User's Guide to APA

Automated Proposal Application

Maintained by the Contract Standards and Development Unit
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Preface

This user guide provides user's step-by-step instructions for the initial set up and use of the Automated Proposal Application (APA) web based line up sheet used in the creation of NCDOT highway construction proposals. The Contract Standards and Development Unit maintains APA and a library of provisions used in the General, Roadway and Standard Provision sections of the proposal. Division personnel and other responsible units are asked to supply and maintain project specific provisions and guidance in addition to these standard provisions maintained by the Contract Standards and Development Unit. Any provisions or suggestions for improvement can be directed to specs@ncdot.gov.

The APA provides a simple solution for uploading project information, using the current standard provisions and guidance, inserting project specific provisions, providing a consistent look in proposals, and sharing project information between districts, divisions and Raleigh; as well as MPO's, RPO's, cities, towns and private engineering firm contractors tasked with compiling proposals using NCDOT managed State and Federal funding. The user can customize the lineup sheet by specifying if the project is for general highway construction, resurfacing projects, small business projects, etc.

Using the provisions provided in the lineup sheet, the program automatically formats the proposal into Times New Roman font and single spaced paragraphs. The headings and page numbers for the proposal are automatically supplied. A Table of Contents is created using the formatted headings of the provision titles in the General Section and using the unit titles. For project specific provisions, using the templates found on the APA home page to develop your provision and insert them will allow for the continued consistent provision output of Times New Roman font and single spaced paragraphs.

APA highlights project specific data (red text, "tags") in the saved proposal for quick review. Project data used through the proposal is either uploaded automatically or only entered once. Location-specific data like address or Proposal Engineer's email can be customized for each proposal as needed. Other pre-populated information is aligned with the advertisement date set for the project.

Once a project and proposal is created, it can be called up using the contract number, TIP number, Description, or WBS number. APA checks for updates automatically and amends the lineup sheet of provisions with the latest guidance each time you view and edit the proposal. As a result you should ensure your letting date project proposal utilizes the proper provision option for that letting if there has been an update available from the time you created the project proposal to the time of generating the advertised proposal. If you return to a created project, the project will automatically

include the latest asphalt, fuel and steel prices inserting the correct values based on the advertisement date, provision guidance, and provision file updates in your previously saved project will also be available. If funding changes you may change the project between funding sources (state or federal) and the provisions will update accordingly to reflect that change removing those that are unapplicable and adding the new provisions that are applicable to that funding source for the project edited. In an edited project situation needs such as a funding source change, any automatically selected provisions based on initial project set-up will not be available systematically in the application for an edited project instance. It is recommended that you document at the overall proposal notes field on the edit proposal page what you changed from the original project proposal built in order to remind to complete the following actions for ensured success in including the required provisions when edits are required at the project level.

- If change funding source, such as "state" to "federal" or vice versa have to search ((Ctrl+f) in the Edit Proposal screen) to find the word "federal" or vice versa "state" and select to "include" those as it is not automatically "included" such as when you create a new project.
- If change county at this time Burn Notice and the federal Davis Bacon Wage Decision would need to be checked to ensure proper selection based on the county list by each. Just search ((Ctrl+f) on the Edit Proposal screen) for the county name to ensure no provision is missed that is required.

There is also clone a project proposal capability available in this system, <u>it is critical when you clone a project you do not initially change the Funding Source, County, Project Type, Managed By, Proposal For</u> information. If you edit these before cloning initially you will have errors in your generated proposal. Clone assists you in minimizing future proposal work if a like project, ideally you do not change the project page at all but if you do have to make a change do so on your second edit iteration of this cloned project.

APA also allows you to keep track of proposal review passes, advertisement status and let status. Changing the project proposal to the Final Let Proposal status cleans up your project proposal listing to exclude those awarded, however the system allows you to view all projects (when "Showing All" on the Projects list page) if so needed as a resource in the future (such as cloning). You can add critical notes to provisions as well as project specific provisions. Project specific provisions can be inserted via a word file added to the project NCDOT Preconstruction website or can be manually added by insert and pathing functionality or drag and drop functionality from a drive location if no such project NCDOT Preconstruction website is available or needed for your project proposal.

APA is a tool to quickly create and review proposals in a standard format using the latest data available. Your feedback is essential to make this tool efficient! Please send comments to specs@ncdot.gov.

Chapter 1: Getting Started (One Time Only)

Topics you will learn in this chapter:

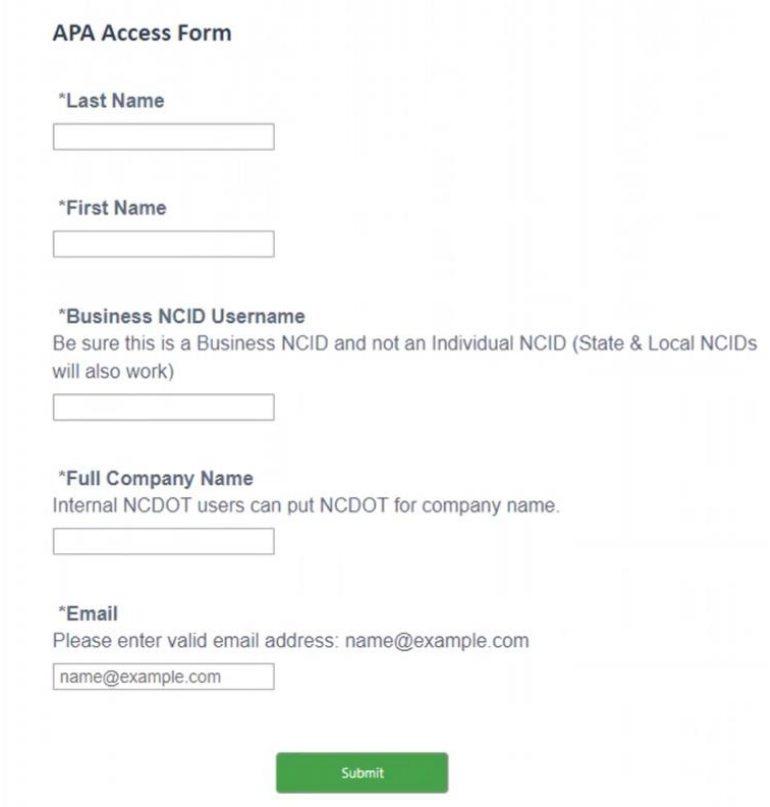
- ✓ Automated Proposal Application (APA) Access Process.
- ✓ Opening APA.

Automated Proposal Application (APA) Access Process

In order to use APA, you must be an NCDOT employee or external party (LGA or Firm or Embedded Consultant to NCDOT) that is performing the function of a proposal developer, have an NCID (Business NCID), and request permission to access the system. Chrome or Edge are acceptable browsers for this application. In order to be part of the user list, please follow the instructions on this APA home page website https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Specifications/Pages/APA.aspx. Feel free to email specs@ncdot.gov if you have any questions. This is a one-time activity and should not need to be repeated unless you have a Business NCID change.

Internal NCDOT employees, to include embedded consultants, steps required to access the system:

Fill out and submit the form on this website https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Specifications/Pages/APA.aspx.


APA Access Form

*Last Name

*First Name

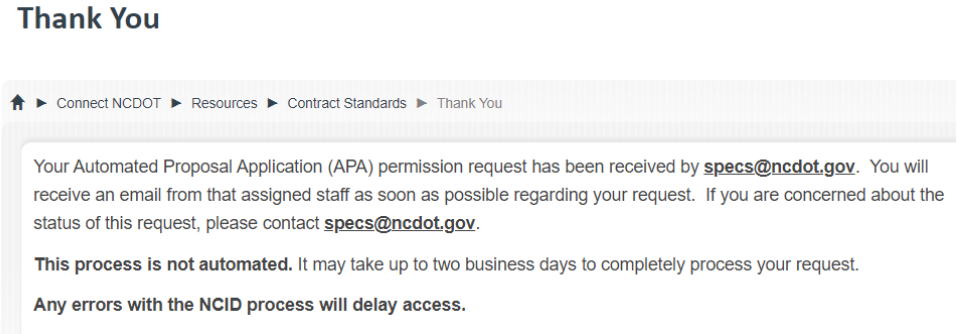
*Business NCID Username
Be sure this is a Business NCID and not an Individual NCID (State & Local NCIDs will also work)

*Full Company Name
Internal NCDOT users can put NCDOT for company name.

*Email
Please enter valid email address: name@example.com
name@example.com

Submit

You will receive a notification that your request has been submitted.


Thank You

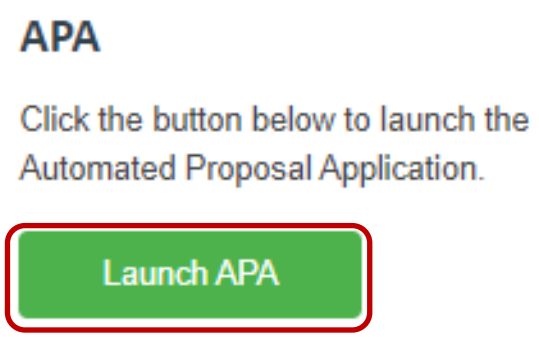
Connect NCDOT ► Resources ► Contract Standards ► Thank You

Your Automated Proposal Application (APA) permission request has been received by specs@ncdot.gov. You will receive an email from that assigned staff as soon as possible regarding your request. If you are concerned about the status of this request, please contact specs@ncdot.gov.

This process is not automated. It may take up to two business days to completely process your request.

Any errors with the NCID process will delay access.

Once you have received confirmation with an introductory email that you have permission, you may access the application by clicking on “Launch APA”. You will be reminded to review the training documentation such as this documentation and the training video recordings prior to getting started since your permissions not only allow you to edit your project proposal work but also edit others in your Division, Local Government Agency, or Contracted Firm completing proposal work for a North Carolina transportation entity.



If you have access issues with APA, please contact specs@ncdot.gov.

External to NCDOT employees steps required to access the system:

You will need to have a Business NCID available to share or acquire a Business NCID. Follow the instructions on this site to obtain a Business NCID.https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Specifications/Pages/APA.aspx.

External Users - Get Access - NCID

New External Users will need a BUSINESS NCID to sign in. An individual NCID will not work properly for access to NCDOT Connect websites. Follow these steps to get your NCID and access to the **Automated Proposal Application (APA) Site.** *Internal NCDOT users can pro ceed directly to the form below.*

If you do not have a Business NCID or it is expired:

1. Click this link to get your business NCID - **https://connect.ncdot.gov/getaccount/**
2. Please check your email to complete the registration process or you will have to re-register again after 3 days. Follow the link in the email to confirm your email address.
3. Make sure the above steps are completed prior to sending the request via the form below.
4. Once your NCID is synced and added to the DOT site you will receive another email letting you know you have been added and You must then follow the link in the email to change your password **BEFORE YOU CAN ACCESS the DOT site.**

Note: Step 4 above happens after you receive confirmation of the permission request form below being completed for APA access. You will receive a letter such as what is noted below when you set-up your NCID permissions with NCDOT.

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: ncid.notifications@nc.gov <ncid.notifications@nc.gov>
To: [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 at 07:17:05 AM EDT
Subject: Change your NCID account password

Hello [redacted],

This is an automated message sent by the myNCID Self-Service system. Please do not reply to this message.

You have been added to the DOT AD group.

Before you access the DOT AD application, please go to https://myncid.nc.gov/ and change your password.

Thank you.

Next fill out and submit the form on this website https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Specifications/Pages/APA.aspx.

APA Access Form

***Last Name**

***First Name**

***Business NCID Username**
Be sure this is a Business NCID and not an Individual NCID (State & Local NCIDs will also work)

***Full Company Name**
Internal NCDOT users can put NCDOT for company name.

***Email**
Please enter valid email address: name@example.com
name@example.com

Submit

You will receive a notification that your request has been submitted.

Thank You

Connect NCDOT ► Resources ► Contract Standards ► Thank You

Your Automated Proposal Application (APA) permission request has been received by **specs@ncdot.gov**. You will receive an email from that assigned staff as soon as possible regarding your request. If you are concerned about the status of this request, please contact **specs@ncdot.gov**.

This process is not automated. It may take up to two business days to completely process your request.

Any errors with the NCID process will delay access.

As well as another notification with an introductory email that you have permission, you may access the application by clicking on "Launch APA" as well as instruction processes. You will be reminded to review the training documentation such as this documentation and the training video recordings prior to getting started since your permissions not only allow you to edit your project proposal work but also edit others in your Division, Local Government Agency, or Contracted Firm completing proposal work for a North Carolina transportation entity.

APA

Click the button below to launch the Automated Proposal Application.

Launch APA

Reminder Complete Step 4 of the earlier set of instructions as noted below. Also ensure you watch all videos and review this documentation prior to getting started.

External Users - Get Access - NCID

New External Users will need a **BUSINESS NCID** to sign in. An individual NCID will not work properly for access to NCDOT Connect websites. Follow these steps to get your NCID and access to the **Automated Proposal Application (APA) Site.** *Internal NCDOT users can pro ceed directly to the form below.*

If you do not have a Business NCID or it is expired:

1. Click this link to get your business NCID - **https://connect.ncdot.gov/getaccount/**
2. Please check your email to complete the registration process or you will have to re-register again after 3 days. Follow the link in the email to confirm your email address.
3. Make sure the above steps are completed prior to sending the request via the form below.
4. Once your NCID is synced and added to the DOT site you will receive another email letting you know you have been added and You must then follow the link in the email to change your password **BEFORE YOU CAN ACCESS the DOT site.**

You will receive a letter such as what is noted below when you set-up your NCID permissions with NCDOT. The link to change your password is in that notification such as what is listed below.)

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: ncid.notifications@nc.gov <ncid.notifications@nc.gov>
To: [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 at 07:17:05 AM EDT
Subject: Change your NCID account password

Hello [redacted],

This is an automated message sent by the myNCID Self-Service system. Please do not reply to this message.

You have been added to the DOT AD group.

Before you access the DOT AD application, please go to https://myncid.nc.gov/ and change your password.

Thank you.

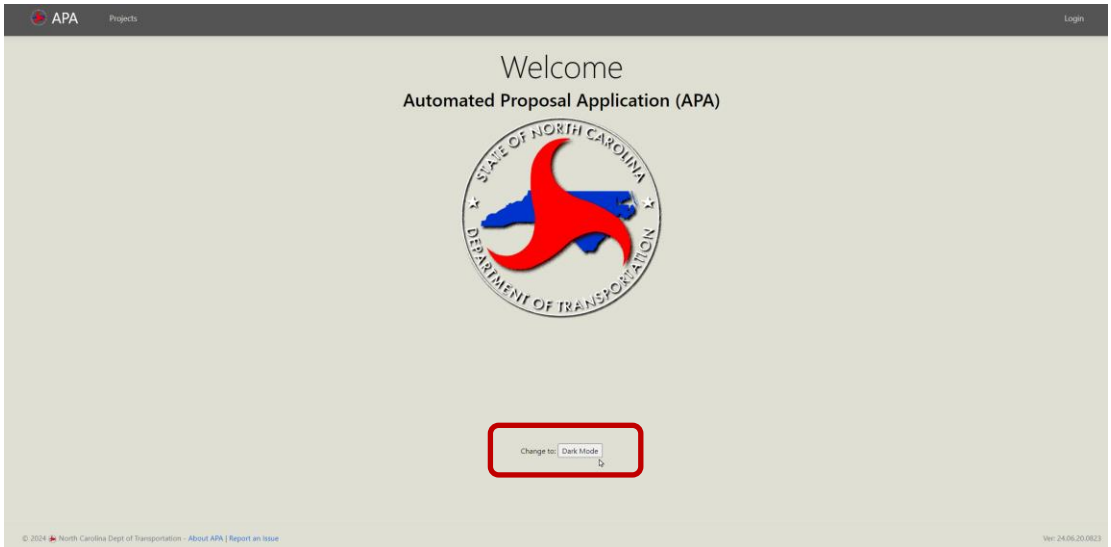
However, if you still have questions on your NCID, please contact the NCDIT Service Desk at any time by calling 800-722-3946. You can also chat live weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with an NCDIT Service Desk specialist at https://it.nc.gov/support/chat. If you have access issues with APA, please contact specs@ncdot.gov.

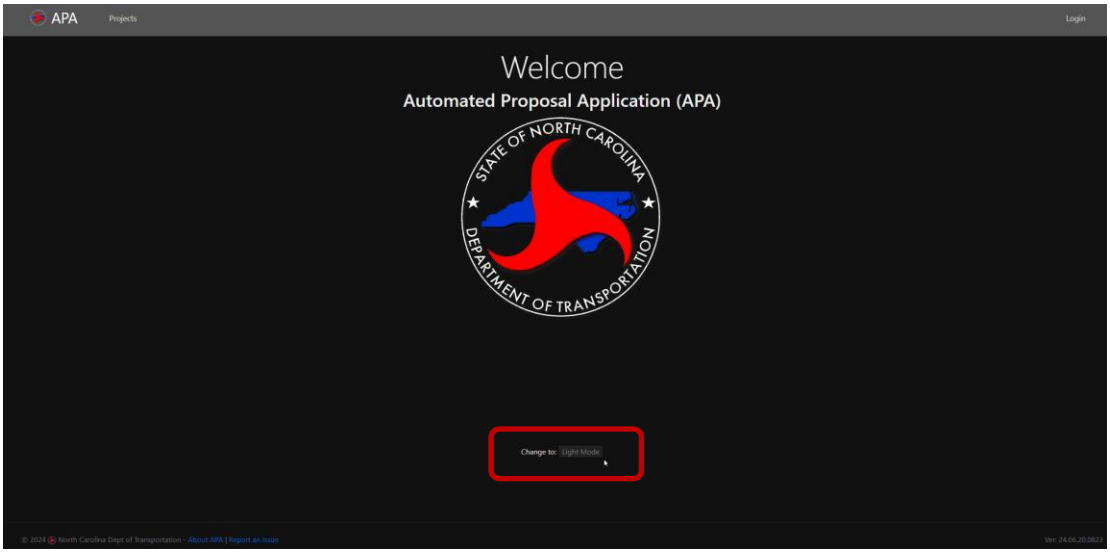
Opening APA

Congratulations, you have APA access https://engblp.services.ncdot.gov/EAD/APA and you have become a registered user, and you are ready to create a proposal!

