



Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Urban Attributable (Z230) Funds

Program Manual – August 2021 (FY 2023 - 2024 STBG Z230 funding)

QUICK CHECK: SHOULD YOU APPLY?

While the remainder of the document explains the details of the CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program, the following reference list is provided here to highlight the **minimum** expectations in CORE MPO's project selection process. If you answer **NO** to any one of these questions, you **should not** apply.

- Is your agency or organization an eligible entity? (See Eligible Project Sponsors on Page 3)

- Is your project in an eligible location and for eligible activity? (See Eligibility on Page 4-7)

- Is your project (including all phases) identified in or consistent with the CORE MPO's financially constrained 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Mobility 2045) or Non-Motorized Transportation Plan? (See Eligibility on Page 7-8)

- Are you requesting at least \$200,000? (See Funding and Local Match on Page 2-3)

- Do you have at least 20% match for the total project cost? Please provide written confirmation of your local match. Local funds already spent on prior project phases cannot be used as part of the local match for new STBG awards. (See Funding and Local Match on Page 2-3)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

STBG Program and Z230 Funds

The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program is a federal-aid transportation program, administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which provides funds to States and localities for transportation improvement projects. The current federal transportation legislation - Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act or FAST Act - converted the long-standing Surface Transportation Program (STP) into the STBG Program acknowledging that the block grant program allows more flexible funding to best address State and local transportation needs.

CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Manual

A formula is used by FHWA to apportion STBG funds to each State. The funds are then sub-allocated to each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) from its respective state Department of Transportation using a population-based formula. Once these funds have been sub-allocated to MPOs, they are committed through the MPO to local governments and agencies for eligible transportation improvement projects through a competitive project selection process approved by the MPO Board. The code for STBG funds allocated to urbanized areas with a population over 200,000 is Z230.

CORE MPO's Surface Transportation Block Grant Program

CORE MPO administers the STBG Urban Attributable (Z230) funds for the Savannah region. The MPO receives approximately \$4 million (federal) of Z230 funds each year.

CORE MPO conducts a Call for Projects at least every four years with expected four-year allocations of Z230 funds, to align the STBG competitive project selection process with Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development. The Call for Projects can also be conducted as needed if the priority projects with awarded STBG Z230 funds have been completed and additional funds become available.

CORE MPO conducted a Call for Projects in February 2020 for Z230 funds to support the development and project prioritization of the FY 2021 – 2024 TIP. There is a positive balance in FY 2021 due to some unexpected circumstances. The FY 2022 funds are fully allocated. There are some Z230 funds available in both FY 2023 and FY 2024. The MPO intends to conduct the Call for Projects in August 2021 to award these available Z230 funds. Awarded projects will be amended into the FY 2021 - 2024 TIP.

Additional Sources of Information

- FHWA STBG implementation guidance:
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/160307.cfm>
- FAST Act fact sheet for STBG Program:
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/factsheets/stbgfs.cfm>

FUNDING AND LOCAL MATCH

Funding

In general, the STBG program is an 80/20 match program, meaning federal funds cover no more than 80% of total cost of the project or the project phase that is the subject of the request. In this Call for Projects, CORE MPO expects to award *the available federal funds* to various projects or project phases **in FY 2023 - 2024****. The award amount will constitute no more than 80% of the costs of the awarded projects and/or project phases.

CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Manual

CORE MPO August 2021 Z230 Call for Projects			
Fiscal Year	Total Expected Z230 Federal Revenues**	Minimum Federal Funding Request per Project*	Maximum Federal Funding Request per Project*
2021**	\$900,000	\$200,000	\$900,000
2023	\$3,178,721	\$200,000	\$3,178,721
2024	\$6,030,778	\$200,000	\$6,030,778

* Local project sponsor will cover at least 20% of the total project cost for each phase.

** Specific funding amount might change when the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) rolls the FY 2021 carryover funds and unspent funds from previous years to FY 2023 and FY 2024.

Period of Availability

STBG funds are contract authority. STBG obligations are reimbursed from the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund. STBG funds are available for obligation for a period of 3 years after the last day of the fiscal year for which the funds are authorized. Thus, funds are available for obligation for up to 4 years. (23 U.S.C. 118)

For the CORE MPO managed Z230 funds, the **following rules** will apply.

