

Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) New Roadways and Existing Roadways Application Instructions & Selection Criteria

Fiscal Years 2025-26

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC)

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Introduction

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Peoria-Pekin urbanized area. One of the responsibilities of the MPO is to program federal Surface Transportation Block Group (STBG) funds allocated on an annual basis to the urbanized area through the Illinois Department of Transportation.

STBG funding is authorized by the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act* (FAST Act), which was signed into law on December 4, 2015, and reauthorized in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, (known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law or BIL) which was signed into law on November 15, 2021. The *FAST Act* rebranded the Surface Transportation Urban (STU) program, combining it with other transportation funding programs to form the STBG Program. Despite the rebranding, STBG functions similarly to STU and provides federal dollars for regionally significant transportation projects on Federal-Aid-eligible roadways. The BIL reauthorizes the STBG program and increases the funding levels by 15.2 percent.

Purpose of this Document

TCRPC intends to direct the use of STBG funds toward projects which will benefit the entire region, rather than projects which benefit only single communities or small parts of the urbanized area. Approximately \$6.56M total is available for New Roadway and Existing Roadway projects in FYs 25-26.

This document explains the procedures for applying for funding and establishes the evaluation criteria TCRPC will use to guide project selection. It is important to note that the evaluation criteria are a guide to aid members with the selection process. Selection criteria and project scores are not meant to be the sole determinant in project selection. TCRPC may choose a lower scoring project based on funding availability, significant regional priority, severe safety concerns, or other non-quantitative factors.

Preservation Set-Aside Program

For the FYs 2021-22 Funding Years, the MPO established a Pilot Program to set aside 20% of the region's STBG funds for resurfacing projects. The MPO established the program in response to the lack of state and local funds for road maintenance. Three (3) resurfacing projects received STBG funds through the FYs 21-22 Resurfacing Pilot Program. The MPO formalized this program during the FYs 2023-24 STBG program. Approximately \$1.64M will be available for resurfacing projects. Preservation set-aside projects will be called for later in Calendar Year 2022.

Project Requirements and Eligibility

The following rules and requirements govern all New Roadway and Existing Roadway projects. Applicants with questions regarding these rules should contact TCRPC staff.

General Requirements

All project must meet these general requirements to be considered for STBG funding.

1. Projects must be in the 20-Year Metropolitan Planning Area.
2. Roadways must have a Functional Classification of Minor Collector or above.
3. Projects must be listed in the *Long Range Transportation Plan*.
4. Projects must be ready to implement/construct by the programmed fiscal year.
5. Applicant must commit via resolution to provide a 30% local match at the time of application.
6. Only dues-paying members of TCRPC are eligible to apply for funding. Other local jurisdictions within the 20-Year Planning Boundary must be sponsored by a TCRPC member.
7. Applications must be submitted online.

Eligible Activities

The following activities (1) are eligible for STBG funding and (2) may be counted toward a project's local match requirement.

1. Construction, reconstruction (defined as more than 50% removal and replacement), rehabilitation, or operational improvements of roadways.
2. Projects relating to intersections that have high accident rates and/or high levels of congestion.
3. Capital costs for transit projects eligible for assistance under Chapter 53 of Title 49,
4. Transportation alternatives, including recreational trails.

Ineligible Activities

The following activities (1) are **not** eligible for STBG funding and (2) **cannot** be counted toward a project's local match requirement.

1. Engineering
2. Right-Of-Way Acquisition
3. Utility Relocation
4. All other activities otherwise eligible under 23 USC 133 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program

Submission Procedure

TCRPC will use the following procedure to solicit projects submissions, prioritize those submissions, and ultimately decide where the region's FYs 2025-26 STBG funds should be used.

1. Staff issues a Call for Projects for Fiscal Years 2025-26.
2. Staff reviews all received applications:
 - a. Evaluating them for eligibility (see Project Requirements and Eligibility);
 - b. To determine if all required information has been submitted; and
 - c. To verify the reasonableness of the points assigned under the Quantitative Criteria.
3. Each applicant makes a brief presentation at a MPO Technical Committee meeting. TCRPC Commissioners are encouraged to attend.
4. TCRPC establishes a Review Subcommittee to assign Regional Significance points, composed of Technical and Policy Committee members. They name a Chair, who serves as spokesperson for the subcommittee at Technical and Commission meetings. Staff keeps minutes of all meetings.
5. Staff tallies Quantitative and Regional Significance scores into final scores for each submitted project. Staff finds natural breaks in project scores to establish project "Tiers" (i.e. Tier 1, Tier 2).
6. Staff presents the final scores and tiers to the subcommittee. The subcommittee considers project scoring, available funding, and any other relevant information and recommends projects to the Technical Committee.
7. The Technical Committee considers the subcommittee's recommendation and makes their own recommendation to the Commission. Members of the public receive the opportunity to comment. The Commission considers Technical's recommendation and makes a final decision for STBG funding.
8. TCRPC adopts their final project selection(s) into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the appropriate fiscal year(s).

