



Understanding STIP

Guidance for North Carolina's 72 NPIAS airports

STIP Overview

The State of North Carolina provides millions of dollars each year to help North Carolina's public use airports develop and maintain their infrastructure. One source of state funding is allocated through the N.C. Department of Transportation's [State Transportation Improvement Program](#), or STIP.

The STIP is a multi-year plan that identifies design, land acquisition and construction funding for and scheduling of both highway and non-highway transportation projects throughout the state, including selected projects at airports. State law requires NCDOT to create this multi-year plan

The STIP covers a 10-year period. The first five years of the document is known as the delivery STIP, and the last five years of the document cover what is considered the development period. It outlines the projects that NCDOT plans to work on during that timeframe.

This guidance document describes what airport projects are eligible for STIP funding, how to submit and advocate for airport projects, and how the STIP prioritization process works. The goal is to provide insights that allow airports to successfully apply for and receive funding that supports their airport's vision and plan.

As always, NCDOT Division of Aviation (NCDOT Aviation) airport project managers (APMs) are the primary point of contact for questions and assistance for public airports navigating this process.

Eligibility

North Carolina's 72 public that are part of the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems, or NPIAS, are eligible for STIP funding. STIP classifies airports into three funding categories, based on their size and contribution to the system.

- **Statewide Mobility** – includes the five commercial service airports with more than 375,000 enplanements per year or that have international service. The five airports are: Asheville Regional,

STIP ACRONYMS

STIP State Transportation Improvement Program

SPOT Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation

STIP HIGHLIGHTS IN BRIEF

- STIP funds are available to both commercial service and general aviation airports.
- STIP provides 100% state funds, with no local match required, programmed through the SPOT prioritization process every two years.
- Scored projects are scheduled over a 10-year period; only the first five years are considered programmed for funding.
- Project costs must be updated bi-annually in EBS until funding is awarded.
- SPOT assigns the schedule for funding within the 10 years. If the schedule changes, airports must notify their airport project manager (APM).
- The APM submits a schedule change to the NCDOT Board of Transportation (BOT) to amend the STIP. Schedule changes require two board meetings and can affect aviation projects throughout the state due to the division cap.
- Each phase of work requires NCDOT BOT approval request for funding, developed in coordination with both APM and sponsor.
- Each project may be phased into four WBS elements.
- All STIP WBSs begin with 4 and end in:
 - 1.1 for design and environmental.
 - 2.1 for land acquisition expenses.
 - 3.1 for construction/contract administration (CA)/resident project representative (RPR) expenses.
 - 4.1 for mitigation fees over \$100,000.
- Any project that requires two separate projects (such as a road relocation prior to a runway extension) must be phased, which may result in WBSs ending in 1.2, 2.2 or 3.2. Coordinate this with your airport project manager.
- NCDOT seeks to close grants with no billings after 18 months. Sponsors must submit a reason for delays to request keeping STIP funds beyond that time.



Charlotte Douglas International, Piedmont Triad International, Raleigh-Durham International and Wilmington International. These airports are eligible for a cap (maximum award) of \$500,000 for each proposed project per year for the active life of the project.

- **Regional Impact** – includes the remaining five commercial service airports, which have less than 375,000 annual enplanements. They are: Albert J. Ellis in Jacksonville, Coastal Carolina Regional in New Bern, Concord-Padgett Regional, Fayetteville Regional and Pitt-Greenville. These airports are eligible for a cap (maximum award) of \$300,000 for each proposed project per year for the active life of the project.
- **Division Needs** – includes all of the 62 general aviation airports in the state that are public use and included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems, or NPIAS. These airports are collectively eligible for a maximum of \$18.5 million a year.

The type of projects eligible for STIP funding, and the formula for scoring them, can change slightly every two years, when the Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) prepares to update the STIP. The current STIP, referred to as P7.0, considered projects that allow the airport to exceed the objectives set for its airport type in the North Carolina Airport System Plan (which sets regulatory requirements for the airport’s infrastructure), increase the capacity of the airport or modernize it.

P7.0 allowed these types of projects, called Specific Improvement Types (SIT):

- 0100 - Runway Approach
- 0200 - Runway Safety Area
- 0300 - Runway Protection Zones
- 0500 - Runway Length & Width
- 0600 - Pavement Strength
- 0800 - Runway Edge Lighting
- 1100 - Taxiway Requirements
- 1200 - Aircraft Apron / Helipad Requirements
- 1300 - General Aviation Terminal Building
- 1300 - General Aviation Terminal Building
- 1400 - Taxiway and Apron Edge Lighting
- 1500 - Airfield Signage
- 1700 - Approach Lighting
- 1900 - Hangars
- 2100 - Perimeter Fencing
- 2200 - Fuel Facilities
- 3000 - Other

Proposing Projects for the STIP

Airports projects are submitted for consideration in the biennial STIP prioritization process by the airport’s associated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or Rural Planning Organization (RPO). Only full projects that include all design, land and construction necessary to complete the project should be entered for scoring. Project costs must be updated every other year in EBS until funding is awarded.

