2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Solicitation

Frequently Asked Questions

Selecting the Right Application Form or Submit to PlanIt

1. **My project is entirely in Long Range (all phases), which form do I need to complete?**
   - Applications for projects that have all phases in long range must be completed using the Infrastructure Form**.**

2. **All three phases of my project are in Long Range, but PE was originally in a previous TIP with federal funding programmed. I am now seeking additional federal funding for PE and/or a subsequent phase. Which application do I complete?**
   - Applicant must complete the Infrastructure Form, as long as the proposed project has PE, ROW, and CST in long range **or** ROW and CST are in long range.

3. **All three phases of my project are within the TIP period, but they are currently programmed with local or non-federal funding. If I am now seeking federal funding for one or more phases, which application do I complete?**
   - Applicant must complete the Infrastructure Form because this would be the first time the applicant is seeking federal funding for the project.

4. **What if my project phase currently has local or state funds programmed but previously had federal funds programmed in a previous fiscal year for that same phase? Which method should we follow if we want the phase to have federal funds again?**
   - If the project previously had federal funds on the phase and the applicant would like to change from a local/state fund source back to federal, please submit request into PlanIt if it is under $2 million. Requests over $2 million, we are asking that an infrastructure application be submitted.

5. **My project is not listed in the TIP or Long Range Plan, but it was identified in an unconstrained project list. Which application form do I need to fill out? OR my project is not in the TIP, the Long Range Plan, or the Unconstrained List, which application form do I need to fill out?**
   - If the proposed project is not listed in the TIP or Long Range plan, please fill out the Infrastructure application. If the project was previously in the unconstrained project list, again we ask that an infrastructure application is submitted. The project in question does need to be part of a locally adopted plan. Be sure and identify the plan of which the project is listed along with the ID and page number.

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Completing the Forms

1. **If my project is already listed in the TIP or RTP, and I need to complete the Infrastructure Form, how should the Application Identification Number be assigned?**
    *   The Application Identification Number for existing TIP or RTP projects must be the same as the existing ARC ID number. See Guidance on Unique IDs for Applications.

2. **If my project is currently in the TIP (all phases in TIP years), do I still need to provide the elected official resolution and supportive documents in addition to mapping?**
    *   Yes. Applications for existing TIP projects, with existing federal funds programmed on any phase beyond PE, do need to be accompanied by a supporting local government resolution. These applications do not require the inclusion of any mapping data unless the scope of the project has changed. Mapping data is only necessary for proposed projects that are not currently in the TIP.

3. **May a Community Improvement District (CID) complete an application? Should a CID assign their own unique project ID code? Should a CID submit their own prioritization list? Do CID applications need to be accompanied by a letter of support from city/county?**
    *   CIDs may complete their own project applications. However, the associated government will be listed as the official sponsor of record should the infrastructure application be awarded. CIDs may be listed as the sponsor for studies applications.

    *   Each CID application must include a unique Application Identification Number, unless it is for an existing TIP or RTP project. If the application is for an existing TIP or RTP project, then the ARC ID number may be included in the form.

    *   If a CID wishes to submit more than one application for either an existing TIP project, a new project, or a study, then the CID must indicate the priority of these applications, independently from the priorities of the associated local government. ARC staff will treat the CID prioritization separately from the local government's priority ranking.

    *   CID Infrastructure Applications must include a CID Board resolution or letter of commitment from the Chief Executive Officer. CID Infrastructure Applications must also include a resolution from the local government. CID Study applications may include a letter of support from the associated local government, rather than a resolution, unless local government funds are being used towards the local match, in which case a resolution would be required.

4. **For joint applications from multiple municipalities and a CID for a study, where one of the municipalities will be the official sponsor of record, should resolutions from both municipalities and the CID be submitted?**
    *   No. A resolution will be required from the sponsor of record and entities providing matching funds. Other CIDs or local governments involved in the project may provide a letter of support in lieu of a resolution

5. **For funding match commitment and project sponsor support resolutions (study application question 2-13 and infrastructure application question 4-69), to whom should they be addressed to?**
    *   Please address all such letters to John Orr, Manager - Transportation Access and Mobility Group. The information is available on the application under Question 2-13 and 4-69 (hover pointer over the question mark).
    *   GDOT support communiques for projects which impact interstate highways or other portions of the state system (see infrastructure application question 4-39) may be addressed to the applicant.

