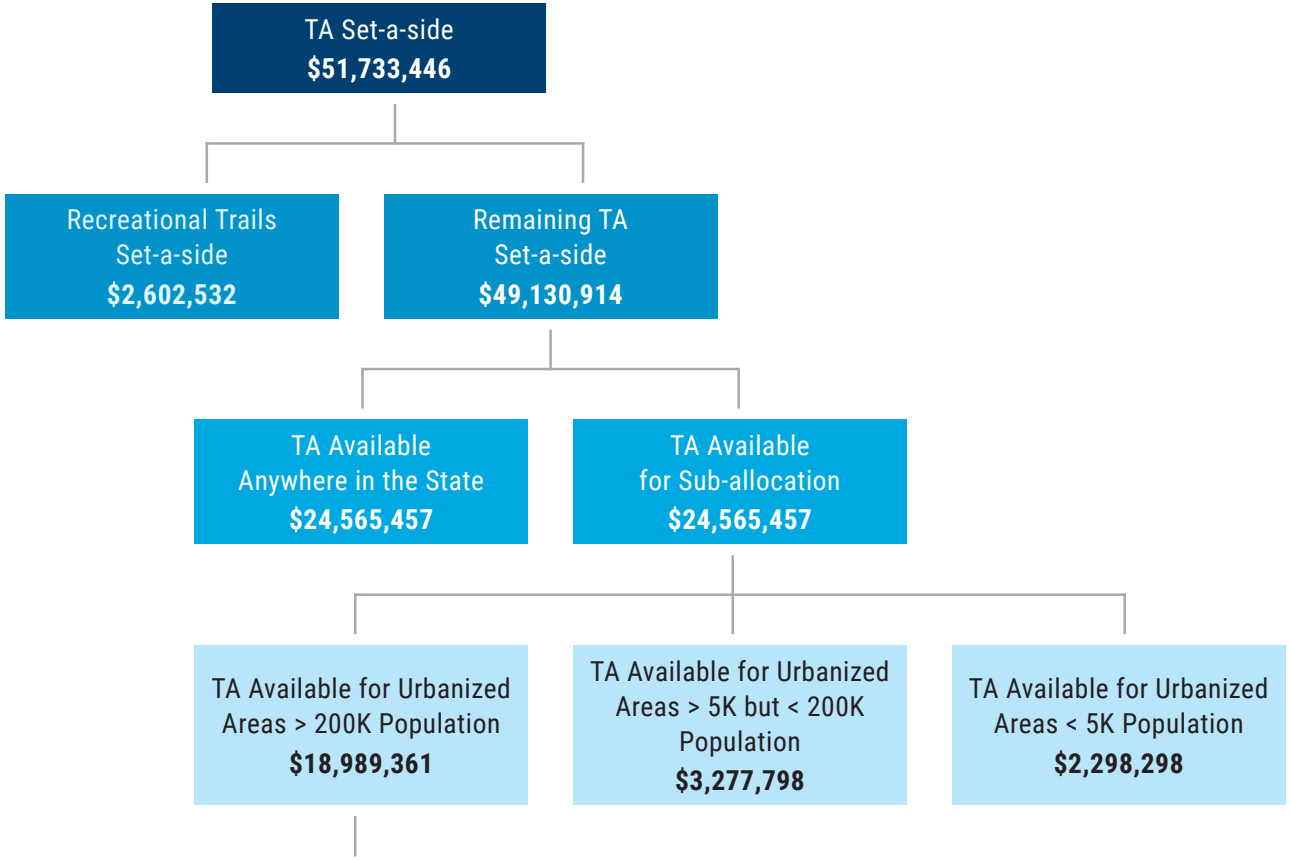


Transportation Management Area* (TMAs)	Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
Pensacola	1. Florida-Alabama TPO
non-TMA MPO	2. Okaloosa-Walton TPO
non-TMA MPO	3. Bay County TPO
Tallahassee	4. Capital Region TPA
non-TMA MPO	5. Gainesville MTPO
Jacksonville	6. North Florida TPO
non-TMA MPO	7. Ocala/Marion County TPO
non-TMA MPO	8. Hernando/Citrus MPO
non-TMA MPO	9. Lake-Sumter MPO
Palm Coast-Daytona Beach-Port Orange	10. River to Sea TPO
Orlando	11. MetroPlan Orlando
Kissimmee	
Melbourne-Palm Bay	12. Space Coast TPO
Tampa-St. Petersburg**	13. Pasco County MPO
	14. Forward Pinellas
	15. Hillsborough MPO
Lakeland	16. Polk TPO
Winter Haven	
non-TMA MPO	17. Indian River County MPO
Sarasota-Bradenton	18. Sarasota/Manatee MPO
non-TMA MPO	19. Heartland Regional TPO
Port St. Lucie**	20. St. Lucie TPO
	21. Martin MPO
non-TMA MPO	22. Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO
Cape Coral	23. Lee County MPO
Bonita Springs	24. Collier MPO
Miami**	25. Palm Beach TPA
	26. Broward MPO
	27. Miami-Dade TPO

