

CENTRAL MINNESOTA AREA TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP LOCAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM PART 1 – APPLICATION GUIDANCE

1. GENERAL

This document provides guidance for cities and counties interested in applying for federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) funding through the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP). The guidance consists of two parts: Part 1 – Application Guidance and Part 2 – Application Instructions. Part 1 gives an overview of the ATP's programming process, including the regional approach it employs to solicit and select local projects for federal funding. It also contains the minimum eligibility requirements that applicants must meet for their projects to be considered for funding by the ATP. For those local agencies with qualifying projects who are interested in applying for funding, Part 2 provides them with helpful instructions in completing the actual application form itself.

2. PROCESS OVERVIEW

The ATP annually develops an Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP) covering a four-year period. The ATIP is a prioritized list of transportation projects that the ATP recommends for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Once in the STIP, projects become eligible for federal transportation funding.

The ATP uses a decentralized approach in recommending local projects for federal funding and inclusion in the ATIP. This approach enlists the help of two regional development commissions [e.g., Region 5 Development Commission (Region 5) and East Central Regional Development Commission (ECRDC)], one metropolitan planning organization [e.g., St. Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO)], and the Region 7W Transportation Policy Board (Region 7W).

The ATP values the role that the regional partners play in identifying their transportation needs and priorities. Accordingly, the regions receive a target amount of federal funding to use in setting their locally sponsored transportation priorities. The amount each region is targeted is based on a distribution formula that takes into account system size and usage factors and federal funding availability.

The regions are responsible for recommending a prioritized list of transportation projects to the ATP based on their target funding levels. While each region has flexibility in setting their investment priorities, they all follow a similar process and schedule set forth by the ATP in soliciting and selecting projects for consideration in the ATIP. Regions 5, 7W and the St. Cloud APO annually solicit projects for the fourth year of the ATIP while the ECRDC solicit every other year to develop a five-year program.

The regions follow the below steps in developing their list of priorities to recommend to the ATP for inclusion in the ATIP:

- Sending out federal application materials to all potential applicants
- Receiving completed applications from jurisdictions by the solicitation deadline
- Verifying all candidate projects meet the minimum federal and ATP eligibility requirements
- Evaluating eligible candidate projects using region's project assessment criteria and process
- Recommending a rank-ordered list of projects to the ATP for programming consideration

3. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Federal STBGP funds provide a flexible source of funding that may be used by cities and counties for projects on any Federal-aid eligible highway or street. They may also be used for bridge projects on any public road. While transit capital is also eligible for STBGP funding, the ATP utilizes a separate process for applicants requesting funding for these types of projects.

3.1. Primary Project Types

Listed below are the primary project type categories eligible to receive funding through the ATP process. Additional details regarding project eligibility for these categories can be found in Part 2 (Application Instructions), Section 4 (Project Type) of this guidance.

- New alignment roadway construction
- Roadway expansion defined as adding capacity by constructing a new travel lane

- Roadway reconstruction
- Roadway reclamation, reconditioning, and resurfacing
- Bridge replacement or rehabilitation
- Safety and/or operational improvements

3.2. Eligibility Exceptions

Applicants are advised some regions have taken official action to make exceptions on what types of projects may be eligible for federal funding in their region. These regions made these exceptions to emphasize and focus federal funding on those transportation needs important to their areas. The following exceptions are in effect:

- Eligible cities and counties in Region 7W (outside of the St. Cloud APO 20-year planning area) may nominate projects in any of the primary project type categories listed above. However, they may only nominate Roadway Reclamation projects under the “Roadway Reclamation, Reconditioning & Resurfacing” category. The other three regions are not subject to this restriction.
- Eligible cities and counties within the St. Cloud APO 20-year planning area may apply for federal funding for Planning. Planning includes those activities occurring before the selection of a preferred alternative. Federal funds may be used for corridor studies/planning activities where specific construction projects are the intended outcome.
- Eligible cities and counties within the St. Cloud APO 20-year planning area may apply for federal funding for Right of Way (R/W) Acquisition. Funding for R/W is limited to reimbursement for the costs that were paid for the acquired property (to be based on the Fair Market Value), not the value of the property at the time for which reimbursement is requested. Applicants receiving funding for R/W must initiate construction within ten years from the date of acquisition.

