



Regional Intergovernmental Council

# MPO Project Selection Guidelines for Federal Suballocated Funds

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June 8, 2023

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# 1. General Overview

The *MPO Project Selection Guidelines for Federal Suballocated Funds* for the Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) serves as a guide for project eligibility and the application process for the purpose of allocating federal suballocated funds for the RIC metropolitan planning area, comprising Kanawha and Putnam counties in West Virginia. The MPO of the RIC seeks to improve transportation infrastructure throughout the two-county region through the implementation of projects utilizing MPO-specific federal suballocated funds. Moreover, the MPO is responsible for allocating federal suballocated funds from the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) and the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) for eligible projects.

This document was developed to support the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) *2023-2028 STIP & TIP Operating Procedures*. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of the Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) is responsible for requesting the WVDOT to initiate and implement regionally significant projects from the RIC Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), in addition to operational and safety improvement projects, and street corridor resurfacing projects. As provided in the *WVDOT 2023-2028 STIP & TIP Operating Procedures*, projects are grouped in (3) tiers—Tier 1: MPO MTP or Regionally Significant Projects, Tier 2: Operational & Safety Projects, Tier 3: Annual Pavement Program Projects-(Federal-Aid or State-Funded). **To view the full description of projects for these programs, see Section VI (Page 13) and Section VII (Page 14) of the *WVDOT 2023-2028 STIP & TIP Operating Procedures*.**

To ensure a fair and transparent process for selecting projects for funding, a project selection process was developed and is described in this document. This process is designed to evaluate project proposals based on established criteria and applicable eligibility requirements.

## 1.1 Applicant Eligibility

Applicants seeking to utilize the federal suballocated funds for the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) and the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) must be able to provide any match required for the project *unless the project is eligible for 100% funding* and be:

- A unit of local government or the MPO itself.
- An agency that maintains Federal-aid eligible facilities or that has coordinated with WVDOT for improvements to a Federal-aid eligible facility prior to submission of an application.
- A nonprofit entity that is responsible for the administration of federal funds for Federal-aid eligible facilities.

Applicants for Tier 1: MPO MTP or Regionally Significant Projects, Tier 2: Operational & Safety Projects, or Tier 3: Annual Pavement Program Projects-(Federal-Aid or State-Funded) should be one of the following:

- A unit of local government or the MPO itself.
- An agency that maintains Federal-aid eligible facilities or that has coordinated with WVDOT for improvements to a Federal-aid eligible facility prior to submission of an application.
- A nonprofit entity that is responsible for the administration of federal funds for Federal-aid eligible facilities.

--Eligible projects for Tier 3: Annual Pavement Program Projects-(Federal-Aid or State-Funded) can be recommended by a member of the public but must be approved by the RIC Policy Board.

## 1.2 Project Selection Criteria and Scoring

Criteria	Points
Tier 1 Project	20
Tier 2 Project	15
Tier 3 Project	10
The project is eligible to receive an increased federal share as defined by 23 U.S. Code § 120 (c)(1)	10
Highest AADT (Average Annual Daily Traffic)*	15
2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest AADT*	10
3 <sup>rd</sup> Highest AADT*	5
The project is directly related to improving safety	10
Promotes alternative transportation	5
An overmatch is provided	5

When two or more projects received the same score, higher ranking will be given to projects with the following features, as ordered by priority for this ranking purpose: 1) benefitting traditionally underserved and disadvantaged populations; 2) promoting alternative transportation; and 3) preferred by the RIC Policy Board and advisory committees.

\*AADT for each project will be determined by latest available open data provided by WVDOT.

## 2. Project Selection Process

At the beginning of each fiscal year (July 1), the MPO will announce the deadline for applications on the website of the Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC). The information will also be shared with the Policy Board, the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

### Step 1. Pre-Application

RIC Transportation Staff will hold pre-application meetings as requested with potential applicants to discuss project qualification and selection criteria.

### Step 2. For Application Submittals

Applications should be submitted with the following documentation:

1. Demonstration of need for the project, e.g., evidence or data demonstrating the project warrants expeditious implementation. The applicant should be able to provide information such as a summary of crash data, identified congestion, network gaps (street or sidewalk), a traffic study, or similar information.
2. Location and Extent of Project, e.g., a map displaying the location and extent of the project should be provided.
3. Identified funding source for match if the project has not been identified as being eligible for 100% federal funding *or* a priority project for the State by a representative of the WVDOT.
4. Identified community support for the project, e.g., letter(s) of support.