- Before Funding Authorization - If the applicant has not made adequate progress to ensure **authorization** of the awarded funds in the appropriate fiscal year, the funds will be rescinded and put back to the Z230 coffer for use by other priority projects in the waiting list.
- After Funding Authorization - If the applicant has not **obligated** the funds two years after funding authorization, the funds will be rescinded and put back to the Z230 coffer for use by other priority projects in the waiting list or those selected in the next round of Call for Projects.

Local Match

As stated above, at least 20% of a Z230-funded project will be locally funded. Note that the local share is calculated as 20% of the **total** project costs, not 20% of the federal funding amount. For example, if an applicant requests federal amount of \$1,000,000 for a project phase, the application needs to demonstrate that at least \$250,000 of local funds are available for that phase because the total cost estimate would be \$1,250,000. Local funds already spent on prior project phases cannot be used as part of the local match for new STBG awards.

For the local match, an applicant may not count any other US DOT funds, nor funds awarded from any other federal agency.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT SPONSORS

Though the FWHA guidance does not specify eligible project sponsors for Z230 funds, STBG program is geared towards state and local governments and agencies with responsibility for oversight of transportation improvements. Thus, the eligible primary sponsors for the CORE MPO managed STBG urban attributable funds should be local/regional governments and

CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Manual

agencies responsible for transportation improvements. In addition, the local project sponsor must be LAP (Local Administered Project) Certified by GDOT to administer the federal funds. If the local sponsor is in the process of becoming LAP certified while submitting an application, the MPO will consider the sponsor an eligible entity as long as the LAP certification becomes official before the requested funding phase starts. This requirement only applies to transportation improvement projects, not planning studies.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Eligible Projects and Activities:

- a. Location of Projects (23 U.S.C. 133(c)): STBG projects may not be undertaken on a road functionally classified as a local road or a rural minor collector unless the road was on a Federal-aid highway system on January 1, 1991, except-
 - (1) For a bridge or tunnel project (other than the construction of a new bridge or tunnel at a new location);
 - (2) For a project described in 23 U.S.C. 133(b)(4)-(11) and described below under "Eligible Activities" (b)(4) through (11);
 - (3) For transportation alternatives projects described in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(29) before enactment of the FAST Act (these are described in 23 U.S.C. 133(h) and in separate TA Set-Aside guidance.); and
 - (4) As approved by the Secretary.
- b. Eligible Activities (23 U.S.C. 133(b)): Subject to the location of projects requirements in paragraph (a), the following eligible activities are listed in 23 U.S.C. 133(b):
 - (1) Construction, as defined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(4), of the following:
 - i. Highways, bridges, and tunnels, including designated routes of the Appalachian development highway system and local access roads under 40 U.S.C. 14501;
 - ii. Ferry boats and terminal facilities eligible under 23 U.S.C. 129(c);
 - iii. transit capital projects eligible under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code;
 - iv. Infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems capital improvements, including the installation of vehicle-to-infrastructure communication equipment;
 - v. Truck parking facilities eligible under Section 1401 of MAP-21 (23 U.S.C. 137 note); and
 - vi. Border infrastructure projects eligible under Section 1303 of SAFETEA-LU (23 U.S.C. 101 note).
 - (2) Operational improvements and capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring, management, and control facilities and programs. Operational improvement is defined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(18).

CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Manual

- (3) Environmental measures eligible under 23 U.S.C. 119(g), 328, and 329, and transportation control measures listed in Section 108(f)(1)(A) (other than clause (xvi) of that section) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7408(f)(1)(A)).
- (4) Highway and transit safety infrastructure improvements and programs, including railway-highway grade crossings.
- (5) Fringe and corridor parking facilities and programs in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 137 and carpool projects in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 146. Carpool project is defined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(3).
- (6) Recreational trails projects eligible under 23 U.S.C. 206, pedestrian and bicycle projects in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 217 (including modifications to comply with accessibility requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.)), and the Safe Routes to School Program under Section 1404 of SAFETEA-LU (23 U.S.C. 402 note).
- (7) Planning, design, or construction of boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.
- (8) Development and implementation of a State asset management plan for the National Highway System (NHS) and a performance-based management program for other public roads*. (*Eligibility indicated here are applicable to state-managed STBG funds.)
- (9) Protection (including painting, scour countermeasures, seismic retrofits, impact protection measures, security countermeasures, and protection against extreme events) for bridges (including approaches to bridges and other elevated structures) and tunnels on public roads, and inspection and evaluation of bridges and tunnels and other highway assets.
- (10) Surface transportation planning programs, highway and transit research and development and technology transfer programs, and workforce development, training, and education under chapter 5 of title 23, United States Code.
- (11) Surface transportation infrastructure modifications to facilitate direct intermodal interchange, transfer, and access into and out of a port terminal.
- (12) Projects and strategies designed to support congestion pricing, including electronic toll collection and travel demand management strategies and programs.
- (13) Upon request of a State and subject to the approval of the Secretary, if Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) credit assistance is approved for an STBG-eligible project, then the State may use STBG funds to pay the subsidy and administrative costs associated with providing Federal credit assistance for the projects*. (*Eligibility indicated here are applicable to state-managed STBG funds.)
- (14) The creation and operation by a State of an office to assist in the design, implementation, and oversight of public-private partnerships eligible to receive funding under title 23 and chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code, and the payment of a stipend to unsuccessful private bidders to offset their proposal development costs, if necessary to encourage robust competition in public-private

CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Manual

partnership procurements*. (*Eligibility indicated here are applicable to state-managed STBG funds.)

(15) Any type of project eligible under 23 U.S.C. 133 as in effect on the day before the FAST Act was enacted. Among these are:

- i. Replacement of bridges with fill material;
- ii. Training of bridge and tunnel inspectors;
- iii. Application of calcium magnesium acetate, sodium acetate/formate, or other environmentally acceptable, minimally corrosive anti-icing and deicing compositions for bridges (and approaches to bridges and other elevated structures) and tunnels;
- iv. Projects to accommodate other transportation modes continue to be eligible pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 142(c) if such accommodation does not adversely affect traffic safety;
- v. Transit capital projects eligible for assistance under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code, including vehicles and facilities (publicly or privately owned) that are used to provide intercity passenger bus service;
- vi. Approach roadways to ferry terminals to accommodate other transportation modes and to provide access into and out of the ports;
- vii. Transportation alternatives previously described in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(29) and described in 23 U.S.C. 213;
- viii. Projects relating to intersections having disproportionately high accident rates, high levels of congestion (as evidenced by interrupted traffic flow at the intersection and a level of service rating of "F" during peak travel hours, calculated in accordance with the Highway Capacity Manual), and are located on a Federal-aid highway;
- ix. Construction and operational improvements for any minor collector if the minor collector and the project to be carried out are in the same corridor and in proximity to an NHS route; the construction or improvements will enhance the level of service on the NHS route and improve regional traffic flow; and the construction or improvements are more cost-effective, as determined by a benefit-cost analysis, than an improvement to the NHS route;
- x. Workforce development, training, and education activities discussed in 23 U.S.C. 504(e);
- xi. Advanced truck stop electrification systems. Truck stop electrification system is defined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(32);
- xii. Installation of safety barriers and nets on bridges, hazard eliminations, projects to mitigate hazards caused by wildlife;
- xiii. Electric vehicle and natural gas vehicle infrastructure in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 137;
- xiv. Data collection, maintenance, and integration and the costs associated with obtaining, updating, and licensing software and equipment required for risk-based

CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Manual

asset management and performance based management, and for similar activities related to the development and implementation of a performance based management program for other public roads;

xv. Construction of any bridge in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 144(f) that replaces any low water crossing (regardless of the length of the low water crossing); any bridge that was destroyed prior to January 1, 1965; any ferry that was in existence on January 1, 1984; or any road bridge that is rendered obsolete as a result of a Corps of Engineers flood control or channelization project and is not rebuilt with funds from the Corps of Engineers. Not subject to the Location of Project requirement in 23 U.S.C. 133(c); and

xvi. Actions in accordance with the definition and conditions in 23 U.S.C. 144(g) to preserve or reduce the impact of a project on the historic integrity of a historic bridge if the load capacity and safety features of the historic bridge are adequate to serve the intended use for the life of the historic bridge. Not subject to the Location of Project requirement in 23 U.S.C. 133(c).

- 2. Applicability of Planning Requirements (23 U.S.C. 133(d)(5)) *:** Projects must be identified in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)/Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and be consistent with the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan(s). When obligating sub-allocated funding (discussed below), the State must coordinate with relevant metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) or rural planning organizations (23 U.S.C. 133(d)(3)). Programming and expenditure of funds for projects shall be consistent with 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135. (*The Z230-funded projects must be consistent with the CORE MPO's financially constrained 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Mobility 2045) or the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and be programmed in the MPO's TIP before funds are obligated).

