

**BATON ROUGE URBANIZED AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
STP>200K PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS**

Adopted: 08/16/2011

INTRODUCTION

The Baton Rouge Urbanized Area - Metropolitan Planning Organization's *Project Selection Process* fulfills several needs in the metropolitan transportation planning process. To spend federal dollars on local transportation projects and programs, a metropolitan area must have a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Both of these documents must be 'financially constrained' and must adhere to the principles laid out in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and the final rules governing metropolitan planning.

According to the final rules regarding metropolitan planning, published in the Federal Register, a MTP must have, at all times, at least a 20 year planning horizon. A MTP must also be updated at least every four years in areas that are designated as nonattainment for air quality or have an air quality maintenance plan. Since the five Parish Baton Rouge MPO area is designated nonattainment for ozone, our MTP will always have a planning horizon of at least 20 years or more and will undergo a *full* update every four years.

The Transportation Improvement Program for the Baton Rouge MPO area is a five-year document. Those five years correspond to Stage I of the MTP; the TIP is a subset of the MTP. The TIP is updated every two years.

One funding category contained in the MTP and TIP is STP>200k. This document is a guide to how projects funded through the program within the area are selected for inclusion in the MTP and TIP.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

The following criteria will determine which projects are eligible to be evaluated for possible funding under the STP>200K program and whether they will be included in the 'financially constrained' component of TIP and MTP.

1. Proposed projects will be consistent with the area's long-range goals.
2. Proposed projects will have a funding source (STP>200k and local match) and cost estimate with supporting documents.
3. Proposed projects will have project readiness information and other details necessary to complete the 'MPO Stage 0 Process'.

4. Projects will fall within the Metropolitan Planning Area boundaries and will be functionally classified according to the adopted functional class roadway system. (*Interstate, Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, Minor Collector and Local*)
5. Projects will not have a negative impact on current conformity determinations or trigger the need for a new regional analysis.

All eligible projects will be reviewed and evaluated by a special TAC working group based on the criteria detailed later in this document. These projects will be placed in the 'financially constrained component' of the TIP based on projected available funding levels, the project's evaluation, the project's implementation timeline (readiness), and input from interagency consultation and coordination. The projects that cannot be included in the TIP will be placed in the 'unconstrained/unmet needs component' and will be considered for review when the next update process begins.

STP > 200K FUNDING CATEGORIES

The STP>200K annual allocation for the Baton Rouge Study Area has been divided into three (3) eligibility categories for project funding. This division of funds will ensure that needs across the transportation system are met in a uniform manner. The total available or programmable funds in a particular federal fiscal year (FFY) will be allocated to each of these categories based on the percentages mentioned below.

1. System Preservation (30%) – Maintenance or preservation (overlay) projects for existing transportation infrastructure. Sample projects include, but are not limited to:
 - Pavement resurfacing, replacement, reconstruction and/or rehabilitation
 - Pavement management system
 - Bridge restoration and/or operational improvements
2. Capacity Expansion (40%) – Construction projects that add capacity to an existing street or interstate, or construction of new facilities. Sample projects include, but are not limited to:
 - Adding lanes to existing streets or highways
 - New Interchanges
 - New Roads
 - Bridge Replacement
 - Bridge Widening and/or Lane Additions
3. Safety and Other (30%) – These projects will generally be less than \$1 million. The following type of projects will qualify under this category.
 - 3.1 Arterial Intersections – Safety and capacity improvements to existing intersections. Sample projects include, but are not limited to:
 - Railroad crossing improvements
 - Signal prioritization, automation, preemption, and/or synchronization
 - Intersection lighting, markings, and/or signage
 - Pedestrian safety measures

3.2 *System Management and Integration* – Technology systems for the management of a communication between transportation-related systems. Sample projects include, but are not limited to:

