

**FY 2026 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage
Development (BUILD), Formerly RAISE
NOFO Summary
January 9, 2026**

The following information and template are based on guidance provided by U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) in the [BUILD Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO), last updated December 15, 2025. If there are discrepancies between information provided here and the NOFO, follow the NOFO. Following the guidance here in the related templates does not guarantee a funding award.

There are two grant types: 1) Planning Project Grants; or 2) Capital Project Grants. Applicants may apply for one or the other. Grant Applications must be submitted via [Valid Eval](#) (more information about this process is below).

Key Dates:

- Applications are due through [Valid Eval](#) by February 24, 2026, at 5:00 pm.
- Funds must be obligated by September 30, 2030.
- Funds must be expended by September 20, 2035 (after these dates, funds are no longer available to the project).

- **Grant Administration Tips:**
- To apply for Federal grants, all applicants must register with the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM. More information about registering with SAM is available [here](#) and [here](#).
 - It may take several weeks to register with SAM and obtain a UEI, so if your municipality or organization does not already have this, it is recommended that you start this process as soon as possible.
 - More information about registering with [Grants.gov](#) and [SAM.gov](#) is available [here](#).
 - Even if your organization is registered with SAM.gov and/or Grants.gov, you may still need to take action to register as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) with Grants.gov to apply for grants.
 - Even though the grant opportunity is listed on Grants.gov, all applications must be submitted through [Valid Eval](#).
- Submit applications through the online application portal, [Valid Eval](#), before the deadline: February 24, 2026, at 5:00 pm. Valid Eval is a third-party website used by USDOT to support application submissions. The primary contact for the application should be a staff member from the organization who signed the SF-424, or the contact listed on that form. Please note that Planning Grants and Capital Grants require unique registrations. See below.
 - [Register on Valid Eval here](#) for Planning Grant application.
 - [Register on Valid Eval here](#) for Capital Grant application.

General Grant Application Tips:

- Review program goals and tie your application back to these throughout the documents, particularly focusing on the Application Review section, and the Merit Criteria.
- Create clear, direct, and logical narratives. Evaluators are likely not familiar with your community or project, so walk them through the problems and how your project will solve the problems.
- Clearly define the transportation infrastructure problem that needs to be solved and clearly describe how your project will solve this problem.
- Tell a compelling story, making connections about why your project needs the funding to solve the problem, and why the solutions you are proposing will solve the problem.
- Be data- and detail-driven; tie detailed statements to evidence and data.
- Provide quantified or illustrative examples.
- Use pictures, maps, and other graphics to help tell the story and make your application interesting.
- Present a reasonable, realistic project schedule that meets required deadlines.
- Narratives must be clear, concise, and meet selection criteria.
- Note: A variety of evaluators will likely review applications, and they may not have access to all application materials or supporting documents uploaded with your application. Ensure that all relevant information that demonstrates compliance with program requirements and selection criteria is included in the correct file.

The federal contribution for BUILD grant projects may not exceed 80 percent of total project costs, unless the project qualifies under one of the following location designations (see Location Designations for definitions):

- Rural
- Area of Persistent Poverty (APP) / Historically Disadvantaged Community (HDC)

Projects located within one of these designated areas may receive up to 100 percent federal funding. Projects in urban areas that are not designated as APP or HDC and that request more than 80 percent federal funding will be deemed ineligible. Applicants should apply the following equation to determine the required cost share for their project:

Project Location	Cost Share Requirement
Urban	Up to 80% Federal Funding
Rural	Up to 100% Federal Funding
Area of Persistent Poverty	
Historically Disadvantaged Community	

Figure 1, p. 7 of BUILD NOFO 26

U.S. DOT is not required to fund 80 percent of the project and may award portions of requested amounts.

Use U.S. DOT's BUILD Grant Project Location Verification [interactive mapping tool](#) to determine if your project is in an Urban Area, Rural Area, APP, or HDC.

More information about BUILD Location Designations is provided [here](#).

Cost Share: Use the following equation to determine cost share:

$$\frac{(\text{BUILD Grant Request} + \text{Other Federal Funds})}{\text{Total Project Cost}} = \text{Federal Cost Share}$$

Figure 2, p. 7 of BUILD NOFO 26

A **list of eligible sources of non-Federal Funds** is provided on p. 7-8 of the NOFO and here for your convenience:

- State funds originating from programs funded by State revenue
- Local funds originating from State or local revenue-funded programs
- Private funds
- Tribal transportation program funds under section 202 of title 23
- Federal lands transportation program funds under section 203 of title 23 8
- TIFIA program funds (as defined in section 601(a) of title 23)
- Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program under chapter 224
- Federal credit assistance (if repaid from non-Federal sources)

Capital Project Grants, Eligible Activities (p. 10 of NOFO):

- Highway or bridge projects that qualify under Title 23 of the United States Code
- Public transportation projects eligible under Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the United States Code
- Passenger and freight rail transportation projects
- Port infrastructure investments, including inland ports and land ports of entry
- Surface transportation elements of airport projects that are eligible for assistance under Part B of Subtitle VII of Title 49 of the United States Code
- Investments in surface transportation facilities located on Tribal land where ownership or maintenance responsibility rests with the Federal Government
- Projects focused on replacing or rehabilitating culverts or reducing stormwater runoff to improve aquatic species habitat while furthering the objectives of the BUILD program
- Intermodal projects, provided that each component independently meets an eligible project category

- Any other surface transportation infrastructure project that the Secretary determines is necessary to advance the program’s goals, including:
 - Public road and non-motorized transportation projects that are not otherwise eligible under Title 23 of the United States Code
 - Surface transportation components of transit-oriented development projects
 - Surface transportation elements of mobility-on-demand projects that increase access and reduce transportation cost burdens

Planning Project Grants, Eligible Activities (Page 11 of NOFO)

- Planning, preparation, design, or engineering activities for eligible surface transportation capital projects described in the Capital Projects section that will not proceed to construction using FY 2026 BUILD funds.
 - Examples include feasibility studies, benefit-cost analyses, environmental reviews, permitting, and other pre-construction efforts.
- Preparation of master plans, comprehensive plans, transportation corridor plans, and integrated plans that combine economic development, land use, housing, and transportation.
- Planning efforts associated with the development of a multimodal freight corridor.
- Port and regional port planning activities, including statewide planning or multi-port planning within a single jurisdiction or region.
- Risk assessments and planning initiatives aimed at identifying vulnerabilities and improving the transportation system’s capacity to withstand the likely occurrence or recurrence of emergencies or major disasters.