Schedule

March 16, 2022	Staff issues Call for Projects
April 29, 2022	Applications due to staff, staff reviews project submissions
May 18, 2022	Match resolutions due to staff
May 18, 2022	Presentations to Technical Committee
June 2022	Subcommittee assigns Regional Significance scores; staff assigns project Tiers
July 2022	Subcommittee makes recommendation to Technical Committee, Technical develops recommendation to Commission
August 3, 2022	Commission makes final decision

Questions

Potential applicants may contact staff at stbg@tricityrpc.org with any questions regarding STBG or the application process.

Project Prioritization

The over-arching goal of TCRPC is to direct the use of STBG funds toward projects which are regionally significant. A regionally significant project is one that will benefit the entire region, instead of a single community or a small part of the urbanized area.

Priorities

Over the years, TCRPC has utilized several resources and spent countless hours to develop an objective project selection process. One essential resource remains the *FAST Act*, the Federal highway bill that enables the STBG program. The goals of the *FAST Act*, listed below, are the foundation upon which the MPO has built its STBG selection process.

- **Safety** – To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
- **Infrastructure Condition** – To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair
- **Congestion Reduction** – To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System
- **System Reliability** – To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system
- **Freight Movement and Economic Vitality** – To improve the National Highway Freight Network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development
- **Environmental Sustainability** – To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- **Reduced Project Delivery Delays** – To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.

Selection Criteria

The following scoring criteria are guides which will aid TCRPC with project prioritization for Existing Roadway and New Roadway project submissions, respectively. The criteria are organized by category.

Criteria in most categories are scored objectively, meaning that they are scored by matters-of-fact in the project application. For example, Average Daily Traffic is an objective criterion because we can measure it the exact same way for every project. Another example of an objective measure is Permeable Pavement; a project either includes permeable pavement or it does not.

Regional Significance criteria are the only ones scored differently. Regional Significance criteria are scored subjectively by the Review Subcommittee. The subcommittee will assign points for Regional Significance criteria based on narratives supplied by the applicants. These criteria address topics which are more difficult to measure, such as impacts on employment or proximity to important facilities. Definitions of all Regional Significance criteria may be found on the following page.

Existing Roadway Projects

Criterion	Points
Safety	
Crash Rate	10
Crash Severity	10
Subtotal Safety	20
Existing Conditions	
Average Daily Traffic	8
Volume/Capacity Ratio	7
Subtotal Existing Conditions	15
Multi-Modal	
Pedestrian	5
Bicycle	5
Transit	5
Freight	5
Subtotal Multi-Modal	20
Sustainability	
Roundabout or Road Diet	3
Permeable Pavement or Bioswales	2
Subtotal Sustainability	5
Regional Significance¹	
Regional Connector	8
Employment Center	8
Transportation Facility	8
Public Facility	8
Project Phasing Continuity	8
Subtotal Regional Significance	40
Total Available Points	100

New Roadway Projects

Criterion	Points
Local Priority	
Joint Project Bonus	15
Local Comprehensive Plan	15
Subtotal Local Priority	30
Multi-Modal	
Pedestrian Accommodations	5
Bicycle Accommodations	5
Transit	5
Freight Accommodations	5
Subtotal Multi-Modal	20
Sustainability	
Permeable Pavement	3
Bioswales	3
Roundabout	4
Subtotal Sustainability	10
Regional Significance¹	
Regional Connector	8
Employment Center	8
Transportation Facility	8
Public Facility	8
Project Phasing Continuity	8
Subtotal Regional Significance	40
Total Available Points	100

¹ Regional Significance Criteria Definitions

Regional Connector

Connects municipalities – the proposed project serves as a primary route between two municipalities, and/or connects major roads – the proposed project serves as a primary link between arterials

Employment Center

Improves movement of employees and/or shopping patrons

Freight Transportation Facilities

The proposed project serves as a primary route for freight, such as manufacturing or warehouse facilities, airports, intermodal terminals, etc.

Public Facility

The proposed project serves as a major connector to a school, medical center, government facility, library, etc.

Project Phasing Continuity

The proposed project is a supplementary phase of a project previously funding through STBG funds.