* Urbanized population over 200,000

** Tampa-St. Petersburg, Port St. Lucie and Miami TMA's contain multiple MPOs.

Figure 2: Florida's Distribution of TA Set-Aside Program Funds



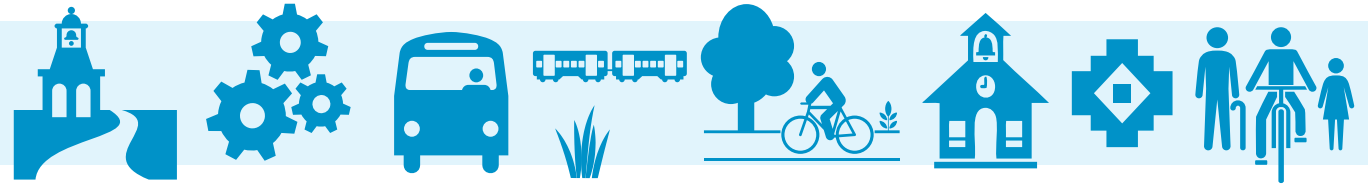
TMA	Sarasota-Bradenton	Cape Coral	Bonita Springs	Lakeland	Winter Haven	Jacksonville	Pensacola	Tallahassee	Port St. Lucie		Miami			Orlando	Melbourne-Palm Bay	Palm Coast-Daytona Beach-Port Orange	Kissimmee	Tampa-St. Petersburg		
District	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	3	4		4		6	5	5	5	5	7		
MPOs included in TMA	Sarasota/ Manatee MPO	Lee County MPO	Collier MPO	Polk TPO	Polk TPO	North Florida TPO	Florida-Alabama TPO	Capital Region TPA	St. Lucie TPO	Martin MPO	Broward MPO	Palm Beach TPA	Miami-Dade TPO	MetroPlan Orlando	Space Coast TPO	River to Sea TPO	MetroPlan Orlando	Forward Pinellas	Hillsborough MPO	Pasco County MPO

Source: Federal Register, Volume 77, No. 138, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2012-07-18/pdf/2012-17514.pdf

February 7, 2019

Eligible Entities (Project Sponsors)

Eligible entities are those that can receive TA Set-Aside program funds. The FAST Act carried forward the eligible entities from the TAP in MAP-21 and adds "non-profit entities responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs" as eligible sponsors. Eligible project sponsors descriptions below are adapted from 23 U.S.C. 213(c)(4)(B).



- **Local governments**. Local government entities include any unit of local government below a State government agency, except for an MPO*. Examples include city, town, township, village, borough, parish, or county agencies.
- **Regional transportation authorities**. Regional transportation authorities are considered the same as the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations defined in the statewide planning section of the legislation [23 U.S.C. 135(m)].
- **Transit agencies**. Transit agencies include any agency responsible for public transportation that is eligible for funds as determined by the Federal Transit Administration.
- **Natural resource or public land agencies**. Natural resource or public land agencies include any federal, tribal, state, or local agency responsible for natural resources or public land administration. Examples include:
  - State or local park or forest agencies;
  - State or local fish and game or wildlife agencies;
  - Department of the Interior Land Management Agencies; and
  - U.S. Forest Service.
- **School districts, local education agencies, or schools**. School districts, local education agencies, or schools may include any public or non-profit private school. Projects should benefit the general public and not only a private entity.
- **Tribal governments**
- **Non-profit entity responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs**. Examples include a non-profit entity responsible for:
  - a local program implementing construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs; and
  - a safe routes to school program.
- **Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails that the State determines to be eligible and consistent with the goals of 23 U.S.C. 213 (c)**.

**The Florida Department of Transportation and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) are not eligible project sponsors; however, they may partner with an eligible project sponsor and serve as the implementing agency to help a project sponsor carry out a project.*

Non-profit organizations are not eligible project sponsors unless they qualify through one of the eligible entity categories listed above (e.g., where a non-profit organization is a designated transit agency, school, or an entity responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs). Non-profit organizations that do not qualify via the legislation are eligible to partner with any eligible entity on an eligible project, if State or local requirements permit.

FDOT requires infrastructure projects be implemented by a LAP certified agency; this includes phases of work leading to construction, or activities specifically identified in the definition of "construction" in Title 23 of the United States Code, Section 101(a)(4). In limited circumstances, planning studies and research studies would not require LAP certification. Non-profit organizations are not eligible for LAP certification. If the project sponsor is not LAP certified, they may partner with a LAP certified agency to serve as the implementing agency. An overview of the requirements of federally funded projects and FDOT local project implementation process can be found in the FDOT LAP Manual at https://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LAP/LAP-TOC.shtm.

Non-infrastructure projects do not require LAP certification; this includes equipment purchases. These projects will be treated as non-traditional federal awards. Please see the FDOT Work Program Instructions for more information on non-traditional federal awards.

Eligible Projects and Activities

TA Set-Aside funds may be obligated for projects or activities described in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(29) or 23 U.S.C. 213(b)(1) as such provisions were in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the FAST Act. To be eligible for funding under the TA Set-Aside program, projects must fall under at least one of the ten categories outlined in the legislation (Table B).

However, the legislation gives "states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)…discretion about how to establish project priorities, or whether to fund (or not fund) particular categories. There is no requirement to consider all eligible TA activities equally."[5] FDOT developed TA Set-Aside project eligibility guidance (Appendix B) to provide specific examples of eligible projects and activities in each category described in the legislation. The content is based on guidance from FHWA, and input from FDOT's Transportation Alternatives Working Group, made up of FDOT district representatives.

