

***Northwest Council of Mayors  
Surface Transportation Program  
Project Selection Guidelines***

*July 2015*

## **I. INTRODUCTION: A GUIDE FOR STP FUNDING APPLICATIONS**

The following municipalities form the Northwest Council of Mayors:

Arlington Heights	Niles
Barrington	Palatine
Bartlett (Cook County portion only)	Park Ridge
Buffalo Grove (Cook County portion only)	Prospect Heights
Des Plaines	Rolling Meadows
Elk Grove Village	Schaumburg
Hanover Park (Cook County portion only)	South Barrington
Hoffman Estates	Streamwood
Inverness	Wheeling
Mount Prospect	

As a member of the Northwest Council of Mayors, you are eligible to submit project proposals to the Council for federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding. The STP utilizes funds from the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) federal transportation legislation to assist sponsoring municipalities with implementing eligible transportation projects.

The Northwest Council of Mayors has assembled this guidebook, which is divided into the following sections, in order to help facilitate the application process:

- Background description of the Surface Transportation Program
- Northwest Council of Mayors STP Policy Statement
- Description of eligible projects
- Project selection criteria used by the Council’s Technical Committee
- The project submittal process

Please note that in order for a potential project to be eligible for STP funding, the following criteria need to apply:

1. The project is on a Surface Transportation Program eligible route.
2. The project work type is eligible under the STP component of MAP-21.
3. The project sponsor can fund the required local match.
4. The project sponsor has met with the Planning Liaison and the Illinois Department of Transportation to discuss the project's scope, schedule and estimated cost

Your main point of contact for initiating the STP funding process is the Planning Liaison to the Northwest Council of Mayors. The Liaison should be contacted to begin the process or answer any questions regarding the program. The Liaison can be reached through the Northwest Municipal Conference at (847) 296-9200.

## **II. THE NORTHWEST COUNCIL OF MAYORS SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM**

### **A. *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21)***

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) provides federal funding, guidelines and requirements for all transportation projects seeking federal funding. Within MAP-21 there are various funding programs. The most important of which, from the Council of Mayors perspective, is the Surface Transportation Program (STP).

The STP allocates funding directly to the state departments of transportation. In Illinois, the Illinois Department of Transportation designates a portion of this funding for the Council of Mayors system. Northeastern Illinois is comprised of twelve regional Councils of Mayors and the City of Chicago. Each local Council oversees the planning and programming of these STP funds within their own region.

### **B. *The Council's Role in the Surface Transportation Program***

Each year the Council receives federal funds to be programmed by the Council for transportation projects within the Northwest region. Local municipalities apply for these funds by contacting the local Council Planning Liaison at the Northwest Municipal Conference, and by completing the appropriate application form.

Each Council has developed a set of project selection guidelines. As its name implies, these guidelines set the parameters by which the Councils select which of the locally submitted projects will receive federal funding.

### **C. *How the Council Utilizes STP Funding***

The Northwest Council funds Phase II engineering, right-of-way acquisition, construction/implementation of highway, transit, bicycle and other transportation projects, and Phase III engineering (ENG III, also known as construction engineering). A 20% local match is required for all construction and ENG III. For Phase II engineering and right-of-way acquisition, a 50% local match required.

For most projects, Phase I engineering is the responsibility of the municipal sponsor. However, projects which are potential candidates for a program which does not fund Phase I (i.e. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds) may apply for Phase I Engineering funds through the Council, with a 50% local match required.

It is very important that you coordinate all phases of your project with the Illinois Department of Transportation, Bureau of Local Roads & Streets. Prior to being considered for the program, the sponsoring municipality must contact the Council Planning Liaison to arrange for a meeting

with the Liaison and a representative from the Illinois Department of Transportation to review the project's scope, timetable and cost estimates.

***D. Technical Committee Review of Submitted STP Projects***

Once submitted, the Northwest Council's Technical Committee then reviews project applications. The Council's selection process will be timed to coincide with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) programming schedule, which is based upon the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Council will program projects through the complete funding cycle of the current TIP. All selected projects must be submitted to CMAP for inclusion in the TIP.

***E. Technical Committee Membership***

The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee shall be comprised of four mayors and four managers from municipalities within the Northwest Council of Mayors area. Alternates may be chosen by members, with notification given to the Technical Committee and the Planning Liaison. No municipality shall have more than one representative on the Technical Committee.

The Chairman of the Technical Committee, elected by the members of the Technical Committee, will serve as one of the Northwest Council's two representatives on the Council of Mayors Executive Committee. The second Executive Committee representative shall be chosen by the Council as a whole.