Prior to getting started, it is important to review the APA Training Videos series found on this website https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Specifications/Pages/APA.aspx and this "Using NCDOT Automated Proposal Application (APA)" document that summarizes the videos. This is to become familiar with the system prior to getting started and a good source of information to resource if you have a specific question on the process as you develop your proposals.

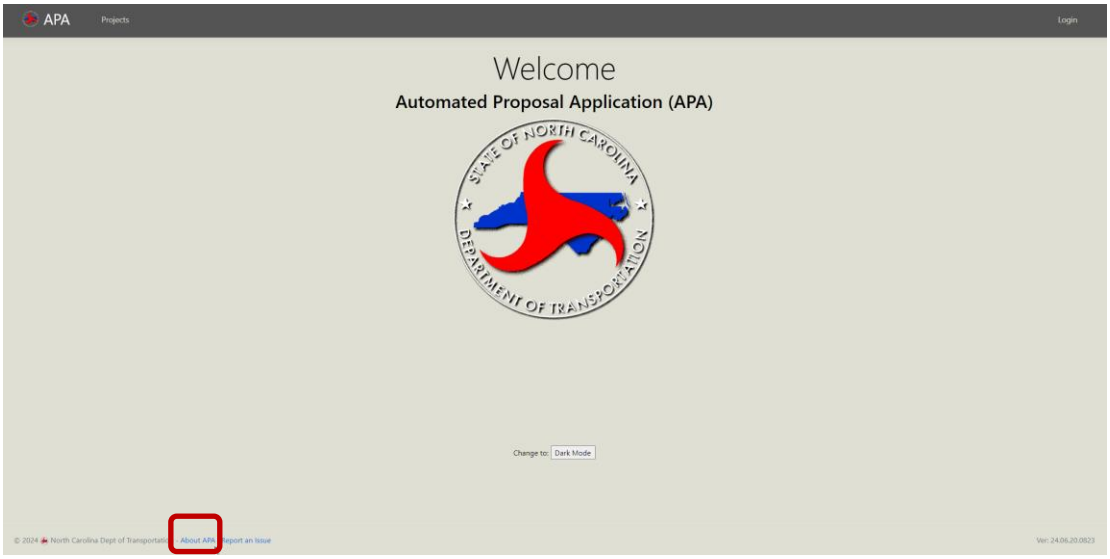
The first step is to choose your view. You have the option to choose "Dark Mode" to change the look of the tool. The outcomes of selected dark mode is noted below. You will need to choose your mode type prior to logging in. Simply select "Light Mode" to change back to the initially displayed view.



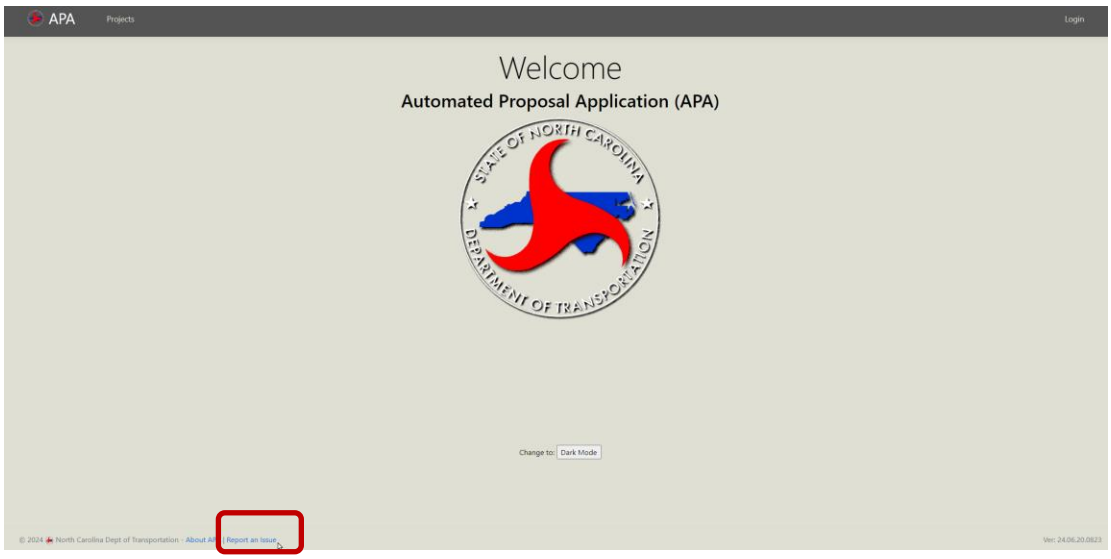


The Automated Proposal Application (APA) can be found at this website https://engblp.services.ncdot.gov/EAD/APA without entering the Automated Proposal Application home page.

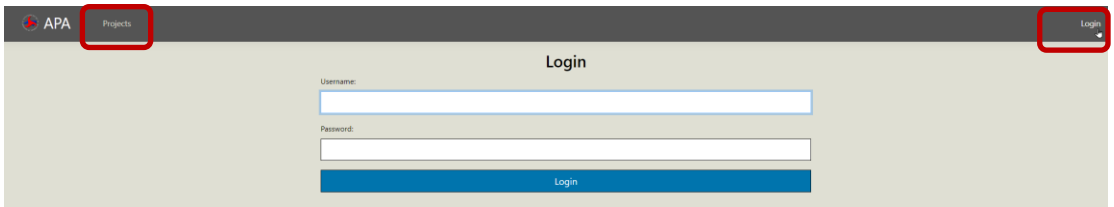
"About APA" will indicate who should use the application as well as permission and access process in case an individual locates the APA program prior to identifying the APA landing page with the permission instruction direction.



To the right of "About APA" is "Report an Issue", this provides instructions on who to contact if you have an issue with a provision, system performance, permission issues, or general questions about APA but first it directs you to the landing page where more information is available such as these instructions.



By selecting "Login" in the upper right hand corner, this will move you to the following APA Login screen. By selecting "Projects" in the upper left hand corner, this will also move you to the following APA Login screen as you will not be able to see what is on the Projects page until after you login.



For the respective Username and Password fields:

- Internal NCDOT employees, to include embedded consultants, use your login and password you use to get into your computer.
- External to NCDOT employees user your Business NCID and Business NCID Password.

If you see an error message, try keying your Username and Password again as you may have just mis-keyed those required fields.

If you have issues accessing or using the Automated Proposal Application, please contact specs@ncdot.gov.

Chapter 2: Using APA

Topics you will learn in this chapter:

- ✓ APA Overview.
- ✓ Projects Page
- ✓ Proposals
- ✓ Inserting Special Provisions.
- ✓ Updates.

APA Overview

Order

APA is designed to follow the finished proposal which mirrors the *Standard Specifications*, the *Roadway Standard Drawings*, and the Master Pay Item List. If you add project specific provisions, please add them consistently with the order the items would appear in the *Standard Specifications* and/or the Master Pay Item List.

Engineering Judgment

As with all things related to highway construction, no tool or system replaces your engineering judgment. The explanations are made for use with Central (Raleigh) let projects and may not always apply to Division or District or Local Government proposals. There are provisions specific to each entity and others aligned with all proposal types. The links to the Master Pay Item list are available when the provision references a pay item.

Automation

Fuel price, asphalt price, and steel price adjustments are automatically updated based on the advertisement date of the project. These price adjustments will not be allowed to be overrode by the user. The only way to adjust those values are to change the

advertisement date on the project. If the provision for fuel, asphalt, or steel is not included in the proposal then these values in turn will not be included.

The typical provisions used on every project are automatically included; however, each provision must be reviewed to determine relevance for the work of the project. If there are provisions automatically included that are going through a period of an update, you may see multiple versions of the same provision selected, you will need to ensure only the provision with the let date of interest is included and change the other provision to do not include.

There are inputs that could be repeated in various portions of the proposal, APA is set up so you only have to select or key the value one time to reduce potential for error/inconsistency. An example is County, once selected (single or multiple counties) when you create a Project it will appear at the top of the pages of the proposal and in various provisions where appropriate.

Updates

APA will provide you all the current and any upcoming provisions that have been defined in your provision list once a project is created. Typically updated or new provisions introduced are provided two months prior to the letting. Once the period of letting has past and a new version has been introduced, historical provisions will be archived. For all let projects the generate proposal output will continue to retain the version of the provision set as "include" no matter if there is an update or if that provision has been obsoleted for some reason. For all active projects that are not let any provisions selected as "include" will continue be retain as well. Please ensure you check the application for any active projects for the latest updates including new provisions starting in a specific let month and year to ensure you have the correct version required for your proposal, provisions that have been discontinued starting in a specific let month and year to ensure you do not include it in error, and ensure when updated guidance you are applying the provision appropriately. The Special Provision link will indicate the letter/number combination for that provision followed by a notification if it is a new provision "Effective" or if an updated provision "Updated" followed by the Month and Year of the Letting where that version is required. If the provision is discontinued during a certain month and year of letting you will see a sentence in the guidance indicating when that provision should stop being used. For provision revisions every time APA is used to create a new project, only the provisions active at the time of creation will display. You will also note each entry is being saved as you make changes, however you may select the "Save" button to save the data for APA projects and proposal editing processes prior to exiting the page.

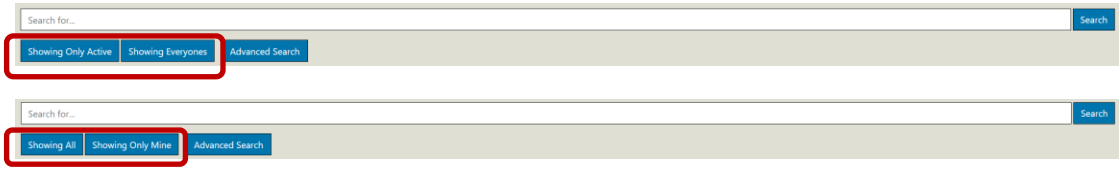
The provision files on the APA are maintained by Contract Standards and Development Unit and will be kept up to date. The special provision inserts which you add to the APA proposal are your responsibility to maintain. Use the templates found on the APA home page, Template for Roadway Provision Section and Template for General

Provision Section to ensure formatting is accurate in the proposal output, or ensure the format aligns with those templates if provided outside of that process prior to inserting into the proposal. If you use a provision frequently, please send it to specs@ncdot.gov. Adding frequently used provisions to the APA system is quick and easy.

Access

Because these proposals may represent highway construction contracts that have not been advertised, there is a certain level of security associated with APA. Users have to be on a registered user list, data files are protected as each user will only see what they are managing or if the managed project or proposal is in the purview of the user they will be able to view but not edit the project or proposal. If you have any issues seeing a project or proposal that is in your purview, please email specs@ncdot.gov.

When you initially view the projects and proposals list it will be set-up to show you what you can edit that is actively being worked, the icon at the top will be "Showing Only Active" in that instance. You can use the functions available to change views as needed where "Showing All" will display all currently active project proposals and final let project proposals. You can also search on key terms to narrow to the Project or Proposal of interest. The search for bar functionality will only source the Description, Contract Number, TIP Number, WBS Number fields; therefore since the Description field is not input into the proposal please be as descriptive as possible for searchability. If you want to return to the full list just key no value in the "Search for…" location and select "Search" and it will return you to the full listing available for your purview. The views available are "Show Only Active" and "Showing All" where you can toggle from one view to the other. "Show Only Active" will be what you can see when you first enter the Automated Proposal Application that you can edit or view that are active. "Active" means that not all of the following criteria are satisfied: Let Date is past "today's date", Proposal Stage is not in a "Reviewer" or "Advertised Proposal" level stage, or you do not have a Generated Proposal yet available. Once all those criteria are met (to include Proposal Stage as "Final Let Proposal"), the project will move to "Showing All" view only. The "Search for" bar will only search on what you are set to view.



The other toggle option is "Showing Everyones" and "Showing Only Mine", "Showing Everyones" shows all projects for your location, while "Showing Only Mine" shows only what projects you have created.

Advance Search allows you to narrow your view or search for a specific project proposal as well. Remember with each choice if there is an overall option outside of your purview it will return no project proposals. You can search by one or any combination of the following:

- Project Description, Contract/TIP/WBS#, Project Type – where any exact keying of any combination of inputs found within these columns will be returned.
- "Proposal For" - this is a good tool for contracted firms doing proposals as you can narrow if you are working for several groups.
- "Managed By" - this is a good tool for Divisions or Local Government Agencies who are seeing project proposals managed by your Division or Local Government Agency but also those possibly managed by a consulting firm.
- "Project Type" – where you can successfully retrieve any project type in your purview.
- "Division" – where you can also narrow to all the project proposals in your purview for the overarching Division as a whole which may be valuable to contracted firms
- "County" – where you can narrow to any project proposals that has a single county or any multiple number of counties listing. There could be project proposals with other counties paired with your selection also displayed. Again you will only be able to see county projects in your purview.

Each group that logs in will see different content within the system, restricted to what you have permission to review or edit. In the following pages edit and view permissions will be described.

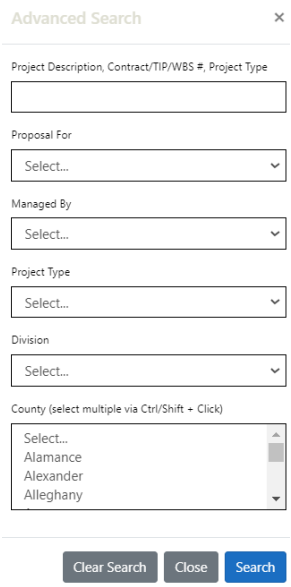
Edit and View Access is set-up as follows:

- *Central Proposal Staff Super-Users* – Will be able to view and edit all Projects and Proposals, deleting Projects and Proposals upon request, change provisions available, provide supporting information that will be helpful in provision selection, and grant users proper access to the system. Email specs@ncdot.gov for deletion requests and utilize the Automated Proposal Application home page for permission processes.
- *Central Proposals Staff* – Will be able to edit all proposals managed by the Central office and view will not be able to view any additional Projects or Proposals.
- *Division and embedded Consultant/Private Engineering Firm (PEF) Proposals Staff* – Will be able to edit all Projects and Proposals managed by that specific Division and be able to view all Projects and Proposals managed by Local Government Agencies or Contractors/PEFs within that specific Division.
- *Local Government Agency Proposals Staff* – Will be able to edit all Projects and Proposals managed by that specific Local Government Agency and be able to view all Projects and Proposals managed by Contractors/PEFs for that Local Government Agency.

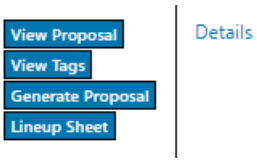
- *Non-embedded Consultant/Private Engineering Firm (PEF) Proposals Staff* – Will be able to edit all proposals managed by that specific Consultant/Private Engineering Firm and will not be able to view any additional Projects or Proposals.

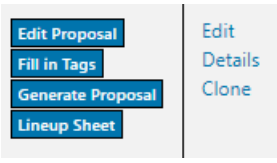
The "Editing party" may be listed with contact information in the overall proposal note field on who is currently working on that project proposal, ensure you contact them if you have feedback and that information is so provided. There is an email listed for the Project under "Created by" which is another method to contact the individual listed there if you have any questions, as a viewer or editor select "Details" on the Projects page to find those "Created by" details. When you have edit access you have full rights to that project and proposal for all changes required to finalize the proposal.

You can further narrow what you see by using the "Advanced Search" icon. You can narrow to what you can "edit", "view", or even use this function to find specific proposals that you are editing as well based on the information you know about that proposal. All possible options will be listed in each drop down menu, but you can only view those in your purview, if select an option that isn't in your purview then you will see there are no records to show you due to your permissions. For example, if I am not responsible for Alamance County then I won't be able to view any Alamance County proposals. If you would like to see only those that you are editing use Advance Search to change "Managed By" to your group (i.e. if Division 5, select Division 5; City of Raleigh select that option). "Close", "Clear Search", and "Search" are available as functions to select. "Close" will exit without the search, "Clear Search" will clear your selections, "Search" will search for what you selected however if you do not have permission to view that selection there will not be any projects returned in that search even if some exist.



The difference between view and edit permissions is shown as follows on the projects page of APA. "View" changes permissions to "View" only in the icons available for Proposal and Tags. "Edit" allows you to edit proposal and fill in tags. Each permission allows you to generate a proposal and print or save in PDF the Lineup Sheet. The Lineup Sheet is a summary of all the provisions selected and what response was provided "?" if still decided or other method of definition since all "?" do not get added to a proposal, "include" when included in the proposal, "do not include" when not included in the proposal as well as all notes keyed about who is managing ("Managed by") this proposal decision if any. You also will not be able to Clone the Project Proposal nor Edit the Project in "View" permission status.

View Access: 

Edit Access: 

Projects Page

The first question the user must answer when starting APA is what is found on the "Projects" page of the website.