- Highway courtesy patrols
- Congestion/Incident Management Systems
- Advanced Traveler Information Systems (ATIS)
- Intermodal transportation facilities and systems (including CVISN)
- Traffic management center capital and Operations and Management costs
- Data storage and transmission
- Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) roadside hardware

3.3 *Alternative Transportation* – Projects that promote alternatives to Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) usage. Sample projects include, but are not limited to:

- Transit capital, research, safety improvements, and/or management systems costs
- Carpool/vanpool projects
- Sidewalk modifications and/or walkway projects
- Bicycle transportation projects
- Multimodal connections (park & ride lots)

Note: The percentage of annual available or programmable STP > 200K funds allocated to each of the above category could be adjusted based on the projects submitted in that particular fiscal year.

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

The Baton Rouge Urbanized Area – MPO's Project Selection Process consists of five (5) steps:

1. Project Call
2. Project Submission
3. Project Review and Evaluation
4. Technical Advisory Committee Approval and Recommendation
5. Transportation Policy Committee Review and Approval

The following pages contain a detailed discussion of the five (5) steps and how they are carried out.

Step 1. Project Call

Each January, the MPO Director, in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee, will send out a call for projects notice to all member governments in the Baton Rouge Urbanized Area. The project call will run for approximately 90 days, through the end of March. All projects must be submitted prior to the ending date specified in the project call letter.

Projects submitted during this call will be reviewed for their impact on the current conformity determination. If the project does not affect the current conformity determination, then it will be eligible for evaluation.

Step 2. Project Submission

The Baton Rouge Urbanized Area 'MPO Initiated Project, Stage 0 Preliminary Scope and Budget Checklist' and 'Stage 0 Environmental Checklist' (found in Appendix A) should be used to submit candidate projects to the MPO Director. It is advisable that engineering assistance is utilized to develop all cost estimates.

In addition to the Checklists provided in Appendix A, the Sponsoring Agency should submit a resolution with commitment of local matching funds.

Step 3. Project Review and Evaluation

Those projects complying with the requirements listed earlier in this document will be prioritized and potentially selected for funding by a working group of the TAC. The TAC working group will include representatives from eligible Sponsor Agencies. MPO staff will coordinate and conduct TAC work group meetings and provide technical guidance. The work group will evaluate the projects based on the following criteria:

1. ***Improve Safety and Security (0 – 10 Points)***. Safety is defined as protection against unintentional harm and relates to both motorized and non-motorized modes of travel; and Security is defined as protection against intentional harm and relates to both motorized and non-motorized modes of travel. While Safety and Security are considered as two separate and distinct factors in transportation planning, they are considered as a single factor in this document. **Examples** of improved safety and security could be: reduction in the number of automobile crashes, reduction of the risk of individual acts of criminal behavior on a transit line, improvement in the emergency response capacity after an act of terrorism, etc.
2. ***Protect the Environment (0 – 10 Points)***. Methods for protecting the environment are as unique as the local environments that they serve. Therefore, **examples** of ways in which a transportation system can impact the environment are myriad. In the Baton Rouge Urbanized Area, the most important environmental protection issues are wetlands protection and flood protection. Examples of ways to protect the environment are: not building roads in environmentally sensitive areas; or building projects that reduce idling time by big trucks.
3. ***Reduce Congestion (0 – 15 Points)***. Congestion is defined as a roadway system operating at speeds below that for which it was designed. **Examples** of ways in which congestion could be reduced are: the addition of turning lanes; or improvements to signalization.
4. ***Support Land Use and Economic Development Goals (0 – 15 Points)***. Land Use and Economic Development Goals are inexorably connected, and can be impacted

