Texas Department of Transportation

Local Government Preliminary Scheduling Tool Guide

2025

Project Planning Guide

This Local Government Preliminary Scheduling Tool helps determine when a project will be ready to let, by considering various factors such as the project's type, location, complexity, and environmental impact. This tool is developed to help determine a general timeline for the completion of the design phase of the project in order to be Ready to Let.

Assumptions:

- When information is uncertain for a requirement or milestone (e.g., Right-of-Way, permits, or utility coordination), the assumption should default to the worst-case scenario. For instance, if it is not clear whether ROW is secured, please utilize worst-case scenario inputs.
- LG is managing project- If TxDOT is managing, this tool is not applicable and project personnel should follow TxDOT standard project development process and procedures.
- Unmodified durations in this tool are based on local government managing the project
- "Base" durations for project type only account for design duration – it does not include the ROW, Utility Adjustment, Environmental Process, Railroad Coordination or the construction of the project.
- This tool is not intended for projects that only consist of Feasibility/Planning elements.
- This tool should be used for projects that will utilize any state or federal funding. Projects that do not utilize any state or federal funding do not follow the same process schedules in this tool and the tool is not applicable.

Project Information

Start on the first tab, by filling in the project details to set the stage:

1. **Sponsor's Name**
    - Who is the owner of the project?
2. **County**
    - What county is the project taking place in?
- **CSJ**
    - Please provide the CSJ
3. **Roadway or Structure ID**
    - Please provide the roadway name or Structure ID
4. **Project Limit**
    - What are the limits of the project? (provide cross-streets or other reference points - To/From)

5. **Project Length**
    - How long is the project?
6. **Select Project Location**
    - Is the project located in a:
        - Rural area
        - Urban area
        - Metropolitan area
7. **LG Risk Assessment Score**
   Projects requiring a funding agreement (AFA or similar) with the LG performing construction on the State Highway System, or managing any phase of the project which is being reimbursed with federal or state funds, or contributing as "in-kind" work performed by staff or consultants as part of its match for federal or state funds require TxDOT to perform a risk assessment of the LG's capabilities (rankings of A, B, C, or D) and commit TxDOT to providing an appropriate oversight level of the LG's performance of its project responsibilities (as assigned to the LG in the funding agreement).
    - A – No impact to Design Phase
    - B – No impact to Design Phase
    - C – Additional 6 months added to Design Phase
    - D – Additional 12 months added to Design Phase
8. **AADT Traffic Count / Count Year**
    - What's the traffic count for the project, and what year was the count done?
9. **Estimated Construction Cost**
    - What is the estimated construction cost for the project?
10. **Project Initiation Date**
    - What is the proposed start date for the design process including AFA coordination? (If unknown, assume today's date)

Proceed to the following tab "LPA Schedule Tool- No Schematic" if no schematic is needed. If a schematic phase will be needed, proceed to "LPA Schedule Tool- Schematic".

AFA Process

11. Has the AFA process been completed? Check if yes.

Procure Consultant

When receiving federal or state funds to pay for consulting services, the LG must use a qualifications-based selection procedure when procuring engineering, architectural, or surveying services. Procedures must be in writing and require TxDOT preapproval.

12. Has a consultant been procured? (select from drop-down list)
    - No, the process has not been approved
    - Yes, the process has been approved
    - Non-federal procurement process. Consultant Not Yet Selected
    - Yes, the process has been approved and a consultant has been procured
    - Non-federal procurement process- Consultant Selected

Schematic/Preliminary Design

13. Is the schematic phase required for this project? Check if yes.

    If there is a schematic phase continue to the yellow tab labeled "LPA Schedule Tool-Schematic". The logic differs from projects without a Schematic Phase. The only project types which require a schematic phase are the following:

    - Convert Non-Freeway To Freeway
    - Freeway Operational Improvements
    - Interchange (New or Reconstructed)
    - Intersection & Operational Improvements
    - New Location Freeway
    - New Location Non-Freeway
    - Widen Freeway
    - Widen Non-Freeway

    Ensure the correct selection has been made, if the "LPA Schedule Tool - Schematic" tool is utilized for any project type aside from those listed, the calculation will not be accurate.

