

**Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments  
Highway Infrastructure Program**

The Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) is a federal-aid transportation program, which provides funding that may be used by states and localities for transportation improvement projects. This program was funded by the Omnibus bill passed by Congress in March 2018 and is only for construction of highways, bridges, and tunnels.

**Funding Levels**

A formula is used to apportion the HIP funds to each State based on its population as a ratio of the nation’s total population. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) then provides allocations of HIP funds to the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG), relative to the census information, to advance local priorities within Cowlitz County. Through a call for projects, CWCOG distributes these funds to priority projects within Cowlitz County based on criteria derived from the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) goals and policies. Criteria is also developed to help Washington State meet its Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) performance measure targets.

Funding was only allocated to the HIP for 2018 in the amount of \$232,310. Seventy-eight percent can be spent in the county’s cities over 5,000 in population and twenty-two percent can be spent in the county’s rural areas. The urban and rural areas funding availability is shown in the table below.

	Urban Areas > 5,000	Rural Areas < 5,000	Total Available to Projects in Cowlitz County
FFY 2018	\$180,834	\$51,477	\$232,310

Please be aware that all funds programmed as a result of this call for projects is subject to modification, pending Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) confirmation of funding availability.

**Eligibility Criteria**

In order to be eligible for HIP funding, a project must meet the **minimum criteria** outlined in this section. These minimum criteria follow federal and state funding requirements. Projects that do not meet these criteria will not be ranked and thus will not be considered for funding.

- Project must be consistent with the goals and policies of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).
- Project must be for the construction of highways, bridges, and tunnels per 23 USC 133(b)(1)(A). Construction includes design and right-of-way when it is directly related to the construction of the roadway project per 23 USC 101(a)(4). Funds cannot be used for transportation alternatives, ferries, transit, and transportation planning/studies.
- Project must be on a roadway functionally classified as higher than rural minor collectors. FHWA and WSDOT have stated that rural minor collectors and local access roads are not eligible to utilize HIP funding.
- Project must be locally administered. By submitting a project for HIP funding, the municipality or local government entity is committing funds to sponsor said project. The applicant (if awarded) shall be responsible for all federal and state reporting requirements associated with HIP funding.

- Applicant must be an eligible agency. All projects must be administered by a certification acceptance (CA) agency. Non-CA agencies can apply for HIP funds but must have a CA agency sponsor for the project. The sponsorship must be in place prior to project selection.
- Project proposal includes a minimum local match of 13.5 percent. Agencies that receive HIP funding are responsible for providing the required matching funds.

### **Project Review, Prioritization, and Award Process**

CWCOG has the responsibility to administer HIP funds in a way that supports the RTP, established funding priorities, and statewide MAP-21 performance measure targets. Projects must be regionally significant or considered important to the local transportation network. The intent of the project review, prioritization, and award process is to provide the opportunity to fund regional/countywide-funding priorities, while implementing the RTP's goals and policies and helping to meet statewide performance measures.

Review. Each project submitted will be evaluated by CWCOG staff for compliance with the minimum eligibility criteria. All projects meeting the eligibility criteria will be forwarded to the Cowlitz Area Technical Advisory Committee (CATAC) for review based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this section (see page 4). Please note that CATAC members will not be able to evaluate their own projects and urban projects will not compete against rural ones. The evaluation criteria identified below is based on the RTP's goals and policies, and focuses on those projects that promote safety; system preservation and enhancement of existing transportation facilities; economic vitality; and choice and mobility.

Prioritization. Projects will be ranked based on how well they meet the evaluation criteria listed above. MPO projects will be prioritized based on the same criteria.

Awards. The CATAC will make funding recommendations based upon the amount of available HIP funds, the project's rank/prioritization, and the funding requests for each project. All ranked/prioritized projects will be forwarded to the CWCOG Board for consideration. CWCOG staff will present the CATAC's recommendations to the CWCOG Board. The CWCOG Board will make the final funding selections.