- by many factors, one of which is the transportation system. Therefore, the transportation investment decisions must consider the state and local economic and land use goals. **Examples** of ways in which the Land Use and Economic Development Goals of the community could be met: not building new roads into areas prone to flooding; or, providing lanes for non-motorized travel; and providing pedestrian amenities along a business corridor; or improving the efficiency of freight movement to and from a port.
5. ***Increase Connections (0 – 10 Points)***. The connectivity of the streets network and circulation system is measured through the ease by which people and goods can move to their desired destinations. Connectivity relates not only to the ease of movement of people and goods within the community, but also to external destinations – regional, national and international. Examples of ways in which connections could be increased are: adding bridges across water barriers; or adding bike and pedestrian paths from neighborhoods to schools that do not necessitate crossing a major arterial.
 6. ***Improve Access (0 – 10 Points)***. Improving access involves control and management of the entrance and exit points to a transportation facility for people and freight. Increasing the number of access points does not necessarily improve access. Improved access is based on a balance between the number of access points and the efficient movement of traffic through the transportation facility. Examples of ways in which access could be improved are: a reduction in the number of driveways that enter a major arterial; or, development of a hierarchical master street plan that designs roads based on use.
 7. ***Increase Multi-Modal Options and Energy Conservation (0 –15 Points)***. The various modes of travel within the community function best when people and goods can easily move from one mode of travel to another. Energy conservation has become a national priority in recent years. The transportation sector uses the largest portion of energy consumed in the US. Therefore, increase in multi-modal options and connectivity between them will lead to conservation of energy. **Examples** of ways this could be achieved includes: a reduction in the use of single occupancy vehicles; expansion of the fixed route transit system into previously unserved areas; an increase in the number of streets with sidewalks; and an increase in intermodal freight transfer facilities.
 8. ***Improve Quality of Life (0 – 10 Points)***. The quality of life of a community is a term that the community must define for itself. The transportation system can have both positive and negative impacts on the quality of life in a community. **Examples** of ways that a transportation system could have a positive impact on the quality of life are: a reduction in mobility gaps experienced by low-income communities; or, a reduction in the time that families spend commuting to school and work. Examples of ways that the transportation system can have a negative impact on the quality of life in a community are: addition of access points to a neighborhood that encourages through traffic that endangers children at play; or widening of roadways to improve port access that also encourages truck traffic carrying hazardous materials through residential neighborhoods.

9. Cost Sharing (0-5 Points). The (STP Urban Mobility/Rehabilitation) funding category requires a mandatory 20% local match. If the project has more than 30% local match, it will be awarded 5 points.

10. Project Readiness (No Points). This criterion determines the year in which a project or phase of a project will be programmed in the TIP. It is recommended that this criterion should be used to assess the project timeliness only and not for the project prioritization process. The following factors determines the project readiness:

- Design Delays
- Right of Way (ROW) Acquisition
- Environmental Problems
- Funding Unavailability

Step 4. Technical Advisory Committee Prioritization and Recommendation

After reviewing the work group recommendations the TAC will choose to forward a recommendation to the TPC for review and approval.

Step 5. Transportation Policy Committee Review and Approval

The Baton Rouge Urbanized Area TPC will review the TAC recommendations. If the Transportation Policy Committee chooses to reject the recommendation of the Technical Advisory Committee, the project listing is sent back to the TAC work group for further review and evaluation. If the Technical Advisory Committee's recommendations are adopted, the prioritized list will be included in the MTP and TIP where funding allows.

APPENDIX A

MPO Stage 0 Check List Stage 0 Environmental Check List

STAGE 0
Preliminary Scope and Budget Checklist

MPO Area: _____

A. Project Background

District _____ Parish _____

Route _____ Control Section _____

Begin Log Mile _____ End Log Mile _____

Project Category (Safety, Capacity, etc.): _____

Date Study Completed: _____

Describe the existing facility:

Functional classification: _____ Number and width of lanes: _____

Shoulder width and type: _____ Mode: _____

Access control: _____ ADT: _____ Posted Speed: _____

Describe any existing pedestrian facilities (ADA compliance should be considered for all improvements that include pedestrian facilities): _____

Describe the adjacent land use: _____

Who is the sponsor of the study? _____

List study team members: _____

Will this project be adding miles to the state highway system (new alignment, new facility)? If yes, has a transfer of ownership been initiated with the appropriate entity? _____

Are there recent, current or near future planning studies or projects in the vicinity? _____

If yes, please describe the relationship of this project to those studies/projects. _____

Provide a brief chronology of these planning study activities: _____

B. Purpose and Need

State the Purpose (reason for proposing the project) and Need (problem or issue)/Corridor Vision and a brief scope of the project. Also, identify any additional goals and objectives for the project.

