

# DVRPC Municipal Bridge Retro-Reimbursement Program

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

- 1. What is the actual amount awarded to selected retro-reimbursement projects? How much will a municipality actually get reimbursed? What happens if a project has a final total project cost greater than the amount that was awarded after completion?**

This program will reimburse 80 percent of the total project cost requested at time of application (after bridge project is 100 percent completed). The municipality is responsible to provide 20 percent of the total project cost. If there is no funding available in the Municipal Bridge Line Item (MPMS #102105) at the time of reimbursement request, project sponsor may need to wait until funding is available to be reimbursed.

For projects that result in a final total cost that is less than 50 percent higher than requested amount in the application, please send an email notification to DVRPC, the home County, and PennDOT District 6 that explains the reasons for cost increase, including the new total amount. DVRPC, the home County, and PennDOT District 6 will work to resolve minor discrepancies in cost over-runs, but the applicant should prepare to cover all cost increases above the requested amount in application.

For projects with a final total cost that is 50 percent higher than requested amount in the application, the municipality must submit a formal request letter to DVRPC, County, and PennDOT District 6 that explains the reasons for cost increase and then discuss a financial arrangement with DVRPC and PennDOT District 6. The applicant should prepare to cover all cost increases above the requested amount in application.

- 2. Must all applicants complete the entire application form? Are there exceptions?**

There are no exceptions. Each bridge candidate must have a completed application submitted to DVRPC by or before Friday, June 1, 2018 at 5:00 PM. Prior to beginning the application for your bridge project, please keep in mind that the purpose of this program is to further reduce the number of structurally deficient municipal bridges in the region and not simply serve as a funding source for completed projects.

- 3. There are some questions in the application that I don't know how to answer or have the information to answer. What should I do?**

Please leave questions blank if (1) you are unable to answer; or (2) the information is not available. DVRPC may follow-up to address the question after application deadline. The application is based on the TIP Benefit Criteria and PennDOT Connects Level 2 form, which aim to gather a comprehensive understanding and evaluation of the project prior to adding them to the TIP. The more information provided about the project, the more likely DVRPC can better (and more accurately) evaluate it.

- 4. When will DVRPC announce the awards?**

DVRPC intends to present the list of recommended projects for approval by the Regional Technical Committee (RTC) and DVRPC Board in October 2018. Letters of awards and regrets would be mailed afterwards. The selected projects would then be listed in the PA TIP as part of the Municipal Bridge Line Item (MPMS #102105).

- 5. How do I find out if a municipal bridge is on the PA Bridge Bill or PA Capital Budget?**

**[updated May 4, 2018]**

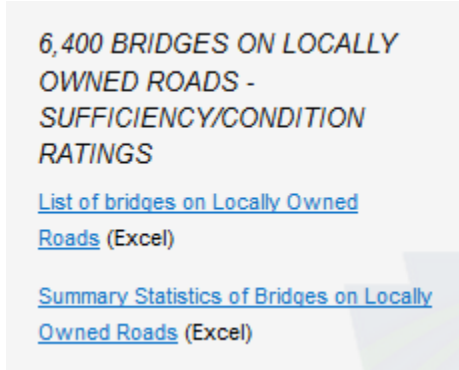
To clarify, the program is not accepting bridges listed in a Bridge Bill that is "pending approval." DVRPC is only accepting those listed in the PA Bridge Bill that is part of the final approved PA Capital Budget. All the PA Capital Budgets are posted on the program's webpage, as of May 4, 2018. As a result, DVRPC has updated question 2.5 in the project application form that reflects this clarification on the program's webpage. It is acceptable if you prefer to submit the original application form that does not reflect the clarification/updated question 2.5.

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### 6. What resources are available to fulfill the project map requirement?

PennDOT's Multimodal Project Management System Interactive Query (MPMS-IQ) is a web-based GIS mapping application available at [http://www.dot7.state.pa.us/MPMS\\_IQ/Mapping](http://www.dot7.state.pa.us/MPMS_IQ/Mapping) that can allow applicants to map and obtain information for Local Bridges, Structurally Deficient Local Bridges, and Posted Local Bridges. Recently, MPMS IQ has been replaced with PennDOT One Map, with very similar functionality but different name. The link is <https://www.dot7.state.pa.us/OneMap>. Information is also provided on the lower right corner of PennDOT's website (see image below) at <http://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Bridges/Pages/default.aspx>



6,400 BRIDGES ON LOCALLY OWNED ROADS - SUFFICIENCY/CONDITION RATINGS

[List of bridges on Locally Owned Roads](#) (Excel)

[Summary Statistics of Bridges on Locally Owned Roads](#) (Excel)

### 7. Must municipal bridges currently be on the PA Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in order to apply for this program?