6. **May project sponsors rely on consultants to work on the applications?**
    *   Yes, consultants may fill out the application on behalf of the project sponsor. However, the sponsor contact must be from the local jurisdiction.

7. **Can we hire the same consultant that filled out our application as the consultant for the project if awarded funding?**
    *   No – not if you want to reimburse them with federal funds. The sponsor must hire the consultant based on a competitive process regardless of a study or actual project. See Question 11 in the General TIP/RTP Guidance section of this FAQ document. However, if a sponsor wants to pay for PE services entirely with local funds, for the duration of the project, they may use their own local procurement process and does not need to comply with Brooks Act.

8. **How should packaging of projects or programs be handled (one form or multiple forms)?**
    *   Please submit individual applications for bundled projects. They will be evaluated on their own merits. For projects that involve transit routes, individual applications will need to be submitted for each route.
    *   Proposed packages may still be partially awarded.

9. **What if I am seeking funding for a project or program for more than one fiscal year?**
    *   Please reflect the total amount requested with the two (or more) fiscal years in its appropriate box. It is strongly suggested that the most realistic schedule be reflected when entering fiscal years.

10. How should I calculate my Right of Way (ROW) cost estimates?
- ARC recommends that the applicant provide a cost estimate based on the GDOT ROW cost estimation tool/methodology, rather than providing its own, locally derived estimate. This helps avoid future ROW cost estimate increases, because of the conservative nature of GDOT's cost estimate assumptions and methodology (which, for instance, does not count on receiving donations). Therefore, it is critical to have a basic understanding of ROW implications of the proposed project, which should lead to more consistency with GDOT's ROW cost estimation methodology. Otherwise, this can lead to project delay and unnecessary TIP re-programming in the future. Contact the GDOT Office of Program Control for more specific information on ROW cost estimating.

11. Question 4-39 asks for a form letter or similar communication from GDOT (Office of Planning, Office of Program Delivery, and the GDOT District Office). Can the approved concept report serve as official documentation to indicate GDOT approval of the project?
- If available, then yes – please upload an approved concept report via the subsequent question (4-39). Otherwise, some documentation of communication and initial coordination with GDOT is required if the project is on the state system. If the project application is located on a state route, we require some form of acknowledgement from GDOT offices/staff that they are aware the sponsor is seeking federal funds for a project on the state system. This can be a formal letter or an email from the required offices/staff.

12. Our jurisdiction previously applied for multiple projects and several were unfunded. These are still available on the TIP application site. Should I delete these applications and start over or can I go ahead and edit the previous application to resubmit during this solicitation cycle?
- Yes, the project sponsor/jurisdiction may go in and edit the previously submitted application if it was denied funding during the last cycle. Please ensure that all questions are reviewed and are up to date. Files and documents will need to be re-attached. And please be sure and hit Submit when completed.

13. Should the priorities for the Studies application be separate from the Infrastructure application? Or should the priorities be merged as a collective submittal for the sponsor regardless of priority level?
- When indicating the priority in the application, please do so as a collective priority for the jurisdiction/project sponsor. For example, the project sponsor is submitting three studies applications and two infrastructure applications for a total of five. Indicate the priority among all five submittals regardless of application type.

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Mapping

1. **How should we reflect the project if it covers the entire city or a specific area? What about if the application covers multiple intersections?**
   - A polygon around the study area may be drawn. However, if the project/study covers the entire city/county, a PDF of the jurisdiction boundaries may also be submitted.

General TIP/RTP Guidance

1. **When is the TIP funding cycle?**
   - The 2019 TIP Solicitation is for STBG-Urban (Surface Transportation Block Grant Program), the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program. The solicitation involves anticipated available funding for these programs for fiscal years 2020 through 2025.