When a vacancy occurs on the Technical Committee, the whole Northwest Council will be asked for nominations. Only a mayor may fill a vacancy left by a mayor, and only a manager can fill a vacancy left by a manager. The seats on the committee belong to the individual, not the municipality. A municipality's replacement for a departing Technical Committee member does not by default become their replacement on the Technical Committee.

The nominees will be voted on by the Technical Committee. The chosen nominee must then receive the approval of the Northwest Council of Mayors and the president of the Northwest Municipal Conference.

### **III. NORTHWEST COUNCIL OF MAYORS STP POLICY METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. Match Ratio**

The match ratio for the Northwest Council of Mayors for the construction phase is an 80/20 federal/local split. Federal funds may be used for up to 80% of the eligible expenses. The sponsoring agency is responsible for the remaining 20%. Phase I Engineering, Phase II engineering and right-of-way acquisition are funded at 50% federal funds and 50% local funds. See details on Phase I Engineering eligibility below.

#### **B. Maximum Federal Participation**

The maximum amount of federal participation for construction for any STP project is \$4,000,000. Based on an 80/20 federal/local split, this would equate to a total project cost of \$5,000,000. Any expense over this amount will be the sole responsibility of the sponsoring agency.

Municipalities may request that the Council waive the federal cap of \$4,000,000 if Phase II engineering or right-of-way acquisition costs have been approved by the Council which will push the project cost above the cap amount (see Item C, below).

#### **C. New Project Programming**

In order to more accurately determine both project scope and allocated funding, all new projects submitted to the Council will be placed in the Multi-Year “B” list until a Phase I Engineering draft report has been completed. Once the Phase I Engineering draft report has been completed, the project can then be moved into a programming year upon the approval of the Technical Committee.

An exception to the one year waiting requirement occurs when a council-wide Call for New Projects takes place. After all projects are evaluated, the Council can program projects received during the call in the active program.

#### **D. Phase I Engineering**

Funding for Phase I Engineering is only eligible on projects which are candidates for a program which does not fund Phase I Engineering. The project sponsor must first seek funding for all further phases through such program during that program’s the next programming cycle. If a project is not funded through the other program(s), it is eligible to apply to move from the Multi-Year “B” list and receive STP funding through the Council.

The Council will limit the amount of projects receiving Phase I funding. The total amount of all phases of projects receiving Phase I funding may be no more than half of the expected STP mark.

#### ***E. Right-of-Way***

Funding for acquisition of right-of-way (ROW) will be on a 50/50-match ratio and will be considered by the Council only under the following circumstances:

- The cost of the ROW exceeds \$100,000
- The agency has been denied funding for ROW elsewhere
- ROW acquisition costs place the project in jeopardy
- The ROW is part of an approved STP project.

Any project requiring right-of-way acquisition, regardless whether STP funding is being used for ROW, must allow for a minimum of 18 months in the project schedule between the date right-of-way acquisition begins and the anticipated letting date for construction. The 18 month period must be kept if any revisions to the project schedule are made. If ROW is acquired before the 18 month mark, the project will be eligible to be moved up in the program, contingent on available funding.

#### ***F. Resurfacing Projects***

Projects which are resurfacing an existing road are eligible for STP funding through the council. These projects, due to their faster approval process, can also be used by the Council to spend down any anticipated year-end STP balance. Upon receiving Phase I Design Approval from IDOT, projects will be placed on a specially designated portion of the Multi-Year “B” list, the Approved Resurfacing list. If the Council Liaison determines that the Council will have a balance of STP funds at the end of the current fiscal year, projects sponsors of Approved Resurfacing may apply to be brought into the STP program in the current year.

Resurfacing projects are not eligible for STP funds for Phase II Engineering through the Council.

#### ***G. Jurisdictional Transfers***

For roadways under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation, IDOT will consider paying for at least a portion, if not all, of the local match if the municipality will accept jurisdiction of the roadway. Not all roadways are eligible for a jurisdictional transfer.

#### ***H. Lighting Projects***

Any STP applications for highway lighting projects must include fully documented day/night accident warrants as part of the application. These warrants are required by IDOT to determine federal funding eligibility of lighting projects. The Council may also use these warrants in

determining prioritization of competing lighting projects. Lighting projects with Phase I approval can also be added to the Approved Resurfacing list on the MYB list.

NOTE: IDOT utilizes the standards set in Transportation Research Board Document #152 – Warrants for Highway Lighting to determine eligibility.

***I. Delays in Project Implementation***

Once a project is programmed in a specific fiscal year for construction in the Council’s active program, the project may only be moved back one fiscal year. If a further delay is sought, the municipality must make their case to the Technical Committee, who then has the option of granting the programming change, or dropping the project to the Multi-Year “B” list. The municipality may request to be moved back into the active program once the project is ready to move forward.

