

Federal Transportation Investment in the Bloomington – Normal Urbanized Area

September 2008



McLean County Regional
Planning Commission

Each Spring, the McLean County Regional Planning Commission publishes the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Bloomington – Normal urbanized area. This document provides a window on planned transportation improvements in the Twin Cities, including street and road improvements, enhancements to transit service, extensions of our network of bicycle facilities, and repairs to major infrastructure such as interstate highways and bridges. The TIP covers a five-year time span, and covers projects planned by both Bloomington and Normal, projects planned by McLean County within the urban area, and projects planned by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Under Federal law, the TIP must be “financially constrained.” This means that each project must have sources for the required funding identified. The TIP outlines how much each planned project is expected to cost, and for each government contributing to the project, the source of the funding to be applied. This can include any of a variety of funding sources, some of which can be applied to any project as deemed suitable by local, state or federal government, and some of which are designed to be used for specific purposes, such as highway safety, bridge construction and maintenance, improvements to rail crossings, the purchase of paratransit vehicles, and other enhancements to our transportation system.

The TIP lists for each project the intended schedule and the estimated costs for each phase of the project. Project schedules often change for various reasons. Thus, the TIP does not always yield an accurate picture of actual project expenditures. To ensure that the public has an accurate understanding of how federal funds are actually being spent on transportation projects, Congress included the following requirement in the most recent federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU:

“an Annual Listing of projects, including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year shall be published or otherwise made available by the cooperative effort of the State, transit operator, and metropolitan planning organization for public review. The listing shall be consistent with the funding categories identified in each metropolitan transportation improvement program (TIP).”

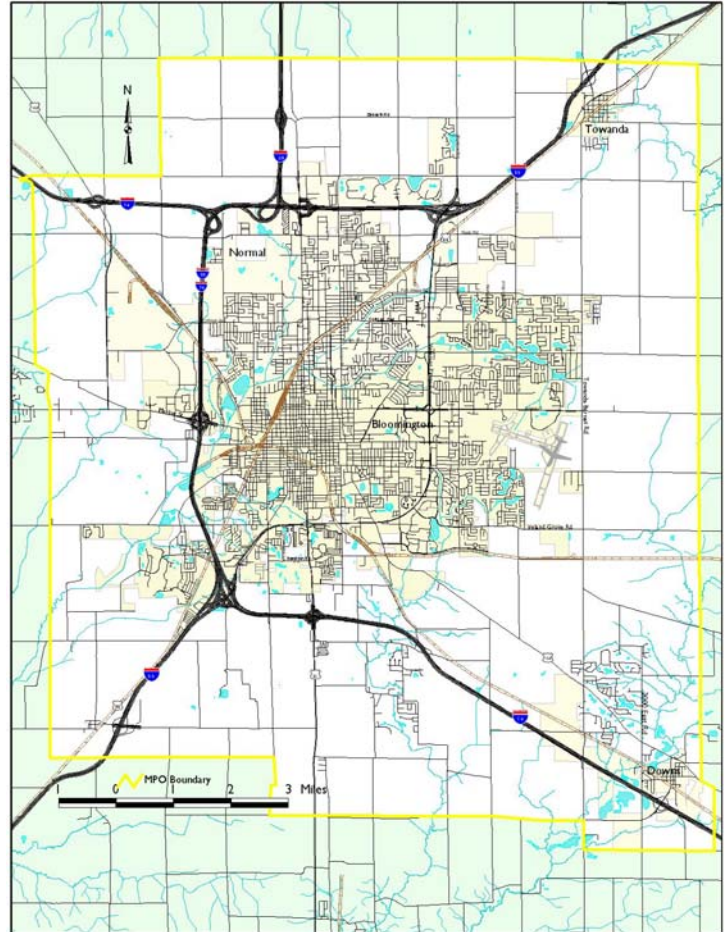
The fiscal year under analysis for the purposes of this document is the state fiscal year from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008.

