



# Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

May 1, 2013

## **CIRCULAR LETTER 2013-06**

### **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (STP) – BRIDGE PROGRAM; STP – OFF SYSTEM BRIDGE PROGRAM**

COUNTY ENGINEERS / SUPERINTENDENTS OF HIGHWAYS  
MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS / DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC WORKS / MAYORS  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) federal transportation bill eliminated the Highway Bridge Program (HBP) as a core funding program. The Illinois Department of Transportation, along with the Illinois Association of County Engineers, and the Public Works Committee of the Illinois Municipal League, have found consensus that the HBP process for distribution of funds based on deficient square footage of bridge area is a sound and equitable premise for fund allocation. The Department has therefore decided to continue using this process for fund allocation through the new Illinois STP-Bridge Program.

#### **PROGRAM FUNDING**

The Illinois STP-Bridge Program funding is a subset of the general STP funds for the local agencies. The funding amount is equal to 15% of the total local agency STP, which is equivalent to the amount of HBP funds the local agencies received under the SAFETEA-LU federal transportation bill.

The Illinois STP-Bridge Program funds are dedicated for the use of rehabilitating and replacing bridges, and may not be used for general roadway improvements. General STP funds may be used to rehabilitate and replace bridges or small structures. The regulations regarding the use of general STP funds for bridge and small structure projects did not change with the new MAP-21 transportation bill.

The MAP-21 federal transportation bill also requires that funding be dedicated towards an STP-Off System Bridge Program. The funding amount for this program is equal to 15% of IDOT's fiscal year 2009 total HBP apportionment under SAFETEA-LU.

Eligible bridge projects should be programmed through the appropriate IDOT District office. County engineers should continue to work with their respective townships or unit road districts, as well as those municipalities with populations less than 15,000 in their county, to program eligible projects. Municipalities greater than 15,000 will be allowed to program their eligible STP-Bridge projects with the District office; however, the project funding will be counted against the respective counties' allotments.

## **DEFINITIONS**

There are no changes in the definition of a bridge under the Illinois STP-Bridge Program. Bridges are considered to be any structure with a length from face to face of abutment (AASHTO length) greater than 20.0 feet measured along the roadway centerline. Small structures are defined as any structure having an AASHTO length equal to or less than 20.0 feet measured along the roadway centerline.

## **PROJECT ELIGIBILITY**

The Department will continue using most of the project eligibility requirements that were present with the HBP for the new Illinois STP-Bridge Program. There are, however, some differences in general eligibility requirements between STP funds and the previous HBP funds. The Illinois STP-Bridge Program funds are dedicated for the use of rehabilitating and replacing bridges. These funds may not be used for general roadway improvements eligible under the STP.

In order for a bridge to be eligible for STP-Bridge funding, it must be located on a public roadway, have an AASHTO length greater than 20.0 feet, be structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, and must have a sufficiency rating less than or equal to 80.0. Requirements for structurally deficient, functionally obsolete, and funding eligibility remain as follows:

### **Structurally Deficient**

- A condition rating of 4 or less for the deck, superstructure, substructure, or culvert, or,
- An appraisal rating of 2 or less for the structural condition evaluation, or the waterway adequacy.

### **Functionally Obsolete**

- An appraisal rating of 3 or less for the deck geometry, deck under clearances, or approach roadway alignment, or,
- An appraisal rating of 3 for the structural condition evaluation, or the waterway adequacy.

A bridge that is eligible for funding with a sufficiency rating less than or equal to 80.0 is eligible for rehabilitation work items. A bridge that is eligible for funding with a sufficiency rating less than 50.0 is eligible for complete replacement.

In addition to the eligibility requirements above, there are also limitations to the type of work that may be completed based on the functional classification for the roadway which the bridge carries. The STP-Bridge Program funds may be used to rehabilitate or replace any eligible bridge located on a roadway with a functional classification of at least a major collector. The STP-Off System Bridge Program funds may be used to rehabilitate or replace any eligible bridge located on a minor collector or local road.

As with the discontinued Highway Bridge Program, the purpose of this program is to remove structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges from the inventory. As such, STP-Bridge funds may not be used to rehabilitate or replace small structures, or replace a small structure with a bridge. The STP-Bridge funds also may not be used to construct a small structure or bridge where one does not already exist.