STBG projects for eligible planning purposes must be reflected in the statewide SPR work program or Metropolitan Unified Planning Work Program*. Further, these projects must be in the STIP/TIP unless the State DOT or MPO agree that they may be excluded. (23 CFR 420.119(e)) (*Z230-funded planning studies must be reflected in CORE MPO's UPWP and included in the TIP before funding obligation.)

- 3. Applicability of 23 U.S.C. 217(i) for Bicycle Projects:** 23 U.S.C. 217(i) requires that bicycle facilities “be principally for transportation, rather than recreation purposes.” However, 23 U.S.C. 133(b)(6) and 133(h) list “recreational trails projects” as eligible activities under STBG. Therefore, the requirement in 23 U.S.C. 217(i) does not apply to recreational trails projects (including for bicycle use) using STBG funds. Section 217(i) continues to apply to bicycle facilities other than trail-related projects, and Section 217(i) continues to apply to bicycle facilities using other Federal-aid highway program funds (e.g., NHPP, Highway Safety Improvement Program, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program). The transportation requirement under Section 217(i) is applicable only to bicycle projects; it does not apply to any other trail use or transportation mode.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

All projects must follow applicable federal guidelines for implementation. Applicants should be aware of the following:

CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Manual

- Timing of expenditures – costs incurred prior to “obligation” are *not* eligible for reimbursement. Obligation occurs when a project is approved and an agreement is executed between the FHWA division office and the State. Any design and feasibility studies conducted prior to receipt of Z230 funds award notice are not eligible as reimbursable costs.
- Types of costs – the following project-specific costs are eligible.
 - Preliminary engineering (PE) work, including project development, environmental work, cost estimates, construction plans, and architectural work;
 - Utility relocations;
 - Right-of-way (ROW) acquisition (the acquisition of real property is subject to the Uniform Act); and
 - Construction costs.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND PROJECT SELECTION

Application Process Timeline

Proposed CORE MPO Project Selection Schedule for Z230 Funds - 2021	
Date	Activity
June 2021	CORE MPO staff develops the preliminary draft funding application packages and schedule.
June 17, 2021	TCC reviews and comments on the preliminary draft application packages and schedule.
June – August 2021	CORE MPO staff revises the preliminary draft to final application packages based on final revenue estimates, federal and state regulations and TCC input.
August 19, 2021	TCC reviews and endorses the Call for Projects application packages.
August 25, 2021	CORE MPO Board approves the proposed schedule and project selection process.
August 26, 2021	Announce Call for Projects. Application cycle opens.
September 30, 2021 (by 5:00 p.m.)	Applications due.
October 1 – October 5, 2021	CORE MPO staff pre-screens the applications for completeness and eligibility.
October 6 – October 15, 2021	All TCC members screen and score applications and send the scores to MPO staff.
October 18 – October 20, 2021	MPO staff compiles scores.
October 21, 2021	TCC meets to review the compiled scores, comes up with project priority lists and award recommendations based on final revenue estimates, and makes recommendations for project incorporation into FY 2021 – 2024 TIP

CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Manual

October 27, 2021	TCC presents the priority list and project award recommendations for approval at CORE MPO's meeting.
December 15, 2021	Projected date that the MPO's FY 2021 - 2024 TIP will be amended for projects with awarded funds.

Applicants should send the electronic copy of a completed application, by 5:00 p.m. on **Thursday, September 30, 2021**, to:

Wykoda Wang, Transportation Administrator
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission
110 E. State Street
Savannah, GA 31401
wangw@thempc.org

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

After applications are submitted to CORE MPO, they will go through the following process:

1. **Pre-screening** - Applications are screened for the following criteria. An application not meeting all of these pre-screening criteria will be disqualified.
 - a. **Eligibility** - eligible sponsor and eligible project type per STBG eligibility requirement.
 - b. **Plan consistency** – projects, including all phases must be identified in or be consistent with the CORE MPO's financially constrained 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Mobility 2045) or Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.
 - c. **Completeness** – the application must address all of the questions in the application package.
 - d. **Funding amount** - - the full funding must be identified for the project phase for which funding is requested. If the STBG funds for which the applicant is applying are not sufficient to complete the project phase, the applicant must identify sufficient available supplemental funding with which the project can be completed. The total requested federal amount must be at least \$200,000 (federal).
 - e. **Local Match** - the applicant needs to provide written confirmation of local match of at least 20% of the total project cost. Local funds already spent on prior project phases cannot be used as part of the local match for new STBG awards.
2. **Project Scoring** - MPO staff sends the applications that successfully clear the pre-screening process to all of the members of the CORE MPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), who review the applications and score them against the project selection criteria, and then send the scores back to the MPO staff for compilation.
3. **TCC Review** – The TCC meets to review the compiled scores, comes up with project priority list and recommendations for funding award, and presents the recommendations to the CORE MPO Board.

CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Manual

4. Board Approval - The project rankings and award recommendations are approved by the CORE MPO Board.
5. Announcement - Approved project award winners are announced. Priority projects not receiving awards will be put in the waiting list based on their priority rankings.
6. TIP Inclusion - Approved projects with awarded funds are programmed in the FY 2021 – 2024 TIP.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

The project ranking and selection criteria are mostly based on the adopted prioritization process of the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Mobility 2045). The project scoring system assigns points to a project based on the criteria in the table below.

Project Ranking and Selection Criteria			
Factors /goals /emphasis areas	Performance Factors	Questions	Scores
System Performance	Truck Traffic	Is the project located on a facility with a Level of Service E or F, which is below the statewide Level of Service minimum of Level of Service D?	Yes: 5 points No: 0 points
	Freight connections to strategic infrastructure	Is the project located on a facility with a high level of truck traffic (volumes and percentage) based on averages for similar functionally classified facilities?	Yes: 5 points No: 0 points
Safety and Security	Crash rate	Is the project located on a facility with a crash rate above the state average for that functional classification?	Yes: 5 points No: 0 points
	Designated evacuation route	Is the project on a designated evacuation route?	Yes: 5 points No: 0 points
Accessibility, Mobility and Connectivity	Freight last mile	Does the project connect population centers with employment and activity centers?	Yes: 5 points No: 0 points
	Transit ridership	Is the project identified in the Freight Plan as a high priority?	Yes: 5 points No: 0 points
	Non-motorized Plan priorities	Is the project identified in the CAT Transit Development Plan as a high priority?	Yes: 5 points No: 0 points
		Is the project ranked in the Non-motorized Plan as a high priority?	Yes: 5 points No: 0 points
Environment and Quality of Life	Impacts to environmental, cultural and social resources	Does the project adversely impact environmental resources?	Scale from 0 to 5 Worst Impact: 0 points No Impact: 5 points
		Does the project adversely impact cultural, historic and community resources?	Scale from 0 to 5 Worst Impact: 0 points No Impact: 5 points
		Does the project adversely impact environmental justice communities?	Scale from 0 to 5 Worst Impact: 0 points No Impact: 5 points
State of Good Repair	Bridge rating Bridge Conditions Pavement Conditions	Does the project include a bridge with a sufficiency rating below 50, or has it been identified as having poor deck, structural or pavement conditions making it eligible for replacement according to GDOT standards?	Yes: 5 points No: 0 points

CORE MPO Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Manual

	Benefit/Cost	Do the project benefits justify the projects costs?	0-5
Intergovernmental Coordination	Project Status	What is the current project development stage?	CST: 5 points ROW: 3 points PE: 1 points
	Local Priority	In this grant application, what phase is the local sponsor contributing funds for?	CST: 5 points UTL: 4 points ROW: 3 points PE: 1 points
	Consistency with other local, regional and state plans		Yes: 5 points Neutral 0 points No: (5)points
	Financial feasibility	Is this project phase included in Cost Band One of Mobility 2045 (financially feasible in the next 10 years)?	Yes: 5 points No: 0 points

PROGRESS REPORTING

Funding recipients will be required to make regular progress reports (**bi-monthly**) to the CORE MPO TCC to ensure timely and efficient use of funds. The CORE MPO TCC will monitor progress and make timely recommendations to the CORE MPO Board to ensure full and timely use of the Z230 funds. If the applicant fails to make adequate progress towards funding authorization in the appropriate fiscal year, the funds will be rescinded and allocated to other priority projects in the waiting list. If the applicant has not obligated the awarded funds two years after funding authorization, the funds will be rescinded and put back to the STBG coffer for use by other priority projects in the waiting list or those selected in the next round of Call for Projects. **If the applicants fail to report on the project development status at the bi-monthly TCC meetings, they will risk not being considered for the next round of Call for Projects.**

CORE MPO CONTACT INFORMATION

CORE MPO will maintain a web page linked at <https://www.thempc.org/Core> (through Quick Links) during the application period where Questions & Answers will be listed. Applicants are encouraged to seek clarifications from MPO staff before submitting their application.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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912-651-1466
wangw@thempc.org