If the application includes right-of-way acquisition, the project is considered a capital project.

Applications are required to include the files below in the following order, using the names under the “File Name” column.

Information	File Name	NOFO Section	Page Limit
SF-424	SF-424	D.1	N/A
SF-LLL	SF-LLL	D.1	N/A
Key Information Questions	N/A	D.2	N/A
Project Description	Project Description	D.3	5 pages
Project Location File	Project Location File	D.4	N/A
Project Budget	Project Budget	D.5	5 pages
Funding Commitment Documentation	Funding Commitments	D.5	N/A
Merit Criteria	Merit Criteria Narrative	D.6	15 pages
Project Readiness	Project Readiness	D.7	5 pages
Benefit-Cost Analysis Narrative (capital projects only)	BCA Narrative	D.8	N/A
Benefit-Cost Analysis Calculations (capital projects only)	BCA Calculations	D.8	N/A
Letters of Support (Optional)	Letters Of Support	D.7	N/A

Figure 3, Table of required materials, p. 14 of BUILD NOFO.

Application file format should be:

- Single spaced and 12-point font with 1-inch margins
- In PDF format unless otherwise mentioned (project information form should be in Excel, location files such as Shapefile or KML/KMZ, and BCA calculations in Excel).

FY 2026 BUILD Project Information

The following questions must be answered in the FY 2026 BUILD application in Valid Eval.

Field	Instructions
Unique Entity Identifier	Enter the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). This should be the same UEI entered on the SF-424. See Section F.2 for how to obtain a UEI from sam.gov
Project Name	Enter a concise descriptive title. This should be the same title used on the SF-424 and throughout the application.
Project Description	Describe the project to be planned or constructed in no more than 100 words.
BUILD Funding Request	Enter the amount of BUILD funds requested. The maximum request amount is \$25 million. The minimum amount for capital projects in rural areas is \$1 million and \$5 million in urban areas.
Other Federal Funding	Enter the total amount of other Federal funds committed to the project.
Non-Federal Funding	Enter the total amount of non-Federal funding committed to the project.
Total Project Cost	Enter the total BUILD funding request, other Federal funding, and non-Federal funding. The Total Project Cost means total future eligible project costs. Do not include previously incurred costs.
Project Type	Enter the project primary and secondary type.
Construction Start Date	Enter the estimated construction start date for the capital project.
Planning Project Start Date	Enter the estimated start date for the planning project.
2020 Census-Designated Urban Area	Select the Urban Area the project is located or "not located in an Urban Area" if the project is outside of an Urban Area
Urban or Rural	Identify whether the project is located in a rural or urban area. A project is designated as Urban if it is located in a 2020 Census-designated Urban Area with a population greater than 200,000. If a project is located outside a 2020 Census-designated Urban Area with a population greater than 200,000, it is designated Rural.

Figure 4, Table of Key Information Questions, p. 15 & 16 of BUILD NOFO

Project Zip Code	Enter the 5-digit zip code for the project location. If the project is located in multiple zip codes, identify the zip code in which most of project costs will occur. Please leave blank if the project is located in a territory that does not have zip codes.
County	Select the county (or equivalent jurisdiction) where the project is located. If the project is located in multiple counties, identify the county in which most of project costs will occur.
Additional Counties	Identify additional counties or equivalent jurisdictions.
2020 Census Tract(s)	Identify the 2020 Census tract(s) the project is located.
Area of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Community	Select if the project is located in an Area of Persistent Poverty/Historically Disadvantaged Community as defined by statute.
Project Location Latitude	Enter the project's latitudinal coordinate using decimal degrees (e.g., 38.87586 , -77.00365). Note, that latitude is the first number in the example coordinates.
Project Location Longitude	Enter the project's longitudinal coordinate using decimal degrees (e.g., 38.87586, -77.00365). Note, that longitudinal is the second number in the example coordinates.
Qualified Opportunity Zones	Select if the project is located in a Qualified Opportunity Zone (26 U.S. Code § 1400Z-1)
Previous Submission to BUILD/RAISE/TIGER	If this exact project was submitted in a previous BUILD, RAISE, or TIGER round, please list the name of the round (e.g., BUILD 2025, RAISE 2024, etc.)
Private Corporation Involvement	Does this project involve a private entity or entities that will receive a direct and predictable financial benefit if the project is selected for award? This includes, but is not limited to, private owners of infrastructure facilities being improved and private freight shippers or carriers directly benefitting from completion of the proposed project.
Private Corporation Name(s)	If this project directly involves or benefits a private corporation, please list the corporation(s) separated by a comma.
TIFIA or RRIF	Is the applicant currently or anticipating applying for Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) or Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing (RRIF) loans to fund the project?

Figure 4, Table of Key Information Questions, p. 15 & 16 of BUILD NOFO (continued)

See **Appendix A** for how these questions are referenced in the ValidEval Application Portals. Responses to these questions will be used to determine applicants and project eligibility.

Note: Some information may be requested in varying degrees of detail on both the SF-424 Application Form and other required application materials. Applicants must fill in all fields unless stated otherwise on the forms. **Ensure that information provided**

on multiple forms, in narratives, and in other application materials is accurate and consistent.