### Step 3. Preliminary Review

After receiving an application, RIC Transportation Staff conduct a preliminary review to determine project eligibility. RIC Transportation Staff will inform the applicant of the outcome of the preliminary review.

### Step 4. Project Scoring

RIC Transportation Staff will score projects based on the information presented in the application. The MPO will compile all applications, scoring sheets, and any other relevant information.

### Step 5. Advisory Committee Reviews

RIC Transportation Staff will share the compiled document with the RIC Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) for review and comment. MPO staff will revise the project scoring and ranking based on the input from TTAC and BPAC.

### Step 6. Policy Board Review

RIC Transportation Staff will prepare a report summarizing the project selection outcome and the comments received from the TTAC and BPAC. RIC Transportation staff will share the report with the RIC

Policy Board for review and comment. If necessary, MPO staff will revise the project score and ranking based on the input from the Policy Board.

**Step 7. Final Approval**

RIC Transportation Staff will submit the report to the RIC Policy Board for approval. Project selection will be considered final only after the report is approved by the RIC Policy Board.

### 3. Project Eligibility

Proposed projects must be located within the metropolitan planning area comprising Kanawha County and Putnam County and be a project or a portion of a project in the RIC Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) or be found by the RIC Transportation Staff and the Policy Board to be consistent with the MTP. Applications for projects seeking to utilize federal suballocated funds must meet the requirements specified in the following subsection.

#### 3.1 Project Eligibility for STBG funding

##### (1) Location Requirement

STBG projects may not be undertaken on a road functionally classified as a local road or a rural minor collector unless the road was on a Federal-aid highway system on January 1, 1991, except-

- A bridge or tunnel project (no new construction);
- A bridge replacement of a low water crossing;
- A project described in 23 USC 133(b)(5)-15 and (b)(23)
  - Highway and transit safety infrastructure improvements and programs;
  - Fringe and corridor parking facilities;
  - Carpool projects;
  - Recreational trails, including maintenance and restoration of existing trail;
  - the safe routes to school program;
  - Pedestrian and bicycle projects in accordance with 23 USC 217, including modifications to comply with ADA requirements;
  - Protection for bridges and tunnels on public roads;
  - Project to reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions;
  - Installation of EV charging facilities;
  - Projects to support congestion pricing, electronic toll collection, travel demand management programs;
  - Planning programs, research, workforce development, training, and education.
- As approved by the Secretary.

##### (2) Eligible Activities

- Construction of
  - Highways, bridges, tunnels, ferry boats and terminal facilities;
  - Transit capital projects eligible under 49 USC 53 Public Transportation;
  - Capital improvements on infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems;
  - Truck parking facilities; and
  - Wildlife crossing structure.
- Operational improvements (23 USC 101(a)(19)), including
  - Capital improvement for installation of traffic surveillance and control equipment;
  - Computerized signal systems;
  - Motorist information systems;
  - Integrated traffic control systems;
  - Incident management programs, and
  - Transportation demand management facilities, strategies, and programs.
- Capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring, management, and control facilities and programs (23 USC 101(a)(18)), includes labor costs, administrative costs, costs of utilities and rent, and other costs associated with the continuous operation of traffic control, such as integrated traffic control systems, incident management programs, and traffic control centers.

- Environmental measures eligible
  - under 23 USC 119(g)
    - Mitigation banking or other third-party mitigation arrangements, such as the purchase of credits from commercial mitigation banks;
    - Statewide and regional efforts to conserve, restore, enhance, and create natural habitats and wetlands; and
    - Development of statewide and regional environmental protection plans, including natural habitat and wetland conservation and restoration plans.
  
  - under 23 USC 148(a)(4)(B)(xvii). The addition or retrofitting of structures or other measures to eliminate or reduce crashes involving vehicles and wildlife.
  
  - under 23 USC 328. Environmental restoration and pollution abatement to minimize or mitigate the impacts of any transportation project funded under this title (including retrofitting and construction of stormwater treatment systems to meet Federal and State requirements.
  