C. Agency Coordination

Provide a brief synopsis of coordination with federal, tribal, state and local environmental, regulatory and resource agencies.

What transportation agencies were included in the agency coordination effort?

Describe the level of participation of other agencies and how the coordination effort was implemented.

C. Agency Coordination (Continued)

What steps will need to be taken with each agency during NEPA scoping?

D. Public Coordination

Provide a synopsis of the coordination effort with the public and stakeholders; include specific timelines, meeting details, agendas, sign-in sheets, etc. (if applicable).

E. Range of Alternatives – Evaluation and Screening

Give a description of the project concept for each alternative studied.

What are the major design features of the proposed facility (attach aerial photo with concept layout, if applicable).

Will design exceptions be required? _____

What impact would this project have on freight movements? _____

Does this project cross or is it near a railroad crossing? _____

Was the DOTD's "Complete Streets" policy taken into consideration? _____

- If so, describe how. Include a brief explanation of why the policy was determined to be feasible or not feasible. _____

How are Context Sensitive Solutions being incorporated into the project? _____

Was the DOTD's "Access Management" policy taken into consideration? If so, describe how. _____

Were any safety analyses performed? If so describe results. _____

Are there any abnormal crash locations or overrepresented crashes within the project limits? _____

What future traffic analyses are anticipated? _____

E. Range of Alternatives – Evaluation and Screening (Continued)

Will fiber optics be required? If so, are there existing lines to tie into? _____

Are there any future ITS/traffic considerations? _____

Is a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) required?

- Is there a significant project in the Transportation Management Area (TMA)? _____
- What is the scope? _____
- What data will need to be collected to address the content and scope of the TMP? _____

Was Construction Transportation Management/Property Access taken into consideration? _____

Were alternative construction methods considered to mitigate work zone impacts? _____

Describe screening criteria used to compare alternatives and from what agency the criteria were defined.

Give an explanation for any alternative that was eliminated based on the screening criteria.

Which alternatives should be brought forward into NEPA and why? _____

Did the public, stakeholders and agencies have an opportunity to comment during the alternative screening process? _____

Describe any unresolved issues with the public, stakeholders and/or agencies.

F. Planning Assumptions and Analytical Methods

What is the forecast year used in the study? _____

What method was used for forecasting traffic volumes? _____

Are the planning assumptions and the corridor vision/purpose and need statement consistent with the long range transportation plan? _____

What future year policy and/or data assumptions were used in the transportation planning process as they are related to land use, economic development, transportation costs and network expansion? _____

G. Potential Environmental Impacts

See the attached Stage 0 Environmental Checklist

H. Cost Estimate

Provide a cost estimate for each feasible alternative:

Phase	Total Estimated Cost	Funding Source (STP>200K, STP<200K, CMAQ, DEMO, DOTD Priority Program)	Match Provided By (City, Parish, State, Other...)	TIP Fiscal Year
Environmental (document, mitigation, etc.)				
Engineering Design				
R/W Acquisition (C of A if applicable)				
Utility Relocations				
Construction				
Construction Engineering & Inspection Services				
TOTAL COST				

ATTACH ANY ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Disposition (circle one): (1) Advance to Stage 1 (2) Hold for Reconsideration (3) Shelve

STAGE 0
Environmental Checklist

Route _____ Parish: _____

C.S. _____ Begin Log mile _____ End Log mile _____

ADJACENT LAND USE: _____

Any property owned by a Native American Tribe?