Project Description:

- 5-pages, max
- Describe the project to be constructed;
- Include a detailed statement of work that focuses on:
 - Technical and engineering aspects of the project,
 - Current design status of the project,
 - Transportation challenges that the project is intended to address, and
 - How the project is expected to solve challenges;
- Project Location:
 - Provide a detailed description of the geographic area;
 - Include maps of the project location to complement the Project Location File;
 - Describe if the project is in an APP, HDC, Urban Areas and/or Rural Areas, as defined in the NOFO.
- May also:
 - Discuss the project's history and how it fits within your broader transportation infrastructure investments;
 - Describe previously completed components;
 - Describe how the project fits within your broader infrastructure investments.

Project Location File:

Submit one of the following file types, which will be used to verify location designations:

- Shapefile (.zip with .shp, .shx, .dbf, and .prj), or
- KML/KMZ*.

*Applicants may use Google Earth to prepare a KML/KMZ files.

These spatial files should include only the project's **direct physical location**, and not a broad service area or area of impact.

Project Budget:

- 5-pages, max
- Describe the budget for the project using:
 - o Tables, and
 - o Narrative section;
- Show future eligible project costs;
- Do not show any previously incurred expenses.

Selection Criteria (Section F. of the NOFO, p. 26):

Grant applications will be evaluated in accordance with the following process:

TIER 1 All Eligible Applications
Merit Criteria Review
TIER 2 All applications rated “Highly Recommended” under the merit criteria review automatically advance for second tier analysis. The Senior Review Team (SRT) can advance applications rated “Recommended” for second-tier analysis.
Project Readiness Review
Project Risk Review (capital projects only)
Applicant Capacity Review
Financial Completeness Review
Benefit-Cost Analysis (capital projects only)

Figure 5, Table of merit criteria ratings, p. 26 of BUILD NOFO

Planning applications should include data on the problem intended to be addressed. U.S. DOT will consider how the plan, once implemented, will ultimately further the merit criteria.

Budget Narrative:

- **Sources, Uses, and Availability** – Provide complete information on how all capital or planning project funds may be used, their availability, and documented funding commitments.
 - o Identify any conditions of funding commitments and describe your control over whether the condition is satisfied.
 - o If a source of funds is available for expenditure only during a fixed period, describe this restriction.
 - o Examples of documented funding commitments include but are not limited to:
 - Letter signed by a governing official or chief financial officer confirming the amount and source of funding;
 - A page or pages from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
 - Signed city ordinance; or
 - Commitment from a county administrator approving general obligation bonds.

- **Contingency Amount and Plan** – Indicate the specific contingency amount included in the budget to demonstrate there is sufficient funding to cover unanticipated cost increases and describe a plan to address potential cost overruns. Planning projects are not required to include a contingency amount but must describe a plan to address potential cost overruns.
- **Level of Design (Capital Project Grants only)** – Indicate the degree of design completion (e.g., no design, 30, 60, 90 percent design) for which the cost was estimated in the case of a capital project;
- **Cost Estimates** – Indicate how, when, and by whom project costs were estimated. Cost estimates should be no older than a year from January 30, 2025. If older, apply an inflation factor.
- **Cost Share (Non-Federal Funding Match)** – Explain how the project budget satisfies the statutory cost share or non-federal funds matching requirements shown in the project budget table, if applicable.

Ensure that all project costs listed in the tables, narratives, and standard forms are accurate and consistent.

Merit Criteria Narrative:

- 15-pages, max
- Demonstrate how the project aligns with each of the eight (8) merit criteria described in Section F of the NOFO (p. 26-36). Explain how and why your proposed project will address the surface transportation problem and achieve benefits under each criterion.
- Organize the merit criteria in the same order that appears in Section F of the NOFO:
 - Safety
 - Environmental Sustainability
 - Quality of Life
 - Mobility and Community Connectivity
 - Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity
 - State of Good Repair
 - Partnership and Collaboration
 - Innovation
- Address each criterion separately and:
 - Identify the bullet(s) from the merit rating rubric (NOFO p.28-36) that your project addresses;
 - Identify the element(s) of the project that address the bullet(s) from the rubric;
 - Provide supporting justification using data. Do not include unsupported claims;
 - Use data, details, and/or qualitative descriptions to support estimated benefit claims.
- Include all relevant information in this narrative to demonstrate alignment with the merit criteria - reviewers will not be required to reference links or other files in the application package.

Project Readiness Narrative Requirements:

- 5-pages, max.
- Describe your preparedness to move your project forward once you receive the BUILD grant.
- Include information that is sufficient for U.S. DOT to evaluate whether your project is reasonably expected to begin the capital or planning project in a timely manner and meet both the obligation deadline (**September 30, 2030**) and the expenditure deadline (**September 20, 2035**).
- Include the following sections in your narrative, which are further described on p.21-25 of the [NOFO](#):
 - **State, Local, or Metropolitan Planning Relevance**
 - Identify any existing plans which include this project in its proposal
 - Announce any acquisitions which will be necessary for this project
 - Describe any unique construction techniques or phasing which will be necessary for this project
 - **Project Schedule**
 - Identify all major project **activities** and **milestones**.
 - Examples for Planning Grants: start dates; schedule for public engagement; and completion dates.
 - Complete necessary activities at least six months before the obligation deadline of September 30, 2030, to allow sufficient time for unexpected delays.
 - Funds must be expended by September 20, 2035.
 - Applicants must have meaningfully sought community input through public involvement.
 - **Project Risk Review** – Capital projects only.
 - **Applicant Capacity Review**
 - Demonstrate your technical capacity to deliver the project in compliance with applicable Federal requirements including, but not limited to, compliance with civil rights laws, Title VI and Buy America provisions.
 - Address:
 - **Federal Funding** – experience implementing federally funded transportation projects.
 - **Federal Regulations** – understanding of federal contract and procurement requirements, Buy America, Americans with Disabilities Act, Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act, Davis Bacon Act, etc.
 - **Project Planning** – practice incorporating projects into long-range development plans or adding projects to the TIP/STIP through the MPO planning process.
 - **Project Delivery** – provide examples of successfully delivered projects of similar size, scope, and complexity.