In each program year, some projects are eligible for funding from a number of Federal transportation programs. On an annual basis, we identify those projects which in the last fiscal year have benefited from the allocation of Federal transportation funding into our area, and report their status to the public through this report, Federal Transportation Investment in the Bloomington – Normal Urbanized Area. These projects include the reconstruction of intersections to improve safety and ease traffic congestion, streetscape engineering to make the community more attractive for all users of our streets, data collection and processing to improve our understanding of the transportation system, and engineering studies to consider the needs of the Bloomington – Normal of the future.

In accordance with federal law (23 CFR 450), the McLean County Transportation Study was established in 1967 by the Governor of Illinois, as a result of the population of the Bloomington-Normal urbanized area exceeding 50,000 for the first time. This population level triggered a federal mandate to create a formal transportation planning program for the area.

With the assistance of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and portions of McLean County were organized into a Metropolitan Planning Organization (M.P.O.) and given the responsibility for transportation planning for the defined metropolitan planning area.

The physical boundaries of the planning area have changed as the community has grown over the more than thirty years since the designation of the M.P.O.. In the map at right, the current Bloomington – Normal metropolitan planning area is shown outlined in yellow.



What are “project obligations”?

You might think of this as setting up a checking account for a specific purpose and then making an initial deposit. In order to begin work on any phase of a federally funded transportation project, the federal funds must first be obligated. This means that the money is set aside for that particular piece of work. Project expenses such as preliminary engineering, design, right-of-way acquisition or construction that are first paid for by the project sponsor can then be reimbursed from the obligated funds for the project.

Do project obligations mean the work is underway?

Prior to work getting underway, the federal funds must be obligated. However, the obligation of funds does not necessarily mean that work will begin immediately. Many times, funds are obligated only for initial phases of a project (preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, etc.), and it may take time to select and hire a consultant to do the work.

What are “project phases”?

Any transportation project, large or small, begins with an idea or plan and ends with construction. Here are the steps:

- **SCOPING:** Meetings are held with project developers and designers, local government representatives, and other involved parties. Decisions are made about the specific elements that will be included in the project, and the range of design alternatives that will be investigated.
- **PRELIMINARY DESIGN:** This phase includes basic engineering work on each alternative, traffic studies, environmental analyses, and other work specific to the project.

Public outreach is used to gain community input into project design. This phase ends with the selection and approval of a project alternative.

- **FINAL DESIGN:** In this phase, the actual plans and specifications that the construction contractor will work from are created.
- **RIGHT OF WAY INCIDENTALS:** Preparation work done prior to the acquisition of the right-of-way.
- **RIGHT OF WAY ACQUISITION:** In this phase, right-of-way necessary for the completion of the project is acquired either through purchase or easements.
- **CONSTRUCTION:** This encompasses all of the work to build the project, whether it is done by a contractor or an agency's own staff.
- **CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION:** In order to make sure that the work is being done properly and conforms to specifications, there is ongoing inspection. Sometimes this work is performed by local or state agency staff, but it may be contracted out.
- **OTHER:** This phase is associated with transit projects, and corresponds to the construction phase of the highway improvements, in that it represents that phase of the project wherein the proposed improvement is actually implemented. For transit projects, this usually involves the actual operation of transit service, and the resultant costs that are incurred, or the purchase and acquisition of equipment or facilities.

Federal investment is a critical element in supporting transit services in Bloomington – Normal. The principal transit provider in the Twin Cities is the Bloomington – Normal Public Transit System, which operates eleven fixed transit routes, provides paratransit special services, and also provides additional transit services to Illinois State University and through the operation of the RedBird Express.

For Federal fiscal year 2008, Bloomington – Normal Public Transit anticipated total operating expenses of \$6,900,000, with a Federal share of \$1,772,780. Actual Federal funding anticipated to be drawn during the period from October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008 was \$980,307. State and local sources provide the remainder of operating funds for the transit system. Federal funds are also used to purchase vehicles for the transit system as needed.