Design Criteria Input

Next, we'll dive into the project type and specific details to estimate how long design might take:

Select Project Scope

14. What type of project is it? Please select the description that best fits your project from the drop-down list.
    - Bridge Maintenance (if Cat 6 funded)
    - Bridge Replacement
    - Bridge Widening or Rehabilitation
    - Convert Non-Freeway To Freeway
    - Culvert & Storm Drainage Work
    - Freeway Operational Improvements
    - Feasibility Studies
    - Interchange (New or Reconstructed)

- Intersection & Operational Improvements
- Landscape & Scenic Enhancement
- New Location Freeway
- New Location Non-Freeway
- Overlay
- Preliminary Engineering
- Pedestrian, Sidewalks and Curb Ramps
- Rehabilitation of Existing Road
- Restoration
- Rail Hwy Crossing Signals/Structures
- Rail Line
- Seal Coat
- Safety Improvement Projects
- Super-2 Highway
- Traffic Control Devices
- Widen Freeway
- Widen Non-Freeway
- Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements
- Traffic Signal
- Hazard Elimination & Safety

Is this a FHWA Major Project or is a Value Engineering Study required?

15. A project classified as a FHWA Major Project is estimated to be over $50 Million construction cost or $40 Million for a bridge project. Value Engineering Studies are required for all FHWA Major Projects but may also be utilized on any other project as needed. Check if yes.

Will the design phase be managed by TxDOT?

16. Check if yes.

ROW Input

Please note that the ROW Process will always extend a few months beyond environmental completion, as federal funds may not be utilized to pay for ROW costs incurred prior to the final approval of the environmental document. Any advanced acquisition is done at the LG's financial risk, including the risk of jeopardizing the prospective federal funding if the acquisition prejudices the environmental review process. Advance acquisition also may cause considerable problems when displacements are involved since relocation funding cannot be set up prior to completion of public involvement and final environmental clearance. In this case, the LG will be responsible for relocation costs.

17. Do you anticipate acquiring ROW for this project?
    - If yes, what types of ROW are anticipated to be required? Check all which apply. If it is anticipated that no parcels/easements will need to be acquired, make no selection.
        - Easements
        - Undeveloped Acreage
        - Residential
        - Commercial
        - Industrial
    - If ROW is required, what is total number of parcels you anticipate needing?
    - Do you anticipate resistance, opposition, or pushback during acquisition of any of the parcels from its owner? Check if yes.
    - Will the ROW phase be managed by TxDOT? Check if yes.

*Please note that in the case there are no parcels, the 9FF successor will be overwritten and date range will reflect a zero monthly duration.

Utility Timeline

18. What type of utilities may need to be relocated for this project? Check all which apply. If it is anticipated that no utilities will need to be relocated, make no selection.
    - Fiber Optic
    - Gas
    - Water
    - Overhead Transmission Line
    - Duct Bank

- How many will need to be relocated?
    - 1-5
    - 6-10
    - 11-15

- > 15

- Will the utilities phase be managed by TxDOT? Check if yes.

Proximity to Railroad

19. Is there a railroad close to the project?
    - None
    - Project includes work within RR ROW
    - Within 50’ of RR ROW
    - Within 51’ to 500’ of RR ROW
- Will the railroad phase be managed by TxDOT? Check if yes.