Applications will be reviewed based on information submitted with the application as well as on DOT Operating Administration knowledge of the applicant's performance.

Highest rating will be assigned to applications that demonstrate:

- The applicant has extensive experience with Federal funds;
- The applicant has extensive experience completing projects with similar scope;
- The applicant has the resources to deliver the project; and
- The project will comply with all applicable Federal requirements (such as Buy America Provisions, ADA regulations, Civil Rights requirements, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, and/or Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations).

Financial Completeness

The project budget will be assessed to confirm:

- Availability of funding for the project;
- Whether a complete funding package was provided; and
- Whether cost estimates are reasonable.

Highest rating will be assigned to applications that:

- Identify all funding sources for the project budget;
- Document all funding is available and committed to the project;
- Describe a plan to address potential cost overruns; and
- Cost estimates that are no more than one year old or include an inflation factor.

Note: Projects with funding estimates that are based on early stages of design (e.g., less than 30 percent of design) or outdated cost estimates without specified budget contingencies will receive a lower rating.

Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)

Projects will be evaluated on their cost effectiveness by comparing expected benefits to expected costs relative to the current problem, often referred to as the "baseline" or "no-build alternative." Benefits claimed for the project, both quantified and unquantified, should be clearly tied to the expected outcomes of the project.

- Quantify benefits, where possible.
- Describe other categories of benefits that are difficult to quantify and/or value in economic terms.
- Review [U.S. DOT's Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance Webpage](#), with references to:
 - o [Benefit Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs Document](#), updated in 2026;
 - o [U.S. DOT's new BCA Spreadsheet Template](#) (an optional resource).(an optional resource).

- Hire a consultant from CRCOG’s on-call list. In December 2023, CRCOG solicited proposals to assemble an On-Call List of Qualified Consultants for Economic Analysis. The list is copied below, and available on [CRCOG’s website](#).

BCA Ratings	
High	The project’s benefits will exceed its costs, with a benefit-cost ratio of at least 2.0
Medium-High	The project’s benefits will exceed its costs
Medium	The project’s benefits are likely to exceed its costs
Medium-Low	The project’s costs are likely to exceed its benefits
Low	The project’s costs will exceed its benefits

Figure 6, table of BCA Ratings, p. 42 BUILD NOFO

CRCOG issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an on-call list to pre-qualify consultants to perform infrastructure related economic analysis services, such as Benefit Cost Analyses (BCAs), for studies or grant applications. The following consultants were selected and are scheduled to remain on the list from January 8, 2024 to January 8, 2027 for CRCOG and/or its municipalities to contract with. The information below can also be found [on our website](#).

Cambridge Econometrics

Subconsultants: SLR, Autocase/Impact Infrastructure, Glen Weisbrod Dan Hodge, Executive Vice President, [Email](#), (413) 588-8816

HDR

Subconsultant: HR&A Advisors, Inc. Pamela Yonkin, Project Manager, [Email](#), (617) 357-7724

WSP

Subconsultant: Cheng Solutions, LLC Charles Warren, Project Manager, [Email](#), (202) 557-3843

- **Application Requirements: Include two (2) BCA files** with your application:
 1. **Narrative Description of Analysis:**
 - Describe the current baseline;
 - Cite sources of data used to estimate project benefits;
 - Document any assumptions;
 - Document values of key input parameters;
 - May also provide a table summarizing the impacts of the project and how those impacts would translate into expected benefits.
 2. **Spreadsheet Revealing Underlying Calculations**
 - Present calculations in sufficient detail and transparency to allow the analysis to be reproduced by evaluators;
 - Use or reference [U.S. DOT’s new BCA Spreadsheet Template](#) (an optional resource).
 - Ensure your spreadsheet is unlocked, allowing evaluators to open and review it.

- Samples from other CRCOG projects:

Task	Hours	Labor Fee	BF&O	Profit	Loaded Labor Total	Rounded Total	% of Total
Task 1. Project Management	205	\$ 11,605.99	\$ 18,219.08	\$ 2,638.03	\$ 32,463.09	\$ 32,465	5.7%
Task 2. Stakeholder and Public Outreach	928	\$ 45,088.31	\$ 70,779.63	\$ 10,248.52	\$126,116.46	\$ 126,115	22.2%
Task 3. Review of Existing Conditions	280	\$ 12,342.83	\$ 19,375.78	\$ 2,805.51	\$ 34,524.12	\$ 34,525	6.1%
Task 4. Development and Analysis of Route Alternatives	766	\$ 32,750.10	\$ 51,411.11	\$ 7,444.06	\$ 91,605.27	\$ 91,605	16.1%
Task 5. Refinement of Preferred Alignment	740	\$ 29,498.05	\$ 46,306.03	\$ 6,704.87	\$ 82,508.95	\$ 82,510	14.5%
Task 6. Implementation Strategy	242	\$ 11,210.14	\$ 17,597.68	\$ 2,548.05	\$ 31,355.87	\$ 31,355	5.5%
Task 7. Recommendations Report and Deliverables	392	\$ 17,090.16	\$ 26,828.13	\$ 3,884.57	\$ 47,802.86	\$ 47,805	8.4%
Task 8. Town of Simsbury Study	304	\$ 16,115.31	\$ 25,297.81	\$ 3,662.99	\$ 45,076.11	\$ 45,075	7.9%
Task 9. Riverfront Park I-91 Pedestrian Bridge (ADDITIONAL)	476	\$ 27,194.52	\$ 42,689.96	\$ 6,181.28	\$ 76,065.76	\$ 76,065	13.4%
TOTAL (Lump Sum Labor)	4333	\$202,895.40	\$318,505.20	\$ 46,117.88	\$567,518.48	\$ 567,520	