The project funding in the following list reflects Federal allocations during the period from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008. In some instances, funds may have been applied to projects during portions of the state fiscal year immediately before or after the time period encompassing the Federal fiscal year. Project listings include references to the Transportation Improvement Program, where relevant. The location of each project is shown on project maps, with the exception of projects consisting of data management.

Projects for which Federal funding has been obligated, as reported by the Federal Highway Administration, are listed below.

The two projects listed below relate to the reconstruction of a bridge on Interstate 74, at a location northwest of the Village of Downs where the Interstate crosses the Kickapoo Creek. The scope of an initial bridge rehabilitation project was expanded following a crash which caused serious structural damage to the bridge. The project location is illustrated on page 5.

FHWA Project

**Description**
0745155 Bridge superstructure replacement

Project I.D. **Location**
C-95-051-07 Interstate 74 over Kickapoo Creek, 5.9 miles east of U.S. 51, Structure # 0570126, westbound

Additional Information: Work programmed at this location was initially identified in the FY 2008 - 2012 Transportation Improvement Program as state project S-08-04, a state-funded rehabilitation project with a total cost estimated at \$658,000. As originally programmed, this project did not include a Federal Funding component. The current project, replacement of the superstructure of the westbound bridge, resulted from the allocation of federal emergency construction funding following a severe crash in July 2007, which caused serious damage to the bridge superstructure, subsequent to the adoption of the FY 2008 - 2012 TIP. The state has designated this project as # H643.

Federal Funds Programmed in 2008 - FY TIP	\$0
Federal Funds Obligated in State FY 2008	\$972,344
State Funds	\$0
Local Funds	\$0
Total Cost	\$972,344
Federal Funds Remaining for Obligation	\$0

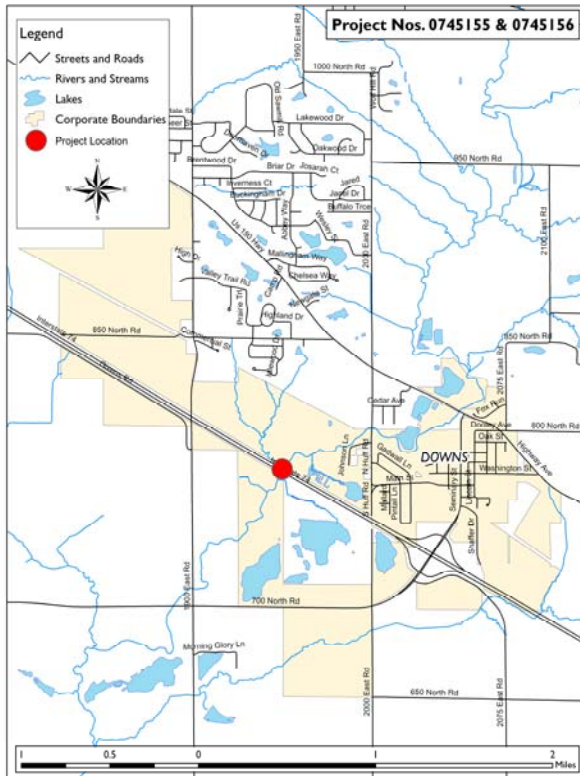
FHWA Project

**Description**
0745156 Bridge rehabilitation/superstructure replacement

Project I.D. **Location**
C-95-052-07 Interstate 74 over Kickapoo Creek, 5.9 miles east of U.S. 51, Structure # 0570125, eastbound

Additional Information: As with the project discussed above (see Project I.D. C-95-051-07) this project superseded the initial state-funded project following the July 2007 crash. This project addresses damage to the eastbound bridge, and has been designated by the state as H644. Additional project elements may be reflected in future funding obligations.