3.3. Minimum Eligibility Requirements

Applicants seeking STBGP funding must meet certain minimum federal and ATP eligibility requirements. The minimum requirements are designed to assist the applicant in determining whether their proposed project is appropriate to receive federal funding. These criteria are also used by the regional planning partners in screening and evaluating candidate projects for funding.

Figure 1 identifies the seven eligibility criteria established by the ATP along with the definition of each criterion.

Figure 1: ATP Local Surface Transportation Program Project Eligibility Criteria	
Existing ADT	This is the average daily traffic (ADT) computed for the most recent count for the roadway. Twenty-year ADT is used for non-existing roadways and expansion projects.
Minimum Functional Classification	This is the minimum functional classification for a roadway in order for it to receive federal funds
Minimum Federal Fund Request	This is the minimum amount of federal funds that may be requested for the project. Projects receiving federal funding require extensive amounts of documentation and investigation during project development. Projects should be of a certain magnitude to effectively optimize the use of federal funds. Otherwise, the administration and development costs may exceed the benefit of the federal funds that are being requested for the project
Project in Existing Plan or Program	Project must be consistent with state, regional, and local long-range plans, including plans and studies prepared by the RDC or MPO or a locally adopted capital improvement plan.
Assured Coordination with All Jurisdictions	Projects that cross multiple local government units must be accompanied by a letter and/or official action indicating all affected local units of government are in agreement with the concept of the proposed project. This is to make sure that projects have the support of the local units of government, which potentially have a veto power over that project.
Assured Local Match	Applicant must provide assurance that they have secured the necessary local match for their project. The local match is a minimum of 20 percent of the total project cost for which federal funds are being requested and any additional costs not covered by federal funds necessary to complete the project as proposed in the application.
Movement of People and Freight	Project must demonstrate that it improves the movement of people and freight. Regions will utilize information from Section 7 (Project Qualifications) of the application to make this determination.

Figure 2 establishes the minimum project requirements by investment category to qualify for STBGP funding. Applicants must meet all of the requirements associated with investment category for which they are seeking funding prior to making application to the region. Applications that do not meet these criteria will be rejected and not considered for federal funding.

Figure 2: ATP Minimum Project Eligibility Requirements by Investment Category									
QUALIFYING CRITERIA		ROADWAY				BRIDGE			SAFETY
		URBAN		RURAL		REPLACE	NEW	REHAB	
		EXISTING	NEW ALIGN	EXISTING	NEW ALIGN				
1	Existing ADT	2,000	3,000	200	400	25	400 R 3,000 U	25	200
2	Minimum Functional Class	Collector	Collector	Major Collector	Major Collector	Public Road	Maj-Col-R Collector-U	Public Road	Maj-Col-R Collector-U
3	Minimum Federal Fund Request	200K	200K	200K	200K	50K	50K	50K	100K (B/C>1)
4	Project in Existing Plan or Program	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Assured Coordination with All Jurisdictions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Assured Local Match	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Movement of People and Freight	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

4. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Applicants must submit the following items by the application deadline:

- Local Surface Transportation Program Funding Application. Ensure the completion of all sections:
 - Section 1 — Applicant Information
 - Section 2 — Project Identification
 - Section 3 — Technical Information
 - Section 4 — Project Type
 - Section 5 — Short Title Description
 - Section 6 — Purpose and Need
 - Section 7 — Project Qualifications
 - Section 8 — Cost Summary
 - Section 9 — Right of Way Needs
 - Section 10 — Project Timeline
 - Section 11 — Supporting Project Details
 - Section 12 — Additional Project Details (Optional)
- Location Map. Map should clearly depict project location and should be reproducible.
- Letters of Support. A letter of support will not be required by the applicant at the time of application. However, support letters will be required if the proposed project impacts and requires participation by multiple jurisdictions. If the proposed project is successfully selected for federal STBGP funding, the applicant will be required to secure a resolution of support from their governing body to demonstrate its commitment to the project's development and construction and to assure the availability of the necessary local matching funds.