Budget from East Coast Greenway project

Event	2024												2025												2026												2027											
	Jan	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec					
RAISE Grant Award Announcement (6/27/2024)																																																
Grant Agreement Execution																																																
Procure Consultant																																																
Establish Project Advisory Committee																																																
Establish Project Website																																																
Phase 1: Corridor Planning Study Kick-off																																																
Advisory Committee Meetings																																																
Develop Custom Community Engagement Plan																																																
Enhanced Public Involvement:																																																
Public Meetings																																																
Public Workshops/Events																																																
Survey(s)/Poll(s)																																																
Key Stakeholder Meetings																																																
Data Collection																																																
Review of Existing Conditions																																																
Land Use Scenario Planning (3 locations)																																																
Development and Analysis of Alternatives																																																
Refinement of Preferred Alternatives																																																
Develop Implementation Strategy																																																
Complete Draft Report/Deliverables																																																
Final Public Comment Period																																																
Complete Final Report/Deliverables																																																
Final Approval from Municipalities and CTDOT																																																
Final Approval from CRCOG Policy Board																																																

Schedule from Berlin Turnpike FY24 RAISE Planning Grant Application

Merit Criteria:

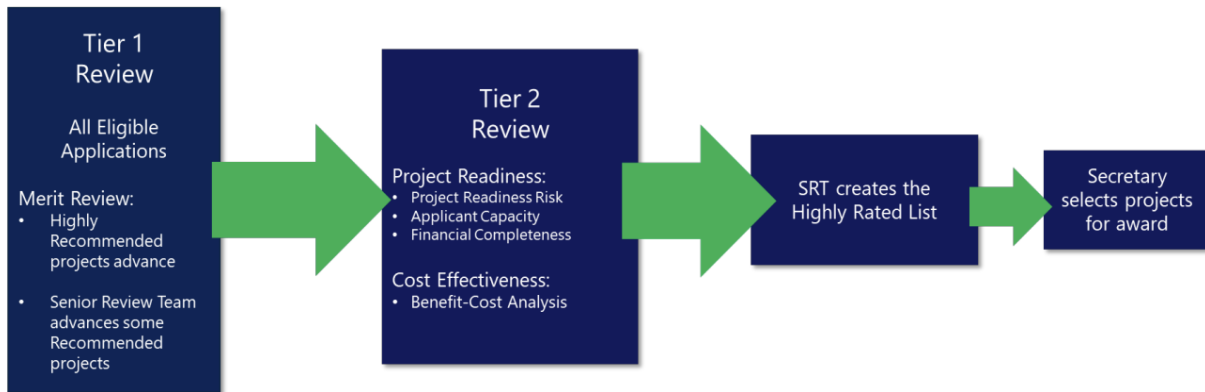


Figure 7, Merit criteria overview, p. 43 BUILD NOFO

Overall Merit Rating	
Highly Recommended	six or more of the eight merit criteria ratings are “high” none of the merit criteria ratings are “non-responsive”
Recommended	one to five of the merit criteria ratings are “high” no more than three of the merit criteria ratings are “low” none are “non-responsive”
Not Recommended	Ratings that do not fit within the definitions of Highly Recommended or Recommended

Figure 8, Table of merit rating in review, p.43 BUILD NOFO

1 Safety

Demonstrate that the project has clear, direct, **data-driven**, and significant benefits that targets a known, documented safety problem, by doing one or more of the following:

- Protecting non-motorized travelers from safety risks; or
- Reducing fatalities and/or serious injuries in underserved communities to bring them below the state-wide average; or
- Incorporating and citing specific actions and activities identified in the U.S. DOT’s [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) plan or [Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit](#) report, or [FTA’s Safety Advisory 23-1: Bus-to-Person Collisions](#); or
- Incorporating specific safety improvements that are part of a documented risk reduction mitigation strategy and that have, for example, port-wide or transit system impact.
- Including data-driven information, such as current and projected number or rate of crashes, fatalities and/or serious injuries among transportation users to be benefited, including vulnerable roadway users⁴.

2 Environmental Sustainability

Demonstrate that the project has clear, direct, **data-driven**, and significant benefits that explicitly by doing one or more of the following:

- Addressing the disproportionately negative environmental impacts of transportation on local communities such as by reducing exposure to elevated levels of air, water, and noise pollution; or
- Implementing transportation-efficient land use and design, such as drawing on the features of historic towns and villages that had a mix of land uses, compact and walkable development patterns and neighborhood centers that make it convenient to take fewer or shorter trips; or
- Improving the resilience of at-risk infrastructure to be resilient to extreme weather events and natural disasters, such as by using best-available data sets, information resources, and decision-support tools; or

- Citing project reference in a [Resilience Improvement Plan](#) or similar plan; or
- Redeveloping brownfield sites;
- Removing, replacing, or restoring culverts for the purpose of improving habitat for aquatic species; or
- Avoiding adverse environmental impacts to air or water quality, wetlands, and endangered species.