(Y or N or Unknown) If so, which Tribe? _____

Any property enrolled into the Wetland Reserve Program?

(Y or N or Unknown) If so, give the location _____

Are there any other known wetlands in the area?

(Y or N) If so, give the location _____

Community Elements: Is the project impacting or adjacent to any (if the answer is yes, list names and locations):

(Y or N) Cemeteries _____

(Y or N) Churches _____

(Y or N) Schools _____

(Y or N) Public Facilities (i.e., fire station, library, etc.) _____

(Y or N) Community water well/supply _____

Section 4(f) issue: Is the project impacting or adjacent to any (if the answer is yes, list names and locations):

(Y or N) Public recreation areas _____

(Y or N) Public parks _____

(Y or N) Wildlife Refuges _____

(Y or N) Historic Sites _____

Is the project impacting, or adjacent to, a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places?

(Y or N) **Is the project within a historic district or a national landmark district?** (Y or N) If the answer is yes to either question, list names and locations below:

Do you know of any threatened or endangered species in the area? (Y or N)

If so, list species and location. _____

Does the project impact or adjacent to a stream protected by the Louisiana Scenic Rivers Act? (Y or N)

If yes, name the stream. _____

Are there any Significant Trees as defined by EDSM I.1.1.21 within proposed ROW? (Y or N) If so, where? _____

What year was the existing bridge built? _____

Are any waterways impacted by the project considered navigable? (Y or N) If unknown, state so, list the waterways: _____

Hazardous Material: Have you checked the following DEQ and EPA databases for potential problems? (If the answer is yes, list names and locations.)

(Y or N) Leaking Underground Storage Tanks _____

(Y or N) CERCLIS _____

(Y or N) ERNS _____

(Y or N) Enforcement and Compliance History _____

STAGE 0
Environmental Checklist

Underground Storage Tanks (UST): Are there any Gasoline Stations or other facilities that may have UST on or adjacent to the project? (Y or N) _____

If so, give the name and location: _____

Any chemical plants, refineries or landfills adjacent to the project? (Y or N) Any large manufacturing facilities adjacent to the project? (Y or N) Dry Cleaners? (Y or N) If yes to any, give names and locations: _____

Oil/Gas wells: Have you checked DNR database for registered oil and gas wells? (Y or N) List the type and location of wells being impacted by the project. _____

Are there any possible residential or commercial relocations/displacements? (Y or N)

How many? _____

Do you know of any sensitive community or cultural issues related to the project? (Y or N)

If so, explain _____

Is the project area population minority or low income? (Y or N) _____

What type of detour/closures could be used on the job? _____

Did you notice anything of environmental concern during your site/windshield survey of the area? If so, explain below.

Point of Contact

Phone Number

Date

STAGE 0

Environmental Checklist

General Explanation:

To adequately consider projects in Stage 0, some consideration must be given to the human and natural environment which will be impacted by the project. The Environmental Checklist was designed knowing that some environmental issues may surface later in the process. This checklist was designed to obtain basic information, which is readily accessible by reviewing public databases and by visiting the site. It is recognized that some information may be more accessible than other information. Some items on the checklist may be more important than others depending on the type of project. It is recommended that the individual completing the checklist do their best to answer the questions accurately. Feel free to comment or write any explanatory comments at the end of the checklist.

The Databases:

To assist in gathering public information, the previous sheet includes web addresses for some of the databases that need to be consulted to complete the checklist. As of February 2011, these addresses were accurate.

Note that you will not have access to the location of any threatened or endangered (T&E) species. The web address lists only the threatened or endangered species in Louisiana by Parish. It will generally describe their habitat and other information. If you know of any species in the project area, please state so, but you will not be able to confirm it yourself. If you feel this may be an issue, please contact the Environmental Section. We have biologist on staff who can confirm the presence of a species.

Why is this information important?

Land Use? Indicator of biological issues such as T&E species or wetlands.

