

Updated Airports Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP) policy published

In October 2006, the Great Lakes Region published a Policy & Procedure Memorandum (PPM) outlining a series of regional policies governing the ACIP process.

Based on changed circumstances at the national level, as well as continued feedback from some of our key stakeholders (states, airport sponsors and consultants), we have now updated the policy.

National changes. The FAA is working to align the allocation of Planning Ceilings and the actual allocation of Discretionary funds. This should enable us to better predict the availability of Discretionary funds.

In addition, the FAA now requires all regions to establish formal “standby” lists, representing approximately 12% more in potential projects that we could fund if higher-priority projects are unable to proceed for any reason.

Regional changes. The Great Lakes Region has updated the regional ACIP policy to:

- Clarify that the basis of the national and regional policies is a statutory provision requiring the FAA to consider national priorities in awarding Discretionary funds, and that projects recommended for Discretionary funds must be ready to proceed swiftly.
- Explain the factors driving regional allocation of Discretionary funds.
- Require sponsors to be prepared to submit grant application by May 1 for grants involving only Entitlement funds.
- Reformat Attachment A (previously a simple outline of milestones) into a planning/tracking tool for joint use by ADOs and sponsors.
- Formalize the use of “standby lists,” generally to include subsequent or final phases of projects already underway.

- Emphasize benefits of designing and bidding projects in phases and/or with bid alternates to enhance the FAA’s ability to offer Discretionary funds if they become available.
- Remind sponsors that they are expected to use all available Entitlement funds for the highest-priority projects, even if those projects (such as Runway Safety Area improvements) are mandated.
- Require ADOs to review the sponsor’s pavement management plan to ensure high-priority airside needs are addressed with Entitlement funds or local funding sources.
- For projects where a sponsor has requested Discretionary as well as Entitlement funds, require sponsors to provide an alternative plan for how the Entitlements would be used if the Discretionary does not become available. The updated policy will also establish a trigger date beyond which the Entitlements must be carried over if the Discretionary has not yet become available.
- Require sponsors to provide a contingency plan for such projects in case the requested Discretionary funds do not become available.
- Substantially revised environmental dates. By February 1 of the year before funding is sought, the ADO must be able to identify the level of environmental review and when the documentation will be completed—which must be no later than the beginning of the fiscal year in which funding is requested.

What should sponsors be doing?

As always, work closely with the appropriate ADO early enough to meet the necessary coordination and milestones, and recognize that both national and regional priorities drive the allocation of Discretionary funds.

Where is the updated policy? The new Regional Guidance Letter (RGL) #5100.20 is online at: http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/regional_guidance/great_lakes/airports_resources/ppms/media/5100.20.pdf