5. REGIONAL PLANNING CONTACTS

Region 5: Counties of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena

Tad Erickson
Region 5 Development Commission
200 First Street Northeast, Suite 2
Staples, MN 56479
Phone: (218) 894-6012 Fax: (218) 894-1328
Email: terickson@regionfive.org

Region 7E: Counties of Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine

Penny Simonsen
East Central Regional Development Commission
100 Park Street South
Mora, MN 55051
Phone: (320) 679-4065, Ext. 23 Fax: (320) 679-4120
Email: penny.simonsen@ecrdc.org

Region 7W: Counties of Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright (excluding the St. Cloud metropolitan area)

Jeff Lenz
MnDOT District 3
7694 Industrial Park Road
Baxter, MN 56425
Phone: (218) 828-5808 or 1-800-657-3971, Ext. 5808 Fax: (218) 828-5814
Email: jeff.lenz@state.mn.us

St. Cloud APO: Cities of St. Augusta, St. Cloud, St. Joseph, Sartell, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park

Vicki Ikeogu Johnson
St. Cloud Area Planning Organization
1040 County Road 4
St. Cloud, MN 56304
Phone: (320) 252-7568 Fax: (320) 252-6557
Email: ikeogu@stcloudapo.org

Other Contact Resources:

Angie Tomovic
District State Aid Engineer
MnDOT District 3
7694 Industrial Park Road
Baxter, MN 56425
Phone: (218) 232-8981 Fax: (218) 828-5814
Email: andjela.tomovic@state.mn.us

Steve Voss
District Transportation Planning Director
MnDOT District 3
7694 Industrial Park Road
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Email: steve.voss@state.mn.us

**CENTRAL MINNESOTA AREA TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP
LOCAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
PART 2 – APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

- Provide contact information as requested.
- Name – Name of requesting governing body.

2. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

- RDC/MPO Region – Enter one of the following based on the county that the project is located:
 - Region 5 – Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena Counties
 - Region 7W – Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright Counties
 - Region 7E – Isanti, Kanabec, and Mille Lacs Counties. (Pine and Chisago Counties not in District 3 programming area)
 - St. Cloud APO – Jurisdictions within the St. Cloud Metropolitan Planning Area
- Congressional/Legislative Districts – Enter the congressional and legislative districts based on the congressional district and legislative district that the project is located.
- Route # – Enter the route name and number associated with the route system (e.g., CSAH 1, CR 12, MSAS 123, etc.)
- Street Name – Enter name of street if route goes by a different title.
- Beginning Termini – Enter the location from where the project will start (e.g., “0.2 MILES FROM JCT CSAH 1,” “AT MISSISSIPPI RIVER BRIDGE,” etc.) Be sure to include entire length of project impacts.
- Ending Termini – Enter the location to where the project will terminate. Ensure termini covers entire length of project impacts. See “Beginning Termini” examples.
- Length – Enter the length of the project in miles to the nearest tenth.

3. TECHNICAL INFORMATION

- A. Functional Classification – Check the box pertaining to the federal functional classification of the route for which improvements are planned. This is the classification on file with MnDOT. Consult with your Regional Planning Contact or the District State Aid Engineer if in doubt.
- B. Traffic Volume – Enter current annual average daily traffic (AADT) from most recent traffic count. Enter 20-year AADT using county multiplier. Enter the County’s current population. If using other forecasting methodology, please indicate method in Section 12 (Additional Project Details) of the application.
- C. Pavement Condition – Enter age in years from last resurfacing change to the present year. Enter pavement rating, such as the Road Quality Index (RQI) for County State Aid Highway routes or the equivalent for other roadways/streets. If other than RQI, please note method for rating your pavement condition.
- D. Bridge Condition – Enter the Sufficiency Rating (SR) of the bridge if your project involves bridge replacement or rehabilitation. Bridge replacement will require a SR of 50 or less to qualify. If project involves work to a historic bridge structure, please indicate so in Section 12 (Additional Project Details) of the application.