***J. Soil Contamination***

Cost increases due to soil contamination shall be capped at 10% of the total cost of the STP funding already allocated for the construction phase, not to exceed the maximum funding for a project, currently at \$4,000,000. A resolution stating that the municipality has no legal options to pursue remediation costs is required before the cost increase is granted.

***K. Council Prerogative***

The Northwest Council of Mayors and its Technical Committee reserve the right to grant exceptions to the above rules at any time it is determined to be in the best interest of the Northwest Council of Mayors and its members.

## ***IV. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS***

### ***A. STP Eligible Routes***

All projects must be on STP eligible routes. STP eligible routes serve a regional purpose and must serve more than a local land access function. Routes must be designated as a "collector" or higher. The IDOT Road Classification shall govern. Please contact the Planning Liaison if you are unsure if a project is along an STP eligible route.

Agencies may ask the Council to request a reclassification of a particular route by IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Council shall decide if such a request is appropriate. Approval from IDOT and FHWA can be a lengthy process. Please consider this when deciding on the timing of the project's implementation.

### ***B. Highway/Road Projects***

The following list provides a general description of the types of projects eligible for STP funding:

- Construction, reconstruction, restoration and rehabilitation of roads and bridges
- Highway and transit safety improvements
- Traffic signalization projects
- Intersection improvements
- Park & ride facilities
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities if undertaken in conjunction with an approved STP project or if they are utilitarian in nature
- Wetland mitigation, wetland banking, landscaping and mitigation of water quality impacts if undertaken with an approved STP project
- Right-of-way acquisition for any eligible project
- Phase III engineering for an approved STP project

If you are unsure of a project's eligibility, contact the Council Planning Liaison.

### ***C. County and Transit Agency Access***

County transportation departments and regional transit agencies (CTA, Metra and Pace) may have access to Surface Transportation Program funds for capital costs of projects by obtaining the co-sponsorship of the project from at least one Northwest Council of Mayors member. This municipality would then present the project to the Council for consideration for STP funding.



## V. PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

Each project under consideration by the Council’s Technical Committee shall be assigned a ranking based upon the following point system. The system is weighted by the following percentages to formulate a final project score.

Regional Transportation Significance	20%
Safety	20%
Scope of Project	20%
Complete Streets/Multimodal Improvements	15%
Congestion Mitigation	15%
Intergovernmental Importance/Project Readiness	10%

### **Regional Transportation Significance 20%**

For an intersection improvement, the higher roadway’s classification will be used for scoring.

Roadway Classification	Points
Other Principal Arterial	10
Minor Arterial	5
Collector	0

### **Safety 20%**

For an application received between calls for projects, averages for the previous call for projects and any subsequent applications in the past three years will be used as the base for determining relative rank. CMAP data will be used for pedestrian and bicycle crash data.

Vehicular Crashes	Points
Top 25% of all applications	5
Top 50% of all applications	3
Bottom 50% of all applications	0

Pedestrian Crashes	Points
Top 25% of all applications	5
Top 50% of all applications	3
Bottom 50% of all applications	0

Bicycle Crashes	Points
Top 25% of all applications	5
Top 50% of all applications	3
Bottom 50% of all applications	0

<u>Crash Severity</u>	<u>Points</u>
Type K and/or A crashes	5
No Type K and/or A crashes	0

**Scope of Project 20%**

<u>Scope</u>	<u>Points</u>
Reconstruction	10
Resurfacing	5

**Complete Streets/Multimodal Improvements 15%**

<u>Transit Improvements</u>	<u>Points</u>
New transit facility	5
Improved transit facility	3
No improvement	0

<u>Bicycle Improvements</u>	<u>Points</u>
New bicycle facility	5
Improved bicycle facility	3
No improvement	0

<u>Pedestrian Improvements</u>	<u>Points</u>
New pedestrian facility	5
Improved pedestrian facility	3
No improvement	0

<u>Plan implementations</u>	<u>Points</u>
NWMC Bicycle Plan project	5
Local plan project	3
No plan/no improvement	0

<u>Intermodal/Truck Route improvements</u>	<u>Points</u>
Improvement to intermodal facility	5
Improvement to truck route	5
No improvement	0

**Congestion Mitigation 15%**

Improvement of Service (existing) Points

F	15
E	10
A-D	0

Level of Service Improvement Points

3 levels	15
2 levels	10
1 level	5
No improvement	0

**Intergovernmental Importance/Project Readiness 10%**

Additional Contributing Sponsors Points

2 or more	10
1	5

Partner Agencies (non-financially participating) Points

2 or more	5
1	3

Project Status Points

IDOT approved Phase I Report	5
Phase I underway through IDOT	3
Project has not started Phase I	0

When analyzing projects, the Council may also take into account unscored qualitative factors including the inclusion of green infrastructure or innovation cost reduction measures into a project as well as the years between a community's last STP project and/or community need.