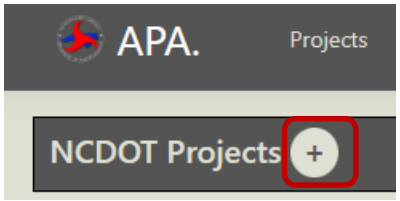
To add a new project:

Go to the "Projects" tab on APA

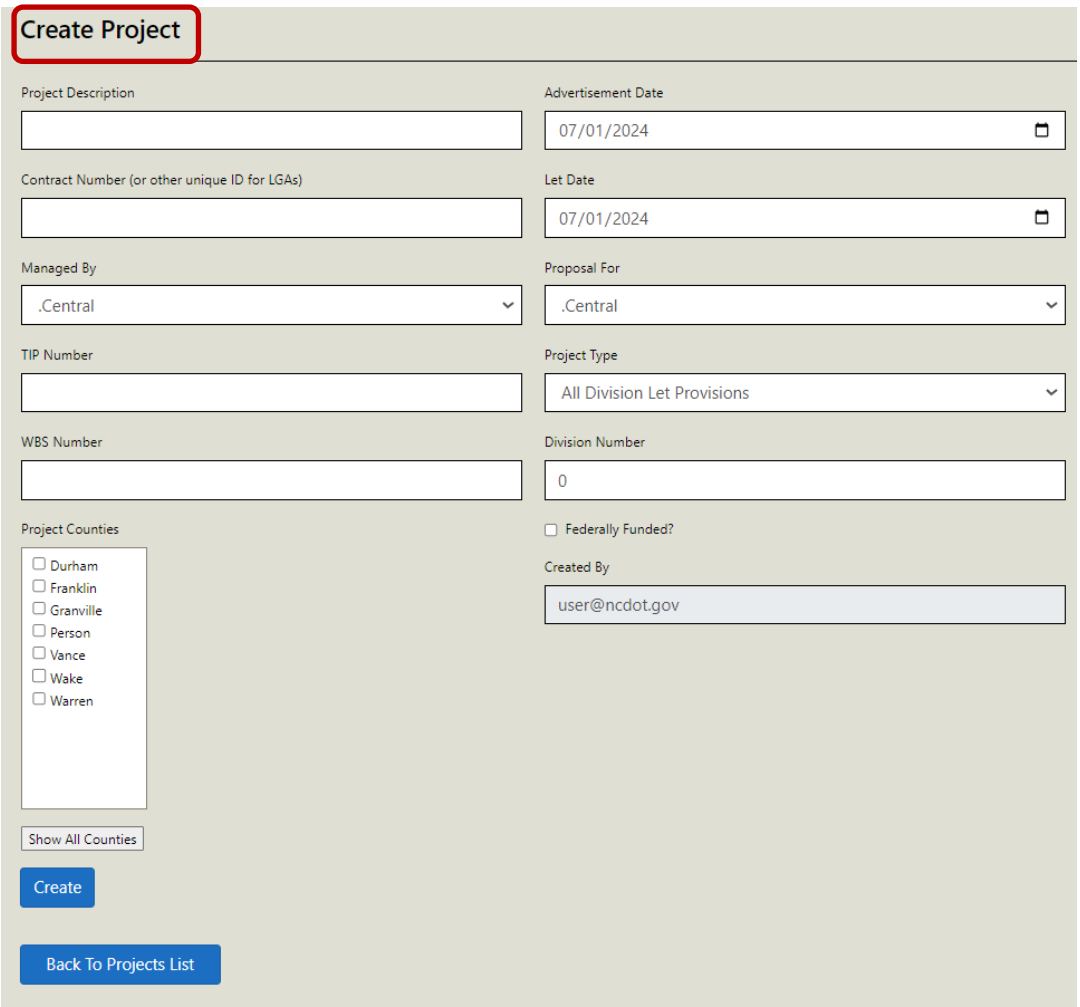
The next step your options are to start with a new project being developed. This will be described first. The second is Cloning which will be described following that option.

To <u>Create a New Project</u> the steps are as follows.

Select the "+" icon at the top of this page.



Key in the data described below. The default values will be different for you based on your permissions. Also the Advertisement and Let Date default to the date you created the new project, just override those dates and make the appropriate default value edits. As mentioned above, most users will have your Division and County displayed in the "Managed By", "Proposal For", "Division Number" fields at the beginning the exceptions are Central Proposal Staff and Non-Embedded Consultant/Private Engineering Firm (PEF) Proposals Staff where the Division Number will be 0 for users that may be working projects for various Divisions and/or Local Government Agencies and will automatically update after you modify and exit the "Proposal For" field. The Project Counties List after first entry will narrow to the county list if your Division Number is automatically populated after your first project creation, you have the option to toggle between "Show All Counties" and "Show Division Only" (whatever view you were in when exiting the Create Project view will be retained with the next new "Create Project" process), this is useful if you have a project where Division lines are crossed.



This "Create Project" page includes the following information:

Project Description - Include any description details that you would like to include to remind yourself what the project is about so you can recall the project for current or future project and proposal work reference.

Contract Number (or other unique ID for LGAs) – Key the contract number or if there is not a contract number with your processes this field is repurposed for LGAs to include whatever identifier that would be valuable to note at the top of the proposal pages in the page header.

Managed By – This field will be automatically populated based on APA permission set-up. i.e. .Central, .AlternateDelivery, .TurnpikeAuthority, .Division XX, .City of XXXXX, Contractor XXX. Where XX is the Division number 1 through 14, and XXXXX is the city. Contractor XXX is the contractor name.

TIP Number – This field is to populate the TIP identifier if applicable, otherwise key N/A

WBS Number – This field is to populate the WBS Number identifier, otherwise key N/A

Project Counties – The default will be to show the County listing for the Division in which you physically reside, if you need additional Counties for your Project change use the "Show All Counties" button below the list to find additional counties required for this project scope. The managing Division should be the Division selected. Based on county selection there are certain provisions that are auto-selected as "include" or "do not include".

Advertisement Date – Key the date in which you are going to advertise this project. Defaults to today's date when initially opened to create a new project.

Let Date – Key the date in which you are going to let this project. Defaults to today's date when initially opened to create a new project.

Proposal For – Based on APA set-up this field will be defaulted to your location (Division, Local Government Agency) or will be a drop down with additional options to select the appropriate Division and/or Local Government Agency you are completing the Project and Proposal for. Central, Turnpike Authority, and Alternative Delivery should select the Division location so that Division can be aware (view) the Project and Proposal in development.

Project Type – Select the type of project you are working for that proposal. There is a list of project types available based on your APA set-up. Examples are general construction or resurfacing project type. Note the indicator of "Raleigh Let" or "Division Let" or "Local Government Agency" appears on the left side of the

designation. If a specific unit has a modified provision set there is a designation for that unit instead of this structure. If you are working on a project that is not easily categorized, you may choose "ALL Provisions" where you will get to see every standard provision programmed into APA. If you do choose "ALL Provisions," conflicting and otherwise mutually exclusive provisions will be automatically selected, and you will need to remove these duplicated, conflicting provisions manually by ensuring not more than one are in an "include" state for your proposal. Based on your APA set-up your list will be narrowed to the options available to you to select. Project type is a critical factor to what coversheets, forms, and provisions will be displayed as options in your proposal as well as which are auto-selected as "include" based on this input.

Division Number – Based on APA set-up your Division will display based on where you reside, however if you are APA set-up could require you to work a Project and Proposal for all Divisions or Divisions and Local Government Agencies then the default is 0 and it must be changed to the appropriate Division. By selecting the appropriate location on "Proposal For" this will change the 0 default to the appropriate Division once you select and exit the "Proposal For" field. This field is restrict to 1 through 14.

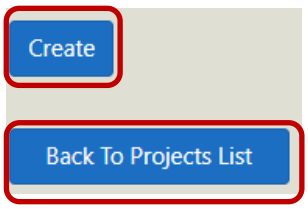
Federally Funded? – Check the box if this Project and Proposal is being funded with Federal dollars. Leave unchecked if State funded. If for some reason funding changes, you may check or uncheck to manage the provisions displayed for that proposal. This field is another critical factor to what provisions will be displayed as options in your proposal, and certain provisions displayed as auto-selected as "include".

Created By – Indicates who created or cloned the project proposal by displaying the email address for that individual. Note: This is another great way to determine who to contact if you are a person with project proposal view only capability and you are concerned about the project proposal you could reach out to that individual.

"Create" icon – Creates the Project with the information you entered.

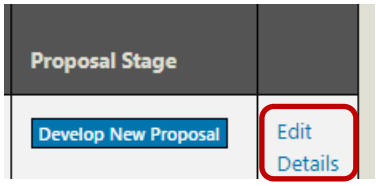
"Back to Projects List" icon – Allows you to not save what you have entered.

Select "Create" when complete and save interest or "Back to Projects List" if you do not want to save what you input.



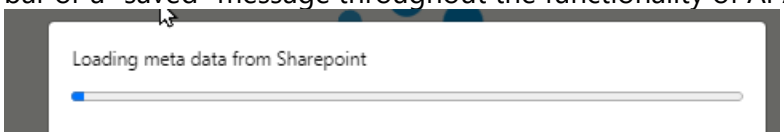
Now that the project is initially created. The Projects page will have your project information.

You may also "Edit" the project at any point, if you are managing this project. You will only see "Details" if you have view rights only which shows you a more information that is not available on the Projects page listing.



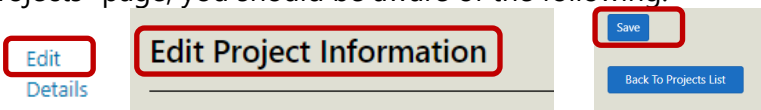
You will also see "Clone" following these options, that is the alternative for new project development, which will be described later. This option will not be available when you have "View" rights only.

After you select "Create" you will see a status bar noting the progress of developing your project proposal. As you complete actions you will see a status bar or a "saved" message throughout the functionality of APA.



After completion of this status bar you will enter the "Edit Proposal" page, which will be described later in this documentation.

Also on the "Projects" page, you should be aware of the following:



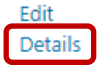
"Edit" will return you to the current project page set-up page which will be called "Edit Project Information" at the top for you to complete any edits required. "Save" will replace what you originally saw as "Create". For example, if there is a funding state change "State" to "Federal" or vice versa, you can edit and check or uncheck that field. You do not have to delete and recreate the project due to changes such as this. The provisions will align with your "Project" set-up selection. However, after completing this edit you must go to "Edit Proposal"

- If change funding source, such as "state" to "federal" or vice versa have to search ((Ctrl+f) in the Edit Proposal screen) to find the word "federal" or vice

versa "state" and select to "include" those as it is not automatically "included" such as when you create a new project.

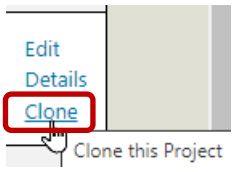
- If change county to ensure provision proper selection based on the county list. Just search ((Ctrl+f) in the Edit Proposal screen) for the county name to ensure no provision is missed that is required.

"Details" provides you a few additional details on this project compared to what you can see on the landing page such as who created that project.



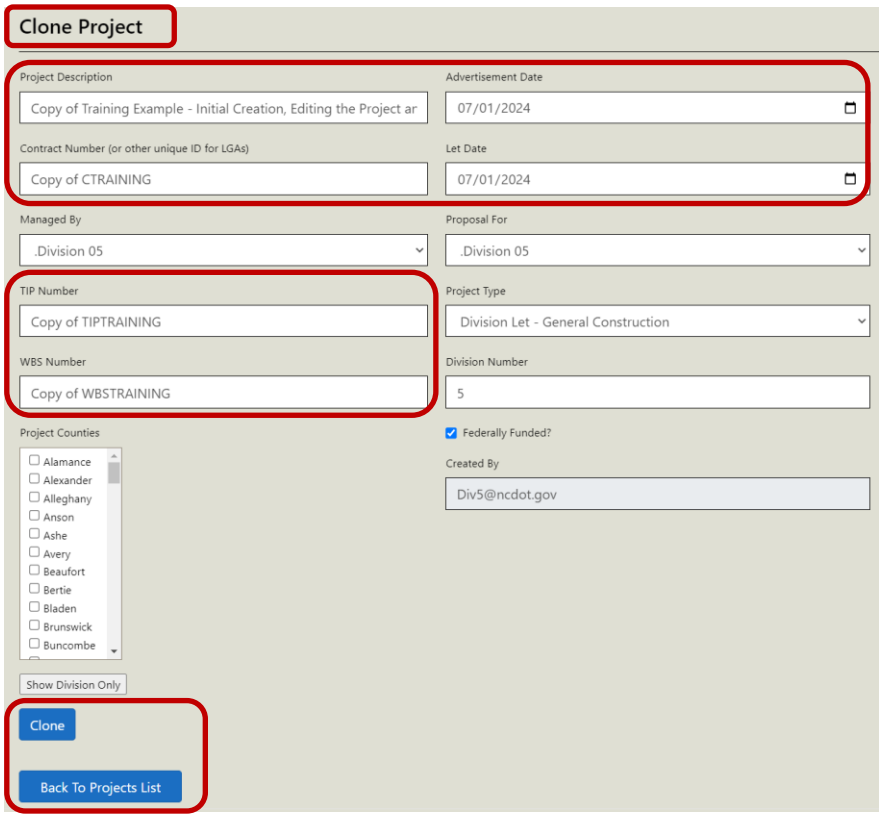
The alternative to creating a project (+ icon) is to <u>"Clone" a project</u> you have already created. The following describes that option:

Most likely you would only want to clone a proposal that has been advertised or final let stage as you have completed all the work for not only the projects page but also the proposals page, which will be discussed next. You would also only want to clone a project that is for the same "Proposal For", "Project Type", "County", "Funding Source (Federal or State)" of interest as you can't change those values when you initially clone the project and make some edits. As mentioned in the last column of the Projects page you will see that there is "Edit", "Details" and "Clone". In this instance instead of clicking the + icon, you will select "Clone" of the project you would like to "Clone" that is very similar to the one you are currently working on.



When you clone the project the same information displays, with a few exceptions.

"Project Description", "Contract Number", "TIP Number", and "WBS Number" text adds "Copy of" prior to what was input for the project you originally selected to Clone. The "Advertisement Date" and "Let Date" will be the date you created the Clone. You can change only those fields prior to selecting the "Clone" icon. You can see in the screen shot below those circled are the only fields you can edit prior to cloning that project. Select "Clone" when you are done editing; if you changed your mind, "Back to Projects List" will cancel the clone.



"Clone" works the same way as "Create" where you get a status bar indicating the status of creating your "Clone" and enter the "Edit Proposal" page for the cloned project proposal. **Remember you can only change the values circled above and use the functions on the bottom of the "Clone Project" page when you initially "Clone" to not cause issues with your proposal provision listing and generate proposal functionality.**

In regard to cloning, after you begin editing your proposal and you discover the funding source changes (state to federal or vice versa) or if you need to change the county list, you may change those but only after you begin editing your proposal. Do not make those changes on the initial clone, make at least a few changes on the proposal prior to editing the project for those changes. In this instance the "Proposal Stage" is not initially the "Develop a New Proposal" but it will be the Proposal Stage cloned. "Final Let Proposal" will need to be changed to "Draft Proposal Reviewer 1" when you first enter the proposal, by selecting that link or editing on the Proposals page which will be described next.

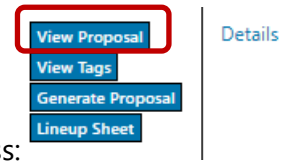
Edit Proposals Page

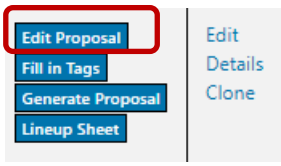
APA's Edit Proposals page will be described next. This is the screen you get to when initially selecting "Create" a new project or "Clone" an existing project and proposal to

create the new project proposal required or when you select "Edit Proposal" or "View Proposal" depending on your permissions on the Projects page listing for a specific project.

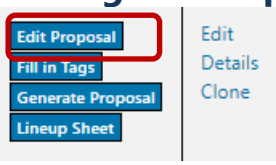
Editing your Proposal Actions

This set of buttons under the "Proposal" column on the Projects page will be critical to the development process after initially creating or cloning a project. If you see "Edit Proposal", "Fill in Tags", "Generate Proposal", and "Lineup Sheet" it means you have "Edit" rights. If you see "View Proposal", "View Tags", "Generate Proposal", and "Lineup Sheet" it means you have "View" rights. You also will not be able to Clone the Project Proposal nor Edit the Project in "View" permission status.

View Access: 

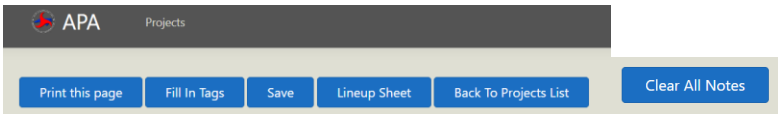
Edit Access: 

Editing the Proposal



This "Edit Proposal" icon will open up the edit proposal page for your project in order to return to make further edits or in the "View Proposal" instance you can only view the overall proposal provision information provided by the editor. After selecting that icon you will enter a screen that has a list of provisions based on the "Project Type", "Federal/State funding selection" and "County" selections made. In addition for provisions that are associated with tags based on advertisement date or other fields on the projects page to reduce duplicate entry those will also be automatically populated on the page. If you are returning to edit or view the proposal you will see the selections made to date when the original project creation or clone occurred or other edit iterations conducted.

At the top left you will see a few options, "Print this page", "Fill in Tags", "Save", "Lineup Sheet", and "Back to Projects List". To the top right you have "Clear All Notes.



- "Print this page" & "Lineup Sheet" – Opens up a window to print or save your listing of provisions and any notes and if you decided to "Include", "Do not include", or if it remains a "?" on deciding to include it or not. The "Print" option will print the file or open up the "Destination" with the arrow to select "Save as PDF" instead. This action changes the "Print" icon to a "Save" icon. "Cancel" in all instances will leave this screen, just select "Cancel" and "x" of the print view to return to the "Edit Proposal" or "Lineup Sheet" page. The "Lineup Sheet" option is an improved print and save option if wanting to focus on the notes in the process. The functionality of "Print this page" at the top of the "Lineup Sheet" page works the same as "Print this page" on the "Edit Proposals" page. On the following page, you will see the options of "Print this page" to print and save in more detail.

- "Fill in Tags" or "View Tags" will provide you a list of inputs to fill in based on your provision selection. Although tags will be revealed as you "include" provisions on the "Edit Proposal" page this page is a summary of all the tags required for the provisions set to "Include" status for your project proposal. The "Fill in Tags" or "View Tags" screen has an icon that connects you to the "Generate Proposal" page and is thus a great last review to ensure all required fields are populated and those that are optional are populated if needed for your project proposal. Some of those fields will be auto-populated based on inputs already provided on the projects page or systematically generated based on your advertisement date; while others you will need to fill in manually. We will look at this further later on in these instructions. Not all provisions have input fields so those provisions will not be represented on this list. If "view" capability you may only view what the editor has provided for that project for tags. With "edit" capability whether you make the appropriate edits to tags on the "Edit Proposals" page or the "Fill in Tags" page you will note Saved will be displayed as you make changes and those changes will be evident on both pages for the tag field no matter what page you decide to input the value. Those automated from other sources will be locked where you cannot edit them on that page.