4. PROJECT TYPE

- Check the box that best describes the category of work being proposed. Check more than one box if your project affects multiple categories. Applicants should refer to Part A (Application Guidance), Section 3 (Project Eligibility) of this guidance for additional clarification on project eligibility and to determine if there are any exceptions to the project types in their region. Consult with your Regional Planning Contact or the District State Aid Engineer if you still have questions regarding the eligibility of your project for federal funding.
- Check “Other” box if your project involves improvements not listed in one of the previous project type categories. Then specify the type of work proposed in the space provided. Figure 3 is a sample list of eligible improvements that may qualify under this section. Other work not listed in this figure may also qualify. Consult with your Regional Planning Contact or the District State Aid Engineer before applying to determine eligibility. All proposed

work must satisfy the minimum eligibility requirements set forth in Part A (Application Guidance), Section 3.3 (Minimum Eligibility Requirements) of this guidance. Projects may be bundled to meet minimum cost requirements but must collectively demonstrate relationship to one another.

Figure 3: Sample List of Eligible Improvements for “Other” Project Type	
• Turn Lanes	• Warning Flashers
• Traffic Signalization	• Roundabout Construction
• Edge Treatments	• Shoulder Widening
• Rumble Strips	• Shoulder Paving
• Median Barrier	• Right of Way Acquisition (St. Cloud APO only)
• Traffic Signal Installation	• Planning (St. Cloud APO only)

5. SHORT TITLE DESCRIPTION

Provide a brief description of location and work. The county and city name should be included before the use of CSAH, CR, or CSAS. Please limit description to 120 total characters.

Roadway Example:

FROM CROW WING CSAH 18 IN NISSWA TO CASS CSAH 42 IN PINE RIVER, MILL AND OVERLAY

FROM 0.5 MI S OF WRIGHT CR 106 TO 500 FT S OF SCHOOL BLVD IN MONTICELLO, GRADE AND SURFACE

Bridge Example:

OVER RUM RIVER 0.6 MI W OF CAMBRIDGE, REPLACE BRIDGE #984

6. PURPOSE AND NEED

State the Purpose and Need (P&N) for your project. The P&N statement explains why the project is being proposed and what objectives are to be met. It should be clear, concise, well-organized, and easily understood. It should identify the problem(s), not the solution(s).

- Need - Identifies transportation deficiencies or problems that need to be addressed, e.g., “The bridge has structural deficiencies that need to be addressed to provide for a safe river crossing.”
- Purpose – Is a broad statement of the primary intended transportation result and other related objectives to be achieved by the project. It should be based on and written after the Needs have been identified.

Figure 4 provides a sample structure for writing a P&N statement as taken from the MnDOT Highway Project Development Process.

Figure 4: MnDOT Sample Purpose and Need Statement Structure	
Background - A short discussion of the context for the project, including location, background on the existing facility and its role in the transportation system;	
Need - A description of the problems or unsatisfactory conditions that currently exist or are reasonably expected with the existing facility or project area. The identified Needs should be clearly defined with respect to their relative importance as project objectives (primary vs. secondary).	
Primary Needs The primary needs section should discuss the primary transportation problems to be solved, i.e., the problems that led to initiation of the project.	
Secondary Needs The discussion of secondary needs includes a description of opportunities for other transportation problems or system improvements within the project study area that may be able to be addressed, if feasible, concurrent with addressing the primary needs.	
The following factors may be helpful in establishing the ‘Need’ for a proposed action:	
Capacity and transportation demand Safety Legislative directive	(Continued on next page) (Continued from previous page)

Economic development and planned growth
Modal interrelationships
System linkage ('connecting link')
Transportation facility deficiencies

Each need should be demonstrated through specific quantitative investigation and supported by discussion of appropriate data. For example, if improving safety is identified as a need, the text should include supporting data such as the number of accidents that have occurred in the past, the relative frequency of accidents and the type/severity of accidents that have occurred. (The supporting data may be included the appendix, to minimize the length of the Needs statement text.) Examples of supporting data include:

Bridge evaluation reports
Pavement evaluation reports
Safety analysis
Forecast travel demand and roadway capacity
Performance criteria (e.g., established in an Interregional Corridor plan or Highway Investment Plan),
Congestion/delay data

Additional Considerations – Describe other desirable project elements or effects that are not central to the purpose and need, but are nonetheless important considerations (e.g., environmental protection, scenic improvements, economic considerations, etc.). These considerations should be discussed separately from the project Needs.

Purpose - A very clear, concise description of the primary goals the project is expected to attain (usually no more than one or two sentences); a “big picture” of the desired results. (e.g., the purpose is to improve safety along a highway segment that has a high crash rate). The Purpose should be based on (and, therefore, written after) the Needs have been defined.