No, but local bridge projects submitted for this program must be recommended, selected, and awarded funds, and then added to the PA TIP in order to use the retro-reimbursement process. The retro-reimbursement process is not available for projects in PennDOT District 6 unless they are selected through this program.

### 8. What are the Purpose and Need statements in the application? [updated May 8, 2018]

Applicants were asked to complete a purpose and need statement in the previous round. It is not required in this current round.

The Purpose and Need statements allow DVRPC to select projects that are not ill-conceived with a clear understanding of a project's scope, very minimum to no conflicts, and very minimum to no potential project delays.

The *Purpose* is the desired performance, such as eliminating the bridge's structural deficiency status, which should allow for a reasonable range of alternatives (e.g., rehabilitate, replace on new alignment, replace in place). For example, the project's purpose can be stated, "the purpose is to provide residents a reliable crossing of a creek that is not structurally deficient or functionally obsolete" instead of, "the purpose is to remove the structural deficiency status of the bridge." Another example is to state this project will result in a bridge with a legal load structure that meets current design standards and provides a safe crossing for all modes.

The *Need* (problem) should be supported by factual and quantifiable data, such as sufficiency rating, which provides evidence of current (and/or future transport problems) that would justify the commitment of resources and any environmental impacts (e.g., if we don't fix the deficient bridge, then...).

Besides facility deficiencies, the applicant should also consider system linkage/connectivity, access/mobility, safety, congestion, land use/economic development/vitality, security, environment/quality of life, etc. when developing the Purpose and Need statements.

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- 9. How hard and fast is the August 1, 2021 completion deadline? E.g. if the project was “substantially” completed, e.g. most of the construction completed, but a few remaining items left of the punch list, by August 1, 2021, would that place a municipality’s funding in jeopardy? If a municipality has a bridge that was selected for retro-reimbursement does not have a retro-reimbursement agreement signed by all parties by PennDOT by the deadline, will the municipality still receive reimbursement for any of the work performed? What actually needs to be completed by deadline to ensure the municipality will be reimbursed?**

DVRPC encourages all municipalities with bridges selected for retro-reimbursement to conduct all appropriate steps necessary to complete an approved retro-reimbursement agreement between the municipality and PennDOT by August 1, 2021. The funds for reimbursement are guaranteed after PennDOT executes the agreement, which usually occurs after construction is 100 percent physically completed. An agreement is executed when all parties have signed it, and agreement is processed through the Reimbursement Agreement System (RAS).

There could be flexibility regarding the deadline for a project depending on the PennDOT Program Manager’s review and evaluation, including the submission of evidence that acceptable progress is being made on the project. If a municipality does not have an agreement executed by PennDOT and does not have the bridge project fully completed by the deadline, the municipality will not “lose” money that they put in for the project. The township will still have 80 percent of the project cost reimbursed. However, the availability of state funding after the August 2021 deadline is not guaranteed, which may place the municipality at risk for delayed reimbursement (see the next Q&A).

- 10. How long must a municipality wait for reimbursement before or after the August 1, 2021 deadline?**

The timing of reimbursement will depend on how many retro bridge projects in the region have been reimbursed (or are requesting reimbursement) and if there is adequate funds available in the Municipal Bridge Line Item (MPMS #102105) at the time your municipality requests reimbursement. As a result, when reimbursement occurs may vary for each municipality. It is possible that a municipality may have to wait from a few months to a year or longer to be reimbursed, depending on the number of projects requesting reimbursement and the funding available in the TIP line item. After the August 1, 2021 deadline, the availability of state funding is not guaranteed, which may place the municipality a higher risk for a longer delay in reimbursement. The municipality will not “lose” any money they put in for the project. The township/borough will still have 80 percent of the total project cost reimbursed. It’s just a matter of when the reimbursement will happen. Also, reimbursement on any work performed cannot occur unless the bridge project is listed in the PA Capital Budget or Bridge Bill, there is an executed retro-reimbursement agreement, and the project is 100 percent completed.

- 11. What are the environmental expectations?**

Municipalities with selected bridges for retro-reimbursement should complete the appropriate environmental documents to secure the necessary construction permits. PennDOT will not require other environmental documents.