#3 Quality of Life

Demonstrate that the project has clear, direct, **data-driven**, and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following:

- Increasing affordable transportation choices by improving and expanding active transportation usage or significantly reducing vehicle dependence, particularly in underserved communities; or
- Reducing transportation and housing cost burdens by integrating mixed-use development and an array of housing types, including by reducing barriers to such development and increasing the supply of affordable housing, with multimodal transportation infrastructure; or
- Coordinating and integrating land use, affordable housing, and transportation planning to create more livable communities and expand travel choices; or
- Improving access to daily destinations like jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, or parks through transit and active transportation; or
- Implementing transit-oriented development that benefits existing residents and businesses, low-income and disadvantaged communities, and minimizes displacement; or
- Improving public health by adding new facilities that promote walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation; or
- Mitigating urban heat islands to protect the health of at-risk residents, outdoor workers, and others; or

#4 Mobility and Community Connectivity

Demonstrate that the project has clear, direct, **data-driven**, and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following:

- Improving system-wide connectivity with access to transit, micro-mobility, and mobility on-demand; or
- Implementing plans, based on community participation and data, that addresses gaps identified in the existing network; or
- Removing physical barriers for individuals by reconnecting communities to direct, affordable transportation options; or

- Including transportation features that increase the accessibility for non-motorized travelers, particularly in underserved communities, like through a Complete Streets approach; or
- Incorporating [Universal Design](#) including details of how the improvements go beyond American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements by designing environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialized design such as a Complete Streets approach; or
- Directly increasing intermodal and multimodal freight movement; or
- Consider last-mile freight plans in Complete Streets and a multimodal approach.

#5 Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity

Demonstrate that the project has clear, direct, **data-driven**, and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following:

- Advance the domestic energy sector, in accordance with [Executive Order 14269 Restoring America's Maritime Dominance](#)
- Improving intermodal and/or multimodal freight mobility, especially for supply chain bottlenecks; or
- Facilitating tourism opportunities; or
- Promoting local economic development and entrepreneurship such as the utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises or 8(a) firms; or
- Building wealth; or
- Promoting long-term economic growth and other broader economic and fiscal benefits aligning with [Executive Order 14154 Unleashing American Energy](#); or
- Creating good-paying jobs with free and fair choice to join a union including using a project labor agreement; or
- Promoting greater public and private investments in land-use productivity, including rural main street revitalization or locally driven density decisions that support commercial and mixed-income residential development.

#6 State of Good Repair

Note: U.S. DOT encourages improvements to the condition and safety of existing state and locally owned transportation infrastructure within the right-of-way before proposing projects that add new general purpose travel lands serving single occupancy vehicles.

Demonstrate that the project has clear, direct, **data-driven**, and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following:

- Mitigating current or projected system vulnerabilities; or

- Restoring and modernizing (such as through road diets and Complete Streets approach) the existing core infrastructure assets that have met their useful life; or
- Reducing construction and maintenance burdens through efficient and well-integrated design; or
- Creating new infrastructure in remote communities that will be maintained in a state of good repair; or
- Address current or projected transportation system vulnerabilities for underserved communities; or
- Prioritize improvement of the condition and safety of existing transportation infrastructure within the existing footprint; or
- Conducting routine or deferred maintenance; or
- Creating new infrastructure (not in a remote community) that will be maintained in a state of good repair; or
- Identifying the party responsible for maintenance and how the new or improved asset(s) will be maintained in a state of good repair.

#7 Partnership and Collaboration

For projects involving other Federal agencies, U.S. DOT will consider the level of involvement and commitment from those agencies when reviewing applications.

Provide details and descriptions of project partnerships. Demonstrate that the project has, or plans to, do one or more of the following:

- Collaborating with public and/or private entities; or
- Documenting support from local, regional, and/or national levels; or
- Engaging residents and community-based organizations to ensure considerations for underserved communities are meaningfully integrated throughout the lifecycle of the project, for example, by citing and describing how the project aligns with the U.S. DOT's [Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making Guide](#); or
- Coordinating with other types of projects such as economic development, commercial or residential development near public transportation, infrastructure projects, or broadband deployment; or
- Partnering with high-quality workforce development programs with supportive services to help train, place, and retain people in good-paying jobs or registered apprenticeships.
- Partnering and engaging with unions and/or other worker-based organizations in the development of the project and the lifecycle of the project, including the maintenance or operation of the completed project, including through providing evidence of project labor agreements and/or community benefit agreements; or
- Partnering with communities or community groups representative of historically underrepresented groups to develop workforce strategies; or
- Establishing formal public-private partnerships or joint ventures to expand or create new infrastructure or economic development capacity; or

#8 Innovation

Applications will be assessed to the extent they use innovative: (1) technologies; (2) project delivery; or (3) financing. Innovation is relative to whether or not the applicant or community has deployed the specific innovations. Provide details for U.S. DOT to determine that a technology, project deliver, or financing mechanism is innovative to you or your community. Innovative technology must comply with Federal regulations 2 CFR §200.216.

Demonstrate that the project has, or plans for, one or more of the following innovative benefits:

- **Innovative Technologies**
 - Enhancing the environment for connected, or automated vehicles to improve the detection, mitigation, and documentation of safety risks; or
 - Improving safety by:

- ♣ using Advanced Driver Assistance Systems on public transit vehicles, including functions such as precision docking; lane keeping or lane centering; or
 - ♣ Using detection systems on railroads to target and deter trespassing; or
- Significantly enhancing the operational performance and maintenance of the surface transportation system, including by:
 - ♣ Using sensors or small unmanned aerial vehicles to enhance infrastructure inspection and asset management processes; or
 - ♣ Using sensors to monitor real-time conditions of pavement quality, signage, crosswalks, transit headways, or other public infrastructure; or
 - ♣ Digitalizing curb management to optimize use across purposes and modes, including freight, pick-up drop-off, and transit usage; or
- Using low-carbon or other innovative materials; or
- Using caps, land bridges, or underdecks; or
- Using active grade crossing detection systems to enable responsive traffic management; or
- **Innovative Project Delivery**
 - Using innovative practices in contracting (such as public-private partnerships and single contractor design-build arrangements, project bundling,), [Advanced Digital Construction Management](#), [Accelerated Bridge Construction](#), [Digital as-builts](#), or an up-to-date programmatic agreement between an environmental resource agency and a state DOT, or other NEPA lead agency, that facilitate accelerated project delivery and establish a streamlined process for environmental consultations and permits for commonly encountered project types.
- **Innovative Financing** – incorporating innovations in transportation funding and finance, such as:
 - Private sector funding or financing; or
 - Securing TIFIA or RRIF loans; or
 - Receiving an allocation for private activity bonds through DOT’s Build America Bureau; or
 - Using congestion pricing or other demand management strategies.