Source: MnDOT Highway Project Development Process, <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/hpdp/>.

7. PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

Respond to the following seven qualifying factors. Please limit your response to the space provided under each factor in the application. Be as complete as possible in your response. The information you provide will be used by the region in evaluating your project.

- A. Access and Mobility – Explain how your project increases the accessibility and mobility options for people and freight.
- B. System Connectivity – Explain how your project enhances the integration and connectivity of the transportation system for people and freight.
- C. Multimodal – Explain how your project promotes walking, bicycling, transit, and other modes as an integral component of the transportation system
- D. System Condition – Explain the current system conditions and how this project will preserve or enhance the transportation infrastructure and/or operations.
- E. Safety – Explain how your project or elements of your project may improve safety.
- F. Economic Vitality – Explain how your project supports the economic development and job retention/creation goals in your community and region.
- G. Equity – What was the last year your jurisdiction received federal aid for a construction project and what was the amount received?
- H. Cost Justification (**Region 7W Only**) – Explain why the project is a sound investment for the region. What cost alternatives have been evaluated?

8. COST SUMMARY

Enter the estimated costs for your project that are eligible for federal participation. Generally, this includes all construction-related costs, including mobilization, traffic control and contingencies. Ineligible items include associated administrative and engineering costs.

Enter the amount of federal funds you are requesting and your agency's local match. Federal Highway Administration requires a non-federal match of at least 20 percent of project costs. Regions reserve the right to limit the amount of federal funds being recommended on any project. Therefore, applicants may be requested to exceed the minimum

20 percent matching requirements to maximize and leverage available funds targeted to the region. However, federal participation may not be less than 30 percent.

9. RIGHT OF WAY NEEDS

Check the appropriate box if you anticipate the project will involve the acquisition of right of way, require an easement of property, or cause a relocation of buildings/displacement of residents or businesses. Applicants requiring right of way should anticipate completion of this activity in the project timeline.

10. PROJECT TIMELINE

Indicate the estimated timeframe (e.g., month/year) when you anticipate completing the environmental documentation, construction plans, and right-of-way acquisition (if required). In addition, provide construction start date and anticipated duration of construction in the space provided. Applicants requiring the completion of more substantial environmental review documentation, such as an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, should anticipate a longer project development timeline.

11. SUPPORTING PROJECT DETAILS

Reply to the four questions below relating to your project. The information you provide will enable reviewers to determine public support for your project and provide an indication of your agency's project development needs and deliverability goals.

- A. Consistency with State, Region, or Local Plan or Program – State, regional, and local agencies have developed numerous comprehensive plans and various transportation plans, studies, and programs. These plans provide documentation on the existing conditions and planned improvements as well as demonstrate public support. As a result, the facilities identified in these plans are likely to provide the greatest public benefits to all the residents.
- B. Assurance of Local Match – Applicants who are recommended for funding by their respective region will be required to provide assurance of the matching funds in writing by resolution adopted by the governing body after selection of the project by the region.
- C. Advance Construction – Advance Construction (AC) is a programming option to allow agencies to accelerate the construction of their project in advance of the apportionment of federal funds. An AC project is treated the same as any other federal project and must be authorized prior to advertising for letting or expending any funds on the project. Local governments selecting the AC option for their project can move ahead the project in the STIP to the year they wish to construct the project. They must agree to meet all project development requirements to meet their desired construction schedule and upfront the full cost of construction. In exchange, they will then be reimbursed the federal funds programmed for the project in the year the AC Payback is shown in the STIP.
- D. Environmental Document Path - Indicate the environmental document path your project will likely follow. Consult with the District State Aid Engineer if in doubt.

12. ADDITIONAL PROJECT DETAILS

This section is optional unless information is required to be provided from Section 3 (Technical Information) of the application. Applicants may provide additional information about their project that is not otherwise requested in the application. To that end, applicants should only include information they feel is pertinent to the region in reviewing and ranking the project.

13. APPLICANT SIGNATURE

Sign and date application to certify commitment toward your proposed project and completion of all the application requirements. Forward a copy of your completed application with other items identified in Part 1 (Application Guidance), Section 4 (Application Checklist) to your Regional Planning Contact by the application deadline.