  - under 23 USC 329. Establishment of plants to perform one or more of the following functions:
    - abatement of stormwater runoff;
    - stabilization of soil;
    - provision of habitat, forage, and migratory way stations for Monarch butterflies, other native pollinators, and honey bees, and aesthetic enhancement.
    - Management of plants which impair or impede the establishment, maintenance, or safe use of a transportation system.
  
- Transportation control measures listed under Clean Air Act (CAA) Section 108(f)(1)(A) / 42 U.S. Code §7408(f)(1)(A), except clause (xvi) of the section.
  - programs for improved public transit;
  - restriction of certain roads or lanes to, or construction of such roads or lanes for use by, passenger buses or high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs);
  - employer-based transportation management plans, including incentives;
  - trip-reduction ordinances;
  - traffic flow improvement programs that achieve emissions reductions;
  - fringe and transportation corridor parking facilities serving multiple-occupancy vehicle programs or transit service;
  - programs to limit or restrict vehicle use in downtown areas or other areas of emissions concentration, particularly during periods of peak use;
  - programs for the provision of all forms of high-occupancy, shared-ride services;
  - programs to limit portions of road surfaces or certain sections of the metropolitan area to the use of non-motorized vehicles or pedestrian use, both as to time and place;
  - programs for secure bicycle storage facilities and other facilities, including bicycle lanes, for the convenience and protection of bicyclists, in both public and private areas;
  - programs to control extended idling of vehicles;
  - reducing emissions from extreme cold-start conditions;
  - employer-sponsored programs to permit flexible work schedules;
  - programs and ordinances to facilitate non-automobile travel, provision and utilization of mass transit, and to generally reduce the need for single-occupant vehicle travel, as part of transportation planning and development efforts of a locality, including programs and ordinances applicable to new shopping centers, special events, and other centers of vehicle activity;



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- programs for new construction and major reconstruction of paths, tracks, or areas solely for use by pedestrian or other non-motorized means of transportation when economically feasible and in the public interest. For purposes of this clause, the Administrator shall also consult with the Secretary of the Interior;
- Highway and transit safety infrastructure improvements and programs;
- Fringe and corridor parking facilities;
- Carpool projects;
- Recreational trails, including maintenance and restoration of existing trail;
- Safe routes to school program;
- Pedestrian and bicycle projects in accordance with 23 USC 217, including modifications to comply with ADA requirements;
- Protection for bridges and tunnels on public roads;
- Project to reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions;
- Installation of EV charging facilities;
- Projects to support congestion pricing, electronic toll collection, travel demand management programs;
- Planning programs, research, workforce development, training, and education.
- Deployment of intelligent transportation technologies, including the ability of vehicle to communicate with infrastructure, buildings, and other road users.
- Planning and construction of projects that facilitate intermodal connection between emerging transportation technology, such as magnetic levitation and hyperloop.
- Protective features, including natural infrastructure, to enhance the resilience of a transportation facility. Natural infrastructure, as defined in (23 USC 101 (a)(17)) involves the use of plants, soils, and other natural features, including through the creation, restoration, or preservation of vegetated areas using materials appropriate to the region to manage stormwater and runoff, to attenuate flooding and storm surges, and for other related purposes.
- Projects to enhance travel and tourism.
- Any type of project eligible under 23 USC 133 as in effect on the day before the FAST Act was enacted - December 3, 2015.

### 3.2 Project Eligibility for Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funding

CRP funding may be used on a wide range of projects that support the reduction of transportation emissions. Projects must be in the STIP/TIP and be consistent with the MTP.

Eligible activities include:

- A project to establish or operate a traffic monitoring, management, and control facility or program, including advanced truck stop electrification systems.
- A public transportation project that is eligible for assistance under 23 U.S.C. 142. Those projects include:
  - Construction of exclusive or preferential high-occupancy vehicle lanes.
  - Construction of highway traffic control devices.
  - Construction of bus passenger loading areas and facilities, including shelters.
  - Fringe and corridor parking facilities, which may include electric vehicle charging stations and natural gas vehicle refueling stations (23 U.S. Code § 142 (a) (1)), as well as access roads, buildings, equipment improvements, and interests in lands. (23 U.S. Code § 137)
  - Construction of a bus rapid transit corridor or dedicated bus lanes, including (23 U.S. Code § 142 (3))
    - traffic signaling and prioritization systems;
    - redesigned intersection that are necessary for the establishment of a bus rapid transit corridor;
    - on-street stations;
    - Fare collection systems;
    - information and wayfinding systems; and
    - depots.
  - Capital improvement to improve access and coordination between intercity and rural bus services (23 U.S.C 142 (a)(2));
  - Construction of facilities to improve multimode connectivity (23 U.S.C 142 (a)(2));
  - Any capital transit project that is eligible for assistance under 49 U.S.C. 53;
- A transportation alternatives project, including the construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation.