Tribal Land Ownership? Tells us whether coordination with tribal nations will be required.

WRP properties? Farmland that is converted back into wetlands. The Federal government has a permanent easement which cannot be expropriated by the State. Program is operated through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service).

Community Elements? DOTD would like to limit adverse impacts to communities. Also, public facilities may be costly to relocate.

Section 4(f) issues? USDOT agencies are required by law to avoid certain properties, unless a prudent or feasible alternative is not available.

Historic Properties? Tells us if we have a Section 106 issue on the project. (Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act) See <http://www.achp.gov/work106.html> for more details.

Scenic Streams? Scenic streams require a permit and may require restricted construction activities.

Significant Trees? Need coordination and can be important to community.

Age of Bridge? Section 106 may apply. Bridges over 50 years old are evaluated to determine if they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Navigability? If navigable, will require an assessment of present and future navigation needs and US Coast Guard permit.

Hazardous Material? Don't want to purchase property if contaminated. Also, a safety issue for construction workers if right-of-way is contaminated.

Oil and Gas Wells? Expensive if project hits a well.

Relocations? Important to community. Real Estate costs can be substantial depending on location of project. Can result in organized opposition to a project.

Sensitive Issues? Identification of sensitive issues early greatly assists project team in designing public involvement plan.

Minority/Low Income Populations? Executive Order requires Federal Agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minority or low income populations. (Often referred to as Environmental Justice)

Detours? The detour route may have as many or more impacts. Should be looked at with project. May be unacceptable to the public.

STAGE 0 Environmental Checklist

Louisiana Governor's Office of Indian Affairs:

<http://www.indianaffairs.com/tribes.htm>

Louisiana Wetlands Reserve Program:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/states/la.html>

Community Water Well/Supply

<http://sonris.com/default.htm>

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries – Wildlife Refuges

<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/refuges>

<http://www.fws.gov/refuges/profiles/ByState.cfm?state=LA>

<http://www.fws.gov/refuges/refugelocatomaps/Louisiana.html>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – National Wetlands Inventory:

<http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/>

Louisiana State Historic Sites:

<http://www.crt.state.la.us/parks/ihistoricsiteslisting.aspx>

National Register of Historic Places (Louisiana):

<http://nrhp.focus.nps.gov/natreghome.do?searchtype=natreghome>

<http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/la/state.html>

National Historic Landmarks Program:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/>

Threatened and Endangered Species Databases:

<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/louisiana-natural-heritage-program>

Louisiana Scenic Rivers:

<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/scenic-rivers>

<http://media.wlf.state.la.us/experience/scenicrivers/louisiananaturalandscenicriversdescriptions/>

<http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=104995>

Significant Tree Policy (EDSM I.1.1.21)

<http://notes1/ppmemos.nsf>

(Live Oak, Red Oak, White Oak, Magnolia or Cypress, aesthetically important, 18" or greater in diameter at breast height and has form that separates it from surrounding or that which may be considered historic.)

CERCLIS (Superfund Sites):

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/cursites/>

http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/cerclis/cerclis_query.html

ERNS - Emergency Response Notification System - Database of oil and hazardous substances spill reports: <http://www.epa.gov/region4/r4data/erns/index.htm>

Enforcement & Compliance History (ECHO)

<http://www.epa-echo.gov/echo/>

DEQ – Underground Storage Tank Program Information:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2674/Default.aspx>

Leaking Underground Storage Tanks:

<http://www.deq.state.la.us/portal/tabid/79/Default.aspx>

STAGE 0
Environmental Checklist

SONRIS – Oil and Gas Well Information & Water Well Information
<http://sonris.com/default.htm>

Environmental Justice (minority & low income)
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ej2000.htm>

Demographics
<http://www.census.gov/>

FHWA’s Environmental Website
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/index.htm>

Additional Databases Checked

Other Comments:

APPENDIX B
BATON ROUGE URBANIZED AREA MAP