Note that the FDOT TA Set-Aside Project Eligibility Guidance is not intended to be comprehensive, but instead provides examples to assist applicants in understanding eligible project types. The final decision on project eligibility remains at the discretion of the district reviewing the application as long as it is consistent with federal eligibility.

Table B: TA Set-Aside Eligible Project Categories

TA Set-Aside Eligible Project Categories	
1.	Construction, planning and design of on and off-road facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other forms of nonmotorized transportation (pedestrian and bicycle facilities)
2.	Construction, planning and design of infrastructure-related projects/systems to provide safe routes for non-drivers including children, older adults, individuals with disabilities (safe routes for non-drivers)
3.	Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for non-motorized use
4.	Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas
5.	Inventory, control or removal of outdoor advertising
6.	Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities
7.	Vegetation management practices in transportation rights of way
8.	Archaeological activities related to impacts from transportation projects
9.	Environmental mitigation activities
10.	Safe Routes to School: Safe Routes to School projects are eligible under TA Set-Aside. For additional information on eligible activities, see https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/guidance/guidance_2016.cfm#EligibleProjects. Note: FDOT also has a state Safe Routes to School Program. For more information on that program visit https://www.fdot.gov/safety/2A-Programs/Safe-Routes.shtm

Note: Utility work is not eligible for funding unless it's incidental to a project and in-kind replacement, such as relocating a manhole when creating a bike lane.

Project Eligibility Determinations

Project sponsors should propose projects that clearly fit into the eligible categories defined in this document. It is the responsibility of the project sponsor to explain in their application how the project aligns with the guidelines for eligible project activities. FDOT districts will make the final determination on project eligibility and will disallow any project that is not clearly eligible.

5 https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/guidance/guidance_2016.cfm

Project Sponsor Expectations and Requirements

It is the responsibility of each project sponsor to read this guidance, and any additional guidance or materials from their district or MPO as appropriate, and become familiar with the application, selection, and implementation procedures associated with the FDOT TA Set-Aside program. Applying for federal funds begins a significant undertaking, which must be led by the project sponsor from start to finish. Project sponsors unable to navigate the federal requirements may be subject to forfeiture of awarded funds and project cancellation. Note: the use of federal funds on any phase of the project federalizes all phases of the project, meaning that all other phases of the project also become subject to federal requirements.

An overview of the requirements and process for a locally-administered federal project can be found in the FDOT Local Agency Program (LAP) Manual at https://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LAP/LAP-TOC.shtm. This manual describes the FDOT local project implementation process and requirements of federally funded projects, including those funded through the TA Set-Aside Program.

Project Application Submittal Process

Each FDOT district administers its portion of Florida's TA Set-Aside Program funds through an annual competitive application process. This section generally describes the application cycle, application form and submittal process for TA Set-Aside funds. Please contact your appropriate FDOT district for specific information related to its application cycle and process; See Appendix A for district TA Set-Aside contact information.

Application Cycle

Applications for TA Set-Aside projects may be submitted on an annual basis. While each district office sets its own schedule for application submittals and evaluations, a general schedule that reasonably follows the Work Program cycle is provided in Table C. Applicants should contact their respective district office for specific schedule dates.

Table C: Typical FDOT TA Set-Aside Application Cycle (Varies by District)

Process Step	Date Range
Project Planning & Development	Ongoing
Application Solicitation	October - December
Application Submittal	January - February
Committee Presentations	March – April
Eligibility/Feasibility Determination	May – June
Work Program Estimate Update	July – mid-August
Submit Priority List	September

Application Form

FDOT has developed a sample TA Set-Aside application form that has been used by the districts in the development of district-specific application forms. The sample application is attached to this guidance document in Appendix C and can be used as a general reference, but please contact your appropriate FDOT district for specific information related to its application form.

Project Budget

The project application must include a well-defined scope of work which lays the foundation for an accurate budget. Budget considerations are very important, and an itemized list of anticipated expenses (including labor, supplies, materials and other anticipated costs) should be provided in the application. Cost estimates must be based on the year in which the project is anticipated to be delivered rather than the year that the application is submitted.

The budget should be divided into project development phases. The most common phases include planning, preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, construction and Construction Engineering and Inspection (CEI) services. The budget should identify all sources of funding and how each activity will be funded. Sources of funds other than TA Set-Aside may include other federal funds (not US DOT funds), state, local, donated services, in-kind services, volunteer and Youth Conservation Corps.

Project sponsors are responsible for all cost overages, including those caused by inaccurate or incorrect project cost estimating.

Note: As each FDOT district has established procedures for administering its apportionment of Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside funding, some districts and MPOs have set minimum or maximum project costs, or both. Some districts only reimburse for selected phases of the project. It is the responsibility of the project sponsor to read relevant district and MPO application materials in addition to this guidance.

Application Submittal

FDOT districts work with and through their region's MPOs and counties to solicit and receive TA Set-Aside project applications.

MPO Areas

In all MPO areas, regardless of population, the MPOs manage the TA Set-Aside application collection. Applications are to be submitted to the MPO with copies provided to the respective FDOT district office. Please contact your FDOT district to obtain MPO contact information for the TA Set-Aside Program.

Areas Outside MPOs

For areas outside of MPOs, applications are to be collected by the appropriate county commission for submission to their respective FDOT district office.