Budget Narrative:

- **Sources, Uses, and Availability** – Provide complete information on how all capital or planning project funds may be used, their availability, and documented funding commitments.
 - Identify any conditions of funding commitments, and describe your control over whether the condition is satisfied.
 - If a source of funds is available for expenditure only during a fixed period, describe this restriction.

- o Examples of documented funding commitments include but are not limited to:
 - Letter signed by a governing official or chief financial officer confirming the amount and source of funding;
 - A page or pages from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
 - Signed city ordinance; or
 - Commitment from a county administrator approving general obligation bonds.
- **Contingency Amount and Plan** – Indicate the specific contingency amount included in the budget to demonstrate there is sufficient funding to cover unanticipated cost increases and describe a plan to address potential cost overruns. Planning projects are not required to include a contingency amount but must describe a plan to address potential cost overruns.
- **Level of Design (Capital Project Grants only)** – Indicate the degree of design completion (e.g., no design, 30, 60, 90 percent design) for which the cost was estimated in the case of a capital project;
- **Cost Estimates** – Indicate how, when, and by whom project costs were estimated. Cost estimates should be no older than a year from application deadline.
- **Cost Share (Non-Federal Funding Match)** – Explain how the project budget satisfies the statutory cost share or non-federal funds matching requirements shown in the project budget table, if applicable.

Baseline / Current Status and Problem to be Addressed	Change to Baseline / Proposed Project to Address Problem	Example Impacts
A bridge has deteriorated to the point where trucks are forced to detour to a nearby bridge	The existing bridge will be rehabilitated to remove restrictions on trucks	Reduced travel time and vehicle operating costs due to a reduction in average truck trip length by X miles
An intersection has a high number of fatal and injury crashes stemming from a deficient design	The existing intersection will be replaced with a roundabout	Reduced fatalities, injuries, and property damage-only crashes by X, Y, and Z per year

Figure 9, Example of Summary of Project Impacts, p. 24 BUILD NOFO

Appendix A: Excerpts from Valid Eval Application Form

Below are excerpts of questions from the Valid Eval application portal. Here, too is a link to the [FY2025 BUILD spreadsheet](#) that was provided last year related to the Key Information Questions, for reference only, since some content may have changed.

Applicant UEI

Only applicants with an active UEI at the time of application submission will be considered eligible for the BUILD program.

A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) can be obtained by registering at <https://sam.gov/>.

Project Description

Describe the project to be constructed in no more than 100 words.

BUILD Funding Request

Other Federal Funds (if applicable)

Enter the total amount of other Federal funds committed to the project.

Non-Federal Funds

Enter the total amount of non-federal funds committed to the project.

Total Project Cost

Enter the BUILD Funding Request, plus Other Federal Funds, plus Non-Federal Funds. The Total Project Cost here should match the total estimated funding listed on the SF-424. Note, the Total Project Cost means total future eligible project costs. Do not include previously incurred costs

Planning Project Start Date

Enter the estimated start date for the planning project.

2020 Census-Designated Urban Area

Select the Urban Area the project is located or "not located in an Urban Area" if the project is outside of an Urban Area

2020 Census Tract(s)

Identify the 2020 Census tract(s) the project is located.

Figure 10, Valid Eval submission questions, Valid Eval form

Appendix B: Excerpts from Webinars from Prior Years

Merit Criterion: Safety

Protect motorized or non-motorized travelers from safety risks

Reduce fatalities or injuries to bring them below the statewide average

National Roadway Safety Strategy

Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit

FTA's Safety Advisory 23-1: Bus-to-Person Collisions

See RAISE [NOFO](#) pages 30 and 37

The slide features a dark blue header with a white circular icon on the left. Below the header, a white background contains five colored boxes with text. A black and white traffic cone icon is positioned to the left of the bottom two boxes. The footer text is in the bottom right corner.

Figure 11 (Source: [USDOT Presentation](#))

Merit Criterion: Quality of Life

Increase affordable transportation choices by improving and expanding active transportation

Reduce transportation and housing cost burdens by integrating mixed-use development and housing with multimodal transportation infrastructure

Coordinate and integrate land use, affordable housing, and transportation planning in order to create more livable communities and expand travel choices

Improve access to daily destinations like jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, or parks through transit and active transportation

See RAISE [NOFO](#) pages 31 and 38

The slide features a dark blue header with a white circular icon on the left. Below the header, a white background contains four blue rounded rectangular boxes with text, each connected to a larger white rectangular box on the right by a thin line. On the left side, there are three icons: a person on a bicycle, a house, and a bus. The footer text is in the bottom right corner.

Figure 12 (Source: [USDOT Presentation](#))

Merit Criterion: Mobility and Community Connectivity



- Improve system-wide connectivity with access to transit, micro-mobility, and mobility on-demand
- Remove physical barriers for individuals by reconnecting communities to direct, affordable transportation options
- Incorporate Universal Design including details of how the improvements go beyond ADA requirements
- Directly increasing intermodal and multimodal freight movement
- Consider last-mile freight plans in a Complete Streets and multimodal approach

See RAISE [NOFO](#) pages 32 and 38

Figure 13 (Source: *USDOT Presentation*)

Merit Criterion: Economic Competitiveness



- Improve freight supply chain bottlenecks
- Utilize Disadvantaged Business Enterprises or 8(a) firms
- Create good-paying jobs with free and fair choice to join a union including using project labor agreements
- Promote greater public and private investments in land-use development
- Revitalize rural main street or locally driven density decisions that support equitable commercial and mixed-income residential development

