

Addendum (FAQ)

Guide to the
Selection of Regional
Transportation
Projects



WINTER 2025

Addendum

As part of the 2028-2031 Call for Projects, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) is providing additional information and clarification in support of the information provided in the *Guide to the Selection of Regional Transportation Projects*, Information Sessions, and Open Office Hours. The information is organized by subject matter and is based on questions received through the project call email address, open office hours, and information sessions.

These sections are designed to provide additional clarification on specific requirements and also outline the foundational principles that inform these requirements. Understanding these core principles will support a strategic approach to the project call process and help sponsors select the best projects and represent them accurately in their applications.

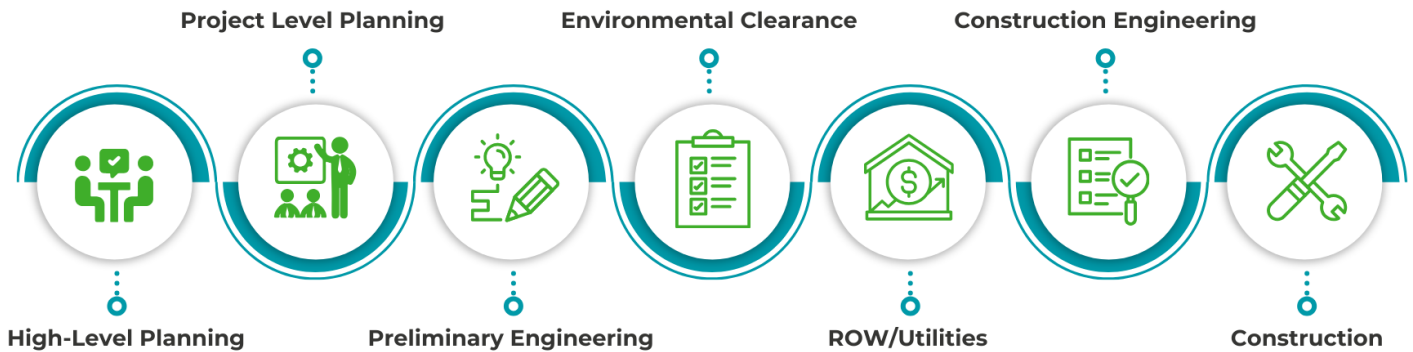
Please note that this document will be updated as appropriate with a final presentation and review at [Information Session 4](#) on January 14, 2026.

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The Project Development Process and Phase Eligibility

The project call process is designed to provide funding for the next sequential phase(s) in project development. To determine the eligible phase of your project, you must fully consider all work completed to-date along with the development needs determined by project complexity. Ideally, projects are developed in a sequential manner, because the requirements of each phase are based on the outcomes of the previous phase.



Please refer to the Readiness Assessment Requirements by Development Phase in the *Guide to the Selection of Regional Transportation Project* for additional information to support the determination of your project phase and the requirements of the phase being submitted for federal funding.

Understanding the Relationship between the Planning and Engineering Phases

Planning work provides a comprehensive and defensible decision-making process that ensures that a concept being moved into engineering has been determined to be technically feasible and the most appropriate concept to continue into preliminary engineering. This is important because the concept being proposed for engineering is the basis of the cost-estimate (and funding request) for the engineering phase. The planning phase also determines if a proposed project is technically feasible.

Because planning impacts the engineering phase so directly, projects that have not completed the planning phase will not be considered for preliminary engineering. This is because the outcomes of the planning process are necessary for the next phase including:

- Determine the specific engineering requirements and scope.
- Provide the basis for the engineering funding request.
- Determine if a project concept is technically feasible.

Requesting detailed engineering funding prematurely assumes the conclusions of the planning efforts, which contradicts the need for the planning phase in the first place.

How Project Complexity Influences the Planning and Engineering Phases

Complexity of the project has often been brought up in the potential for combining the planning and engineering phases. The complexity of a project does play a role in reducing the risk the planning outcomes would have on the engineering phase, but it does not remove the risk entirely. Comparing a complex project to a non-complex project illustrates this.

Complex Project (Multiple Potential Alternatives)

A complex project that has a wide range of alternatives that each offer very different engineering costs. An example would be a project with two significantly different alternative alignments: one alignment would cross a body of water and impact nearby parkland but would provide a more efficient route. The second alignment would provide a longer route but avoid water and parkland and has straightforward geometric design requirements. These alternatives have different engineering requirements, one alignment requiring bridge engineering, hydrology, and parkland impact mitigation, while the other is straightforward engineering. These alternatives have very different outcomes, and very different engineering phase requirements and costs.

