

Using the Expedited Project Selection Procedures (EPSP) to Meet Project Delivery Requirements for Local Safety Projects

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This document provides information and guidance on the use of the Expedited Project Selection Procedures (EPSP) to deliver local safety projects. EPSP can be used to design and construct a project prior to the program year shown in the Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP). This document also explains why the expected delivery dates shown in the [Project Delivery Status Reports](#) are not consistent with the program year shown in the FSTIP.

Project Lists of State-managed Local Safety Programs for FTIP

Caltrans, Division of Local Assistance, Office of Bridge and Safety Programs (OBSP), manages the federal funds for three local safety programs; the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), the High Risk Rural Roads Program (HR3), and the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). OBSP prepares a financially-constrained, statewide project list for each safety program and sends those lists to the various Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to amend into their FTIPs. The MPOs are requested to program the projects in the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) shown in the project lists and are encouraged to program the projects in a grouped project listing. In a grouped project listing, funding for all project phases is included under Construction. Grouped project listings provide flexibility with project phase authorizations and reduce the resources needed to monitor the delivery of a project.

A project list contains all approved safety projects that have yet to authorize construction funds. Due to the financial constraint requirements, the project list can only include a finite value of project funds in each of the four (4) Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) available in the FSTIP. Therefore, in order to include all active projects in the FSTIP, Caltrans HQ Safety Program managers organize the project list to contain the oldest projects in the earlier years and the newer projects in the outer years. For example, the HSIP Project List for the 2009 FTIP contains Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 projects. Cycle 1 and 2 projects, which consist of 3 federal fiscal years of HSIP funding, are programmed in the first three years of the FSTIP period (2008/09 thru 2010/11). Cycle 3 projects are all programmed in 2011/12, the fourth year of the FSTIP, since it was the only year within the FSTIP that had financial capacity for all of these new projects. Project lists for the 2011 and future FSTIPs will be organized and prioritized in a similar manner.

Project Delivery Requirements vs. FSTIP Program Year

The Project Delivery Requirements are entirely independent of the FSTIP Program Year. The Project Delivery Requirements are based upon a set time period to complete three (3) primary milestones of a project. The three milestones and corresponding delivery requirements are:

- 1. Request Authorization to Proceed with PE within 6 months after the project is amended into the FSTIP.**
 - a. Agencies that do not request Authorization to Proceed with PE because they are using their own work force or using other non-federal funds for that phase will only be held to receiving approval for Construction Authorization within 30 months after the project is amended into the FSTIP.
 - b. Agencies that retain consultants for any PE work will be provided an additional six (6) months of PE time. This will extend the CON Auth and Close-Out Milestone dates by 6 months.

2. **Request Authorization to Proceed with Construction within 30 months (2 ½ years) after the project is amended into the FSTIP.**
3. **Complete construction and close-out the project within 54 months (4 ½ years) after the project is amended into the FSTIP.**

The date the project is first amended into the FSTIP (i.e. approved by the FHWA) is the date from which all future delivery performance is evaluated. As soon as a project is included in an approved FSTIP, local agencies are expected to move forward with their project delivery and request an authorization to proceed with PE, ROW, or CON, whichever phase is appropriate for their project. When the FFY of the project delivery schedule does not match the FFY in the FSTIP, local agencies must utilize the Expedited Project Selection Procedure (EPSP) prior to requesting authorization to begin work on the project.

Expedited Project Selection Procedures (EPSP)

Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Sections 450.220(e) and 450.330(a) allows for the advancement of projects within the active period of the approved FTIP and FSTIP. However, in order to access this provision, an MPO, or the California Department of Transportation acting as the MPO for the rural, non-MPO counties, must have an EPSP in place.

An EPSP is a project selection process developed by the MPO, State, and public transportation operators, including transit operators, that provides for the advancement or delay of projects for implementation purposes within the active period of the approved FTIP and FSTIP without the need for immediately processing FTIP/FSTIP amendments, unless the EPSP action results in the project crossing analysis years for air quality conformity determinations. However, the impacts of the EPSP action must be included in future FTIP/FSTIP updates, amendments or administrative modifications.

23 CFR Section 450.330(a) specifies that "if the State or public transportation operator(s) wishes to proceed with a project in the second, third, or fourth year of the TIP, the specific project selection procedures stated in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section must be used unless the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator(s) jointly develop expedited project selection procedures to provide for the advancement of projects from the second, third, or fourth years of the TIP". The EPSP must be agreed to by all parties in the project selection process as stated in 23 CFR 450.220(e), and be adopted by the MPO Board.

Using the EPSP to Meet Project Delivery Requirements

To facilitate the timely delivery of local safety projects, Caltrans anticipates that all agencies may need to use the EPSP. Each MPO is expected to have an EPSP in place which can be used for all federally-funded projects when needed.

The following steps outline how Caltrans, local agencies, and MPOs can use the EPSP to ensure that 'requests for authorization' for safety projects are approved in a timely manner:

1. When a local agency wants to submit a Request for Authorization (RFA) to proceed with a project that is not programmed in the currently-active fiscal year of the FSTIP, the agency first needs to request approval from the Caltrans District Local Assistance Engineer (DLAE) to use EPSP and advance the project to the current program year.
2. The DLAE will review the EPSP request and the project's readiness for authorization. If the DLAE determines that the project is ready for authorization, he/she will forward the EPSP request to the HQ Safety Program Manager for review and approval.

3. The HQ Safety Program Manager will evaluate the financial capacity of the FSTIP for the current program year. If sufficient capacity exists, he/she will notify the DLAE that the EPSP request has been approved. The DLAE will then inform the local agency and HQ will notify the affected MPO.
4. After the local agency has received notification from the DLAE that their EPSP request was approved, the local agency can complete and submit the RFA to the DLAE. The local agency must indicate that EPSP has been approved on Exhibit 3E - Request for Authorization to Proceed Data Sheet(s) of the Local Assistance Procedures Manual.

Note: All correspondence relating to using the EPSP can be processed with emails. Formal agency letters with letterheads are not necessary.

Summary

Through the use of the EPSP, all local agencies with safety projects are encouraged to proceed with the delivery of their project regardless of the year it is programmed in the FSTIP. Caltrans District and Headquarters staff will work with the respective MPO and responsible lead agency to use the EPSP and ensure that authorization requests for all phases are approved as quickly as possible.

Internet Links to Related Documents

Project Delivery Status Reports and Delivery Requirements

http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/HSIP/delivery_status.htm

Project Lists of State-managed Local Safety Programs for FTIP:

http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/HSIP/FTIP_Info.html