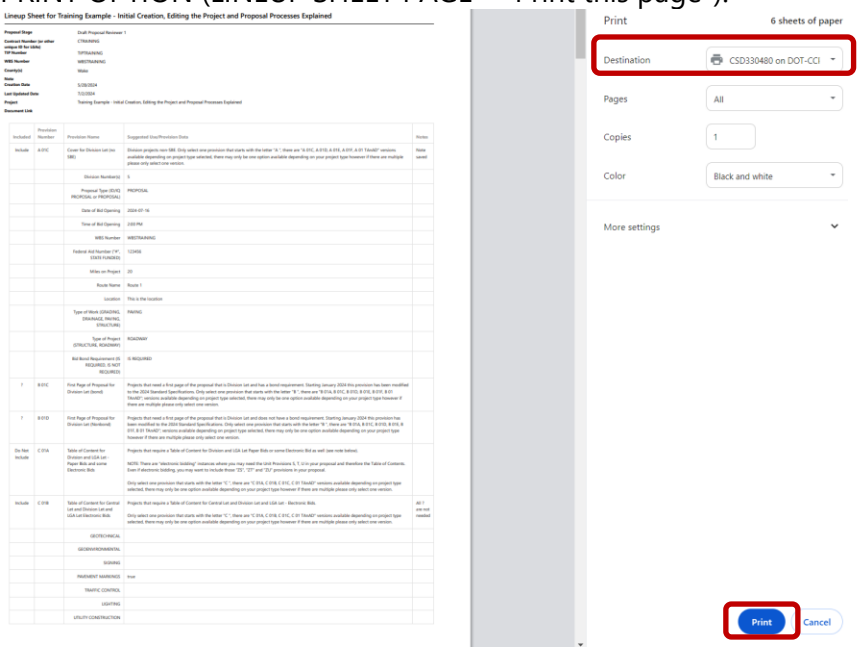
- "Save" will save your selections and inputs to date, however as you key and leave fields of selection or input you will note that the system is "saving" (Saved) each change. This "Save" icon is also at the bottom of the provision listing. After the "Save" icon there may be a provision that needs inserted. This inserting of project special provisions will be covered in a later section of this document.

- "Back to Projects List" will return you to the projects list after you have completed your review and when you do not have interest in completing your

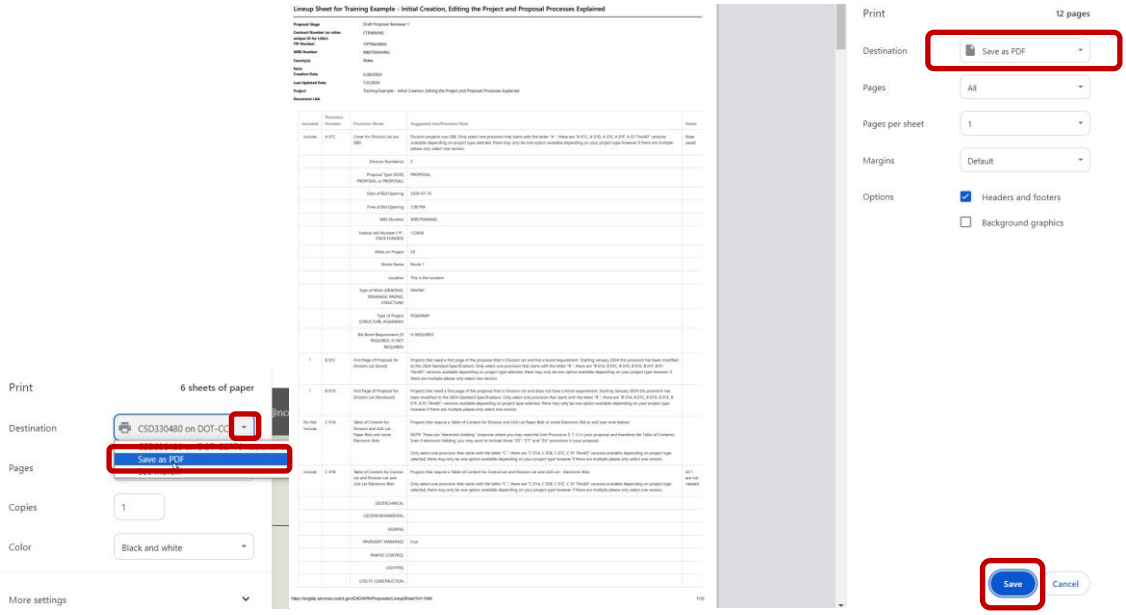
proposal (Generating the Proposal), prior to selecting "Back to Project List" select "Save".

- "Clear All Notes" is available for a "Clone" project proposal situation, where those set of notes may or may not be applicable to the current project you were working from that clone.

PRINT OPTION (LINEUP SHEET PAGE – "Print this page"):

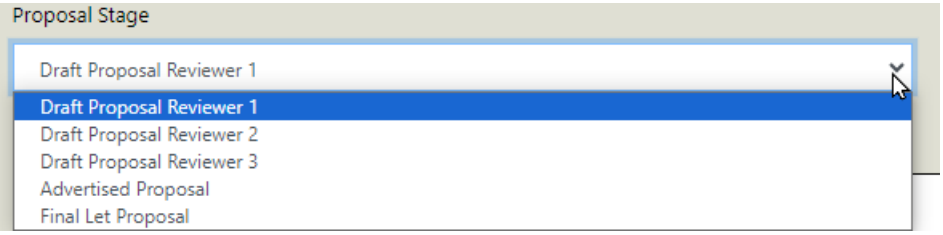


SAVE OPTION (LINEUP SHEET PAGE – "Print this page"):

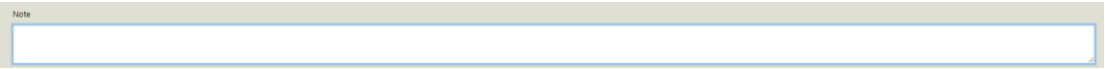


Following these options on the "Edit Proposal" page, there is a summary of what you saw on the Projects page at the top which is locked from changes unless you go to the "Projects" page and "Edit" to make an appropriate edit for those fields. The fields include "Proposal Stage" (Reviewer, Advertised, Let status), "Contract Number (or other unique ID for LGAs), TIP Number, WBS Number, County(s), Overall Project Proposal Notes as "Note", Creation Date, and Last Updated Date, "Project Description",.

This is followed by "Proposal Stage" where you indicate the appropriate proposal stage. This is to keep track of your passes, or if you have a hierarchy of reviewers to finalize a proposal with the Draft Proposal Reviewer 1, 2, and 3 statuses. When you finalize for advertisement, you can change to "Advertised Proposal" and then finally when it is let "Final Let Proposal". This action locks down the proposal so there will not be a change when a provision is obsoleted or updated to hold the provisions you utilized for that proposal. No matter the stage, "Include" status provisions will always be retained. Remember when you have cloned a project the initial proposal stage will be what the cloned project was when you initially cloned it (most likely Final Let Proposal), change the Proposal Stage to "Draft Proposal Reviewer 1" upon initially entry as you start the review process. "Draft Proposal Reviewer 1" will be automatically selected when you create a proposal using the "+" icon at the top of the Proposals page.

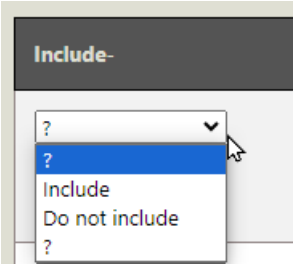


"Note", input field, follows this field. This is a note available for the full proposal and any reminders or reviewer communication you would like to note, what is keyed here will be displayed on the Proposal Page for your searching needs. If you would like those with "view" access with comments on the proposal to reach out to you via email and/or phone on any feedback they may have on the proposal being developed please key your name and appropriate contact method in this overarching proposals "Note" input field.

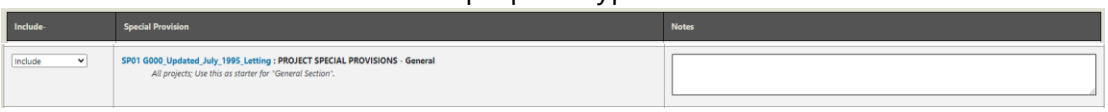


Following this field, you will see the following columns, "Include", "Special Provision" and "Notes".

- "Include" is where you make a decision on if the "Special Provision" should be included. Most provisions will be default to "?", while some will be "Include" if it should be used for "All projects" or the County this proposal is for, others will be "Do not include" for the county defined provisions and the county is not selected.

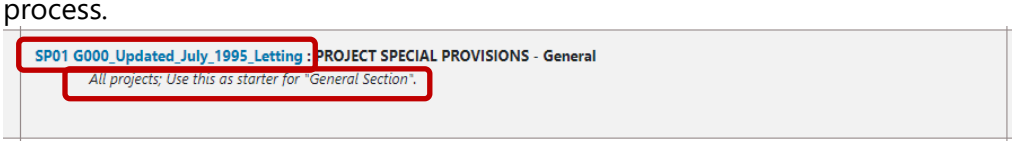


For example due to this being the header of the General Section, this provision below will be set to "Include" for all proposal types.



- "Special Provision" will have a link (blue text) when selected it will generate a download that can be found on your "C Drive" "Downloads" folder where you can review that provision further to make a better decision to include or not. If you open a provision file using the blue link available you will note there may be indicators that start with "Ç". The C-cedilla, "Ç", is a Latin script letter which indicate the locations where the tag values you key will be placed in the proposal. We will discuss those "Ç" tags further in the Fill in Tags section of this document.

The "Provision Title" and "Reason for Use", can also assist in your selection process.



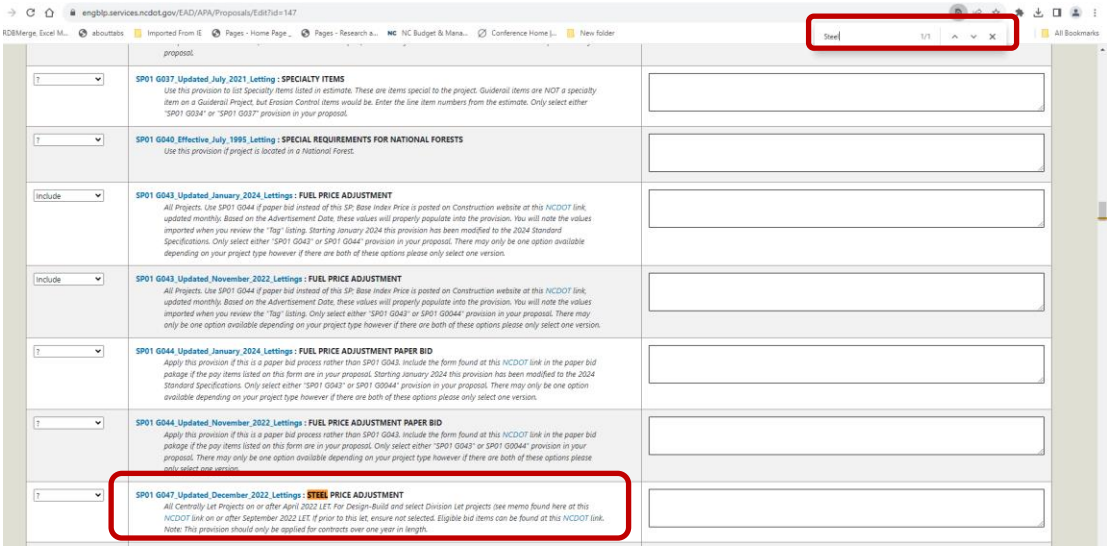
You may see links to additional documents in the "Reason for Use" to provide further direction for your selection needs. You may also see more than one active provision ensure you select the correct version for your proposal based on the letting date for that proposal. The letting date where that version is effective will be available in the file name hyperlink to that provision. The "Reason for Use" could also change over time without a provision date update if there is no change to the physical provision and just the direction,

just utilize the current direction posted. Below is an example of links in the "Reason for Use" and more than one displaying if there was an update while you were working on a proposal. Note: New projects created will only have the latest version displaying for that let month that is actively being worked.

The "Notes" field will allow you at the provision level to create any notes. You may want to note who and when you made the decision to include or note, why you decided to include it, perhaps you are missing information and you may want to note who is expected to provide it to you to make a proper decision. This note field is what is valuable to you and your team during proposal development, or for future reference. As a reminder at the provision or overall proposal level notes can be edited by those with "edit" and "view" access authority.

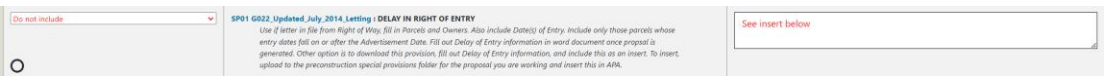
You will note there is an option to expand the notes field further to view all the text keyed if it is larger than the space automatically provided. Just hover until you see an up and down arrow , click and drag and drop to expand the field. This is available for all text entry fields to include "tags" which will be described later, however when "Include" that provision you will notice the black arrow on the right in the Include column below the drop down listing will change to if there are "tags" required for that provision and it will change to a if there are no "tags" required for that provision. A tag is entry inputs that get loaded into that provision in order to be specific to the project proposal being worked.

Keep in mind that this list of provisions is searchable. Select "Ctrl"+"F" on your keyboard, this action adds a new pop-up window at the top of the page, then key the topic of interest, hit "Enter" and you can see the word is highlighted by the provisions that have that key word searched for. Below "steel" is searched.

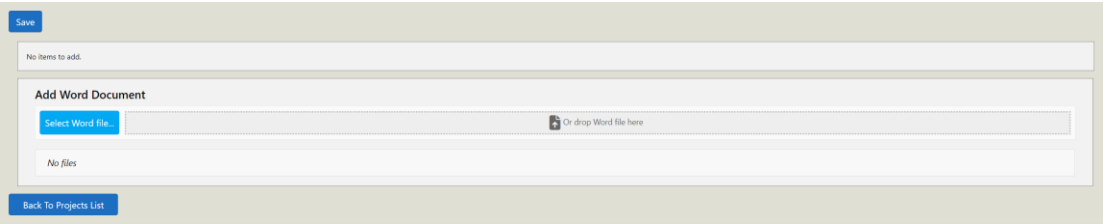


If you have view only rights, you will note the selection options are shaded where you do not have rights. As you can see below I can't change the Proposal Stage, or if I should include or not the provision, I cannot add notes at the top and at the provision level. I also cannot key any "tags" not displayed below, those may not be shaded however as a viewer there will not be capability to input any new or different values in that location.

There are "Note" fields available at the provision level, as noted above in the last column. If slighting modifying the standard provision you would want to note you aren't selecting that provision but replacing that provision with the one inserted right below it. For example "Delay in Right of Entry" provision, you would always want to download that provision and insert what is appropriate in the table space available in the provision, then insert that provision. Inserting the provision will be described later in this documentation.



At the bottom of this page you will find methods to insert special provisions. In addition you will see an option to "Save" and return "Back to Projects List" if you are done with your tasks for the project proposal. You will a function to "Add Word Document" and "No items to add" unless if you do not have a Preconstruction website established for your project proposal as an option to insert project special provisions into your proposal and word files placed on the special provisions site for that project. Use "Add Word Document" for when you do not have a need for a project site on the NCDOT Preconstruction Website.



So in other words, there are two ways to allow for an insertion of a project special provision on this part of the page:

1) Place project special provisions on the NCDOT Preconstruction website for your project.
2) If there is no Preconstruction website for your project, use the "Add Word Document" function.

For both methods, it is important your file name does not have any special characters in the naming convention used. See below for a list of illegal characters, it is important you do not use those characters in your file name or file path in general on your folder structure used.

Illegal Filename Characters

Do not use any of these common illegal characters or symbols in your filenames or folders:

- # pound
- % percent
- & ampersand
- { left curly bracket
- } right curly bracket
- \ back slash
- < left angle bracket
- > right angle bracket
- * asterisk
- ? question mark
- / forward slash
- $ dollar sign
- ! exclamation point
- ' single quotes
- " double quotes
- : colon
- @ at sign
- + plus sign
- ` backtick
- | pipe
- = equal sign
- emojis

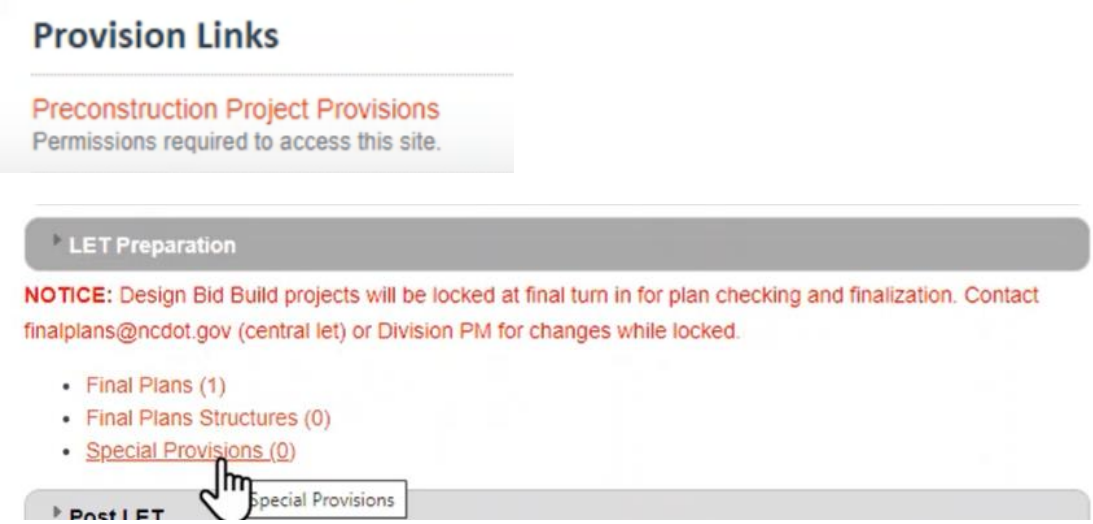
The Preconstruction website is one exception, where you will note "%20" replacing all spaces between words on a SharePoint website path however, this will not cause harm in pathing and properly inserting your project special provision when using the

Preconstruction website. In the example below your WBS number on the Automated Proposal Application Project page should be "15401.1048012 Southdock Emergency" to properly link provisions on the Special Provisions site to your Project Proposal in APA. You may change the WBS number to "15401.1048012" after inserting those provisions. The TIP Number or WBS Number fields are used to connect APA inserted provisions to the Preconstruction website project special provisions site.

connect.ncdot.gov/site/Preconstruction/division/div01/15401.1048012%20Southdock%20Emergency/Special%20Provisions/Forms/By%20Topic.aspx

For the first option, further in this document you will see the instructions for how to add a project specific provision to that Preconstruction Project Provisions website.

