Illinois Department of Transportation
Departmental Policy

OPP-01: CONSULTATION WITH NON-METROPOLITAN LOCAL OFFICIALS

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Approved By: Holly Bieneman

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1. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Transportation to promote a dynamic and effective working relationship with local agencies in rural and small urban areas. The department recognizes the importance of the state-local partnership in delivering a safe and efficient transportation system. In Illinois, coordination of transportation activities between state and local officials spans the entire transportation planning, programming, and implementation process. While the consultation process in urbanized areas is highly structured by statutory requirements, state coordination with local agencies in rural and small urban areas is more flexible to better meet the needs of local officials.

The department has developed a consultation process that builds on its current efforts to partner with local officials in rural and small urban areas. The department will implement this process by consulting with local officials on the following sections: Funding, planning, programming, project development, and other coordinated activities

2. PERSONS AFFECTED

OFFICE OF HIGHWAYS PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

OFFICE OF INTERMODAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a process for the Office of Planning and Programming to partner with non-metropolitan planning areas and obtain input from smaller, local communities.

4. GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A. Funding

Highways are funded from similar sources, whether they are rural and small urban areas' jurisdiction or large urban jurisdiction. For other modes of transportation, some funding categories distinguish between urbanized areas and rural/small urban areas. In addition to locally generated revenues, federal and state funding sources available for rural and small urban transportation activities include:

1) Federal Highway Funding

Federal highway funding sources include:

a. National Highway Performance Program,

b. Surface Transportation Block Grant Program,

c. Highway Safety Improvement Program,

d. Railway-Highway Crossings Program,

e. National Highway Freight Program,

f. Bridge Formula Program,

g. Transportation Alternatives Program,

h. Carbon Reduction Program,

i. Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program,

j. Statewide Planning and Research funds, and

k. Ferry Boat Program

The division of most non-discretionary federal highway funds between state and local agencies is determined by a formula negotiated between the department and representatives of local agencies, such as the Illinois Municipal League and the Illinois Association of County Engineers. Likewise, the division of non-discretionary state highway (Motor Fuel Tax) funds between the state and local agencies is determined by a formula negotiated between the state and local agencies (including township officials) and codified by state statute.

The discretionary Illinois Transportation Enhancements Program (ITEP) distributes funds for the Transportation Alternatives program, which is dedicated to smaller-scale transportation projects, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity.

Ferry Boat Program funding is available to eligible public ferry systems within the state, with amounts determined by a federal statutory formula.

2) Federal Transit Funding

Federal transit funding sources include:

a. Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307),

b. Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310),

c. Formula Grant for Rural Areas (Section 5311),

d. State of Good Repair (Section 5337),

e. Bus and Bus Facilities Formula (Section 5339), and

f. New Starts (Section 5309).

The allocation of non-discretionary transit funds to rural and small urban transit providers is based on an evaluation of population, regional distribution, ability to secure local resources, technical capacity, and the age of rolling stock.

The allocation of discretionary funds is determined by specific criteria established for each federal and state discretionary program. When appropriate, the department will seek input and comments from officials from all local units of government, urban and rural, regarding these programs.

3) Federal Aviation Funding

The Airport and Airway Trust Fund (AATF), created by the Airport and Airway Revenue Act of 1970, provides funding for the federal commitment to the nation's aviation system through several aviation-related excise taxes. Funding currently comes from collections related to passenger tickets, passenger flight segments, international arrivals/departures, cargo waybills, aviation fuels, and frequent-flyer mile awards from non-airline sources, like credit cards.

4) Federal Rail Funding

The Illinois Rail Freight Program (RFP) was established in the General Assembly's Illinois Administrative Code, Title 92, Chapter 1, Part 800, in 1983 to facilitate government investments in rail service to support statewide economic development. The program provides low-interest loans to finance rail improvements. Funding for the program is provided through two revolving loan funds: the Rail Freight Repayment Fund, which uses federal funds from the former Local Rail Freight Assistance Program, and the State Loan Repayment Fund, which uses state funds from past General Revenue Fund appropriations.