Environmental Clearance

LG must comply with TxDOT procedures for environmental review and approval. This includes compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) on projects receiving federal funds. Projects with lesser environmental impacts can typically be approved by Categorical Exclusion (CE). As impacts or potential impacts increase the requirements for review and approval become greater requiring performance of an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

- What environmental document is anticipated to be needed?
    - Categorical Exclusion (CE)
    - Environmental Assessment (EA)
    - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Select any additional permit which will be required for this project

- US Fish and Wildlife
- US Corps of Engineers - Individual Waters of US Permit

Final Thoughts

Upon completing the requested information in this tool, it will provide an estimated project design phase duration to achieve TxDOT **Ready to Let (RTL)** status, including a proposed letting date, based on the project’s complexity and other factors. If you have any questions, contact your district’s project PM or the Local Government Program Section of the Transportation Programs Division.

Definitions

- Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements: New Construction, reconstruction or addition of Shared Use Paths (for bicycle and pedestrian use) bicycle lanes or other bicycle safety improvement projects on new or existing locations. Shared Use Paths may be located within roadway ROW or on independent ROW.
- Border Crossing Facility: Construction of Border Crossing Facility.
- Bridge Maintenance: Bridge Maintenance not addressed as bridge rehabilitation, widening or replacement. For example: bridge rail replacement, bridge beam repair, concrete surface repair, abutment repair work, pile repairs, adjust steel shoes, bridge painting, cleaning bridge joints or structural deck overlays.
- Bridge Replacement: Replacement of structure on existing location.
- Bridge Widening or Rehabilitation: Rehabilitation or widening of deck, sub or super structure of an existing bridge to upgrade bridge to loading standards or geometric standards or traffic capacity.
- Convert Non-Freeway to Freeway: Added capacity conversions of multiple highways with non-controlled access to controlled access freeway.
- Corridor traffic Management: Corridor Traffic Systems.
- Culvert & Storm Drainage Work: New, replacement, or extension of non-bridge class culvert, storm drainage, or detention pond work.
- Emergency Relief Project: Work performed after a disaster or catastrophe classified as an emergency.
- Environmental Work Activities: Work associated with environmental impact and approval processes such as air quality analysis, archaeological studies, hazardous material mitigation and other pollution prevention practices/ activities (including noise walls).
- Feasibility Studies: Analyses conducted to assess the practicality, costs, and benefits of proposed transportation projects before detailed design and implementation.
- Ferry Boat: The Construction or reconstruction of landings, approaches, or appurtenances to ferry boat operations, purchase of ferries.
- Freeway Operational Improvements: Facilitates operational and traffic improvements; may include the construction of deceleration/acceleration lanes, on/off ramp improvements, frontage road conversion from 2 to 1 way operations or other traffic/access improvements (primarily on controlled access facilities); Upgrading of a freeway facility to full current geometric standards including base or pavement support enhancements.
- Interchange (New or Reconstructed): A complete interchange facility (such as trumpet, diamond, three-level diamond, cloverleaf, partial cloverleaf, directional, or roundabout) on new location or reconstruction of interchange.
- Intersection & Operational Improvements: Construction of right/left turn lane or other intersection improvements (primarily non-controlled access facilities). Can also include stand-alone corridor operational under SFT; Upgrading of a non-freeway facility to current geometric standards including base or pavement support enhancements.
- Landscape and Scenic Enhancement: Improvements of overall aesthetics of Right of Way, enhancements of roadside view or irrigation work.
- New Location Freeway: A Controlled access facility on new location.
- New Location Non-Freeway: A Non-Freeway facility on new location.
- Overlay: Levelling up or surfacing a pavement course, or any combination composed of a compacted mixture of mineral aggregate and asphaltic material.