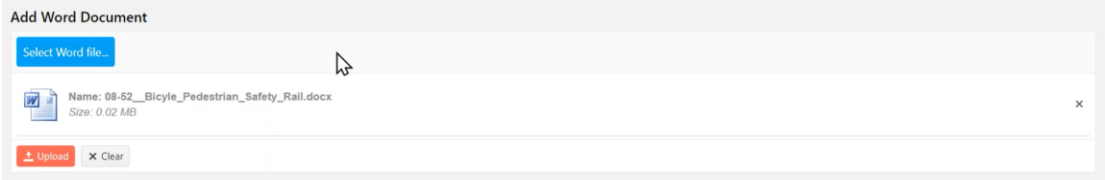
However, in short summary, Preconstruction Project Provisions website has a short cut to the site on the APA home page under "Provision Links" for reference. When adding a project special provision in word format to the Special Provisoins site under Let Preparation for your project under the Preconstruction Project site and ensuring the project website path alignment with the TIP or WBS fields for your Project, you will then be able to see the provisoin on your listing at the bottom of your Edit Proposal page. You can always modify the TIP and WBS fields to align with what you truly want the proposal to be generated as if the website established is slightly different in order to insert your project special provisions from this site as mentioned on the prior page.



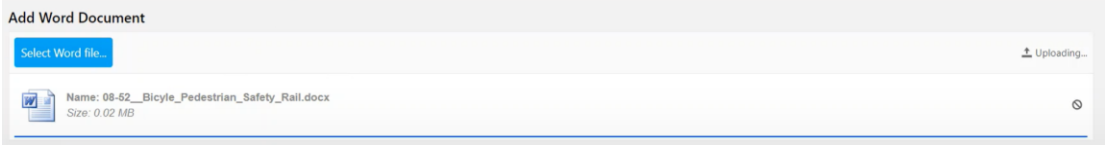
More information about how to add a word file to this site, are available further in this document for reference under "Inserting Project Special Provisions" section of this document for how to insert provision onto this site and how the Automated Proposal Application should align with the site name established to allow APA to find the provisions at this site properly.

The other option is use the "Add Word Document".

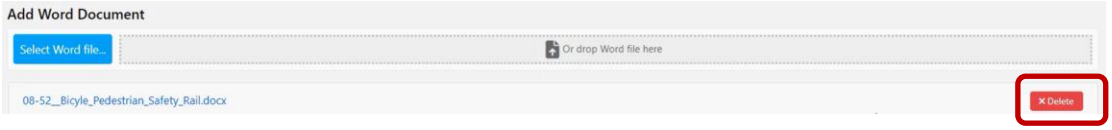
You can either drag and drop your word document into the "Or drop Word file here" location or click the link "Select Word file" to path to the location of your special provisions word file. After you perform one of these actions for the first time, you will see something like the following screen, the exception is it will be whatever file name you included and the corresponding file size. If you have more than one word document added you will see a list of all the ones you added below the "Select Word File" location prior to adding that additional project special provision.



Select "Upload" or "Clear" if you change your mind.



If you select "Upload" you will see "Uploading" and a status bar of that upload process displayed. Otherwise the file will be removed, if you select "Clear".

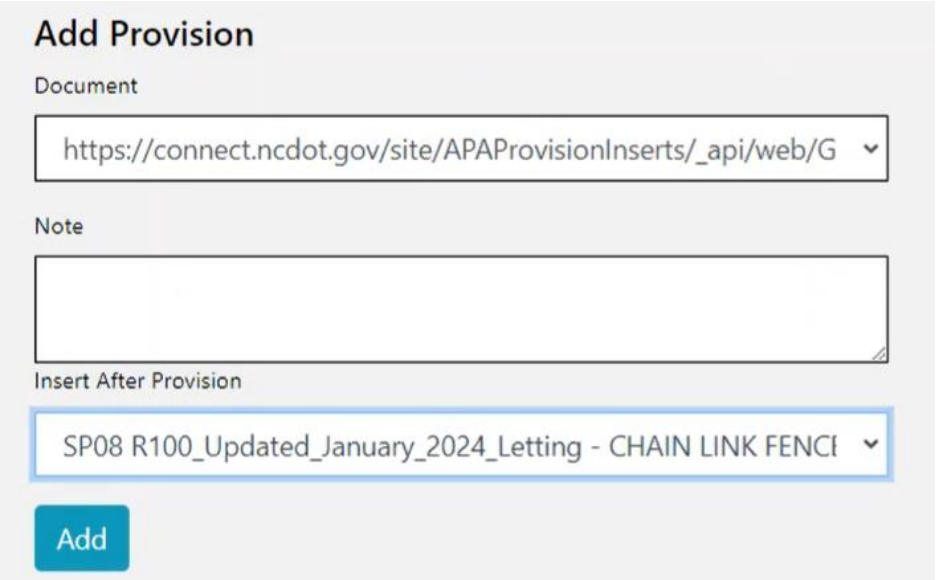


After uploading you will have the option to "Delete" it and that "Delete" option will remain available but do not select "Delete" if you move to the next step of including that provision in your proposal as an insert after a specified provision. Instead after inserting the provision into your proposal just change "Include" to "Do not Include" for when you change your mind instead of selecting "Delete". If you select "Delete" the provision will not be available in your proposal but it will be noted on the Generate Proposal listing. The Generate Proposal process is discussed later in this documentation.

Either of these two actions of word file on the Preconstruction Site Special Provisions folder or drag/drop or path using the "Add Word Document" tool will change the following screen to the following for "No items to add".

To the following (however it may not look like above initially if you already have word file project special provisions loaded to that Preconstruction Special Provisions site and look like below when you first create a project proposal):

Just select each provision required one at a time, making any notes (but you can add notes after inserting the provision if you wish), and then look at the premise of your provision "Document" you are selecting in order to choose which provision you want to "Insert After Provision" for example if it is Guardrail related this information in the *Standard Specifications* can be found in Division 8 Section 862, thus you would want include that provision after or within the Division 8 provisions. You will understand what Division that provision is based on the name of the provision "SP08" is a Division 8 provision and since Guardrail related would want to include that inserted provision after one with similar premise such as below when making your "Insert After Provision" selections or at the end of that section selecting the last provision in that Division or the last provision of the previous Division provisions if there are not any special provisions established for that Division. Then select "Add".



After you insert it you can drag and drop the provision in another location if so needed appropriate sequence wise. Optimally following the order of the *Standard Specifications*, where typically these provisions will be in the General section of the proposal (SP## G###) and Roadway section of the proposal (SP## R###) portion.

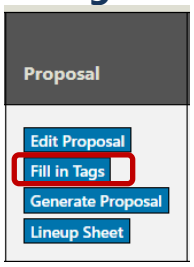
You will note all inserted provisions are a darker background shade and are a custom document link in the "Lineup Sheet". When initially inserted you will see a check function, where the check means included; however when you come back to "Edit Proposal" or "View Proposal" you will see that it will be the "Include", "Do not Include" and "?" option.

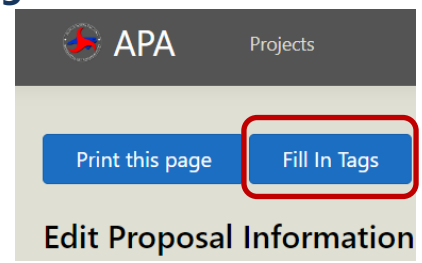
Initial insert (where you can uncheck to exclude that provision inserted if you change your mind on including that inserted provision):

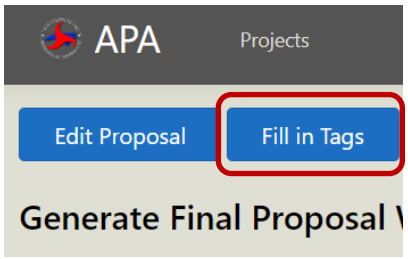
Returning to "Edit Proposal" or "View Proposal" (where you can change from "Include" to "Do not include" if you change your mind on including that inserted provision)

When you insert all the word files on the Preconstruction website Special Provisions site or insert all the "Add Word Document" files you added you will notice the display will return to "No items to add".

Filling in Tags





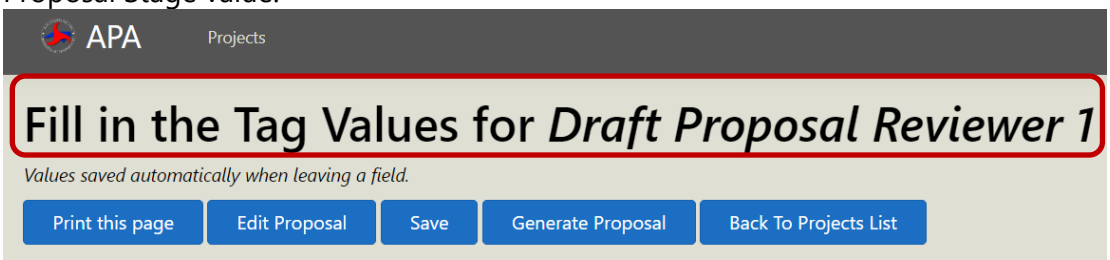


This button will provide you all input fields required for the proposals you selected. It can be found on the Projects page, Edit Proposal Page, and Generate Proposal Page. Again, not all proposals have input fields, and the ones that do are drawn from inputs you already provided when you developed the project, the set-up of your group, or are automatically

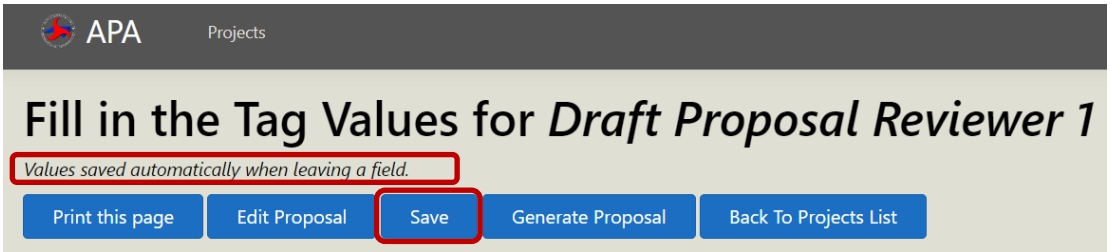
generated based on the advertisement date, while others will have to be populated on a provision basis.

You can fill in "tags" as you select to "Include" each provision that has tags displayed will change from to after "Include" is selected for some provisions. A summarized list of tags can be displayed and reviewed to ensure no missing input fields required are not populated prior to Generating the Proposal. You can input the tag in both the "Edit Proposal" and "Fill in Tags" pages. After selecting "Fill in Tags" you will enter the "Fill in Tags" landing page.

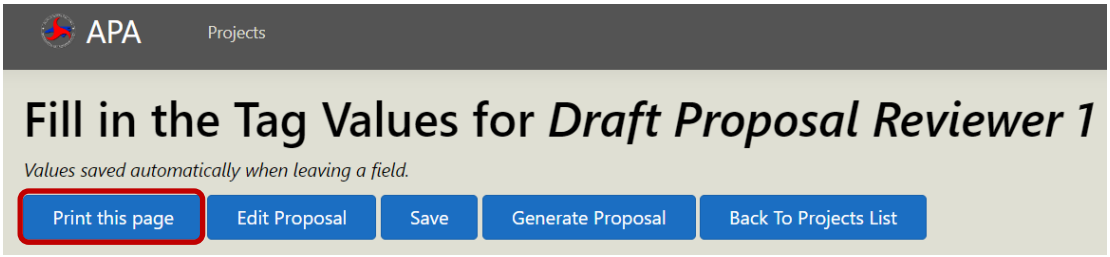
You will see at the top it will say "Fill in Tag Values for" followed by the Proposal Stage value.



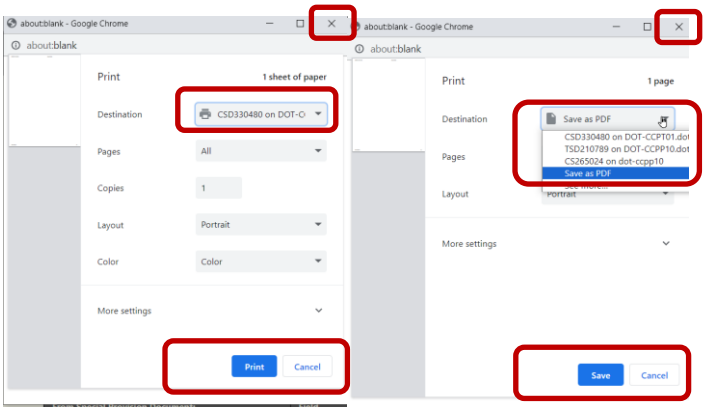
There is a note "Values saved automatically when leaving a field" however there is also a "Save" button for use.



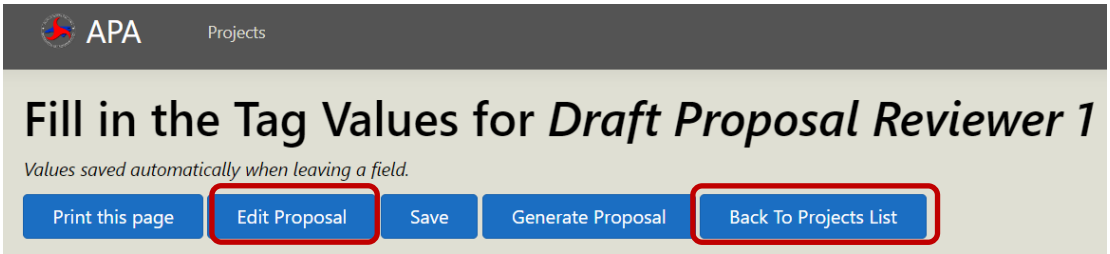
This page also has an option to print or save this page, which operates the same way as "Print this page" on the "Edit Proposal" page.



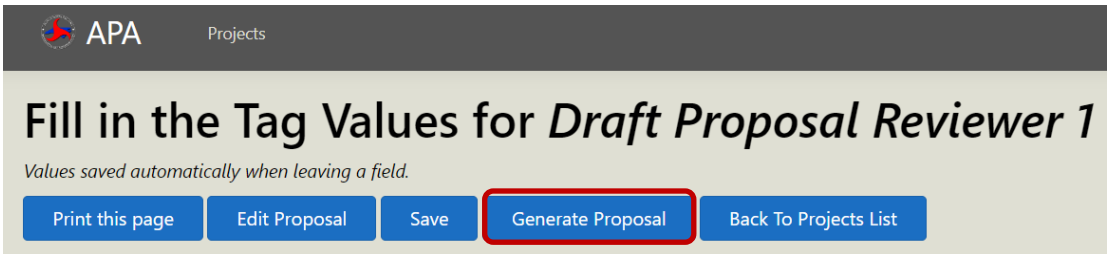
You can "Save as PDF", change to printer of interest or cancel or "x" to exit if change your mind on printing or saving.



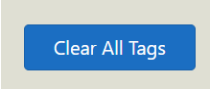
"Edit Proposal" will return you to the provision selection listing. "Back To Projects List" will return you to the project list if you are done with your proposal work for that project and not ready to generate or make other provision selection or insertion adjustments.



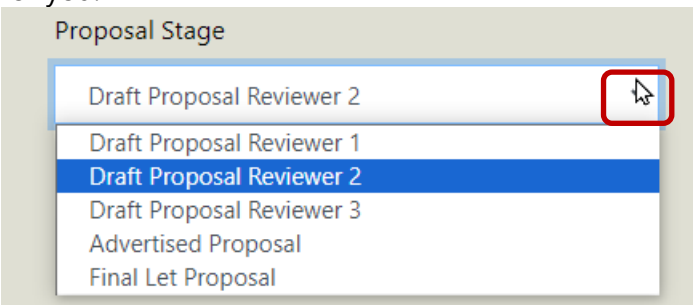
"Generate Proposal" will move you to the next step in the process, among other ways to get to that screen such as the Proposals landing page. We will discuss that page later in this document.



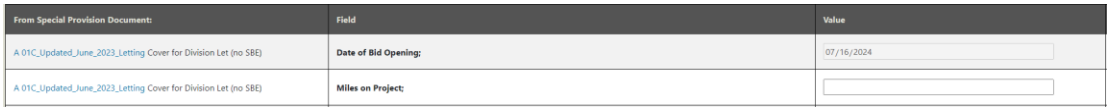
At the top right of the "Fill in Tags" page there is also "Clear All Tags", this option is best for "Clone" use situations and if you clone it is best to come to the "Fill in Tags" screen to clear all the tags as well as the clear all notes that you conducted on the "Edit Proposal" page.



Below this information is some information about your proposal, to include "Project Description", "Contract Number (or other unique ID for LGAs), TIP Number, WBS Number, Creation Date, Last Updated Date, and Proposal Stage. You can edit the proposal stage on this screen as well. If you have "View" rights to that proposal adjustments such as this will not be an option for you.

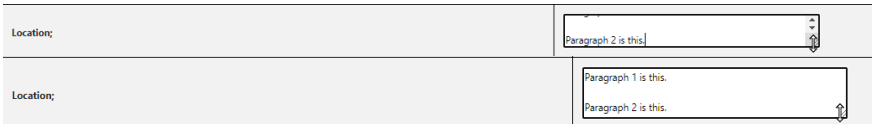


The requirements for this page are to populate values, and you will see values automatically populated for your proposal from the projects page or other sources are appropriate. Below is one that is obtained from the projects page while another is a field that is required to be input.