- 12. Would the municipality be required to bid for engineering services or just for construction services? In other words, would the municipality be able to select the engineer without formally bidding the design work?**

A previously designated municipal engineer can perform the engineering services for the retro-reimbursement bridge project. However, should the municipal engineer not be qualified to perform the design services needed for the project, the municipality would be expected to procure engineering services in accordance with their procedures for procuring professional services.

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### **13. If a municipality rehabilitates a bridge to remove its structurally deficient (SD) status, is that preservation or rehabilitation?**

Rehabilitation is defined by 23 CFR 650.403(c) as involving major work required to restore the structural integrity of a bridge and any work necessary to correct major safety defects. Rehabilitation projects typically require complete or almost complete restoration of bridge elements or components and typically require significant engineering resources for design, a lengthy completion schedule, and considerable costs. Most of these projects include repairing several bridge components and bridge deck replacement (partial or complete). However, functional improvements, such as adding a travel lane or raising vertical underclearance, that is considered rehabilitation is not considered part of preservation. Specifically, a rehabilitation project that will remove the bridge's SD status excludes the bridge preservation activities below and is not considered a bridge replacement project. Work activities below are deemed eligible bridge preservation work:

1. Scour Countermeasures: Scour countermeasures including underpinning, riprap placement, streambed paving, etc. properly designed for predicted scour.
2. Expansion dams: Repair, replace or install new expansion dams to ensure leakproof joints. Where economically feasible, eliminate the deck joints. Repairs to deck drainage or downspouting may also be included. Replacement of seals is also permitted, provided other items, if any, relative to leakage are also addressed.
3. Beam end repairs and restoration: Restore steel, concrete or P/S concrete beam-ends to extend their service life.
4. Fatigue and Fracture Retrofits: Retrofits or repairs to fatigue-prone details of steel bridges.
5. Bridge bearings and supports: Restore or replace the existing bearings to make them functional and repair or rehabilitate substructure units to extend their service life. If bearings are replaced, they must meet seismic requirements. However, no seismic analysis is to be performed.
6. Spot/Zone painting: Spot/zone painting can be used as a stand-alone measure or with other steel repair items. Preservation of zinc-rich paint systems should be considered. Cleaning and waste disposal is included in this item. Spot/Zone painting to be completed in accordance with Pub 408, Section 1071.
7. Deck restoration and overlays: Concrete deck patching (Repair Types I, II, or III) and waterproofing overlays (i.e., latex concrete, bituminous with membrane) needed to extend deck life and improve rideability are eligible. Full deck replacements are not eligible. Bituminous deck patching alone is not eligible.
8. Painting: Full overcoats or complete repainting, with cleaning, waste disposal, and steel repairs in accordance with Pub 408, Section 1070.
9. Approach slabs: Repair the approach slab as necessary where the condition of the approach slab is affecting the performance of the bridge. Where practical and needed, repair or replace approach slabs, pavement relief joints, and other high spots adjacent to bridge to restore functionality and/or improve rideability.
10. Where practical, bridge preservation projects in close proximity should be grouped together to economize traffic control and other incidental costs. Bridges within limits of other highway work should be evaluated for opportunities for simultaneous bridge preservation work.
11. Other bridge preservation items not mentioned in the above categories may be included, but must be properly justified.
12. Safety items such as bridge parapet replacement are not eligible work items for preservation. However, safety improvements funded using other than bridge preservation funds may be included in such projects to take advantage of traffic control and other incidental project.

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### 14. What documents are required for submission by deadline? **[clarified as of May 4, 2018]**

- Application form;
- Where bridge is listed in the PA Capital Budget (see webpage for pdf links);
- A letter of support from the County Planning Director; and/or
- Other helpful info, as needed (e.g. map, picture).

### 15. Is there a size limitation to the DVRPC email address?

Yes, DVRPC staff will not receive an email containing an attachment or multiple attachments totaling 25 MB or over.

### 16. My bridge is not listed on the PA Capital Budget. How can I get my bridge listed? How long would it take? **[updated May 8, 2018]**

It is a legislative process; please contact the local legislator to make the request. The last PA Capital Budget that the legislators approved was for 2014-2015. If there is no legislative response or reasonable progress, please provide the location and estimated cost of the phases of work to Jonathan Korus at [jkorus@pa.gov](mailto:jkorus@pa.gov) from PennDOT District 6's Capital Planning & Programming office. PennDOT would then submit the bridge to the legislature as a proposed candidate.

