



Memorandum

U.S. Department

of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Subject: **ACTION:** Waiver of State Planning and Research Funds Match for the *Collaboration on Strategic Planning Models* Transportation Pooled Fund Study

Date: January 22, 2026

From: Kenneth N. Petty, II
Director, Office of Planning

In Reply
Refer to: HEPP-1

To: Emily Biondi
Associate Administrator for
Planning, Environment and Realty

The Office of Planning requests your approval to waive the matching requirement of State Planning and Research (SPR) Subpart A (Planning) funds in support of the Collaboration on Strategic Planning Models Transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) study ([Solicitation #1651](#)).

This project will fund and manage development and deployment of strategic models implemented through VisionEval (<https://visioneval.org>). This is an open-source family of strategic tools improved by two previous TPF studies since 2017 (“Collaborative Development of New Strategic Planning Models (TPF-5(369))” and “Extending and Sharing Benefits of Strategic Planning (TPF-5(528))”). VisionEval supports strategic planning by allowing users to run, visualize and explore thousands of scenarios, testing a broad set of policies and actions. VisionEval’s range of inputs and quick runtime also make it valuable for conceptual framing prior to long range plans and testing plans under future uncertainties. VisionEval requires considerably less time to run than traditional network-based travel demand models and thus can be used to explore a wide range of alternatives with the best performers advancing for additional analysis.

The TPF study’s objectives will support the investment in new and upgraded tools, avoid duplicative expenditure of public funds on similar efforts, and facilitate efficient development of innovations built on existing working tools. The TPF study will allow participating agencies to have access to:

- **Conduct small upgrade and usability improvements** to coordinate code repository, guidelines and new releases, and establish documentation.
- **Offer technical support for member states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs)** for model implementation and development of policies for evaluation with the model.

- **Develop capabilities** to incorporate additional policies for what-if scenarios. This includes new research and moving beta-modules developed in prior research into practice with appropriate code and output reviews
- **Improve user experience**, such as better integration with source data and tools and making package data more user accessible.
- **Conduct third-party evaluations** or peer reviews of model logic and forecast accuracy. No model is perfect, and the evaluations provide users and customers with an understanding of VisionEval's strengths and weaknesses and thereby increase credibility of forecast impacts based on the model.
- **Create a community of practice** for active users and developers to share VisionEval implementation experience, case studies, and coordinate conference/outreach highlighting how the tool supports improved transportation decision making, which will reduce the likelihood that models will become obsolete, fall under the control of a single developer, or be abandoned by their developer while there is still interest in using them.

The TPF study will be led and administered by the Virginia Department of Transportation with active participation from member state and local agencies. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), consisting of one representative of each TPF participant, will jointly determine the research that is to be undertaken and the priority of various TPF activities. The TAC will define the research needs for the TPF, select the tasks to be conducted (including specific model development and support activities), approve research teams, oversee technical support and software hosting, and ensure the TPF objectives are met. The TAC will also help develop work plans to address the research needs for the TPF and review progress on individual research tasks.

Tasks will include administration, contracting for development and support services, conducting community forums and events to promote VisionEval and increase its value as a modeling resource, and providing technical support for the application of these strategic modeling tools. Partner agencies may propose investments in new policy evaluations, tool upgrades, user interface and visualization enhancements, and model support activities to improve strategic support for scenario planning and performance-based planning. This TPF is intended to last up to 36 months starting in 2026. Contributions are \$25,000 per year for states and \$15,000 per year for MPOs.

The Office of Planning reviewed the submission and concluded that it is in the best interest of the Federal-Aid Highway Program to allow the use of SPR Subpart A funds without matching for this TPF study in order to advance the state-of-the-practice in statewide and metropolitan transportation planning. Therefore, consistent with the provisions in 23 U.S.C. 505(d) and 23 CFR 420.119(d), we recommend your concurrence in this waiver of the SPR non-Federal match requirements.

I Concur:

Emily Biondi
Signature

1/26/2026

Date

I DO NOT Concur:

Signature

Date