From Special Provision Document:	Field	Value
A 01C_Updated_June_2023_Letting Cover for Division Let (no SBE)	Date of Bid Opening;	07/16/2024
A 01C_Updated_June_2023_Letting Cover for Division Let (no SBE)	Miles on Project;	

Some of the input values will be restricted to an integer (where the field is restricted to a whole number), date (where the field is restricted to a calendar date), or currency input (where the input is still an integer but the output is in dollar format, those tag field descriptions will indicate no need to key the $ in the field as a reminder) . Others are text fields where you have more input capability, you can add multiple paragraphs leaving a space between each paragraph and if this requires a large amount of text you can expand the input field so you can see all text keyed. To expand the field hover in the bottom right hand corner, hold your left mouse button, and drag and drop to where you can see all text keyed. You will note in the example below I have two paragraph separated by a single space, this is exactly how the output will come across where this "Location" input is required if keyed in this fashion.



For currency fields, you do not have to key the "$" value, just the numeric value. For date fields, you have to key a valid calendar date.

LDs $ - Number;	$ 1000
Date of Availability;	06/01/2024

It is important you populate all fields provided, otherwise there will be a blank location where that input was located, however for tables in the provision you may leave those tag input fields blank and those rows in the table will be deleted (an example is Major Contract Items). These locations that may or may not be filled out will have text indicating "If not applicable, leave blank.", if you do not see text of this premise review your project for fields you should leave blank or populate. Ideally you would want to fill out all tags prior to generating your proposal, however if you need to view the proposal to date as an interim review step just be aware of those you did not key. Some have a specific method to key indicated, just follow those instructions.

From Special Provision Document:	Field	Value
SP01 G028_Updated_January_2024_Letting MAJOR CONTRACT ITEMS	**Major Contract Item 1 (Note: Using Percent Run Estimate, begin by selecting items who's percentage is 10%+ of project total and working down to achieve a total of 20-30% (ideally) of the project. Lower percentage items, down to 3%, may be used. (DOT NOT USE: LUMP SUM ITEMS, WELDED STEEL PIPE, ASPHALT BINDER MIX ITEMS, DRILLED PIER and ALL PILE ITEMS, ASPHALT LEVELING COURSE, PRE-SPLITTING ROCK ITEMS, OR MILLING ASPHALT PAVEMENT. OKAY TO USE: ULTRA-THIN and APPLICATION MATERIAL, SPECIALTY ITEMS) (Key the line number, 3 spaces, then the Description i.e. 176 Reinforced Concrete Deck Slab);**	176 Reinforced Concrete Deck Slab
SP01 G028_Updated_January_2024_Letting MAJOR CONTRACT ITEMS	**Major Contract Item 2 (Note: Using Percent Run Estimate, begin by selecting items who's percentage is 10%+ of project total and working down to achieve a total of 20-30% (ideally) of the project. Lower percentage items, down to 3%, may be used. (DOT NOT USE: LUMP SUM ITEMS, WELDED STEEL PIPE, ASPHALT BINDER MIX ITEMS, DRILLED PIER and ALL PILE ITEMS, ASPHALT LEVELING COURSE, PRE-SPLITTING ROCK ITEMS, OR MILLING ASPHALT PAVEMENT. OKAY TO USE: ULTRA-THIN and APPLICATION MATERIAL, SPECIALTY ITEMS) (Key the line number, 3 spaces, then the Description i.e. 176 Reinforced Concrete Deck Slab) IF NOT APPLICABLE TO HAVE A 2nd ITEM LEAVE BLANK.;**	

There are tags that you can copy and paste the options available. To do this, highlight the text, select "Ctrl"+"C" to copy, then go to the values column location and select "Ctrl"+"P" to paste. In this example below I have "ID/IQ PROPOSAL" or "PROPOSAL" required in that field. I can only copy and paste on the "Fill in Tags" page and not the "Edit Proposal" page where these "tags" are also listed. This copy and paste methods avoids keying errors in the process.

From Special Provision Document:	Field	Value
A 01C_Updated_June_2023_Letting Cover for Division Let (no SBE)	**Proposal Type (ID/IQ PROPOSAL or PROPOSAL)**	

You will note there is a link to the provision so you can view it to better understand where the input value will reside in the text. By selecting the link, the file will go to your "C Drive" "Downloads" folder for review.

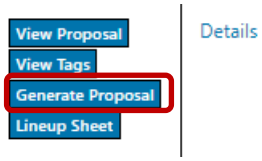
From Special Provision Document:	Field	Value
A 01C_Updated_June_2023_Letting Cover for Division Let (no SBE)	**Proposal Type (ID/IQ PROPOSAL or PROPOSAL)**	

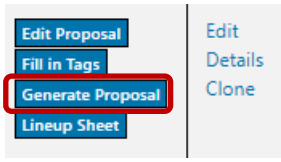
If you open a provision file using the blue link available you will note there are indicators that start with "Ç". The C-cedilla, "Ç", is a Latin script letter which

indicate the locations where the tag values you key will be placed in the proposal. If you leave the tag blank it will remove "Ç" value so ensure you only do not populate all tag values with the exception of those indicating an option to leave it blank in the field description. Above is an example of a place that has an indication of it being "blank" if not applicable.

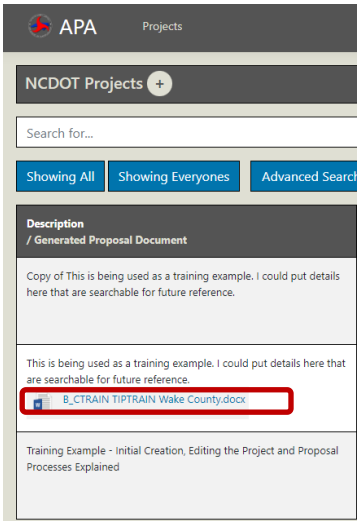
Generating the Proposal

"Generate Proposal" is the last step of the process, use this functionality when you have finalized all content for your proposal or would like to view the proposal to date based on selections and added project special provisions included. There are several locations where you will see "Generate Proposal". On the "Projects" page you will see under the "Proposals" column for both when you have edit and view access the following locations to go to the "Generate Proposal" page.

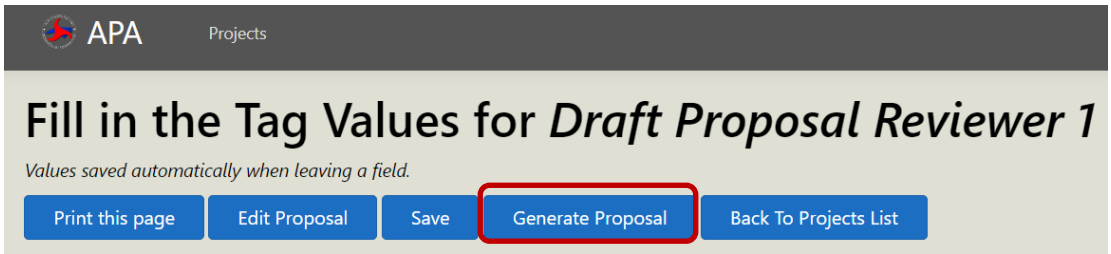
View Access: 

Edit Access: 

Also, on the "Projects" page, you will see a column "Description / Generated Proposal Document" where you will see a word document that you can click on to generate the proposal as well. This option will only generate the proposal in a single document however. The options of a single document versus a zipped split file document will be explained shortly.

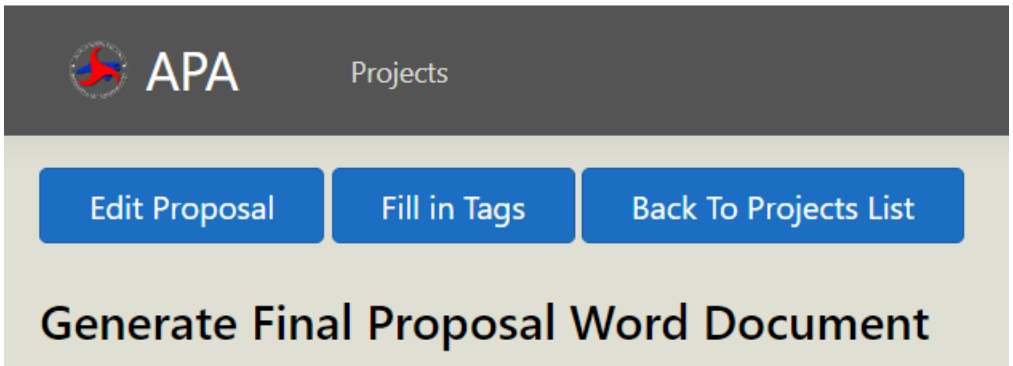


The final location to find "Generate Proposal" is at the top of the "Fill in Tags" page, as shown in the example below.



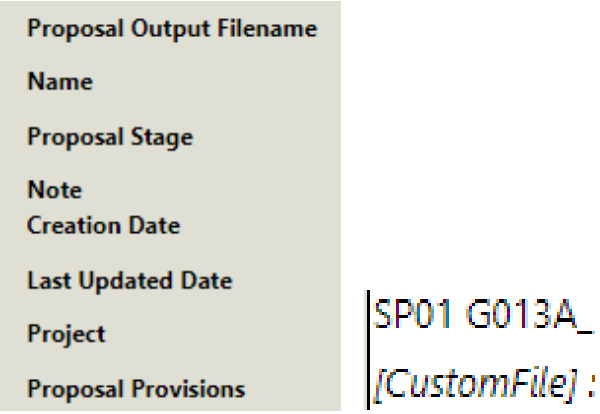
This function will create a Word® document for you to edit. The headers, format, etc. have been enhanced to provide you a proposal that requires no further edits if the inserted project special provisions are formatted properly using the templates provided on the APA home page and a consistent product for NCDOT state and federally funded proposals. The output like all other items, when Generated will go to your "C Drive" and "Downloads" folder for relocating to an appropriate location. The "Generate Proposal" site will provide you the list of provisions you are including for one more quick review.

At the top of the page you will see an option to return to "Edit Proposal" and "Fill in Tags", and "Back to Projects List" option for when you change your mind or need further work on your proposal after reviewing that list of provisions that will be included. This is followed by an indication that you are going to "Generate Final Proposal Word Document" to know you are on the "Generate Proposal" page.

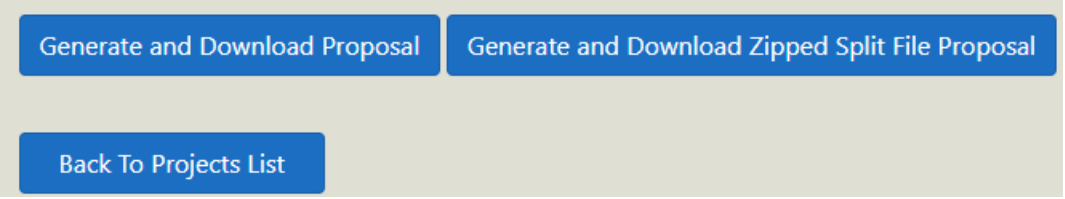


This is followed by information about the Proposal to include "Proposal Output Filename", "Name", "Proposal Stage" status, the "Note" field for the proposal overall, "Creation Date", "Last Updated Date", and "Project". This is followed by "Proposal Provisions" which lists each provision you selected, file name followed by the title of the provision. For special provisions inserts it will note that it is a "CustomFile" followed by the title of the file posted on the Preconstruction Website Special Provisions folder or the name of the file that you inserted in the "Add Word Document" section if no

such project site is established. These values and example of a custom and not custom start of the file name is noted below.



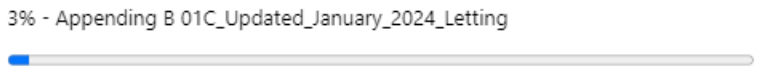
After your review the provision listed and are satisfied with what is on the provision list for your proposal, select "Generate and Download Proposal" or "Generate and Download Zipped Split File Proposal", found at the bottom of this page. Along with a method to exit the proposal and return to the "Proposals" page if you change your mind about generating that proposal.



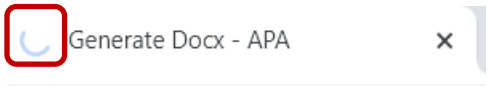
"Generate and Download Proposal" will output the proposal into a single file. You will want to select that option when you have no "ZP", "ZS", "ZT" and "ZU" provisions as part of your proposal.

"Generate and Download Zipped Split File Proposal" will output the proposal into a single zipped folder where inside it will have a file for the main body of the documentation, as well as the "ZP", "ZS", "ZT" and/or "ZU" provisions in a separate document depending on if you have each of those provisions selected. If you select this option and do not have "ZP", "ZS", "ZT" and/or "ZU" provisions selected, the output will be the same as "Generate and Download Proposal" but the file will be in a zipped folder.

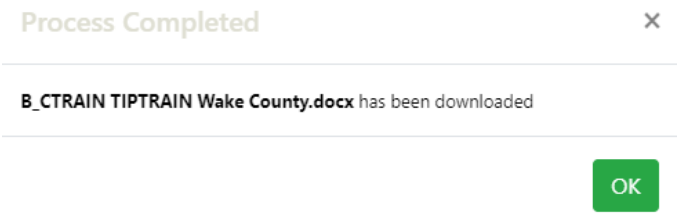
You can tell "Generating" is occurring as the browser tab will show a progress bar, such as other actions in this system and when complete there will be a pop up box that states "Process Completed".



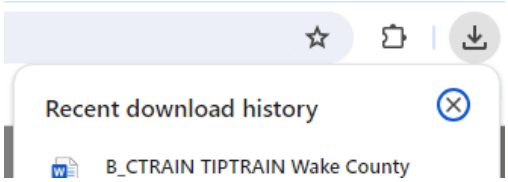
You will also note the following at the top of your browser.



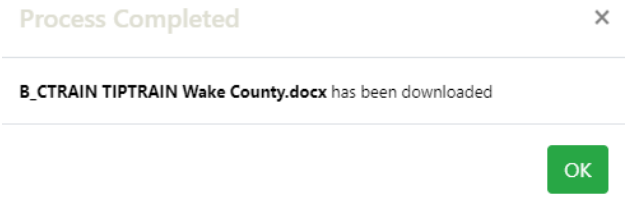
when the download is complete…



When this pop-up appears you will note that under your download icon at the top of the browser there is a file produced.

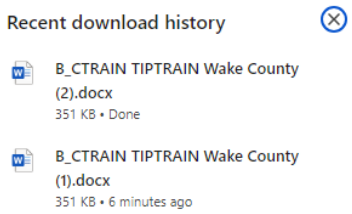


If there are any errors in your special provision inserts you will see the issue in that "Process Complete" pop up message. Just select "Ok" to clear the message after you process any error messages to remedy.



A more common error would be when the special provision insert has been deleted from the "Add Word Document" portion of the "Edit Proposal" page or the SharePoint Website for your project under Special Provisions. You will note "Could not open" followed by the path of the file that was not able to be found.

You will find the output under your "C Drive" "Downloads" folder, where you can cut and move that to your appropriate project site. If you download multiple and they remain in the "C Drive" "Downloads" folder you will see the first output with no "(#)" following it, but with each "Generate and Download" action you will see there is a numbering schema. "(1)" for the 2nd one generated, "(2)" for the 3rd one generated in that folder. An example is below on if on an earlier date I generated this proposal, then on another date I generated two more.



The file name for your Word document will be the combination of the Contract ID (or LGA unique ID), Tip No., and County. If you do not have a TIP number you can either replace that field with another identifier or leave it blank. You will find these values at the top of the pages of your proposal above each provision selected to exclude the cover sheets and Table of Content provisions.

If more than one Proposal is downloaded and remains in your Downloads folder it will be numbered with a "(#)" after the file name displayed in the "Document Link" column.

Inserting Project Specific Provisions

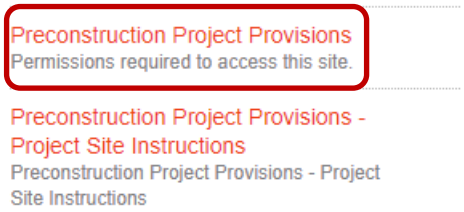
Prior to Generating your proposal you may have some provisions specific to your project that should not be in a unit specific sealed portion of your proposal, this system does provide you the capability to insert provisions into the proposal.

To do this first you need to go to the NCDOT Preconstruction site for your project. This was mentioned earlier in this documentation along with an alternate if you do not have a NCDOT Preconstruction site for your project. In this section we will discuss how you add a project special provision to the website only.

The Preconstruction Website can be found on the Automated Proposal Application (APA) Home page under "Provision Links".

