

CONCEPT STATEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Submittal Procedures

The Concept Statement for Local Federal Aid Projects ([Form 517001](#)) is available on-line in both [Microsoft Word](#) and the Iowa DOT's [eForms XML](#) format. This form is also included in Index No. 6 of the [Project Development Information Packet](#) (Packet).

It should be received by the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) Administering Office by the date listed in the [Critical Path for Project Development Memorandum](#), located in the General Information Section of the Packet.

The steps involved in the Concept Statement submittal and review process are shown on [Chart 3 – Concept Statement Process](#) and [Chart 6 – Environmental Process Overview](#), located in the Flow Charts Section of the Packet.

The Concept Statement may be submitted by e-mail, provided that all of the required documents and information are attached to the e-mail. Acceptable file formats for e-mail attachments include: Microsoft Word (*.doc), Adobe Acrobat (*.pdf), Joint Photograph Experts Group (*.jpg), Graphic Interchange Format (*.gif), and Tag Image Format (*.tif). Contact the Administering Office for the appropriate e-mail address to use.

If all of the required information cannot be provided in electronic format, submit hard copies in accordance with the Critical Path Memo.

Submit the Concept Statement with a cover letter or e-mail. Use cover letter or e-mail to identify any unusual features of the project that are not adequately addressed by the information shown on the Concept Statement.

If it is known that the project will require a design exception, the design exception documentation should also be included with the Concept Statement submittal. If the need for a design exception becomes apparent later, submit the design exception as soon as possible, but no later than the preliminary plan submittal. Refer to Packet Index No. 5 - Design Criteria, for more information on design exception requests.

General Information (Page 1)

County / City: Enter the county and city in which the project is located. Leave the city space blank if the project is only in the county.

Date Submitted: Enter the date that the Concept Statement is submitted. Check “First” or “Revised” as appropriate to indicate if the Concept Statement is being submitting for the first time or if it has been revised. This helps alert Iowa DOT reviewers that a change to the project concept has been made.

Project Number: Enter the project number assigned by the Iowa DOT. If a project number has not yet been assigned, request a number from the Iowa DOT. Users of the Transportation Program Management System ([TPMS](#)) may request project numbers using this system. Otherwise, contact the Administering Office to obtain a project number. Include the project number on all project related correspondence.

STIP Year: Write the Federal fiscal year (FFY) or years that the project appears in the current Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). If the project is not in the current STIP, leave this field blank. If the project is not programmed for the FFY in which Federal funds will need to be authorized, contact the appropriate Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA) or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and request an amendment or revision to their Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The FFY begins on October 1 and ends September 30.

Estimated Letting: Enter the estimated date that the project will be let. Check to make sure the proposed letting date is in conformance with the dates listed on the Critical Path for Project Development Memorandum. In addition, the estimated letting date should fall within the FFY in which the Federal funds are programmed.

Exception: October lettings must have Federal funds programmed in the previous FFY. This is because the Federal funds are actually authorized about 1 month prior to letting.

If the Federal funds are not programmed consistent with the estimated letting date, contact the appropriate RPA or MPO to request an amendment or revision to their TIP.

Contact Information: List the contact information for the person who has responsible charge for completing all project development activities. This information is needed to establish proper communication for the project.

Concept Statement Items (Pages 1 & 2)

- 1.a **Project Location(s):** For street and highway projects, enter the street name(s) and the beginning and ending points for the project. This description should match what is listed in the STIP. This can be more descriptive but cannot expand the project beyond the project limits established in the STIP. If the project limits or description shown in the STIP is incorrect, work with the appropriate RPA or MPO to correct it. For non-highway projects such as restoration of historic buildings, enter the street address.

Attach a location map that shows the beginning and ending points of the project. Include sufficient detail (i.e., major street names, landmarks, etc.) such that the project location can be easily located.

- 1.b **Project Title / Description:** For non-highway type projects, enter the project title or brief description. For example, "Phase I Depot Renovations." For street and highway projects, this space may be left blank.