5) State Highway Funding

State highway funding sources include:

a. Illinois Motor Fuel Tax (MFT),

b. Economic Development Program,

c. Truck Access Route Program,

d. County Consolidated Program,

e. Needy Township Program,

f. High Growth Cities Program,

g. Township Bridge Program,

h. Park Roads Program,

i. Grade Crossing Protection Fund Program,

j. Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program,

k. State Planning Funds,

l. State Matching Assistance Program, and

m. capital program funding.

Allocation of the state share of certain funds is carried out through the state highway programming process, detailed later in this policy. The distribution of the local share of non-discretionary highway funds to local recipients is determined by formulas based on criteria such as population and roadway miles. Each local agency, in turn, develops its own program for using these funds.

6) State Transit Funding

State transit funding sources include:

a. Capital Assistance

- MFT
- Bond
- Downstate Transit Improvement Fund (DTIF)

b. State Operating Assistance

- Downstate Operation Assistance Program (DOAP)
- Public Transportation Fund (PTF)

c. Fare Reimbursement for students, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities,

d. Rural Transit Assistance Program, and

e. State Technical Studies.

7) State Aviation Funding

There are two sources of state funding for airport improvement projects: Series B Bonds and Road Funds. These sources are used to match federal funds and for the State-Local Program.

B. Planning

The Illinois State Long Range Transportation Plan (“Plan”) provides the strategic direction for realizing the department’s vision. The department’s vision for transportation in Illinois is that all modes be integrated, coordinated, planned, and built so that present and future travel options are user-focused, economically supportive, ecologically sensitive, and information-centric. Updates to this plan will be developed in coordination with all transportation stakeholders, including residents, businesses, local, state, and federal officials and agencies, and transportation operators. This coordination will include public forums and outreach meetings.

The Plan not only sets out policies and goals but also actions the department will pursue to make these goals a reality. Many of these actions will also require outreach and coordination with department transportation stakeholders to achieve the plan’s goals.

C. Programming

Coordination and consultation with local officials in rural and small urban areas will occur at different levels depending on the program. For the state highway program, local officials will have an opportunity to provide input directly to the department during the program’s development and indirectly through their state representatives and senators during the legislative review of the program.

1) State Highway Program

The Proposed Highway Improvement Program, also referred to as the Multi-Year Program (MYP), is a fiscally constrained six-year program that outlines how transportation dollars will be invested in the state and local highway system. The program includes lists of projects the department intends to accomplish over the next six years. The MYP is developed annually and is consistent with the policies and goals identified in the Plan.

Once resource allocation is complete, the department’s five regional engineers, through the nine district offices, develop, prioritize, and submit candidate projects based on each district's needs. At this point, the ongoing coordination with local officials (discussed below) comes into play.

Currently, each district maintains a continuous, cooperative relationship with state and local elected officials within its boundaries. Regular meetings are held with mayors, municipal engineers, county board members, county engineers, township highway supervisors, and state legislators to exchange information about needed improvements on the state highway system. During these meetings, local input is sought to modify proposed improvements, suggest new ones, and convey local opposition to any state proposals.

In many instances, local agencies coordinate with district offices on projects that involve both state and local jurisdiction. In these cases, the total project scope, along with state-local cost-sharing activities, is negotiated.

Once the districts submit their candidate projects to the central office, the program is assembled and evaluated. The Governor then approves the program for release, and it is submitted to members of the Illinois General Assembly for their review and input.

2) Local Roads Program

All municipalities, townships, and counties develop their own local street and highway program to use the federal and state highway funds they receive. Local agencies will often supplement this program with locally generated funds. The local portion of the highway improvement program is developed using locally determined needs and priorities. The federal and state-funded portion of the local program is coordinated through the department to ensure that projects are eligible for the various funding sources, that applicable state and federal standards, policies, and procedures are met, and that the work is coordinated with state projects.

3) Public Transportation Program

All rural and small urban transit providers receive federal operating assistance and are eligible for state and federal capital grants, when funds are available. Those rural and small urban transit providers that qualify under state statute also receive state operating assistance.