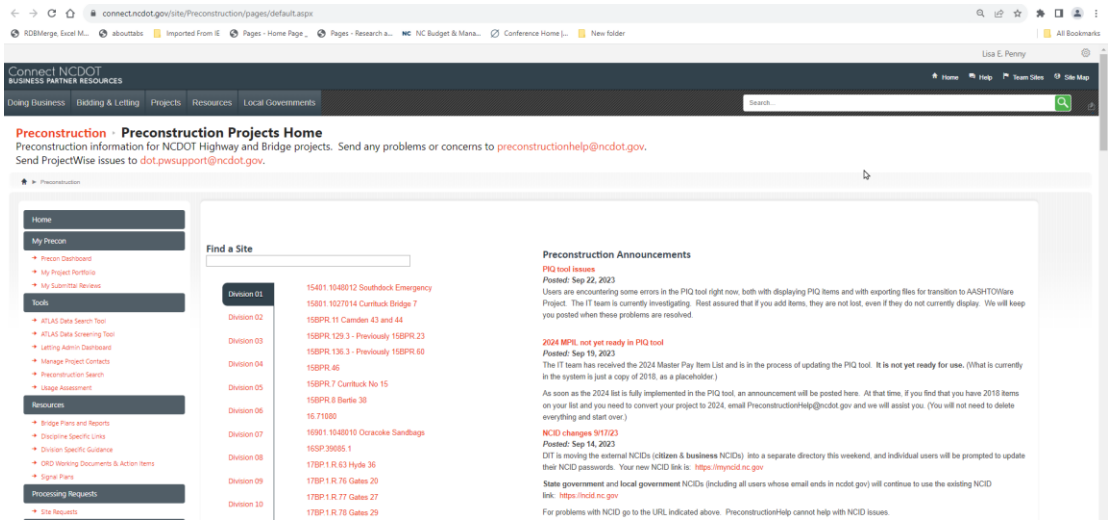
https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Specifications/Pages/APA.aspx

Provision Links

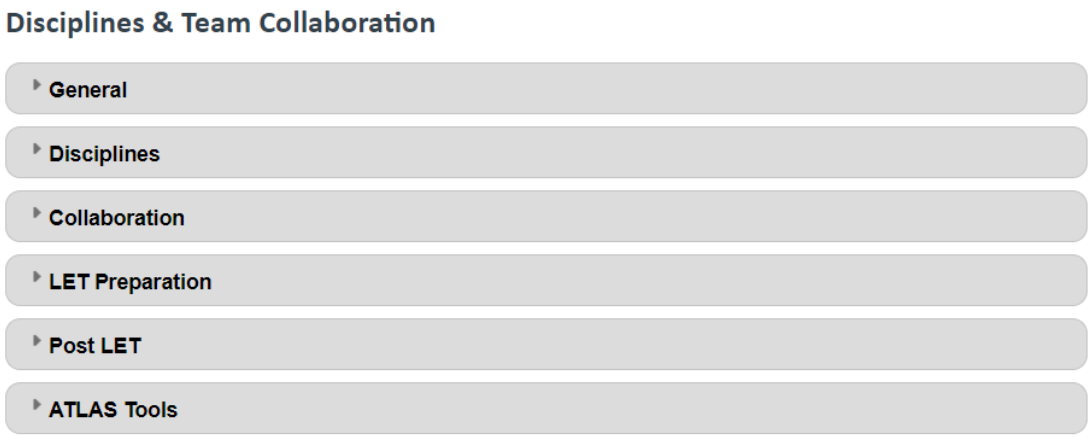


The "Preconstruction Project Provisions" link takes you to this website https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/Preconstruction/pages/default.aspx. If you do not have access to this site, please utilize the instructions that follow that link for how to obtain access, however you may not be eligible for access if you are an LGA or a firm working with an LGA on an LGA project proposal; thus as mentioned earlier there is an alternative to placing your project special provisions on this site to add that project special provision to your proposal.

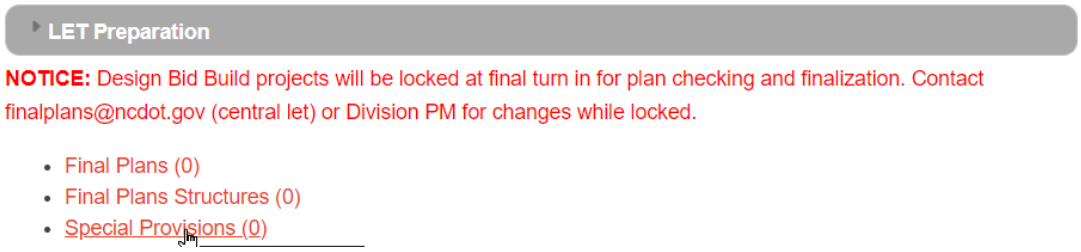
Use "Find a Site" to search for the WBS, TIP of interest or the Division links to find projects available for that Provision by scrolling through the list.



When you enter the project, you will see the following initial project set-up listing.



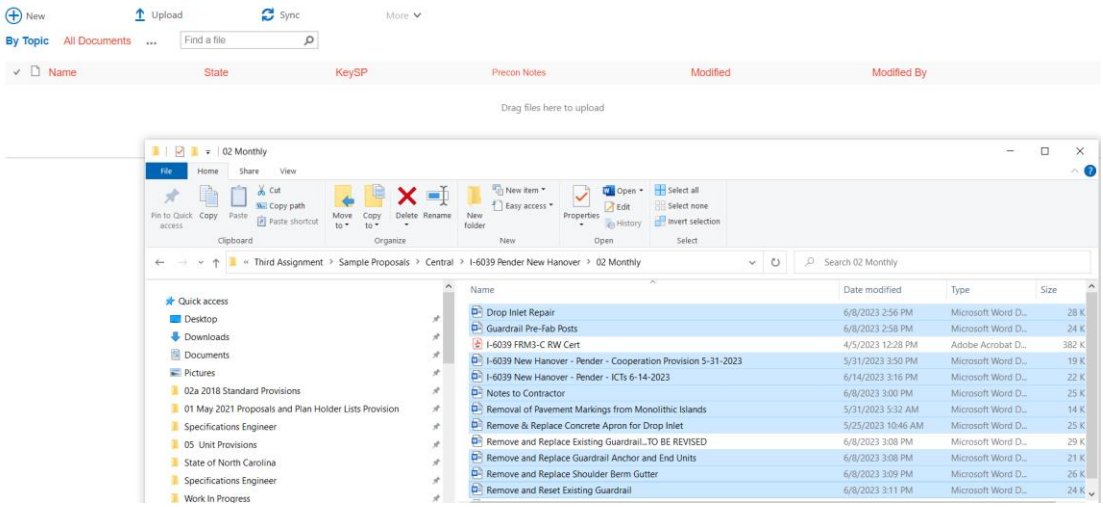
Select “LET Preparation”, then “Special Provisions”.



To load project specific provisions you have two options to complete that action.

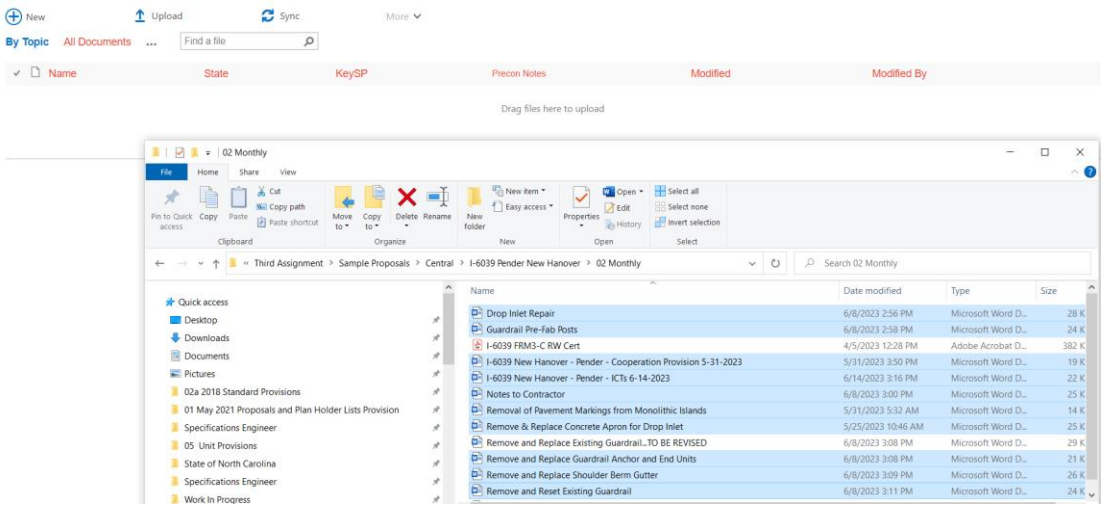
<u>Option 1:</u>

Drag and drop or upload the provisions for that project to this site.



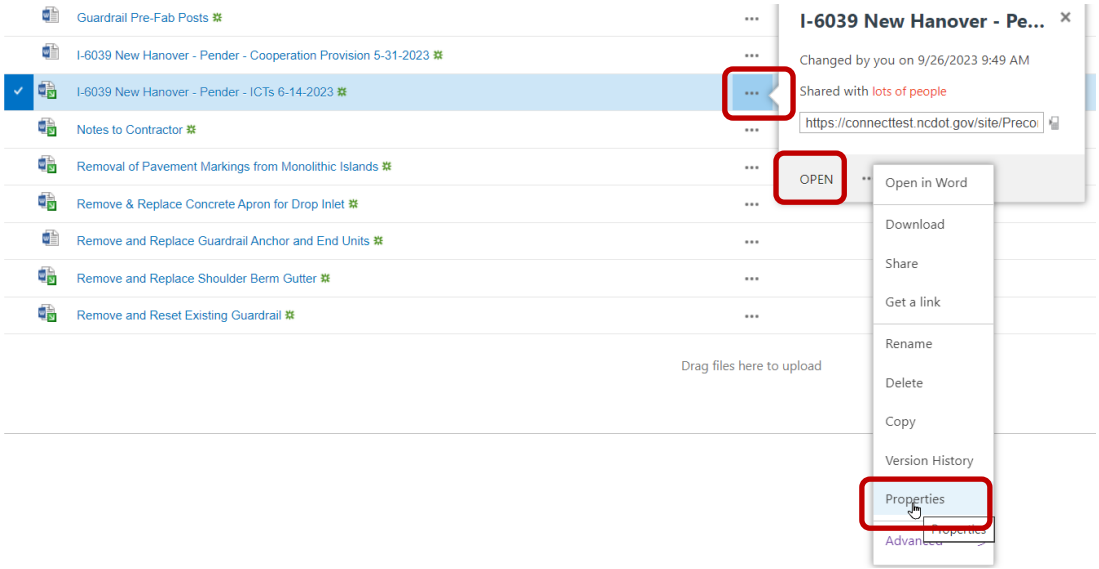
After this loads you will see them available for use.

You have to fill out the properties of each provision inserted and check it in if you drag and drop them into the provision folder.

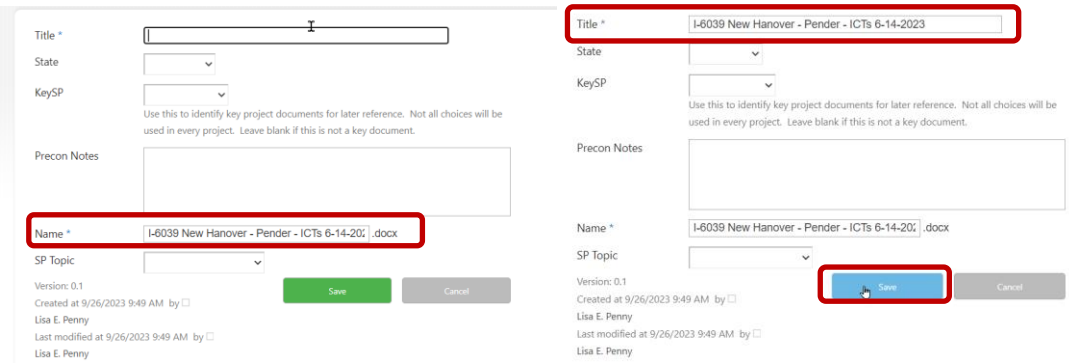


If you use this option you will need to ensure all the files dropped in are “checked in”, you will tell it is not checked by seeing the little arrow by the word icon.

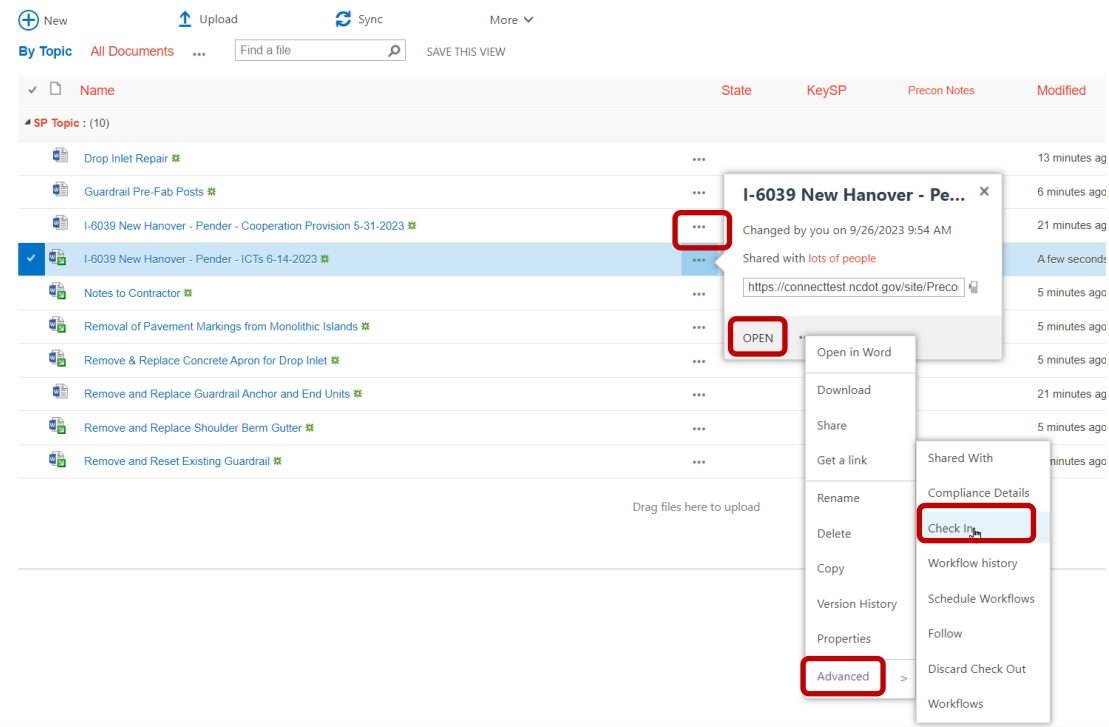
For those instances, you will need to select the triple dot (...), then triple dot again (...), then Properties.



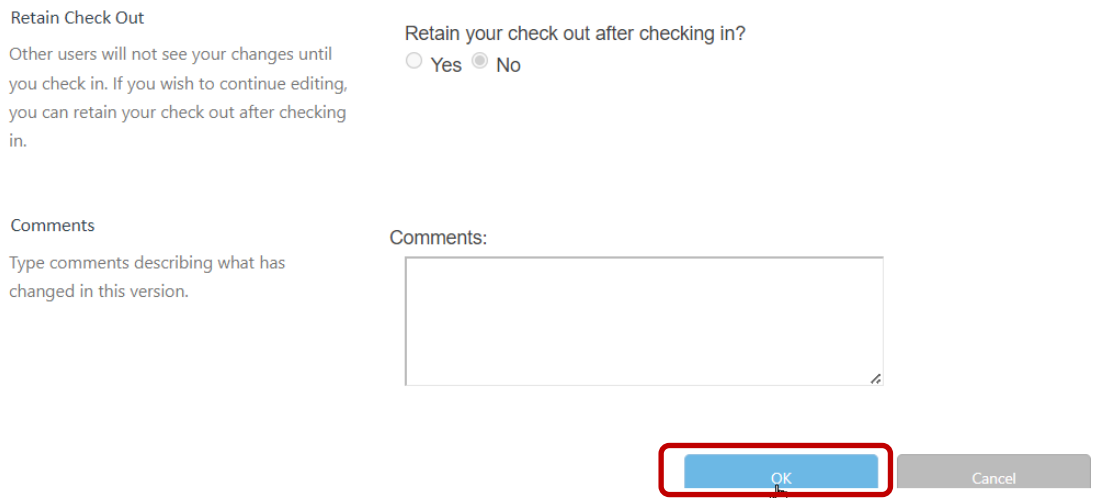
Copy "Name" to "Title" and "Save".



Then select the triple dot (...), then triple dot again (...), then Advanced, then "Check In".