This includes projects that maximize the existing right-of-way for accommodation of nonmotorized modes and transit, including

  - separation of motor vehicles from ped/bicycle
  - increasing visibility (lighting), and
  - promoting electric bike (charging facility) and micro-mobility.
- A project for advanced transportation and congestion management technologies (23 U.S.C 503 (c)(4)(E)) including advanced traveler information systems; advanced transportation management technologies; advanced transportation technologies to improve emergency evacuation; infrastructure maintenance, monitoring, and condition assessment, and advanced public transportation system.
- A project to replace street lighting and traffic control devices with energy-efficient alternatives.

- Development of a carbon reduction strategy.
- A transportation management project, such as congestion pricing, shifting transportation demand to nonpeak hours or other transportation modes, increasing vehicle occupancy rates, and otherwise reducing demand for roads.
- A project to reduce the environmental and community impacts of freight movement.
- A project to support the deployment of alternative fuel vehicles, including publicly accessible electric vehicle charging facilities, alternative fueling infrastructure; zero-emission vehicles, and required supporting facilities.
- A project to improve traffic flow that 1) is eligible under the CMAQ program, and 2) does not involve the construction of new capacity.
- A project for the deployment of infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems, such as vehicle-to-infrastructure communications and short-range communications.
- A project that contains sustainable pavements and construction materials. Lifecycle assessment (LCA) demonstrate substantial carbon reductions.

Any project that is eligible under the STBG if the Secretary certifies that the State has demonstrated a reduction in on-road highway CO2 emissions: 1) per capita, and 2) per unit of economic output.

## 4. Funding (Federal Share)

### 4.1 Federal Share of STBG Funds

Federal share for STBG-funded project is governed by 23 U.S.C. 120. In general, the share is 80 percent federal funds and 20 percent local funds. An administration fee (approximately 10%) may be associated with the project. Certain safety projects may be funded at 100 percent of the cost by federal funds upon approval by the WVDOT.

The 23 U.S.C. provides that:

- Interstate system projects: **90%** of the total project cost, unless adding lanes that are not high- occupancy-vehicles or auxiliary lanes.
- Other projects: **80%** of the total project cost
- Increased federal share – up to **100%** of the cost of construction of the following safety related projects:
  - Traffic control signalization;
  - Traffic circles, including roundabouts;
  - Safety rest areas (no food, fuel, or lodging services);
  - Pavement marking;
  - Rumble strips;
  - Commuter carpooling and van pooling;
  - Rail-highway crossing closure;

- Traffic lights, guardians, barrier;
- Vehicle-to-infrastructure communication; and
- Priority control systems for emergency vehicles or transit vehicles.

States are encouraged to consider the use of STBG funds for such safety improvements that would increase the Federal share to 100 percent.

- Workforce development, training and education activities and activities carried out with STBG funds under 23 USC 504(e)(1)(A) through (H): **100%**, including
  - Tuition and direct educational expenses in connection with the education and training of employees of State and local transportation agencies;
  - Employee professional development;
  - Student internships, apprenticeships, and
  - Education activities to develop interest and promote participation in surface transportation careers.

## 4.2 Federal Share of CRP Funds

Federal share for CRP-funded project is governed by 23 U.S.C. 120:

- Interstate system projects: **90%** of the total project cost, unless adding lanes that are not high- occupancy-vehicles or auxiliary lanes.
- Other projects: **80%** of the total project cost
- Increased federal share – up to **100%** of the cost of construction of the following safety related projects:
  - Traffic control signalization;
  - Traffic circles, including roundabouts;
  - Safety rest areas (no food, fuel, or lodging services);
  - Pavement marking;
  - Rumble strips;
  - Commuter carpooling and van pooling;
  - Rail-highway crossing closure;
  - Traffic lights, guardians, barrier;
  - Vehicle-to-infrastructure communication; and
  - Priority control systems for emergency vehicles or transit vehicles.