Non-Complex Project (One Potential Alternative)

On the other hand, a non-complex project with only the no-build alternative option and one build alternative option offers a more straightforward alternatives analysis, where you can more reasonably assess the engineering requirements and cost estimate of the phase because there is only one build option. However, even if there is only one build alternative available, and we know what those costs would reasonably be – without the planning outcomes, it cannot be determined if the build option is technically feasible in the first place.

Limitations of Combining the Planning and Engineering Phases

As detailed in the *Guide to the Selection of Regional Transportation Project*, sponsors generally cannot include the preliminary engineering phase along with the planning phase. This is to avoid investing engineering funding (which is often very expensive) in project concepts that may change or may not be viable, all outcomes of the planning process.

However, planning requests may include some *elements* of engineering that do not go beyond conceptual schematics. These are conceptual schematics that support the planning process and alternative selection and may include some high-level engineering elements to determine feasibility. These elements are appropriate parts of the planning process and will be considered for funding. Often called Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER), the activities help support the detailed engineering of a project once the planning is complete.

A useful project development reference can be found in the [Texas Department of Transportation's Project Development Manual](#). Chapter 4 Preliminary Engineering details the engineering process for the alternatives analysis that can be conducted as part of the planning process detailed in 4.1 through 4.3 which ends with the geometric alternatives analysis. Geometric Schematic Design, as detailed in the section starting in 4.4, is not eligible to be included in planning requests.

Preliminary Engineering Reports versus Preliminary Engineering

Related to the previous section, it's important to review the difference between preliminary engineering and preliminary engineering reports (PER) that combine the planning phase with elements of engineering.

Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)

A preliminary engineering report (PER) is an early-stage planning document that outlines the feasibility, scope, and conceptual design prior to the beginning of the preliminary engineering (30%) process. PERs are similar in scope to traditional feasibility studies but include conceptual design schematics that are used in the alternative analysis with the early preferred alternative schematic used as the foundation for preliminary engineering. PER schematics are generally conceptual and meant to illustrate the proposed alternatives and feature basic layouts, major components, and simplified typical sections and profiles.

Preliminary Engineering (30%)

Preliminary engineering for transportation projects is a critical phase that bridges planning and final design. After planning and feasibility studies identify the preferred alternative, preliminary engineering develops that concept into a workable solution. This phase involves collecting detailed field data such as topographic surveys, geotechnical investigations, and the identification of specific impacts and acquisition requirements for right-of-way and detailed utility identification and coordination. The deliverables from preliminary engineering typically include 30% design plans—scaled drawings with dimensions, profiles, and typical sections—along with refined cost estimates and schedules. These detailed designs are also used for the environmental evaluation in the next development phase.

Comparison Table

	Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)	Preliminary Engineering
Purpose	Feasibility study, concept selection.	Technical design for preferred alternative.
Timing	Early in development during planning.	After planning process, before final design.
Deliverable	Planning report, conceptual schematics.	Preliminary design (30%), refined cost estimates.
Level of Detail	Conceptual layouts, no technical detail.	Detailed layouts, profiles, geotechnical data

As noted above, a useful project development reference can be found in the [Texas Department of Transportation's Project Development Manual](#).

Engineering Requirements for the Construction Phase

For this project call, the standard minimum of engineering and design completion required for construction phase request is 60%. This is to ensure engineering plans are sufficiently developed to demonstrate minimal risk of substantial design changes, cost estimate escalation, and schedule impacts.

This is based on the [average performance](#) of previously selected projects utilizing design and engineering plans earlier in the development process. Another useful tool to illustrate CAMPO's approach to engineering requirements are the guidelines from the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) . These highlight the design completion percentages and cost estimate accuracy ranges based on nation-wide information from states and MPO's.

NCHRP Cost Estimate Accuracy by Phase	
Phase	Accuracy Range
Planning	-30% to +50%
Programming	-30% to +50%
Preliminary (30%)	-15% to +30%
Intermediate (60%)	-10% to +20%
Final Design (90–100%)	-5% to +10%

Sponsors may submit engineering design sets below 60% if they believe that the design and project complexity demonstrate that minimum development risk, however they will be reviewed for risk in regard to the information that is typically developed later on in the design process. If the design plans are missing critical information, the project will not be considered ready.