See RAISE [NOFO](#) pages 33 and 39

Figure 14 (Source: *USDOT Presentation*)

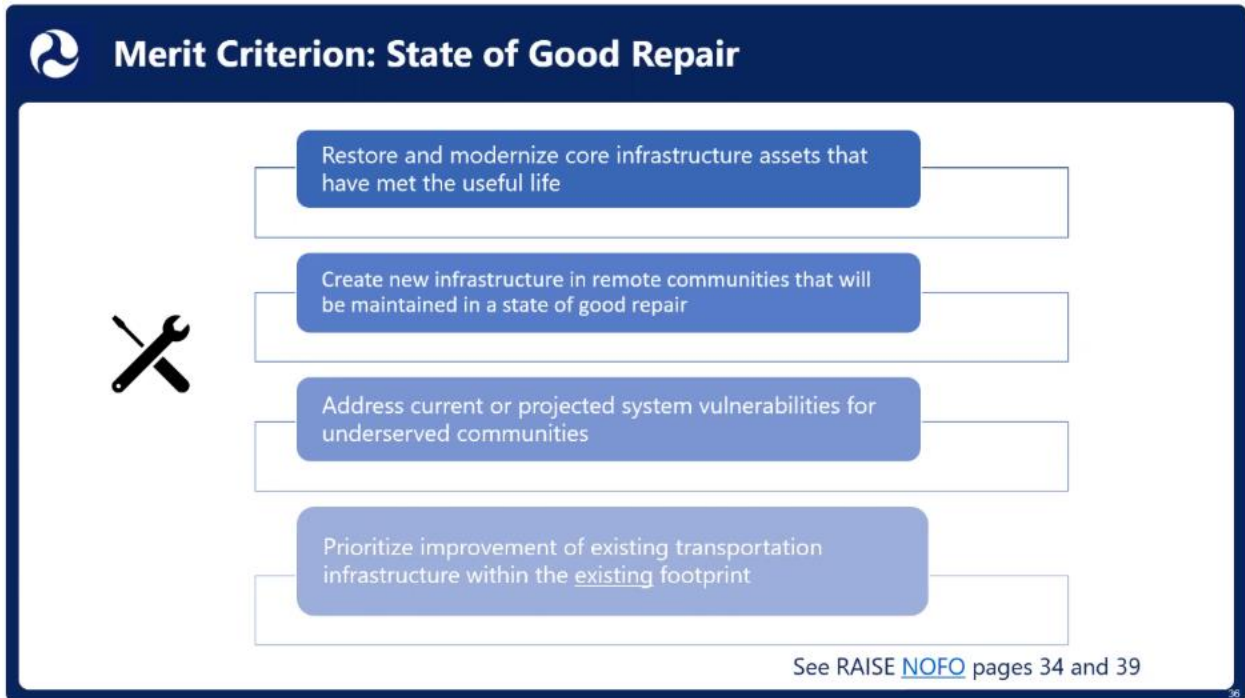


Figure 15 (Source: *USDOT Presentation*)

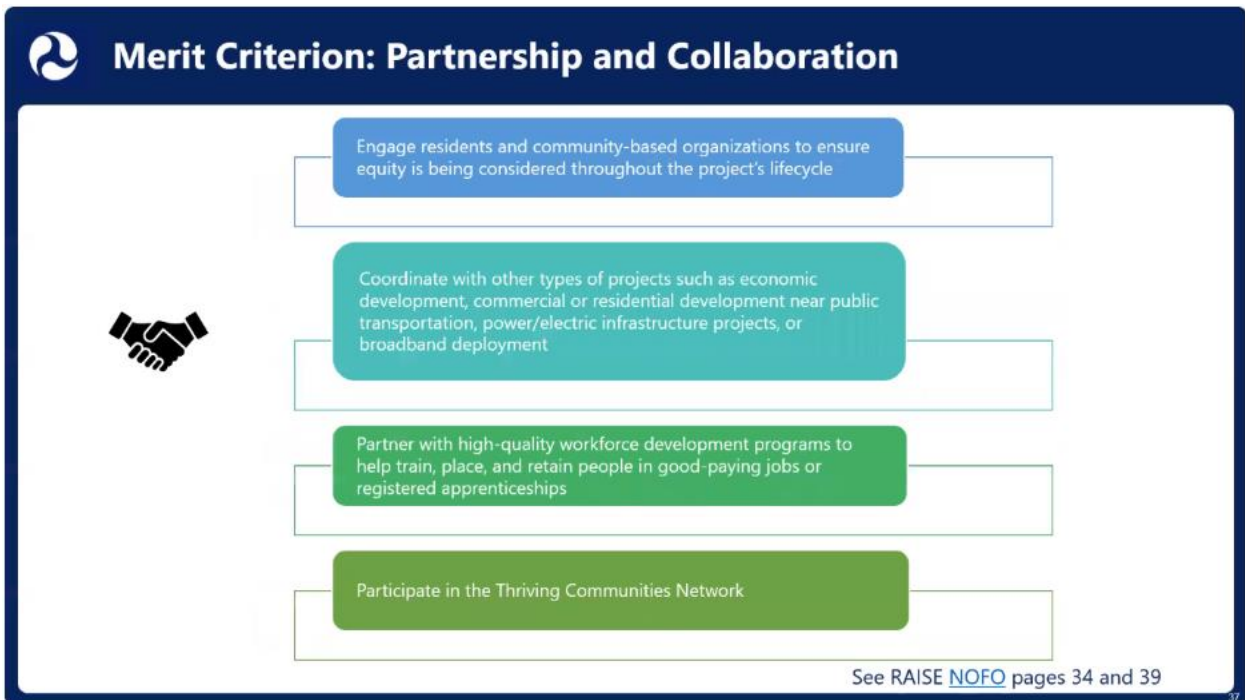


Figure 16 (Source: *USDOT Presentation*)