Project Selection and Programming

The FAST Act requires TA Set-Aside projects be selected through a competitive selection process (23 U.S.C. 133(h)(2)). While FDOT is responsible for programming all TA Set-Aside funds, the legislation gives TMAs the authority to develop and administer their own competitive selection procedures for funds sub-allocated to areas with greater than 200,000 population. FDOT oversees TMA procedures and more directly manages selection of projects for all other TA Set-Aside funds, but consults with MPOs and local agencies, regardless of population size, to ensure that MPO and/or county priorities are considered.

Once the evaluation and prioritization process is completed and approved, the FDOT district office will program projects based on priority, the availability of funds, the implementing agency, and the capacity of the applying agency to implement the project.

FHWA has issued guidance that explains who is responsible for the selection process and Table D describes how TA Set-Aside project selection is managed in Florida. As neither the FAST Act nor FHWA have established standards, procedures, or processes for the competitive selection of projects, development of a competitive selection process is left to the State and MPOs.

TA Set-Aside Project Selection Criteria

Each agency that evaluates TA Set-Aside applications, whether an MPO, county, or FDOT district office, must utilize documented selection criteria to evaluate project applications. At a minimum, the selection criteria must include an assessment of sponsor and project eligibility, an assessment of project feasibility, and a description of additional selection factors to guide evaluation and prioritization by the appropriate parties. These three selection criteria categories are further described below.

1. **Eligibility**. Is the project sponsor an eligible applicant and does the project fit within the eligible project categories for the TA Set-Aside program? FDOT has developed TA Set-Aside project eligibility guidance (Table B) to clarify how the state interprets which specific projects are eligible in Florida. However, this guidance is not intended to be comprehensive, and the final decision on project eligibility remains at the discretion of the district.
2. **Feasibility**. Does the project face complex issues that would add cost or delay delivery? This may include consideration of:
   - Right-of-Way availability
   - Environmental impacts/permitting issues
   - Utilities

Table D: FDOT TA Set-Aside Project Selection Process

Area Funds	FDOT and MPO Roles
Areas with > 200,000 urbanized population – TALU fund code	**MPOs within the TMAs** manage application solicitation, collection, review, prioritization and project selection in consultation with FDOT district office.
Areas with > 5,000 but <200,000 population – TALL fund code	**FDOT** district offices manage application solicitation in coordination with MPOs and Counties.
Areas with <5,000 population – TALN fund code	**MPOs/**Counties manage application collection, review and prioritization in collaboration with their FDOT district office.
Any area of the State – TALT fund code	**FDOT district offices** manage project selection with consideration of prioritized project submittals by MPOs and/or counties.

- Constructibility
- Cost estimate
- Status of project sponsor or implementing agency's Local Agency Program (LAP) certification and/or history of project development
- Maintenance responsibility

3. **Support for TA Set-Aside Program Goals and Florida Planning Emphasis Areas (if applicable)**. The criteria should support the intent of the TA Set-Aside program and must, at a minimum, include consideration of the following factors:
   - Project's effectiveness in supporting TA Set-Aside goals
   - Documented safety need, particularly related to reducing the number of bicycle and pedestrian injuries and fatalities
   - Public support for the project (a record of public involvement/support should be provided with application)
   - Support for Florida Planning Emphasis Areas
4. **Additional selection factors**. Districts, MPOs and counties may also identify additional selection factors to address regional or local priorities.

These factors are not listed in order of importance and districts and MPOs may establish weights by which to prioritize them to meet local or regional needs. For more information on MPO Selection Criteria, please contact the appropriate MPO or district office.

Competitive Selection Process

FDOT is responsible for programming all TA Set-Aside funds and directly manages or oversees selection of projects in consultation with MPOs and local agencies, regardless of population size, to ensure that MPO and/or county priorities are considered.

MPO areas under 200,000 population

In all MPO areas under 200,000 population, the MPOs manage the TA Set-Aside application collection, review and prioritization in collaboration with their respective FDOT district office. Applications are typically reviewed and prioritized by various committees within the MPO structure using criteria established by the MPO which align with FDOT's district and statewide TA Set-Aside application selection criteria. The list of prioritized projects is then forwarded to the FDOT district office for eligibility and feasibility determination. Those projects determined eligible and feasible may then be considered for funding and programming in the FDOT Work Program.

Areas outside of MPOs

For areas outside of MPOs, counties will establish tentative priorities for projects in their area, which should align with FDOT's district and statewide TA Set-Aside application selection criteria. The respective FDOT district office will perform the project eligibility and feasibility reviews. Ideally, an advisory committee will evaluate and prioritize each project in counties outside of MPOs. Advisory committees should consist of county, municipal, and FDOT district staff. Interested members of the public may also be included. FDOT will finalize the list of priority projects after completing eligibility and feasibility determinations. Projects are then considered for funding and programming in the FDOT Work Program.

Project Selection Committees

To select projects through a fair and competitive process, it is important to establish advisory or selection committees to review the TA applications and properly evaluate the proposed projects. MPOs typically utilize existing committee structures such as Technical Advisory Committee or Bike/Ped Advisory Committees to establish project selection criteria for prioritizing the proposed projects. The resulting priority list is to be approved by the MPO or county, as appropriate, prior to submittal to FDOT for programming.

It is important that a similar committee be formed for projects in those areas with less than 200,000 in population. Such a committee should consist of both FDOT and Local Agency representatives, as well as interested citizens.