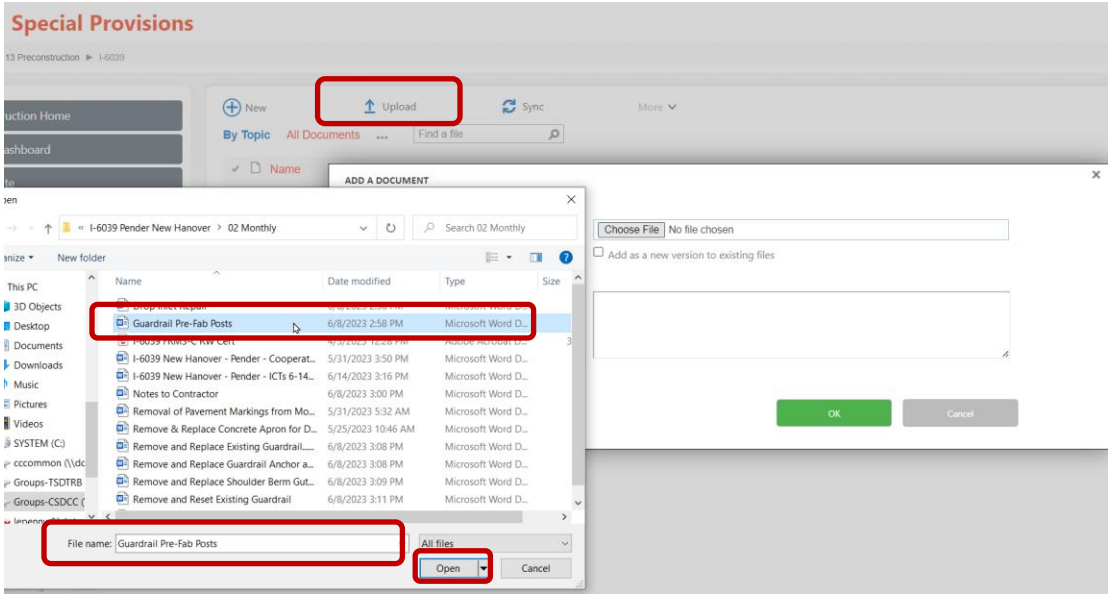


Then select "Ok"

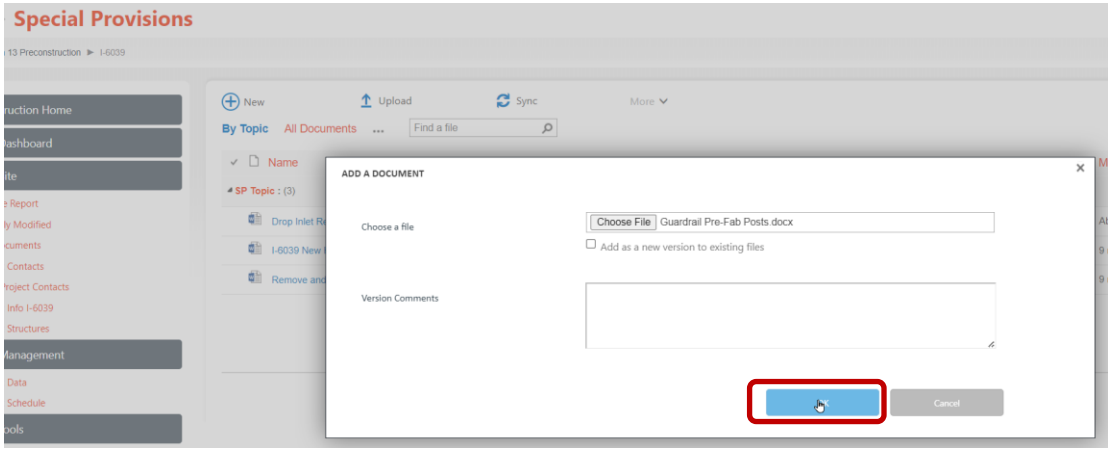


<u>Option 2:</u>

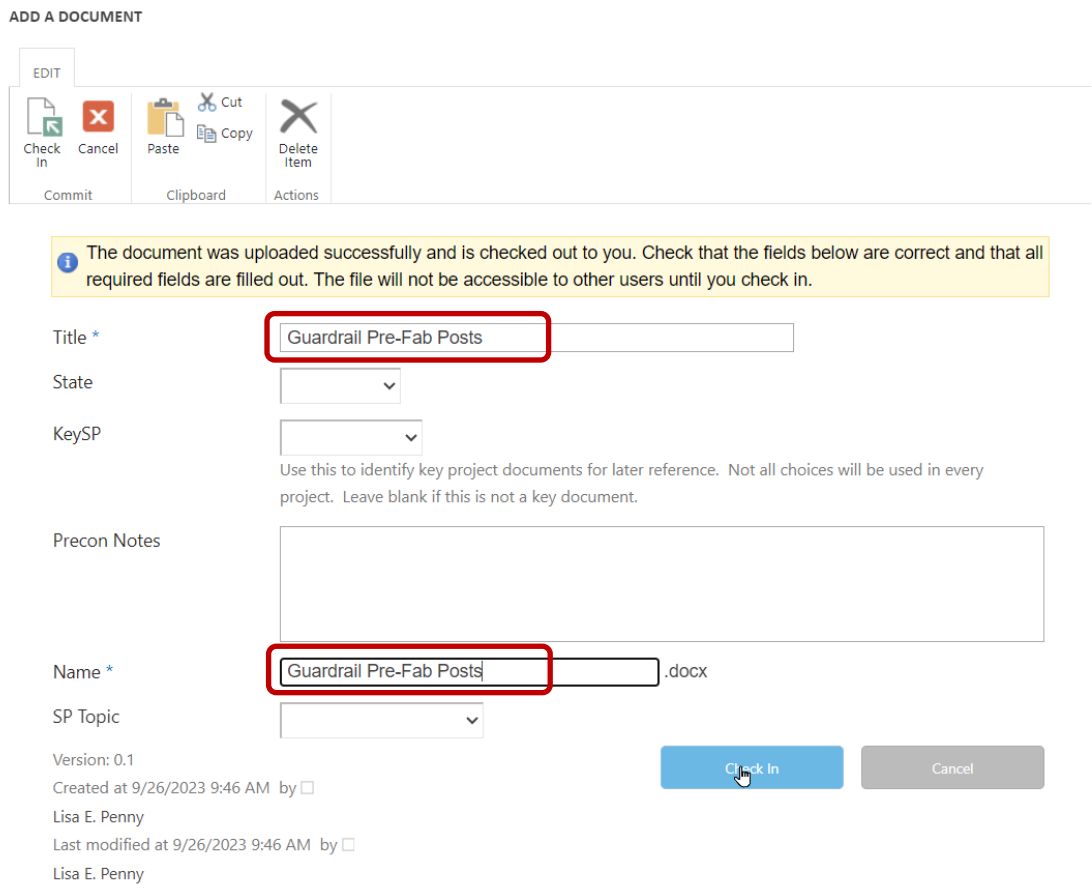
The alternative is, "Upload", "Choose File", select your file of interest", select "Open".



Select “Ok”.



Then copy “Name” to “Title” field and “Check In”. Those are the only required fields.



After you complete this action, return to your proposal for this project. Now that they are on this site, they will be displayed at the bottom of your "Edit Proposal" page for your project proposal as described earlier. Remember if PDF files are on this site, they will not be an option to insert, only Word files will be allowed for insertion. Bundle the other required sealed provisions in a DocuSigned document, this system will not be able to manage those other portions.

Updates

The Automated Proposal Application (APA) will be updated by the Specification Engineer in the Contract Standards and Development Unit. Your suggestions for updates/improvements are encouraged. Please send to specs@ncdot.gov.

If the project moves to a later letting date, ensure you modify the Projects page accordingly. You will need to ensure you have the correct version of the provisions selected. If the let date is past the provisions will be marked as "inactive" and only the "active" provisions will be displayed for a new project created. For historical projects and proposals (past the Letting Date) if a provision is selected as "Include" it will be

retained to link to the historical provision even if "inactive" so you can view an historical proposal for reference as needed. Use the contract number, WBS, TIP, or Description to search for the project or proposal. The last changes made will be available for further update.

Note that the provisions and lineup sheet are typically updated in the third week of the month approximately two months before the let date when the approved provisions become effective. This is done to allow one month to assemble the proposal and one month to advertise the proposal. Provisions, lineup sheets and the website updates typically correspond with the provision distribution email sent to each Division by the Specifications Engineer.

Chapter 3:
APA Proposal Output

Topics you will learn in this chapter:

- ✓ Create Proposal and Final Review.
- ✓ Table of Contents
- ✓ APA Proposal Product.

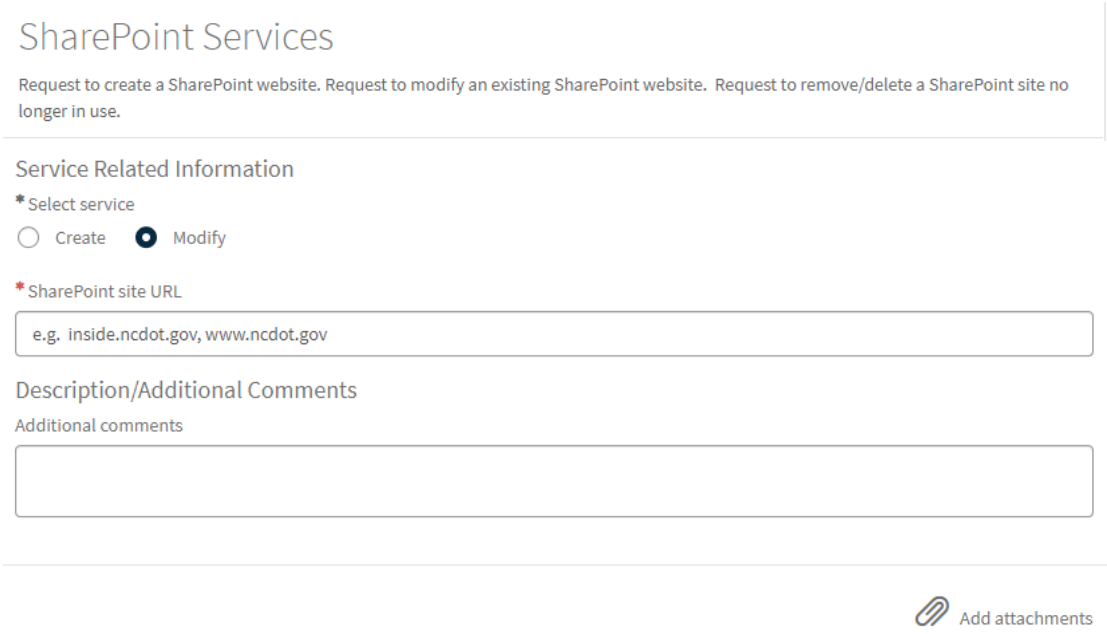
Create Proposal and Final Review

The Automated Proposal Application, if used as intended, minimizes your changes required after you generate the proposal. Key items to remember include:

Use the APA templates and Provisions Writers' Guide provided on the APA Home Page to create those provisions that insert into the General Provisions or Roadway Provisions of the Proposal. There should not be any additional provisions inserted into the Project Standard Special Provisions section. This is to ensure the Table of Contents and like structure of provision is applied to those project special provisions needed for your project. Please note if the individual sealing the General, Roadway and Project Standard Special Provisions sections does not want to seal a project special provision Roadway provision insert, the alternatative is creating a Miscellaneous Roadway section of your proposal as will be described in the next section of this document where the Unit Provisions File Number and Page Number chart is noted.

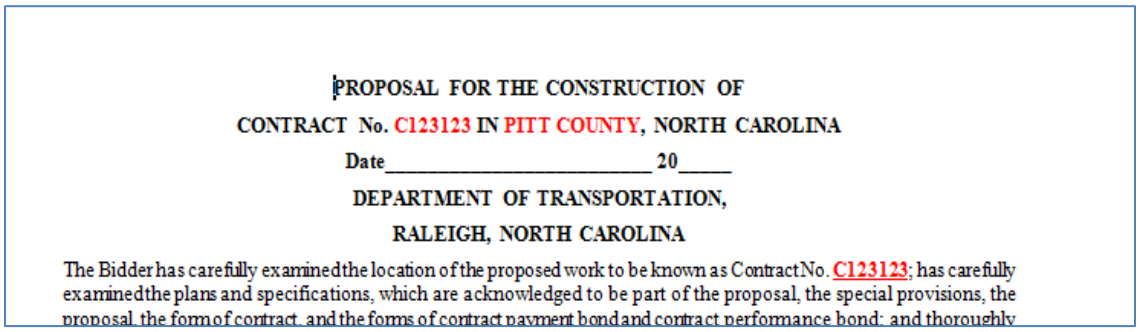
For additional or modified provisions, using the templates of course, insert them by using the "Preconstruction" website placing them as word files in the Special Provisions location for your project. If the "Preconstruction" website is locked down, open a ticket to insert your provision onto the website, if timing does not allow for this please complete the ticket and insert where needed regardless, but also manually insert that provision into your proposal. Upon entering the "open a ticket" SharePoint Services path, you select "modify", copy and paste the Special Provisions Path. However if time does not permit

this action, or no need for a "Preconstruction" website for your project, just use the "Add Word Document" method described earlier in this document within the "Edit Proposal" page in APA.



If you ensure above is followed, there are minimal steps required after you generate your proposal, again this will be found after generating on your "C Drive" "Documents" folder. First finalize all red text (tags) are appropriate throughout, then modify the text removing the red format as noted below.

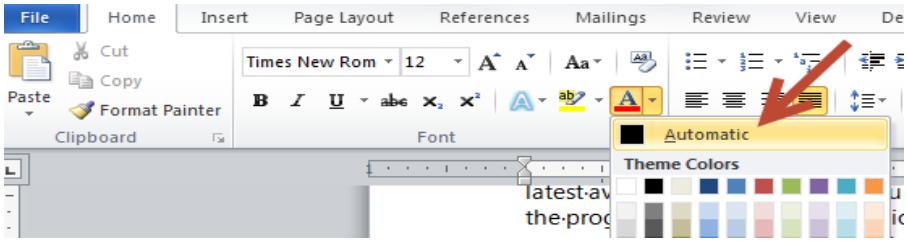
APA creates a Word document in your "C Drive" "Downloads" folder. This document uses **Black** text to denote the standard information within the proposal. **Red** text denotes user inputs including user inputed project special provisions, i.e., the provisions that you added using the "Click Here to Add Additional Project Specific Provisions".



PROPOSAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF
CONTRACT No. C123123 IN PITT COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
Date_____ 20_____
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

The Bidder has carefully examined the location of the proposed work to be known as Contract No. C123123; has carefully examined the plans and specifications, which are acknowledged to be part of the proposal, the special provisions, the proposal, the form of contract, and the forms of contract payment bond and contract performance bond; and thoroughly

After you have reviewed your proposal, press "Control" and "A" to select all text. On the Home tab of Word, under the "Font" ribbon, select "Automatic" on the font color symbol after you have completed your review.



There are a few more steps if manually inserting provision(s) after output versus using the Preconstruction website and that provision is needed in the Table of Contents; however it is highly recommended to just use APA to insert the additional provision required using the "Preconstruction" website "Special Provisions" folder or "Add Word Document" on the "Edit Proposal" page for your project and then regenerate.

Just copy one of the other Table of Contents rows, insert the copy and rename the Title and page number if there is some reason you must do this insert outside APA which should be very rare or never.

For any spacing changes that are done post proposal generation (ideally format the provision as described in the template instruction or report there is an issue with the standard provision by contacting specs@ncdot.gov). The Table of Contents can be highlighted then select "F9" to update it. However, the manually inserted table of content rows will not update with "F9", ensure if the manually inserted provisions shifted and if in the Table of Contents the page number is accurate before advertising.

In the example below only 1 provision was selected and thus if I move it, highlighting the rows and selecting F9 would modify it from G-4 to G-5 if I moved the title down one page. The manual inserted "NEW PROVISION" and "NEXT NEW PROVISION" would not update and would have to ensure that the page numbers are appropriate via manual inspection. Obviously these are not realistic titles of provisions, but it is to provide you an idea of how the BABA provision row was copied down two times and two provisions were inserted on two different pages of this document and how I would have to adjust the title to match that manual provision title as well as the page number versus highlight and F9 key selection. When highlighting you can see the "5" would change but the 6 and 7 would not, this will help you know which you have to manually adjust and which you do not have to manually adjust.

PROJECT SPECIAL PROVISIONS

BUILD AMERICA, BUY AMERICA (BABA):.....G-4

PROJECT SPECIAL PROVISIONS

BUILD AMERICA, BUY AMERICA (BABA): G-5
NEW PROVISION: G-6
NEXT NEW PROVISION: G-7

Table of Contents

As of late 2014, Raleigh uses chapter-type prefixes for each individual unit's work in the Table of Content. These chapter letters were created to allow units to submit their sealed packages to the Contract Standards and Development Unit in DocuSign without having to "renumber" and break the seal.

The General and the Standard Special Provisions typically have each provision title listed in the Table of Contents. The other sections use a range of page numbers to indicate their location in the proposal. Provision sets provided by individual units may use the first page to list a table of contents for those unit provisions. That table of content is often used to sign and seal the provisions from that unit. Please use the templates provided for project special provisions that are inserted either in the General Section (ex. Need more than one of the same Intermediate Contract Time special provision), or the more typically applied Roadway Section project special provision template. The templates can be found in the APA and Project Special Provision Development Instructions on this Automated Proposal Application (APA) Home Page website: https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Specifications/Pages/APA.aspx.

The Table of Contents applies the following before the page number in each section, where APA will manage the G-, R-, and SSP- portions of the proposal. In this Unit Provisions listing below, A2 serves as a cover sheet, A2 and B portions of the proposal are sealed by a single Professional Engineer, whereas all the other sections are sealed by a Professional Engineer for that respective discpline expertise. The other unit specific provision disciplines listed below have separate sealing requirements with the exception of Utilities by Others and Erosion Control which are not required to be sealed by a Professional Engineer. Note: ST- may not have Railroad Insurance as part of the insert, So there will be ST- or ST- and RR- depending on how it is provided.

UNIT PROVISIONS	File Number	Page Number*
CONTRACT COVER SHEET	A1_	none
PROPOSAL COVER SHEET	A2_	none
PROPOSAL / CONTRACT BODY / PROJECT SPECIAL PROVISIONS / GENERAL	B_	G-
PROPOSAL / CONTRACT BODY / PROJECT SPECIAL PROVISIONS / ROADWAY	B_	R-
PROPOSAL / CONTRACT BODY / STANDARD SPECIAL PROVISIONS	B_	SSP-
GEOTECHNICAL	C_	GT-
GEOENVIRONMENTAL	D_	GV-
SIGNING	E_	SN-
PAVEMENT MARKING	EM_	PM-
TRAFFIC CONTROL	F_	TC-
LIGHTING	G_	LT-
UTILITY CONSTRUCTION	H_	UC-
UTILITIES BY OTHERS	I_	UBO-
MISCELLANEOUS ROADWAY	II_	MR-
EROSION CONTROL	J_	EC-
PLANTING / REFORESTATION	K_	PL-
REST AREA	L_	RA-
TRAFFIC SIGNALS	M_	TS-
INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS	N_	ITS-
RAILROAD INSURANCE (Roadway)	O_	RI-
STR / CULVERTS / RR INS (Structures)	P_	ST-
RR INS (Structures) (when provided separately from Structures/Culverts only)	Q_	RR-
PERMITS / GREEN SHEET COMMITMENTS	R_	P-
SIGNATURE SHEETS & FORMS	S_	S-
BID/PAY ITEM SHEETS	T_	T-
DOT EXECUTION SHEET	U_	U-

* Page numbers should be the 18 font Times New Roman Bold Centered at the Top of the Header.
TIP number goes on the Top Left Header and the County Name at the Top Right Header using 12 font Times New Roman.
All provisions must be electronically sealed (Docusigned) except Erosion Control and Utilities by Others.
All provisions should be submitted as .pdf documents EXCEPT Intermediate Contract Time (ICTs) which should be .docx.

APA Proposal Product

NCDOT has provided this tool for NCDOT state and federally funded projects to create your proposal. It will ensure accuracy in using the proper provision available and consistency for bidders ease of review. There may be a legal review required for changing the process to align with this system when put in use or manual processes required on top of what has been described to align with those requirements if not approved locally.

To ensure minimal requirements outside of this system, we had representatives from NCDOT, Cities, Municipalities, and PEF Contractors proposal developers and those that support the proper execution of a proposal for a project involved in system development. This system has been developed for *2024 Standard Specifications* and subsequent versions of the *Standard Specifications*. Any questions please contact specs@ncdot.gov.