Federal Funds Programmed in 2008 - FY TIP	\$0
Federal Funds Obligated in State FY 2008	\$1,190,098
State Funds	\$132,232
Local Funds	\$0
Total Cost	\$1,322,330
Federal Funds Remaining for Obligation	\$0



FHWA Project #
0113026

Description

McLean County Local Crash Data Collection Project Conversion of crash data into a GIS compatible format; this project was carried out by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission on behalf of IDOT, and provides local data input into a consistent statewide database of the locations of crashes over a four-year period which resulted in fatalities or very serious injuries. This data can be used in Geographic Information Systems, such as the McLean County GIS, to plot locations and analyze traffic patterns in crash-prone areas.

Project I.D.
P-35-072-07

Location

Bloomington - Normal urbanized area

Additional Information:

This project was reflected in a September 2007 amendment to the MCRPC Unified Work Program identifying \$9,000 in Federal funds, and was completed during the third quarter of FY 2007. This project utilized Federal HSIP funds.

Federal Funds Programmed in FY 2008 UWP	\$9,000
Federal Funds Obligated in State FY 2008	\$9,000
State Funds	\$1,000
Local Funds	\$0
Total Cost	\$10,000
Federal Funds Remaining for Obligation	\$0

FHWA Project #
00D5086

Description

Streetscape renovation project; implementation of this project may include elements supporting bicycle users.

Project I.D.
C-95-305-08

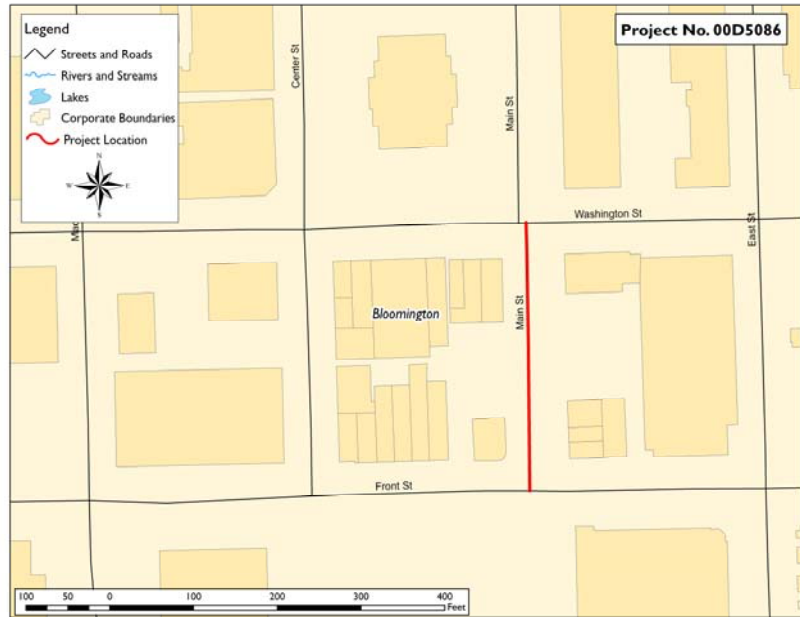
Location

Main Street in downtown Bloomington from Front to Washington Streets
This project results from a City of Bloomington application for streetscape funding, an element in the City's ongoing redevelopment of downtown Bloomington. This project used Federal Enhancement funds. During the development of the FY 2008 - 2012 TIP, this project was not identified as programmed by the City of Bloomington.

Additional Information:

Federal Funds Programmed in FY 2008 - 2012 TIP	\$0
Federal Funds Obligated in State FY 2008	\$170,414
State Funds	\$42,604
Local Funds	\$0
Total Cost	\$213,018
Federal Funds Remaining for Obligation	\$0

The map at right illustrates a section of downtown Bloomington, including the project area for the funded streetscape improvements.



Total Project Costs in the Bloomington – Normal Metropolitan Planning Area

Federal Funds Obligated	\$2,341,856
State Funds	\$175,836
Local Funds	\$0
Total Cost	\$2,517,692
Remaining Obligated Funds	\$0

Additional information on these and other local planned transportation projects can be found on the McLean County Regional Planning Commission website at www.mcplan.org.

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