Some agencies incorporate project presentations as part of the evaluation process. Presentations address project specifics and emphasize the origin (county comprehensive plan, special area plan, MPO Long Range Transportation Plan, documented safety concern, etc.) and purpose of the project and its ability to address the intent of the TA Program.

Over 200,000 urbanized population

The FAST Act provides TMAs (urbanized areas with over 200K population) with and the authority to administer their own competitive selection procedure for TA Set-Aside funds. MPOs within the TMAs are responsible for communicating program guidance and eligibility criteria and a project scoring and selection procedure that reflects regional priorities. These MPOs must include the minimum requirements outlined in this guidance or may opt to use the competitive selection processes and materials developed by FDOT district offices for the other TA Set-Aside program funds. Regardless, when the competitive process and materials have been developed, the MPO must submit them to their respective FDOT district office for review in partnership with the FDOT Central Office to confirm that a required competitive process for eligible projects was used. The MPO must submit three documents to the district office prior to soliciting TA Set-Aside applications:

1. The MPO's competitive selection process, including:
   a. Persons involved in project review, scoring and selection
   b. A summary of the competitive selection process
   c. A scoring matrix or weighting criteria, as relevant
2. Additional regional program guidance, as relevant
3. A list of eligible project activities. MPOs may use or adapt FDOT's eligible project list if choosing to fund only certain project categories. All project activities must comply with the federal legislation.

In TMAs with multiple MPOs, either the MPOs will each develop a priority list for TA funding applications or will coordinate and agree upon a single project priority list for the TMA. Once each TMA has finalized its regional project selection, it will submit a list of all selected projects to district offices. For a list of Florida TMAs and information on TMA funding allocations, please see Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Project Programming

Once the project evaluations are complete, priorities established, and selections made for inclusion in the Work Program, FDOT will prepare an official project estimate by phase, using budget information submitted by the project sponsor, for budgeting and programming purposes. Projects will be added to the FDOT Tentative Work Program according to the Work Program Instructions. In MPO areas, FDOT will coordinate with the MPO for any necessary amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Other Regulatory Requirements

There are a number of state and federal regulatory requirements that apply to the TA Set-Aside program which are described in the Local Agency Program (LAP) Manual. A district LAP Administrator will be able to assist with the interpretation and application of requirements, but it is the responsibility of the project sponsor to review the LAP Manual.

Below is a list of some of these requirements with which the project sponsor should be familiar.

- Agreements and Eligible Costs
- Reimbursement
- Public Involvement
- Environmental Clearance
- Consultant Selection for Project Development and Implementation
- Treatment of Projects
- Design and Implementation Requirements
- Right-of-Way Clearance
- Permits
- Bidding
- Construction
- Maintenance

Anticipated Roles for FDOT and Planning Partners

FDOT Central Office

- Create statewide guidance and policy.
- Develop and maintain a website with general information for the public, including project sponsors (https://www.fdot.gov/planning/policy/TAsetaside/default.shtm).
- Promote the program and disseminate information to partners and the public.
- Create statewide application and application guidance.
- Provide guidance on project eligibility and sponsor eligibility for applications.
- Maintain a database of submitted applications and awarded projects.

FDOT Districts

- Provide support to project sponsors as they develop applications.
- Work with Planning Partners (MPOs and Counties) to assess project eligibility and feasibility.
- Work with Planning Partners to review, comment, and rank applications.
- Enter into cost-reimbursable contractual agreements with sponsors to successfully deliver selected projects.

MPOs > 200,000 Urbanized Population (TMA MPOs)

- Communicate program guidance and eligibility criteria.
- Communicate funding availability to eligible sponsors.
- Review and rank applications through a competitive process.
- Select projects for their regional TA allocation.
- Assure projects recommended for funding can be delivered in a timely manner by the sponsor.

MPOs <200,000 Population

- Communicate funding availability to eligible sponsors.
- Assure that projects recommended for funding can be delivered in a timely manner by the sponsor.
- Review, rank and provide comments to Central Office for all applications received from their area.

Project Sponsors

- Identify the FDOT district TA Set-Aside program contact.
- Identify if the project falls within an MPO.
- Read the Florida Department of Transportation TA Set-Aside Program Guidance, and any additional guidance or materials from relevant FDOT districts or MPOs as appropriate to determine application cycle.
- Become familiar with the application, selection and implementation procedures associated with the FDOT TA Set-Aside program and the FDOT district or MPO as appropriate.

Resources

Federal Resources

The Federal Highway Administration TA Set-Aside implementation guidance: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/guidance/guidance_2016.cfm.

Federal Guidance for the Recreational Trails Program: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/.

The Rails to Trails Conservancy tracks state spending of Transportation Alternatives funds through annual data collection from states. Project tracking information and annual spending reports are housed on the Transportation Alternatives Data Exchange (TrADE) site: https://trade.railstotrails.org/index.

Florida Resources

The Florida Department of Transportation's TA Set-Aside webpage: https://www.fdot.gov/planning/policy/TAsetaside/default.shtm.

The Florida Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School program webpage: https://www.fdot.gov/safety/2A-Programs/Safe-Routes.shtm.

