

Frequently Asked Questions

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP-S)

2018 Call for Projects

If you have questions about the STP-S application process, scoring criteria, or anything else related to the STP-S Call for Projects, please check below to see if it has already been asked. We plan to update this list on a regular basis. If you don't find your question below, don't hesitate to give us a call at 314-421-4220 or 618-274-2750 or email us at stps@ewgateway.org.

Q1: I do not see a number for logging back into the (STP-S) application.

There is no project record number associated with the STP-S application as in prior years. This year, the STP-S application must be downloaded and completed on the applicant's computer.

Q2: For the point ranges for cost: Are the points prorated down to 0%? And, if so, why would points be assessed to a project that doesn't need funding?

If a project requested 0% federal funds, it would not be evaluated since it could be constructed outside the federal-aid program.

Projects in the upper point ranges for cost (8.9% or less of adjusted construction funds in Illinois or 1.9% or less of total funds available in Missouri) are evaluated on a curve with the project with the lowest construction funds requested in Illinois or lowest total federal funds requested in Missouri receiving the full 20 points.

Q3: Who do I send a request for a letter of coordination if my project is on a transit route, impacts a Gateway Bike Plan route, or impacts a Great Rivers Greenway constructed facility?

A letter of support is only required if there is:

- a. Transit impact - bus stop improvements are part of a project.
- b. Gateway Bike Plan/Great Rivers Greenway facility impact - bicycle facility is constructed (on- or off-road) as part of project in St. Charles County, St. Louis County, or St. Louis City.

Send requests to:

- Bi-State Development/Metro - Lance Peterson, Director of Service Planning
- Madison County Transit District - S.J. Morrison, Director of Marketing and Planning
- St. Clair County Transit District - Ken Sharkey, Managing Director
- Great Rivers Greenway - Mark Vogl, Project Manager, Planning

A transit letter is not required if the project does not include transit improvements.

A Great Rivers Greenway letter is not required if the project does not include a bicycle facility that is located on a Gateway Bike Plan route or a bicycle facility which impacts a current Great Rivers Greenway route.

Q4: To receive points for the Primary Highway Freight System, does the road need to be on one of the designated Primary Highway Freight System roadways?

Projects do not have to be on the Primary Highway Freight System routes to receive points. On the application for the Freight project type, a project can receive points if it connects to the Primary Highway Freight System or an Interstate which is not on the Primary Highway Freight System. If a project does not connect to the Primary Highway Freight System or Interstate, a project can also receive those points by providing connections to an intermodal freight facility, major freight generator, logistic center, manufacturing and warehousing industrial facility, navigable waterway, or port district. Points can also be gained if the project is located in an industrial site area.

Q5: Can you provide direction as to how points will be assigned from Table 4 in the STP-S scoring criteria when the federal cost is determined to be between 1.9% and 2.0%, 2.9% and 3.0%, etc. for Missouri projects?

The scale is open-ended. Below are two tables showing the continuous scale for STP-S projects in Missouri and Illinois:

| Missouri Cost Points Scoring Ranges | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Federal Project Cost Range | Point Range |
| $\text{Min}(x)\% \leq x < 2\%$ | $18.8 < x \leq 20$ |
| $2\% \leq x < 3\%$ | $14.8 < x \leq 18.8$ |
| $3\% \leq x < 4\%$ | $10.8 < x \leq 14.8$ |
| $4\% \leq x < 5\%$ | $6.8 < x \leq 10.8$ |
| $5\% \leq x < 10\%$ | $4.1 < x \leq 6.8$ |
| $10\% \leq x < 15\%$ | $2.8 < x \leq 4.1$ |
| $x \geq 15\%$ | 0 |

| Illinois Cost Points Scoring Ranges | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Adjusted Construction Cost Range | Point Range |
| $\text{Min}(x)\% \leq x < 9\%$ | $17.4 < x \leq 20$ |
| $9\% \leq x < 11\%$ | $12.1 < x \leq 17.4$ |
| $11\% \leq x < 13\%$ | $8.1 < x \leq 12.1$ |
| $13\% \leq x < 16\%$ | $4.1 < x \leq 8.1$ |
| $16\% \leq x < 20\%$ | $1 < x \leq 4.1$ |
| $x \geq 20\%$ | 0 |

Q6: We would like some further information as to how “within community” or “outside community” will be determined.

Each project will receive a weighted average of the PEI cells it falls within. No buffer will be used in the analysis. Sponsors can request a PEI designation for each project until May 10th. Staff will respond within one week with the project scale. If the sponsor feels the PEI designation does not reflect the conditions of the area, they may submit a PEI Change Request Form. The change request is due by May 24th. Staff will respond within one week.

Q7: When is the next TAP funding round?