Transportation Planning Requests and Partnership Requirements

Sponsors have requested additional clarification on the transportation planning partnership requirements outlined in the *Guide to the Selection of Regional Transportation Projects*, including if there is a limit to the number of studies awarded or flexibility to allow the local sponsor to manage the planning project directly.

There is no pre-set limit to the number of transportation planning projects to be awarded – this will be determined through a combination of regional value, schedule, duration, complexity, and capacity. All transportation planning project awards will be partnerships with CAMPO as detailed in the *Guide to the Selection of Regional Transportation Projects*.

Cost-Overruns and Local Impacts

Local sponsors are responsible for any and all cost over runs associated with project implementation. The funding award is a one-time allocation of funding. If a project sponsor cannot bear the additional costs, the funding award will be recommended for rescinding and made available to another project and sponsor. Cost-overruns and the significant negative impact it can have on local sponsor finances and the ability to remain on schedule, which is why this process requires accurate and detailed cost-estimates developed at the appropriate stage of project development.

Development Schedule and Future Funding Availability

A common question raised is regarding the development of a project, the project schedule, and the future funding availability. Many sponsors have noted that they can have the project fully developed and ready for construction by the time the funding is available, but that it is not currently ready.

Projects that could be ready for construction in time for the future fiscal years but have not completed the necessary activities to be ready for the submitted phase by the deadline for this project call will not be considered ready because the information that is produced in the continued development of a project is necessary for the readiness determination and benefit evaluation. Without that information, we cannot assess its readiness nor conduct an evaluation of future benefits.

For example, if a sponsor wants to submit a project for construction phase in Fiscal Year (FY) 2030 and currently only has very early design schematics, it is entirely reasonable that the project will be fully ready by FY 2030. The problem is that the continuing design work could significantly impact the final design, schedule, and cost-estimate. Without having that information on hand in the application, it is impossible to determine readiness requirements, evaluate the benefits, and ensure the project can stay on schedule.

Engineering Cost-Benefit Analysis

Sponsors have requested clarification on the cost-benefit analysis process for project development phases that are not construction but beyond the planning phases. CAMPO uses the federal funding request amounts against the projected project benefits to develop the CBA ratio or return on investment.

Because the engineering phase requests are much lower than the construction phase, measuring those funding requests the same would heavily skew the outcomes in favor of engineering requests. To normalize the CBA process, the estimated federal share of the cost of the construction phase for a project will be utilized for the CBA for any project development phase requests that do not include construction. The federal share of the construction phase will be determined using the same federal share of the submitted phase. For example, if a project sponsor is using the standard 80/20 match for their application. The CBA will assume an 80/20 match for the construction phase. If a sponsor is overmatching, the CBA will assume the overmatch ratio.

Safety Information and Regional Averages

The project selection criteria include the evaluation criteria that require sponsors to demonstrate that the project addresses a severe crash rate higher than the regional average. Below are the severe regional average rates by county and functional classification. Please use the information in the Regional Crash Rates (Severe Only) table as the regional average most appropriate for your project.

Regional Crash Rates (Severe Only)							
Area	Severe Crash Rate per VMT	Bastrop	Burnet	Caldwell	Hays	Travis	Williamson
Rural	Interstate/Freeway	N/A	N/A	3.17	N/A	10.16	1.81
	Principal Arterial	8.17	0.00	8.99	6.41	3.43	5.40
	Min. Arterial, Maj. Collector	15.32	9.66	12.17	7.37	11.43	11.81
Urban	Interstate/Freeway	5.79	N/A	3.14	3.54	4.22	3.43
	Principal Arterial	8.99	0.00	5.87	16.47	7.48	5.77
	Min. Arterial, Maj. Collector	8.91	15.18	12.21	8.94	9.78	7.51

To determine the crash rate of the project submission you will need to determine the number of severe crashes and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) within the project limits for 2022, 2023, and 2024. With this information, use the formula below to calculate the crash rate for the facility.

Project Crash Rate= (Number of Severe Crashes in Limits/Vehicle Miles Traveled) x 100,000,000

In addition to the severe crash rates, the total crash rates per facility and county are provided below. These are not the rates to be used for the severe crash rate criteria but may be included as appropriate.