Proposed projects must be contained in the airport’s Airport Layout Plan. Since STIP is a competitive funding program, submittals should make a strong case for why their project benefits the community through enhanced facilities and services. Since the STIP prioritization process takes two years and projects are programmed over 10 years, airports should not submit projects, such as safety projects, that must be addressed in a shorter time frame.

Airports can get assistance from their NCDOT Aviation airport project manager to determine which projects are best suited for STIP and which

What makes a “good” STIP project?

- “Full” projects that include design, land, and construction
- Projects contained on the Airport Layout Plan
- Clear, concise, project descriptions including the “why” of the project
- Project Request entry in EBS, with up-to-date cost estimates that include all phases of work
- Projects that do not require completion in the next five years.



are better suited for other state and federal funding sources, so that funding from all sources can be optimized.

Strategic Prioritization Process

STIP-funded transportation projects are prioritized based on the [Strategic Mobility Formula](#), established by the N.C. Strategic Transportation Investments law in 2013. It combines data-driven scoring with local input to identify which projects will be programmed for funding during the 10-year period. While STIP provides 100% funding for projects, committing a local match can increase a project's score.

The [prioritization process](#), which takes about two years, is broken into three main phases:

- **Strategic Transportation Prioritization (SPOT)**, the transparent, public process used to develop the STIP. The process involves scoring all roadway, public transportation, bicycle, pedestrian, rail, and aviation projects on a range of criteria, such as safety, congestion, benefit-cost and local priorities. MPOs, RPOs and NCDOT division offices contribute to the final project score by assigning local priority points to projects.
- **Programming and scheduling**, when NCDOT develops a proposed STIP, based on the scores, rankings, readiness factors such as completion of environmental and engineering plans, spending caps and federal and state funding restrictions.
- **Review and approval**, when individual projects that are programmed and scheduled become the Draft State Transportation Improvement Program. The Draft STIP is released to the public for review and comment, then submitted for final approval to the N.C. Board of Transportation.

Once the process is complete, a new STIP is released, showing schedules and costs. Projects shown in the first five years of the existing STIP are considered programmed and will not be rescored during prioritizations. Projects beyond five years will be rescored and considered in each prioritization cycle.

Managing STIP Projects

Once the STIP is approved by the NCDOT Board of Transportation, NCDOT Aviation airport project managers (APMs) work with airports to manage the project schedule and funding requests.

The date identified for each project in the STIP schedule is the date set for airports to bid (let) construction. Airports should work with their APMs to keep projects as close to schedule as possible to reduce STIP cap impacts on airport projects throughout the state. NCDOT Aviation will request cost updates to be entered in EBS, which is required for all projects, so that NCDOT can manage the pace of spending.

STIP provides separate grants for design, land acquisition and construction phases of each project. Each phase of work requires a new Board of Transportation approval for award and should be requested at least six weeks in advance of beginning that phase of work.

All STIP project WBSs begin with 4 and end in:

- 1.1 for design and environmental.
- 2.1 for land acquisition expenses.
- 3.1 for construction/contract administration (CA)/resident project representative (RPR) expenses.
- 4.1 for projects with mitigation fees that exceed \$100,000.



If project have separate bid processes, airports should work with their APM to develop additional WBS elements for the second phase such as a roadway relocation followed by a runway extension. This is necessary to track the separate construction contracts and minority goals associated with each bid.

Airports should follow the NCDOT aviation grants process for STIP funds using grants checklists AV-101, 102 and 103 on the [Connect website](#). Project expenses should be broken out to show that STIP funds will not reimburse expenses paid with federal or other grant funds for the same project.

Any land acquisition completed with STIP funds must provide the documents noted in the AV-100, page 2, checklist and follow the land acquisition guidance on the Connect website. NCDOT recommends the use of prequalified appraisers to prevent delays. Land exceeding \$1 million must receive two appraisals to meet UNIFORM Act requirements.

STIP requires NCDOT Aviation to provide biennial cost updates for programmed STIP projects. To comply with this requirement, airports may be asked to update project cost information for their STIP projects each fall as part of the division's annual Call for Projects or at other times as necessary to meet STIP deadlines.

Commercial service airports are eligible for a cap (maximum award) for each programmed project per year for the active life of the project. These funds may be spent during any phase of the project (design, land, construction) but must be spent while the phase is actively under way. Each phase requires a new WBS. Commercial service airports should coordinate their funding schedules with their APM.