### 17. If our bridge is a roadway over a dam, is it considered a bridge under the terms of this program?

**[updated May 8, 2018]**

Yes, as long as the deck span is 20 feet in length. Further, the bridge must be listed on [PennDOT's List of Bridges on Locally Owned Roads](#) and be a vehicular bridge, not a pedestrian bridge. The vehicular bridge may include pedestrian/bicycle amenities, such as sidewalks.

### 18. Our bridge is already demolished, having been structurally deficient (SD). Is construction of a new bridge eligible for funding under the program? **[updated May 8, 2018]**

Construction of a new bridge is not eligible because this is a program to rehab or replace an existing bridge, which would as a result of the work, remove the existing bridge's SD status, per Program Eligibility Requirements #3 ("Rehabilitation or replacement work completed must result in the elimination of the bridge's structurally deficient status."). This is not a program to construct a brand new bridge. When a bridge is demolished, please notify PennDOT District 6 to remove bridge from [PennDOT's List of Bridges on Locally Owned Roads](#) to avoid future inspections of the bridge.

### 19. Are pedestrian bridges eligible in this program? **[new as of May 8, 2018]**

Not at this time. The program is accepting vehicular bridge rehab or replacement projects only. However, the vehicular bridge may include pedestrian/bicycle amenities, such as sidewalks.

### 20. The application form mentions: "The bridge must have a structurally deficient status, meaning the bridge deck, superstructure, or substructure must have a rating of 4 or less from the most recent bridge inspection." What is the rating of 4? Where can we find this information? **[new as of May 8, 2018]**

The information should be found in the most recent bridge inspection report of the bridge. If the bridge is on [PennDOT's List of Bridges on Locally Owned Roads](#), the bridge would get inspected by PennDOT at least once every two years. The numbers indicate the general structural condition, or health, of the bridge components. Bear in mind that these condition ratings are only used to generally categorize bridge conditions and to provide a global view for planning transportation improvements. The ratings are from FHWA's condition rating numbers, which are defined as:

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9 = Excellent

8 = Very good

7 = Good, some minor problems noted.

6 = Satisfactory, structural elements showing minor deterioration.

5 = Fair, primary structural elements are sound but showing minor cracks and signs of deterioration.

4 = Poor, deterioration of primary structural elements has advanced.

3 = Serious, deterioration has seriously affected the primary structural components.

2 = Critical, deterioration of primary structural components has advanced and bridge will be closely monitored, or closed, until corrective action can be taken.

1 = Imminent failure, major deterioration in critical structural components. Bridge is closed but corrective action may put the bridge back into light service.

0 = Failed, bridge is out of service and beyond corrective action.

N = Not applicable

A condition rating of 4 or lower means that deterioration on at least one structural component is advanced and the poor conditions result in the bridge being classified as structurally deficient. Inspectors provide documentation and photographs to structural engineers to review the deterioration. Structural engineers confirm the assigned condition rating, perform a load rating analysis to determine the load (or weight) capacity of the bridge, compare results to previous studies to determine if the capacity has changed, and determine what other actions must be taken..

A condition rating of 5-9 means that the bridge is performing as designed with minor signs of deterioration. The bridge is structurally sound and routine maintenance actions can stop further deterioration.

Source: [PennDOT Bridge Safety Inspection FAQs](#)

**21. If a bridge is already completed and met program eligibility requirements listed on webpage, would it be eligible to apply for program? [new as of May 15, 2018]**

The plans would have to undergo PennDOT structural adequacy review. If the review shows that the plans are found to not meet the PennDOT standards, the project would not be eligible.

**22. If bridge work has been advertised and awarded, and project meets program eligibility requirements listed on webpage, is bridge project eligible for this program? [new as of May 15, 2018]**

The plans would have to undergo PennDOT structural adequacy review. If the plans do not meet PennDOT standards, changes to the plans would have to be made during construction to bring the plans in accordance with PennDOT standards. If changes are made to meet PennDOT standards, then the project would be eligible.

**23. If bridge work has been advertised and not awarded yet, and project meets program eligibility requirements listed on webpage, is bridge project eligible for this program? [new as of May 15, 2018]**

The plans would have to undergo PennDOT structural adequacy review. If the plans do not meet PennDOT standards, then changes could be made to bring the plans in accordance with PennDOT standards, and the project re-advertised. If that happens, the project would then be eligible.