In addition to rehabilitating or replacing eligible bridges, the following work is eligible for the use of STP-Bridge funds:

- Approach roadways pursuant to Section 4-1.03(d) of the BLRS Manual;
- Bridge painting (spot painting is not eligible) – sufficiency rating of 80.0 or less can be funded as a sole item of work;
- Seismic retrofit – no sufficiency rating restriction; can be funded as a sole item of work;
- Historic bridges – inventory for historic significance and preservation in accordance with 23 *U.S.C.* 144(o);
- Bridge inspection – routine NBIS, fracture critical, in-depth, special, load rating, damage, and underwater bridge inspections are eligible, including underwater scour evaluation, training, and equipment purchase, and/or rental;
- Initial cost for posting signs immediately adjacent to the bridge;
- Anti-icing/de-icing applications – the bridge must be STP-Bridge eligible; and
- Scour countermeasures – countermeasures must be designed, but may be used at any structure with scour problems or potential scour problems.

Removal of an eligible bridge without replacement, or without replacement with an eligible bridge, may also qualify for funding as long as the through roadway is maintained. The eligible bridge may be replaced with a non-eligible bridge (AASHTO length less than or equal to 20.0 feet), but in such a case only portions of the project germane to the removal of the bridge are eligible for STP-Bridge funding.

Bridges that have been closed for greater than five years will not be included in the calculations to determine an individual county's STP-Bridge allotment. These structures will have their Bridge Status, Illinois Structure Information

System (ISIS) Item #41, coded as “E – Closed, Permanent Closure.” The eligibility of the bridge will be restored when the bridge owner places the bridge replacement / repair project into their highway improvement program. The Bridge Status will then be changed to “B – Closed, replacement/repair anticipated within 5 years.”

## **WAIVER REQUESTS**

### **Sufficiency Rating**

Under the HBP, eligible bridges with a sufficiency rating between 50.0 and 80.0 were eligible for rehabilitation work only. However, if the entity with jurisdiction over the bridge preferred to do a bridge replacement, they were allowed to submit a waiver request, through the Department, to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for review. Justification for replacement of the structure versus rehabilitation was required as part of the waiver request.

Under the Illinois STP-Bridge Program, this waiver request process will remain the same, except the Department will have approval authority. Requests should be initiated through the appropriate District Local Roads and Streets office and directed to the Local Bridge Unit within the IDOT Central Bureau of Bridges and Structures.

### **Approach Limits**

Under the HBP, reasonable touchdown points for bridge projects were recommended in order to keep the total length of approach work at less than 1,200 feet. However, if the local agency determined that the required approach work total would exceed 1,200 feet, but all elements of the project were designed to the operating speed of the roadway (not exceeding the posted or statutory speed), a waiver request could be submitted, through the Department, to the FHWA for review.

Under the Illinois STP-Bridge Program, this waiver request process will remain the same, except the Department will have approval authority. Requests should be initiated through the appropriate District Local Roads and Streets office and directed to the Project Development Engineers within the IDOT Central Bureau of Local Roads and Streets.

## **BRIDGE CONDITION REPORTS**

A Bridge Condition Report (BCR) is required by the Department for all bridge rehabilitation projects, regardless of the funding source, and also required for all bridge replacement projects using federal funds. For federal funding, this policy extends to rehabilitation of existing structures greater than 6.0 feet, similarly measured along the centerline of the roadway.

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For bridge replacements using federal funds, the BCR must include the structure number and, at a minimum, consist of a brief summary of the deficiencies, indicating eligibility and sufficiency rating, and color photographs.

**MAJOR BRIDGE PROGRAM**

It is expected the Illinois Major Bridge Program will continue under the Illinois STP-Bridge Program. Project eligibility requirements will remain the same as will the funding limitation for construction and construction engineering items.

**SOFT MATCH CREDIT PROGRAM**

The Soft Match Credit Program will continue under the Illinois STP-Bridge Program. Project requirements will remain the same as they were with the HBP.

Sincerely,



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cc: Jeff South, Office of Planning & Programming  
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