## **VI. PROJECT SUBMITTAL PROCESS**

### ***Step # 1: Contact Council Planning Liaison***

Municipalities wishing to place a project in the Northwest Council of Mayors Surface Transportation Program (STP) must first contact the Council Planning Liaison at the Northwest Municipal Conference. The Liaison may arrange a meeting between the municipality and the Illinois Department of Transportation. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the details of the project and come to agreement on the project's scope, schedule and cost. During a call for projects, this meeting may come after the application has been submitted.

### ***Step # 2: Complete Application***

After this meeting, if the municipality wishes to proceed they should complete the project application form. The completed application should be submitted to the Liaison along with a municipal resolution stating the municipality's intent to proceed with this project as well as their ability to meet the required local match. Project applications are accepted on an on-going basis; however, the Council may issue specific calls for projects based upon outside timetables.

The Liaison shall review each project application and complete the Quantitative Analysis Sheet for each project using the ranking formula approved by the Council. The project shall be assigned a "benefit number" which shall be used to compare this project against other projects received by the Council for funding consideration.

### ***Step # 3: Confirmation of Project Eligibility***

The Liaison will confer with representatives from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to confirm the project's eligibility for STP funds. If either CMAP or IDOT considers the project ineligible for STP funds, the municipality may still present the project to the Council's Technical Committee. If the Technical Committee deems that the project is of significant benefit and should be funded through the STP process, the Council may, at its discretion, resubmit the project with their reasons why the project should be funded. The Liaison will work with CMAP and/or IDOT in order to reach a mutually agreeable decision.

### ***Step # 4: Presentation to the Council Technical Committee***

Upon receiving confirmation of the project's eligibility, the project application will be placed on the agenda of the appropriate meeting of the Council's Technical Committee. Projects may be presented at any time. Projects shall be selected at a meeting whose date coincides with the project submittal schedule of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). Prior to the project selection meeting of the Technical Committee, the Liaison shall distribute copies of the project proposal to all Committee members. At the meeting, the municipality should be prepared to give an oral presentation and answer questions concerning the project.

The Technical Committee shall select projects for programming in the Council's Surface Transportation Program up to an amount not to exceed the projected available funding. The Committee may, at its discretion, establish a waiting list of projects it deems worthy but for which funding is not available. The Committee may also program an amount less than the projected available funding. In selecting the projects for inclusion, the Committee shall take into account the project's benefit number, overall cost, fiscal status of the Council's Surface Transportation Program and other factors as the Committee deems appropriate.

***Step # 5: Approval of the Council of Mayors***

Upon receiving the recommendation of the Technical Committee, the project shall be presented by the Council Chair and Liaison at the appropriate meeting of the Northwest Council of Mayors. All twenty members of the Northwest Council of Mayors will vote on the Technical Committee's recommendation. Upon receiving approval from the Council, the Liaison will submit the required documentation to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning so that the project may be added to the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

***Step # 6: Confirmation from Illinois Department of Transportation***

The municipality must not proceed with any work utilizing Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds until receiving confirmation from the Illinois Department of Transportation's Bureau of Local Roads and Streets that the project has been added to the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Any work performed prior to the project being officially added to the TIP and the Council's Annual Element will be ineligible for federal funding.

The municipality is strongly encouraged to work very closely with IDOT's Bureau of Local Roads throughout the engineering and construction phases whether or not STP funds are being used on that particular phase. By coordinating with IDOT during phase I and II engineering, the municipality is better able to assure that all of the necessary actions required to receive STP funds are being accomplished in a timely and cost efficient manner.

## ***VII. PROJECT APPLICATION FORM INSTRUCTIONS***

Any municipality wishing to place a project in the Surface Transportation Program (STP) of the Northwest Council of Mayors shall submit a project application form for each proposed project. Prior to the Council's consideration of an application, the municipality shall meet with the Liaison and a representative from IDOT to conduct a project scoping meeting. At the meeting the project's scope, timetable and cost estimates shall be discussed. Contact the Liaison to arrange for such a meeting.

Application forms should be sent to: **[mwalczak@nwmc-cog.org](mailto:mwalczak@nwmc-cog.org)**

Prior to completing the application, please contact the Liaison. If you have any questions, please contact the Liaison at (847) 296-9200.