



## FDM 3-20-1 Local Program Bridge Approach Length Eligible for Federal Funding

February 15, 2023

### 1.1 Introduction

FHWA and WisDOT limits local bridge approach costs to only those approach costs that are necessary to render the bridge serviceable (to reach the attainable touchdown points using current standards). The reason for this eligibility restriction is that local bridge funds are meant for bridge work only. If bridge funds are used for extended approaches or other non-bridge work, then there are fewer local bridges that can be replaced or rehabilitated. For projects on the Federal-aid system (functionally classified above a minor collector), FHWA allows for other eligible funding (such as STP funds) for extended bridge approaches. However, for many local bridges, the roadway is not on the Federal-aid system and there are no federal funds available for bridge approach work beyond that which is described above.

Any county or other unit of local government desiring to include a local bridge in the Local Bridge Program must comply with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program Funding Policy and "*Performance Based Practical Design (PBPD)*." The funding policy has been written to help facilitate more projects through the Local Bridge Program by being more efficient with the dollars spent. As a result, this Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program Funding Policy and PBPD will define the desirable touchdown points as being no longer than 50 feet on each side (100-feet total) from the structure, unless appropriate design data and/or sound engineering judgement has been provided to justify a longer touchdown point.

The Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program Funding policy is shown in [Attachment 1.1](#). Questions about the policy should be directed to the region Local Program Project Managers (LPPMs). The WisDOT PBPD perspective is described in [FDM 11-1-5.2](#).

At program cycle project application review, if approaches are anticipated to be longer than the desirable 50 feet on each side (100-feet total), then the sponsor should indicate the estimated length of the approaches in the application. Examples of justification can include, but are not limited to:

- hydrology reports
- historical flood data
- safety data
- AADT data
- environmental considerations, or
- other appropriate data points.

Bridge approach lengths up to 300-feet total (150-feet on each side) can be approved at the application stage. Bridge approach lengths beyond 300-feet total will require an Approach Length Justification Report.

The cost estimate contained in the project application must reflect the estimated approach lengths, even if they are longer than the desirable length (50 feet on each side). Bridge approach lengths beyond 300-feet, or 150-feet on each side, should be identified as non-participating costs in the project application. Approach lengths, and other bridge geometrics can be altered after the initial application by presenting the appropriate design modification with supporting justification at project milestones. Requests for funding increases as a result of the design modification will require the sponsor to follow the WisDOT Change Management Procedure. Change Management requests for approaches longer than what was estimated in the application will not be approved unless engineering justification is provided.

### 1.2 Touchdown Points on Local Program Bridge Projects

Design local bridge projects in accordance with the appropriate design criteria discussed elsewhere in the FDM and in the Bridge Manual. The point where a proposed bridge approach roadway matches into the existing roadway is the touchdown point and the sum of the lengths from each touchdown point to the bridge abutments is the "approach length."

As indicated above, 50-feet on both sides of the structure (100-feet total) is the desirable approach length, however longer approach lengths up to 150 feet on both sides of the structure (300-feet total) can be approved at project application based on sound engineering judgement. The cost estimate contained in the project

application must reflect the estimated approach lengths, even if they are longer than the desirable length. Bridge approach lengths beyond 300-feet should be identified as non-participating costs in the project application.

### **1.2.1 Roadside Barrier on Local Program Bridges**

Design roadside barrier at bridge abutments as described in [FDM 11-45-2](#). It is acceptable for the end of this barrier system to extend beyond the touchdown point. When the beam guard is exclusively protecting the parapets, or a feature related to the bridge replacement, pavement replacement is eligible for federal funding from the start of the asphalt shoulder taper for the EATs to the touchdown point of the approach reconstruction. Pavement replacement is not eligible for federal funding if beam guard is protecting steep slopes or other existing conditions that are not part of the bridge reconstruction.

### **1.3 Local Program Bridge Design Study Report**

The Design Study Report (DSR) for Local Program bridges is found at the [Local Program Procedures and Tools webpage](#). DSR section directions are found in [FDM 11-4](#).

### **LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

[Attachment 1.1](#)            Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program Funding Policy