Like the local roads program, the public transportation program for rural and small urban areas is developed using locally determined needs and priorities. Transit providers submit operating budgets and applications for capital assistance. The department reviews these budgets and applications individually with each provider. Operating funding will be provided at levels sufficient to maintain existing service and accommodate strategic expansions. Capital funding is awarded on a competitive basis, using criteria aligned with the Department's priorities and strategic planning.

4) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

This final step in the surface transportation programming process provides an additional opportunity for local official input. At this point, all three programs discussed above are integrated and subjected to a statewide public involvement process.

D. Project Development

The department has developed methods for involving stakeholders in its decisions, and its Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) policy makes stakeholder involvement a regular process for projects involving new construction, reconstruction, and major expansion of transportation facilities. The department defines CSS as an interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective, multi-modal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build, and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities that fit into and reflect the project's surroundings – its "context." Through early, frequent, and meaningful communication with stakeholders and a flexible, creative approach to design, the resulting projects improve safety and mobility for the traveling public while seeking to preserve and enhance the scenic, economic, historic, and natural qualities of the settings through which they pass. The CSS approach involves stakeholders early and often throughout the process, especially before major decisions are made. The information gained from partnering with stakeholders is then used by the department to craft an informed solution to the transportation issue. This informed solution should also be a consensus solution between stakeholders and the department.

For local agency highway projects, each department district office has dedicated staff to assist local officials in the planning, development, and implementation of state and federally funded local highway projects. These offices will coordinate with rural officials on their projects.

For public transportation, applications for transit funding are subject to a public process. This process allows for public and local official input into the planning and implementation of public transportation services in rural and small urban areas. In addition, all applications and grant constraints will be approved by the public transportation operator's local governing board.

E. Other Coordination Activities

The department will be actively involved in statewide organizations representing municipalities, counties, and townships. The Bureau of Local Roads will participate on an ongoing basis in several of the standing committees of each of these organizations. These committees and organizations meet with the Secretary, the Deputy Secretaries, and the Directors of the various Offices as needed throughout the year. These meetings will address a broad range of transportation policy issues and provide local officials with regular access to the principal decisionmakers within the department.

The department will be an active participant in statewide conferences hosted by the Illinois Association of County Engineers, the Illinois Municipal League, the American Public Works Association, and the Township Officials of Illinois. In addition, district offices will host regular meetings with all the local agencies in their area.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The following outlines the individual and office responsibilities to ensure compliance with the provisions of this directive and its appendices (if applicable): The **Office of Planning and Programming** is responsible for maintaining this directive and the associated manual or procedures. OPP is also responsible for gathering input when making funding determinations, developing plans and programs, and during project development.

B. The **Offices of Highways Project Implementation and Intermodal Project Implementation** are responsible for adhering to this policy and communicating any project funding changes to the Office of Planning and Programming

C. **Managers/Supervisors** are responsible for:

1) Ensuring operations align with the items outlined in this policy; and

2) Ensuring that this policy is readily accessible to and understood by all employees under their supervision.

D. All **employees** are responsible for complying with the policy prescribed in this policy.

6. REVISION HISTORY

This directive includes the following changes:

- General language and format updates throughout the document to increase readability.
- section 4.A.1. Federal Highway Funding to include new and updated federal funding programs used as inputs in the local fund distribution formula and remove the Metropolitan Planning Program (metropolitan area funding only).
- Updated section 4.A.2. Federal Transit Funding to reflect the correct fund section reference for the Bus and Bus Facilities Formula program and added technical capacity as a criterion for allocation of non-discretionary transit funds.
- Updated section 4.A.5. State Highway Funding to include the Grade Crossing Protection Fund Program.
- Updated section 5.C.3. Public Transportation Program to specify the need for applications and delineate operating funding and capital funding distribution methods.

The current version of this Departmental Policy is available at https://powerdms.com/home.

Archive versions of this and all directives are available by contacting the Policy Administration Unit in the Bureau of Business Services at DOT.Policy@illinois.gov.

7. CLOSING NOTICE

Supersedes: Departmental Policy OPP-01: Consultation with Non-Metropolitan Local Officials Policy, Version 3.0, Effective May 4, 2021

Attachment(s):