Regional Crash Rates (All Crash Types)							
Area	Total Crash Rate per VMT	Bastrop	Burnet	Caldwell	Hays	Travis	Williamson
Rural	Interstate/Freeway	N/A	N/A	77.52	N/A	101.63	39.11
	Principal Arterial	119.01	48.30	94.86	111.30	55.61	65.11
	Min. Arterial, Maj. Collector	172.41	102.14	145.79	104.53	185.80	138.80
Urban	Interstate/Freeway	147.68	N/A	112.96	81.71	103.97	124.24
	Principal Arterial	257.00	349.54	275.21	331.80	163.46	230.16
	Min. Arterial, Maj. Collector	331.16	253.79	377.95	190.30	247.75	286.24

Sponsors may use supporting information available in the *Regional Safety Action Plan*, *State of Safety Report*, and *Safety Dashboard* to demonstrate the safety impacts of their projects. All resources are available on the CAMPO website and linked in the *Guide to the Selection of Regional Transportation Projects*.

Procurement Process

All federal funds must go through a TxDOT-approved procurement process that meets state and federal standards. This approval is required before going out for procurement for a federal funded project, however if a project sponsor has already procured a consultant or contractor, the TxDOT-Austin District can review the process utilized on a case-by-case basis to determine if the federal funding can be used for the existing contract. Sponsors may reach out to TxDOT for additional clarification on their specific projects, but sponsors should assume that a new procurement will be required and prepare their applications accordingly.

Match Considerations

The match is the local funding allocated to the phase of the project awarded federal funding and is directly tied to the federal funding reimbursement process. Local funding and investment in earlier project development, or non-eligible phases concurrent with the requested phase, such as post-let utility relocation, is not considered match or in-kind contribution.

ROW and Utility Relocation Eligibility

As noted in the *Guide to the Selection of Regional Transportation Projects* and information sessions a, right-of-way acquisition and utility relocations are not eligible for award through this process.

Cost-Benefit Analysis and Modeling

As noted in the *Guide to the Selection of Regional Transportation Projects* and information sessions, the cost-benefit analysis will be conducted by CAMPO using information provided in the application. Sponsors that have conducted previous cost-benefit analysis and modeling for their projects may submit that information to CAMPO for use in the CBA process, subject to verification.

Resolution Submission After the Application Due Date

CAMPO is providing limited flexibility for sponsors regarding resolutions, understanding that the approval process can take some time. Resolutions from governing bodies (boards, council, and commissioners court) may be submitted after the application due date with certain restrictions and acceptance requirements. In order to ensure fairness and accountability for all sponsors, resolutions that will be submitted after the due date are subject to the following restrictions:

- The application must include the draft resolution and agenda.
- The application must include the scheduled date for consideration by the approving body.
- The signed resolution must be submitted to funding@campotexas.org by February 20, 2026.
- Until a signed resolution is received, associated readiness requirements have not been met.
- Resolutions that are not received by the due date above will not be considered.

No other materials submitted after the application due date will be considered.

Planning Scope Support

Sponsors have requested project samples for transportation planning studies and preliminary engineering reports. Below are a few links to relevant studies and resources that can be used reference for project sponsors in developing their own project scopes.

Please note, these are a few select references only, there are numerous resources available online. Additionally, sponsors using these resources must develop and submit a custom scope of work that is tailored to the needs of their projects and process. As with all resources, being listed here does not mean they are acceptable for your projects – use professional judgement, conduct your own research, and thoughtfully prepare the scope of your project to meet the process requirements and your needs as a sponsor.

- [CAMPO - Local Plans and Studies](#)
- [TxDOT - Project Development Manual \(through Chapter 4.3\)](#)
- [FHWA - Planning](#)
- [ITE – Transportation Planning Resources](#)

Functional Classification

Sponsors should understand the functional classification requirements for federal funding eligibility and how that impacts their project. The official functional classification for federal funding is maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation and is located on the [statewide planning map](#). Local transportation plan classifications are not used for federal funding eligibility. Please refer to the [Project Readiness Workshop](#) presentation and linked materials within the slides for additional information on that process.

Regional Significance

Sponsors should consider that project selection process prioritizes regionally significant projects. Even if a project is functional classified and eligible to receive federal funding, it does not mean it is considered regionally significant. For information on regional significance, please review the [2050 Regional Transportation Plan](#) which includes the adopted regional definition (Page 53).

Pre-Application Review

Sponsors may submit materials to CAMPO for high-level feedback prior to the application due date through the project call email funding@campotexas.org. These reviews will be limited to the material provided, staff time available, and are not considered definitive determinations, as those require complete applications and in-depth reviews. Requests submitted after January 14, 2025, may not receive a response prior to the application deadline.