



Statewide Guidelines and Operating Procedures
Rural Funding and Planning Coordination with Regional Planning Agencies
December 2013

The Rural Task Force (RTF) Program provides Surface Transportation Program (STP) - Rural, and Transportation Economic Development Funds-D Category (TEDF-D) Federal and State funds to task forces based on a statewide formula. Each county participating in the Rural Task Force (RTF) program has the ability to work cooperatively with its member agencies in funding transportation needs.

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Statewide Transportation Planning Division administers the RTF Program. Projects are programmed and monitored by the Statewide Planning Section. Funding for each RTF is shown on individual balance sheets. These balance sheets will show allocations for STP and State D category funding. If additional federal obligation authority becomes available to the program, this amount will be shown as the starting balance. Beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, the amount of carryover obligation authority that will be repaid to the local program from year to year will be limited to five percent of the annual obligation authority designated for the Local Federal-Aid Program.

MDOT representation at county level and RTF meetings will be a primary responsibility of the appropriate MDOT Region Office. Staff from MDOT's Statewide Planning Section may also participate in meetings if necessary. Per state law, MDOT is required to be a voting member of the RTF for TEDF and approval of the All-Season Road Network. Regional Planning Agency involvement ensures consensus in the project selection process and that each member is given equal consideration.

I. Local County Meetings

1. The RTF balance sheet will reflect the current approved years of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
 - a. Statewide STIP development occurs every three years.
 - b. During STIP development, future years are added to the STIP.

2. During statewide STIP development, the Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) will work with the counties to conduct local project selection meetings.
 - a. Local project selection meetings are required during STIP development.
 - b. RPAs will notify local elected officials, stakeholders, and general public of the opportunity to participate in project selection, in a timely manner, based on established procedures written in bylaws or in approved public participation plans.
 - c. If procedures do not exist, public notification must be sent out at least one week prior to both local and RTF meetings.
3. Future year project additions will occur during development meetings.
 - a. Before local task force meetings, task force members assign priorities for consideration by completing the RTF data sheet.
 - b. At local task force meetings, a city/village representative (1), transit representative (1), and county road commission representative (1) will meet and reach consensus on which projects are to be submitted for their county.
 - c. All eligible projects should be given equal consideration. Members determine the highest and best need, and reach consensus before the RTF meeting.
 - d. Local task forces are encouraged to develop Illustrative Lists to move projects up if additional funding becomes available.
 - e. Illustrative projects that are identified locally and approved through the RTF can be administratively added to the program when funding is identified. This list should be prioritized based on criteria established by the task force.

II. Rural Task Force Meetings

1. Regional Planning Agencies will notify the public and all other interested parties of the opportunity to participate in RTF meetings.
 - a. Notification will be sent in a timely manner based on established procedures written in bylaws or in approved public participation plans.
 - b. If procedures do not exist, public notification must be sent out at least one week prior to both local and RTF meetings.
 - c. Distribution of notifications must reach the entire geographic area of each task force.
2. Representatives from each county meeting are required to approve regional programs.

- a. Each county will have equal representation from their county road commission, cities/villages with less than 5,000 residents, and any rural transit provider(s).
 - b. MDOT is a voting representative on TEDF-D projects per PA 231 of 1987.
3. The RTF program will follow a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive transportation planning process.
 - a. Each county will review individual priorities established at the local county meeting.
 - b. Agencies will describe project amendments, as required, for task force approval.
 - c. Public and interested parties will be provided an opportunity to comment on proposed additions or amendments.
 - d. Ensure projects meet funding eligibility and criteria.
 - e. Provide revisions to TEDF-D All-Season Road Network map.
 - f. Constrain each year's list of projects to regional funding targets.
 - g. Approve rural task force projects for inclusion in the STIP.
4. In order to facilitate timely delivery and increase the opportunity to fully obligate the programs, RTF meetings should convene as early as possible.
5. MDOT Region and/or Transportation Service Center staff will attend task force meetings and provide members with updates on trunkline projects in each region.
6. Task force meetings should occur as needed throughout the year to accommodate project changes.
- 7.

III. Required Project Information

1. Project amendments require public involvement; administrative modifications do not (See Appendix).
2. Adding or deleting a project from the approved STIP listing requires approval from the local county task force.
3. Illustrative projects that have gone through public involvement can be added to the financially constrained program.
4. Individual Projects/Road Segments listed in the STIP as "Countywide/Variou locations" must be publically identified and documented during the fiscal year of obligation

5. Transit projects requiring scope changes after approval by Federal Transit Administration require RTF member action.
6. RTFs are required to meet in April to reevaluate the status of the program.

IV. Programming Policy

1. RTFs will program and maintain financial constraint at the RTF level.
 - a. Annual allocation targets will be provided.
 - b. Each county will submit their recommended list of projects to the task force and funding will be allocated based on agreement by the full task force. Projects should reflect the regions' highest priority projects.
 - c. Projects not selected for funding can be reprioritized and placed into the Illustrative List.
2. Task forces are encouraged to cooperate with members to fund transportation needs.
 - a. RTFs should ensure that agencies will obligate projects in the fiscal year they are programmed.
 - b. If the project cannot be obligated that fiscal year, the project sponsor must notify task force members.
 - c. Task Force members will reprioritize projects to maximize use of available federal obligation authority within the current fiscal year.
3. Reprogramming/Borrowing policy for rural funding
 - a. If the local agency has not obligated their project by April, the task force members will be notified.
 - b. The task force will decide whether projects should be reprioritized.
 - c. MDOT will continue to provide quarterly reporting to assist in maximizing the use of available funding in a given fiscal year.
 - d. RTF members are encouraged to provide project status updates to membership throughout the year
 - e. Available revenue and programmed commitments will be shown statewide
 - f. Task forces can enter into agreements to leverage available funding statewide
 - g. Documented approval through each RTF is required; MDOT Planning will process the request
 - h. The documentation must include a signed resolution or letter from each task force chairperson involved in the transaction approving the amount and timeframe for the borrowed funds;

The agreement should be sent to MDOT by the Regional Planning Agency for the Task Force receiving the funds

- i. Funds cannot be re-paid outside of STIP years. Projects utilizing funds from other task forces should be built within the timeframe of the current STIP.
4. TEDF-D State funds are not subject to obligation authority.
- a. Agencies can accumulate balances to fund transportation needs.
 - b. Projects identified with State D funds have three years from the original approved fiscal year to be obligated.
 - c. If not obligated at end of the third year, funds shall be reallocated to remaining counties within the same task force per PA 231 of 1987.

V. Submission

1. Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) will document and compile materials for submission.
 - a. Both local and RTF meeting materials are required for submission.
 - b. Agenda, meeting minutes, public notices, data sheets, revised balance sheets, and TEDF All Season Road Network map changes go to the RTF Program Manager.
 - c. Documentation of local elected official consultation and stakeholder involvement are required for local STIP development meetings.
 - d. RPA is expected to submit completed materials within timely manner.
 - e. The RTF Program Manager will review materials and notify the RPA if additional information is required. Approved MDOT job numbers and a revised balance sheet will be returned to the RPA.
 - f. The RPA will notify the RTF members of program approval.
 - g. Reimbursement for activities goes to the RPA Program Manager.
 - h. Approved projects will be placed on the MDOT RTF Web Site and will be included with the next STIP amendment submittal to the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.