The Florida Department of Transportation Local Agency Program (LAP) website: https://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LAP/default.shtm.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection Recreational Trails webpage: https://floridadep.gov/lands/land-and-recreation-grants/content/recreational-trails-program

Coordination with Central Office

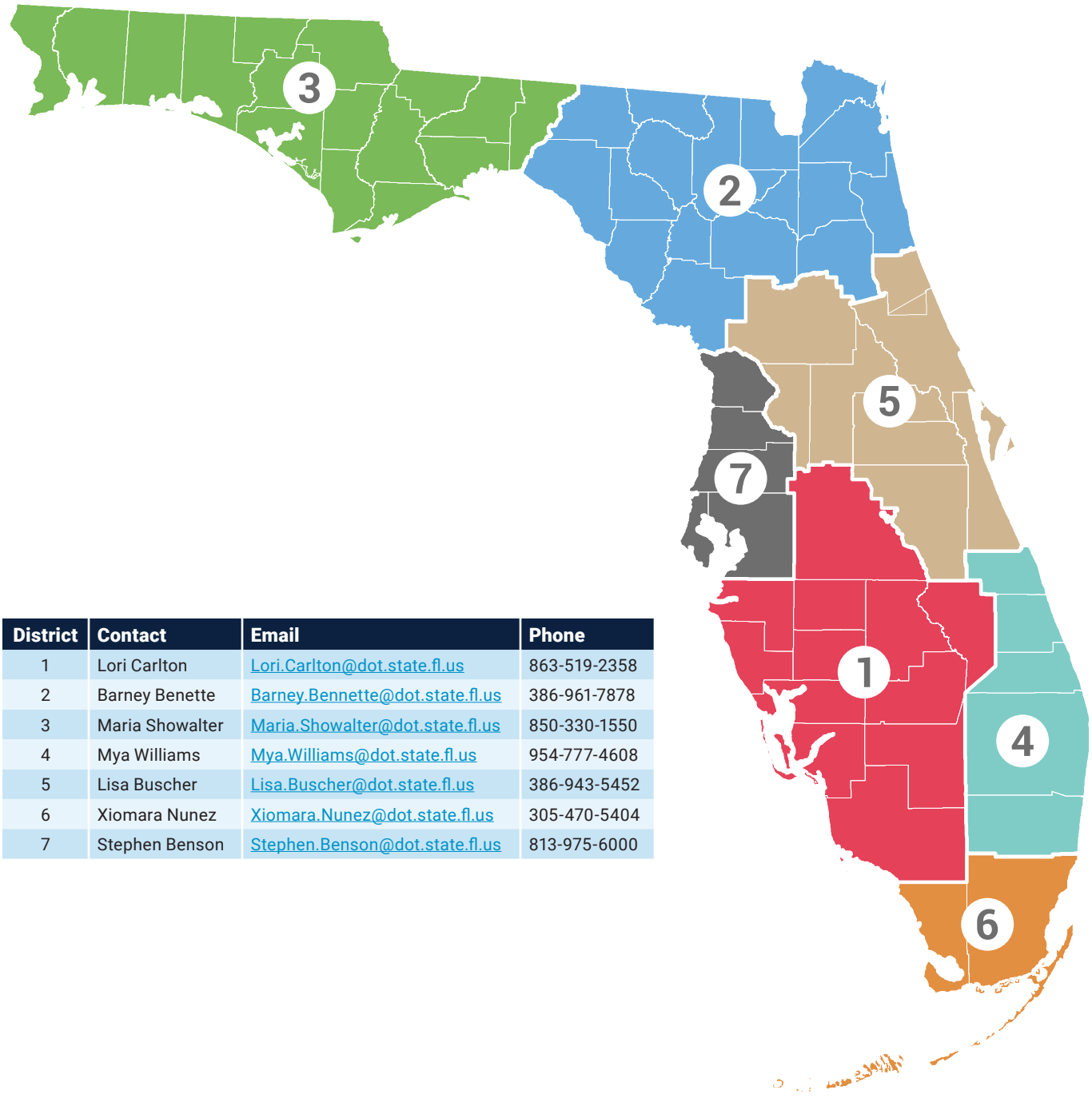
Chris Edmonston oversees FDOT's Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program and can assist with related questions.

Chris Edmonston | SIS Planning Manager
Florida Department of Transportation
Systems Implementation Office
605 Suwannee Street, MS 19
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 414-4813
chris.edmonston@dot.state.fl.us

Appendix

Appendix A

FDOT Districts and TA Set-Aside Program Contacts



District	Contact	Email	Phone
1	Lori Carlton	Lori.Carlton@dot.state.fl.us	863-519-2358
2	Barney Benette	Barney.Bennette@dot.state.fl.us	386-961-7878
3	Maria Showalter	Maria.Showalter@dot.state.fl.us	850-330-1550
4	Mya Williams	Mya.Williams@dot.state.fl.us	954-777-4608
5	Lisa Buscher	Lisa.Buscher@dot.state.fl.us	386-943-5452
6	Xiomara Nunez	Xiomara.Nunez@dot.state.fl.us	305-470-5404
7	Stephen Benson	Stephen.Benson@dot.state.fl.us	813-975-6000

Appendix B

FDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Project Eligibility Guidance