Recipients of HIP funds will receive written notification of funding approval within 30 days of the award. CWCOG will submit the list of approved HIP project selections to WSDOT Local Programs. All projects funded with HIP funds must be included or amended into the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) showing full phase/project funding prior to authorizing federal funding. These RTIP amendments are the responsibility of the applicant to provide to the CWCOG. Selected projects will also need to enter into a Local Agency Agreement (LAA) with WSDOT's Local Programs office to authorize the funding.

### **Project Scope Changes**

Any project scope changes will need to be approved by the CWCOG. If a scope change is accompanied by a request for additional HIP funds, a new project application will be required. In such instances, the local government entities will be responsible to contact CWCOG staff to discuss the project and complete a full application prior to the next CATAC meeting. CWCOG staff will determine if funds are available for distribution, review the application, and forward it to the CATAC for their review. In addition, CWCOG staff will take the CATAC recommendation to the CWCOG Board for a final decision on the request for HIP funds.

### Contingency List

A list of contingency projects may be developed in addition to the selected project list. A project from the contingency list will be chosen to move forward if one of the selected projects fails to obligate or returns the funds. Neither WSDOT Local Programs nor CWCOC is required to provide funding for any project listed on the contingency list.

### Project Programming and Obligation

Unlike Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP) or Transportation Alternatives (TA) where obligations need to occur no later than the year the funds are programmed in order for CWCOC to continue to meet obligation delivery targets, the HIP funds are not included in the delivery targets. The HIP funds need to be programmed in the RTIP and STIP in the year obligation is planned by the local agency and obligation must occur by September 30, 2021. Any HIP funds not obligated by September 30, 2021 will be lost.

### Timeline

Date(s)	Description
August 3, 2018	CATAC Reviews Draft HIP Guidance/Application Form (Revised Sections)
August 23, 2018	CWCOC Board Approves HIP Guidance and Application Form
September 21 – November 2, 2018	Call for Projects Open
November 5 - 9, 2018	CWCOC Staff Reviews Applications and Forwards to CATAC
December 6, 2018	Project Review, Prioritization, and Recommendations at CATAC Meeting
December 20, 2018	Recommended HIP Project Selections to CWCOC Board for Approval
By December 31, 2018	Award Letters Mailed; WSDOT Local Programs Notified of Selected Projects
By September 30, 2021	All HIP Funds Awarded Must be Obligated

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Weighted Score</b>
<b>Economic Vitality (Maximum Points – 12)</b>			
A. Project is anticipated to increase employment opportunities?	1	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	/5
B. Project increases the capacity or efficiency of the freight network (trucking, rail, marine, or air cargo services)?	1	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	/5
C. Project is on a truck route identified in the Washington State Freight and Goods Transportation System?	1	Yes = 1 No = 0	/1
D. Project is included in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)?	1	Yes = 1 No = 0	/1
<b>System Preservation and Enhancement (Maximum Points – 40)</b>			
A. Project preserves/rehabilitates existing facilities and networks?	4	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	/20
B. Project improves, rebuilds, or retrofits facilities and networks, which have exceeded their useful and functional life?	4	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	/20
<b>Safety (Maximum Points – 40)</b>			
A. Project will help address known safety issues considering historical accidents documented in WSDOT's crash data, local plans, or other means?	4	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	/20
B. Project will eliminate or minimize safety hazards (sight, distance, intersection layout, school zone, sidewalk, railroad crossings, access control, lighting, etc.)?	2	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	/10
C. Project improves the design and operation of the facility?	2	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	/10
<b>Choice and Mobility (Maximum Points – 5)</b>			
A. Project improves connectivity between population centers and employment or activity centers (i.e. retail, school, community center, recreation center, park, library)?	1	Significantly = 5 Moderately = 3 Slightly = 1 Not at All = 0	/5
<b>Maximum Points (excluding possible bonus points)</b>			<b>97</b>
<b>Bonus Points</b>			
Provides additional funding to existing project already awarded STBGP funding?			Add 2 Points
Project is located on the National Highway System?			Add 1 Point
All funds, except for the requested HIP funds, have been secured?			Add 5 Points