- Pedestrian, Sidewalks and Curb Ramps: New Construction, reconstruction or addition of ADA compliant pedestrian improvements, sidewalk, and curb ramp projects on new or existing locations.
- Preliminary Engineering: Preliminary Engineering only, will not lead to a Statewide or local let project.
- Rail Highway Crossing Signals/Structures: Work on rail highway crossing signals/structures and replanking.
- Rail Line: Work on State owned or privately-owned rail.
- Rehabilitation of Existing Road: Reshaping and/or addition of existing base courses, including resurfacing, within existing Right of Way to meet 3R Standards. This function includes (but not limited to) minor safety upgrading, such as widening culverts, shoulders and guard fence.
- Restoration: Restoration of pavement structure to existing configuration to meet 2R Standards as minimum. This function may include some minor safety upgrading.
- Right of Way: The purchase of Right of Way.
- Seal Coat: Application of a protective sealant over asphalt pavements to prevent water infiltration and prolong pavement life.
- Safety Improvements Projects: Cable/Concrete median barrier, rumble strips, new or improved shoulder work, curve improvements, intersection safety improvement, and flashing beacons.
- Safety Rest Area: Construction of Safety Rest Area.
- Seal Coat: Surface treatment of one or more applications of asphalt covered with aggregate for sealing of existing pavements includes crack seal.
- Super-2 Highway: Construction of periodic passing lane is added to a 2-In rural highway to allow the passing of slower vehicles and the dispersal of traffic platoons.
- Texas Park and Wildlife: Off-state highway system, work within state park including camp pull out and parking lot work.
- Traffic Control Devices: Improvements include illumination, signage and signals, traffic protection devices, striping, pavement markings, new traffic signal, or upgrade of signalized intersection, ITS equipment, dynamic message signs.
- Transportation Non-Roadway: Addresses work that is not associated with roadway construction. For example: Carpool/ vanpool, purchase or replacement of buses or rail cars, bridge inventory, ozone action days, commute solution studies, transit/visitor centers, intermodal studies, outreach campaigns, aerial photography, bicycle sharing systems.
- Utility Adjustments: The adjustments of Utilities.
- Widen Freeway: Added capacity widening of an existing freeway facility.
- Widen Non-Freeway: Added capacity widening on an existing non-freeway facility and addition of travel lanes.
- Rural: Projects located in less densely populated areas, typically focusing on infrastructure that serves smaller communities or areas where traffic volumes are lower compared to urban regions.
- Urban: Projects situated within cities or metropolitan areas, characterized by higher population density, complex traffic patterns, and a need for extensive infrastructure improvements, such as road networks, transit systems, and urban amenities.
- Metro: Refers to metropolitan regions that encompass both urban and suburban areas, often requiring projects that address high-density traffic, large-scale public transportation systems, and interconnected roadways.

- Large Parcels: Land areas that are typically larger than average, often used for infrastructure projects that require significant land for construction, such as highway expansion, new roadways, bridges, or other major transportation improvements. These parcels may be required for construction zones, staging areas, right-of-way acquisition, or other project needs.

Project Milestones

- **AFA Complete:** Advanced Funding Agreements have been executed.
- **Start Design Date:** Any resources have begun working on the Project Development Phase of a project.
- **PS&E 30% Complete Milestone:** 30% PS&E completion as defined per project. For simple paving projects this milestone may not be applicable.
- **PS&E 60% Complete Milestone:** 60% PS&E completion as defined per project. For simple paving projects this milestone may not be applicable.
- **PS&E 95% Complete Milestone (Optional):** 95% PS&E completed with construction details fully developed and drafted including the development of specifications needed for the project.
- **Environmental Clearance for Letting Milestone:** This is environmental clearance for letting and corresponds to when all obligations related to ENV Clearance have been met and a project is Ready to Let for construction.
- **Railroad Coordination Complete:** Corresponds to when all permits and certifications are acquired from railroad owners.
- **ROW Possessed Milestone:** Corresponds to when all ROW parcels and/or easements have been possessed for construction.
- **Utilities Adjusted Milestone:** Corresponds to when all utilities required to be relocated or adjusted prior to project letting have been completed.
- **PS&E 100% Complete Milestone:** 100% PS&E completed with construction details fully developed and drafted including the development of specifications needed for the project. Includes TxDOT issuance of a State Letter of Authority (SLOA) and receipt of Federal Authorization and Agreement (FAA).
- **Ready to Let Milestone:** Based on current TxDOT definition.