Eligible	Not Eligible
1. Construction, planning and design of on and off-road facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other forms of nonmotorized transportation (pedestrian and bicycle facilities)	
• Pedestrian infrastructure such as new sidewalks, crosswalks, etc. • Bicycle infrastructure such as bike lanes, bicycle parking, etc. • Bicycle racks for buses • Pedestrian and bicycle signals • Bike share infrastructure such as bikes, racks, kiosks • New or reconstructed off-road trails that serve a transportation need, such as trails that provide connections to schools, parks, or other public places • Amenities along a trail that serve trail users such as benches, trash cans, watering stations, pet amenities, bicycle repair stations, wayfinding signs, security cameras, etc. • Trailhead projects that serve trail users such as rest areas with benches, restrooms, trail access improvements, parking, kiosks, etc. • Bicycle and pedestrian bridges and underpasses • Lighting and other safety related infrastructure	• Routine maintenance or replacement of existing sidewalks (unless ADA upgrades are needed) • Circular trails/sidewalks • Facilities located within a property that do not connect to other trails/sidewalks • General resurfacing of roadways • General recreation and park facilities: playground equipment, sports fields, campgrounds, picnic and pavilion areas
2. Construction, planning and design of infrastructure-related projects/systems to provide safe routes for non-drivers including children, older adults, individuals with disabilities (safe routes for non-drivers)	
• Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 compliance projects such as rehabilitation of existing sidewalks, curb ramps, sidewalk widening, etc.) • Traffic calming techniques • Lighting and other safety related infrastructure • Traffic realignments, road diets, or intersection changes that improve bicycle and pedestrian access or safety • Crosswalks • Pedestrian refuge areas • Crossing improvements that shorten crossing distance, provide access, and/or primarily improve bicycle and pedestrian safety	• Roadway lighting that doesn't benefit non-drivers • Promotional materials (except for Safe Routes to School; see Category 10) • Intersection realignments aimed at improving vehicular flow • Projects that reorganize pick-up and drop-off primarily for the convenience of drivers • Education programs that are primarily focused on bus safety • Improvements to school bus stops
3. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for non-motorized use	
• Developing rails-to-trails facilities, where there is an adjacent line that is no longer active • Trailhead projects that serve trail users, such as rest areas with benches, restrooms, trail access improvements, parking, etc. • Construction or reconstruction of multi-use trails within a railroad right-of-way, • Purchasing and converting unused railroad property for reuse as a trail	• Trails for motorized vehicles • Maintenance of an existing trail
4. Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas	
• Turnouts and viewing areas at scenic or historic sites • Right-of-way acquisition	• Visitor center • Operation or maintenance • Marketing/promotional materials
5. Inventory, control or removal of outdoor advertising	
• Data collection • Removal	• Administration or operating expenses
6. Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities	
• Facilities on historic register or eligible for historic register. • Rehabilitation of historic surface transportation facilities (bridges, lighthouses, canals, etc.) • Historic toll and ferry facilities • Historic railroad facilities	• Operating costs • Facilities not open to the public • Construction of replica facilities • Infrastructure not related to surface transportation (air and space) • Structures not on or eligible for the national historic register

Eligible	Not Eligible
7. Vegetation management practices in transportation rights of way	
• Removal of invasive species and plant native plants • Planting of native species that can help control erosion and ensure that roadsides are stable, look nice, and provide clear sightlines • Planting of vegetation to attract honey bees, monarch butterflies, etc.	• Standalone landscaping • Planting of annuals
8. Archaeological activities related to impacts from transportation projects	
• Archaeological excavations and surveys related to a transportation project • Archaeological activities required as part of a TA Set-aside eligible project • Interpretation and display of artifacts discovered as part of a transportation project	• Archaeological activities not related to a transportation project eligible under federal Title 23
9. Environmental mitigation activities	
• Pollution prevention, abatement and mitigation activities to address storm water management, control and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, including activities listed in Sections 133(b), 328(a), and 329. • Reduction in vehicle caused wildlife mortality such as a wildlife crossing or fencing • Restoration and maintenance of the connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats (e.g. surmountable curbs for turtles) • Erosion and sediment control • Native plantings • Minimizing impervious surfaces	• Drainage improvements related to poor maintenance and /or upgrades to inadequate systems • Stormwater management activities not related to highway run-off and water pollution
10. Safe Routes to School Safe Routes to School projects are eligible under TA Set-Aside. For additional information on eligible activities, see https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/guidance/guidance_2016.cfm#EligibleProjects. Note: FDOT also has a state Safe Routes to School Program. For more information on that program visit http://www.srtsfl.org/.	
• Bicycle and pedestrian education targeting student travel (grades K-8) • Public awareness campaigns and outreach to press and community leaders • Traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools • Student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health, and environment • Funding for training, volunteers, and managers of safe routes to school program • Infrastructure projects • Sidewalk improvements • Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements • Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements • On-street bicycle facilities • Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities • Secure bicycle parking facilities • Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools	• Bicycle and pedestrian education campaigns for the general public

Appendix C

FDOT Sample TA Project Application Form

(please contact your FDOT District Office for specific application materials)

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM
APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION

PROJECT SPONSOR:

CONTACT PERSON: **TITLE:**

ADDRESS: FL, **ZIP:**

PHONE: **FAX:**

EMAIL:

PROJECT SPONSOR'S LOCAL AGENCY PROGRAM (LAP) CERTIFICATION STATUS:

☐ Currently LAP Certified (Year of Certification:)

☐ Not LAP Certified

☐ Seeks Project Specific Certification

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT PRIORITY NO.:

PROJECT TITLE:

PROJECT LOCATION:

PROJECT LENGTH: **TERMINI:**

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

PROJECT IS SUBMITTED UNDER WHICH ELIGIBLE PROGRAM TYPE:

☐ Transportation Alternative, defined in 23 USC 101

☐ Recreational Trail, defined in 23 USC 206

☐ Safe Routes to School, defined in 23 USC 402 note, Public Law 109-59
*(Safe Routes to School Application **must** accompany this application)*

☐ Roadway construction within former interstate routes or other divided highways

QUALIFYING ACTIVITIES

Check the Transportation Alternative activity that the proposed project will address. Please check one activity that represents the majority of the work proposed. (Note: Checking more activities does not ensure or increase eligibility.) Eligible activities must be consistent with details described under 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(29) and 213(b).

