



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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December 16, 2013

Michigan Regional Planning Agencies
Michigan Metropolitan Planning Organizations
MDOT Region Planners

Dear Local Partners:

Subject: Local Rural Program Guidelines and Information

The Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT's) Statewide Planning Section has been working with our local partners to improve the Local Rural Program. Concerns shared by the County Road Association of Michigan (CRAM), Michigan Municipal League (MML), Federal Highway Administration, MDOT's Passenger Transportation Division, and the MDOT Local Agency Program Section over the past two years revealed that improvements need to be made to ensure accountability, project delivery, and consistency in the planning process for dollars allocated to the Rural Task Forces (RTFs).

In an effort to achieve these improvements, MDOT has revised the RTF Guidelines to include the following objectives:

- Obligate all available federal-aid each Fiscal Year (FY) and improve project delivery.
- Stabilize the FY 2014-2017 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and better maintain financial constraint.
- Maintain a consistent transportation planning process statewide.

On November 25, 2013, the MDOT Bureau of Transportation Planning provided the revised statewide RTF guidelines to our partners, including CRAM, MML, and planning agency members, for review and comment. Meetings were held on November 26, 2013 and December 2, 2013 with Michigan's Regional Planning Agencies and the CRAM Engineering Committee respectively to discuss the guidelines and changes to the Local Rural Federal-Aid and State Category D Program. After receiving input from many local partners, language was also added regarding the ability of RTF members to borrow from other Task Forces to fully fund their programs in a given fiscal year.

The revised final guidelines are enclosed along with additional information for RTF members. Key highlights of these revisions include:

- Revised RTF spreadsheets are more consistent with the STIP.
- The STIP E-file for each RTF will reflect projects that have been selected for FY 2014-2017.

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- Task Force allocations are shown at the regional level for each fiscal year. RTF members can decide how they want to spend the allocation, either by a prioritized list of projects or by sub-allocating to the individual counties within their task force area.
- Task Force members are required to meet at least once annually (no later than April 30) to discuss the status of the current fiscal year projects and adjust their programs as needed.
- Rural Task Force members are encouraged to employ the use of illustrative lists to prioritize unfunded projects. These projects can then be moved into the financially constrained program when funding is identified.
- Beginning in 2015, federal obligation authority available for carryover will be limited to five percent (estimated to be \$10-\$12 million based on current federal funding levels) of the local federal obligation authority available from the previous year. The carryover obligation authority will be added to the amount available for the current year.

MDOT is confident the revised guidelines will create an improved process and help ensure transportation funding intended for the local road system is available and utilized.

If you have any questions, please contact either Larry Doyle, Manager, MDOT Local Agency Programs, at (517) 335-2233 or Pamela Boyd, Supervisor, Statewide Planning Section, at (517) 335-2803.

Sincerely,



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Bureau of Transportation Planning



Mark A. Van Port Fleet, Director
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Enclosure(s)

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