EWG has programmed all the TAP funds allocated to the region through the current federal transportation law which ends in 2020. Unfortunately, EWG will not hold another round of solicitations until the program is reauthorized by Congress.

Q8: Can federal funds be used for local match?

Federal funds are generally not allowed to be used for local match, with the exception of funds from Federal Land Management Agencies (such as the Forest Service or National Park Service) or HUD Community Development Block Grants. In all cases, confirm with MoDOT or IDOT prior to using any federal funds as local match.

Q9: Will the solicitation cycle go back to normal (starting in December with applications due in March) or is this the new solicitation cycle?

The schedule for this solicitation cycle (beginning in March with applications due in June) will only occur for this round. The next cycle will return to its previous schedule.

Q10: What is the difference between submitting a project as STP-S Traffic Flow vs. CMAQ?

While the types of projects will likely be similar, the particular nature of the project may lead a sponsor to submit in one program rather than the other. For instance, while the focus of the CMAQ program is on reduced emissions, the focus of STP-S Traffic Flow is on system reliability/reduced delays, with emissions still accounted for, but given a smaller share of points. Additionally, a greater range of factors are taken into account with STP-S Traffic Flow, allowing a project to receive points for non-traffic flow aspects included in their project, such as improved safety, multimodal improvements, or freight significance. Any new roads or added through-lanes are ineligible for CMAQ funds, but eligible for STP-S.

Q11: If your project includes sidewalk slab replacements, does that trigger Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliance on the entire sidewalk within the project limits?

Make sure to draft the scope of work so that it specifies what will be constructed. All new sidewalk must be ADA compliant. If the scope includes repairs to sections of sidewalk along the limits then ADA mandates that all the sidewalk be made ADA compliant. This will make your project costs escalate due to potential right of way acquisition.

Q12: Are ADA transition plans required to submit an application?

The ADA requires public agencies with 50 or more employees to have an ADA transition plan. EWG does not require a transition plan to apply for funds.

Q13: We feel our project should have a different PEI designation from what we received. What information should we provide on the PEI Change Request Form to justify this change?

PEI designation is only used for road and bridge projects to determine whether a project is "within community" or "outside community." The Population & Employment Index (PEI) tells us the basics about the local context of a project, but it isn't exact. If you submit a designation request and disagree with the designation determined by the Index, you can send in a PEI Change Request Form. On the form, let us know of any issues that may impact walking and biking along the project limits that may not have been accounted for in the population and employment density data for the area. For example, if there are future developments planned nearby, geographical barriers, connections to existing facilities, a large attractor, a nearby transit facility, etc. these could all impact the amount of pedestrians and bicyclists utilizing a facility.

Q14: There are no countermeasures included in my project. Should I still list the crashes on the Crash Summary Form and attach crash reports?

If you are not including a countermeasure, then you do not need to include any minor injury or property damage crashes on the Crash Summary Form, but you are required to list all fatal and serious injury crashes on the form and attach the full crash report for each. While reviewing the fatal and serious injury reports, if a consistent pattern emerges pointing to a safety issue within the project limits, consider including a countermeasure.

Q15: For the lifespan of my countermeasure on the Safety Supplement, do we have to use the service life in the IDOT guide?

The IDOT Safety and Engineering Policy Memorandum (linked to on the Safety Supplement) is an excellent resource for the lifespan of different facility types, which both Illinois and Missouri sponsors should use to determine the lifespan of the countermeasure. However, if you have a different internal policy, or a different resource which you utilize to determine facility lifespan, you are free to use that. If you choose not to use the IDOT guide, please note the resource you use and either provide a copy of it or a link to it on the Safety Supplement.

Q16: The Safety Supplement asks for the maintenance costs for one year. Is this an average over the facility's lifetime?

The Safety Supplement asks for the costs associated only with the maintenance of the countermeasure over one year. This should be the average yearly maintenance cost of the countermeasure over the course of its lifetime. Estimate the total cost of maintaining the countermeasure over its lifetime, then divide that by the number of years of the countermeasure's lifetime to get the average annual maintenance cost.

Q17: What is the minimum amount of information that should be submitted with a preliminary application?

Enough information must be provided for EWG reviewers to understand the project's scope, schedule, and financial plan. This information is all included in the application itself. However, the more information you provide in your preliminary application, the better able EWG will be to provide detailed comments.

Q18: The application asks for anticipated regular maintenance costs over the next 25 years. Should these be based on the cost to maintain the existing condition of the road if the project were not funded or future conditions after construction has been completed?

Maintenance costs should be based on future conditions of the roadway after construction has been completed. Project sponsors should be considering maintenance costs early in the process and ensure they will be able to maintain any facilities constructed with federal funds.