- ☐ Construction of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- ☐ Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
- ☐ Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other nonmotorized transportation users
- ☐ Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas
- ☐ Community improvement activities, which include but are not limited to:
  - ☐ Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising
  - ☐ Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities
  - ☐ Vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control
  - ☐ Archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under title 23
- ☐ Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to:
  - ☐ address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, including activities described in sections 133(b)(11), 328(a), and 329 of title 23; or
  - ☐ reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.
- ☐ The safe routes to school program eligible projects and activities listed at section 1404(f) of the SAFETEA-LU: ***(A Safe Routes to School application must accompany this application.)***
  - ☐ infrastructure-related projects
  - ☐ Noninfrastructure-related projects
  - ☐ Safe Routes to School Coordinator
- ☐ Planning, designing, and constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Roadway Name and/or Number:

(A location map with aerial view must be attached)

☐ **On-System Project** (State Roadway) ☐ **Off-System Project** (Local Roadway)

Project Termini- Begin: **End:**

Project Length:

Scope of Work *(Attach conceptual plans if available)***:**

Summarize any special characteristics of the project *(Provide Typical Section drawings and describe the typical section here.)***:**

Describe existing right-of-way ownerships along the project *(Describe when the right-of-way was obtained and how ownership is documented, i.e., plats, deeds, prescriptions, easements)***:**

Is right-of-way acquisition proposed? If Yes, describe proposed acquisition including expected fund source, limitations on fund use or availability, and who will acquire and retain ownership of proposed right-of-way. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Provide any additional project specific information that should be considered.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION

Project phases included in funding request:

- ☐ Planning Activities
- ☐ Project Development & Environment Study
- ☐ Preliminary Engineering/Final Design Plans
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Construction Engineering & Inspection

Describe any project work phases that are currently underway or have been completed.

Describe the proposed method of performing and administering each work phase of the project. (*If it is proposed that the project be administered by a governmental entity other than the Department of Transportation, the entity must be certified to administer Federal Aid project in accordance with the Department Local Agency Program (LAP) Manual (Topic No. 525-010-300).)*

Refer to Chapter 18 of the LAP Manual requirements regarding use of consultants.

Planning	PD&E	Design	R/W Acquisition	Construction
☐ Applicant's Staff	☐ Applicant's Staff	☐ Applicant's Staff	☐ Applicant's Staff	☐ Applicant's Staff
☐ Applicant's Cons	☐ Applicant's Cons	☐ Applicant's Cons	☐ FDOT	☐ Applicant's CEI
☐ FDOT	☐ FDOT	☐ FDOT		☐ FDOT

Have any public information, or community, meetings been held? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Describe public, and private, support for the project. *(Examples: petitions, written endorsements, resolutions, etc.)*

Explain the proposed ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the project when complete?

Are matching funds being applied to the project? If so, explain any limitations to those funds. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Provide any additional implementation information that should be considered.

PROJECT COST ESTIMATE

Below, provide a summary of the estimated cost for the work being proposed. ***(A detailed project cost estimate must be attached to this application.)***

Planning Activities	$
Project Development & Environment Study	$
Preliminary Engineering / Final Design Plans	$
Construction	$
Construction Engineering & Inspection Activities	$
Other (Describe)	$
Total Estimated Cost	$ 0

(To update Total Cost, select entire column and hit F9)

PROJECT FUNDING

TA FUNDS	LOCAL FUNDS	TOTAL
$	$	**$** 0
TA FUND %	**LOCAL FUND %**	**TOTAL**
		0

(To update Totals, select entire row and hit F9)

CERTIFICATION OF PROJECT SPONSOR

I hereby certify that the proposed project herein described is supported by ***Click here to enter text.*** (sponsoring entity) and that said entity will: (1)provide any required funding match; (2)enter into a maintenance agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation, as necessary; (3)comply with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Acquisition Policies Act (The Uniform Act) for any right-of-way actions required for the project; (4)comply with NEPA process prior to construction which may require involvement with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and other State and/or Federal agencies, prior to construction; and (5)support other actions necessary to fully implement the proposed project. I further certify that the estimated costs included herein are reasonable and that ***Click here to enter text.*** (sponsoring entity) will follow through on the project once programmed in the Florida Department of Transportation's Work Program.

_____

Signature

_____

Print Name

_____

Title

_____

Date

FOR FDOT USE ONLY		
Application Complete	☐Yes	☐No
Project Eligible	☐Yes	☐No
Implementation Feasible	☐Yes	☐No
Include in Work Program	☐**Yes**	☐**No**

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Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program Guidance and Procedures

Fiscal Year 2020