2. **Do projects need to exist in a county/state/regional plan?**
   - Yes, all projects must be listed in an approved and adopted local or regional plan, or an official document that has been vetted with the public and adopted/endorsed by the local governing entity.

3. **Matching Funding: Can a third party (NGO, university, private organization, etc…) provide matching funding? How would this work?**
   - Third parties may provide funds to contribute towards the local match for federal funding. This type of commitment is usually executed through a written agreement between the project sponsor and the third party. ARC or GDOT will not officially recognize this third-party agreement in the TIP.

   - The local government is ultimately held responsible for the entirety of the required local match, regardless of whether or not the third-party meets its commitment.

4. **Are projects ever partially funded? For instance, will ARC amend a proposal and lower the funding amount?**
   - Yes. Proposed projects can be awarded with federal funds in an amount that is less than what is requested. To the extent practicable, project applications must be scalable, so that partial awards are possible. ARC will confer with project sponsors if only partial funding can be provided.

5. **When are project funds distributed, and who are they distributed to?**
   - Actual FHWA funds are managed on a reimbursement basis. The project sponsor (local government) or other entities financially committed to the project (e.g., CIDs or NGOs) must be prepared to front the entire cost of each phase of the project. Once the work for that phase begins, then the actual sponsor of record will submit their invoices, and will then be reimbursed up to the full amount of federal funds programmed for that phase. Co-funding sponsors should seek reimbursement for their portion from the sponsor of record.

6. **Would there be any funding implications if the jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., future annexations or incorporations) where the project is located change, after it has been programmed in the TIP?**
   - ARC will conduct a TIP Administrative Modification to reflect the new local government as the sponsor of record pending agreement between all entities involved. As such, applicants are encouraged to identify appropriate project delivery contingencies and document these through the application process if possible. Infrastructure applications that are following the state process will undergo additional review to assess deliverability, commitment, etc.

7. **A local government would like to conduct a general bicycle and pedestrian study as a supplement to completed LCI (Livable Centers Initiative) study/plan. What is the best approach to take?**
   - ARC recommends that the local government apply for federal funds using the Studies Application.

   - Even if an LCI (Livable Centers Initiative) or other previous study/plan has been completed, it may not have addressed the specific inquiry or issue that the local government is now facing, so a "supplemental" study may be warranted prior to applying for federal funds for implementation.

8. **Can in-kind services or right-of-way donations be used towards local match?**
   - No. Local sponsors must pay consultant or contractor invoices in full and submit to GDOT (for projects) or ARC (for studies) for reimbursement up to 80% of the cost. However, the sponsor may use a variety of fund sources to cover its 20% match, including local sources, state funds, non-USDOT federal funds such as CDBG, CID or private funds, etc.

9. **If my application is awarded federal funding, am I required to conduct a competitive procurement process?**

   - Yes. In order for its application to be considered for any amount of federal funding, the local government sponsor must be certified through the Georgia Department of Transportation's Locally Administered Projects (LAP) training program. This LAP training will provide the guidance on how to procure goods and services that are funded with FHWA funds.

   - For services that <u>do not</u> require a professional license certification, the procurement process to hire for those services must be competitive-based, where price must be one of the factors considered. See 2 CFR § 200.320.

   - For services that <u>do</u> require a professional license certification (professional architect or engineer), the procurement process must be based on qualifications, according to the Brooks Act. See 2 CFR § 200.320.

   - For additional questions and answers regarding the Brooks Act (procurement requirements for architectural/engineering services for federal aid projects), click on the following URL: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/programadmin/172qa_01.cfm.

   - If a sponsor wishes to use a consultant/engineering firm not procured in accordance with Brooks Act or other federal procurement regulations, they may do so if they are funding their services completely locally. These consultant services will not be eligible for federal funding reimbursement at any point in the project. However, some sponsors choose to do this and fund PE locally so as to advance the project. Federal funds will still be available for ROW acquisition and construction as long as those phases are bid out in accordance with federal procurement regulations and the PDP has been followed.