2. Type of Work: Indicate the general type of work by checking all of the boxes that apply for the project. If the project does not fit one or more of these types of work, check “Other” and describe the general type of work in the blanks beside it.
3. Project length: Enter the length of the project to the nearest tenth of a mile or kilometer. All roadway and trail projects require a project length. Historic restoration or bridge-only projects do not require a length.
4. Existing Bridge Information : Enter the information for any bridge or large culvert (total opening width greater than 20 feet) structures on the project. If there is more than one structure on the project, attach a list of this information for each structure to the Concept Statement.
5. Project Costs: Check “Yes” for those costs for which Federal-aid reimbursement will be requested. Check “No” if Federal-aid reimbursement will not be requested, or if the cost item does not apply to the project. If Federal-aid will be requested, enter the total estimated costs for each cost item shown. If the current estimate of total costs is significantly different than shown in the STIP, work with the appropriate RPA or MPO to correct it.

CAUTION: Before proceeding with any work for which Federal-aid reimbursement will be requested, you must receive written notification from the appropriate Administering Office that FHWA authorization has been obtained for that work. Any costs for work done prior to FHWA authorization are not eligible for Federal-aid reimbursement.

For each cost item shown, refer to the Packet documents or indices noted for the procedures to request Federal participation. Please Note: Checking “Yes” to any of these cost items does not constitute a formal request for Federal participation.

If an in-kind contribution is proposed, include the estimated value of the in-kind contribution. Do not include this value in any of the cost items shown above. If the in-kind value can be determined at the time of the Concept Statement submittal, attach the in-kind request and supporting documentation. Otherwise, submit the in-kind request as soon as possible, but no later than the Check Plan submittal. For more information, refer to the [In-Kind Contribution Guidelines](#), located in Index No. 4 of the Packet.

6. Total Federal-Aid (as shown in STIP): Enter the amount of Federal-aid shown in the STIP for the project. If the project is funded by more than one Federal-aid program, enter the total of Federal-aid funding for all Federal-aid programs that apply. This amount should be the same as shown in the STIP. If the Federal-aid shown in the STIP is incorrect, work with the appropriate RPA/MPO to correct it.
7. Estimate of Land or Property Acquisition Impacts: Before answering the questions in this section, consider the following:

First, if the project uses Federal-aid reimbursement for any aspect of the work, the project must comply with all applicable Federal and State regulations for right-of-way acquisition, even if no Federal-aid will be used for right-of-way acquisition. For assistance, contact the Administering Office. The LPA should also refer to the Office of Right-of-Way [Local Public Agency Manual](#) for more information on Federal and State right-of-way acquisition regulations and procedures.

Second, the LPA may not check “No” to these questions because the needed project right-of-way has already been acquired as part of an earlier phase of the same project. When right-of-way will be acquired as part of an earlier non-Federally funded phase of a project, and Federal funds will be used for a later phase of the same project, the LPA should submit a Concept Statement before beginning work on any phase of the project and check “Yes” to the appropriate items listed here to indicate the right-of-way needs for the project as a whole.

7.a-b. Check “Yes” if the LPA will need to obtain any type of temporary or permanent property rights (e.g., access, grading, use as storage, etc.) in order to construct the project. If yes, include an estimate of the number of acres to be acquired for temporary and permanent easements. This estimate does not need to be precise. The purpose of this estimate is to assist the Iowa DOT evaluate the magnitude of environmental impact the project is likely to cause.

7.c. Check “Yes” if any borrow material will be required to construct the project. If yes, check as many boxes as appropriate to indicate the proposed source or sources of borrow material.

Check “New borrow area” if the contract documents will designate a site outside of the existing right-of-way for use by the contractor.

Check “Contractor furnished” if the contract documents will specify that the contractor shall furnish the borrow material from a site of their choosing. For contractor furnished borrow areas (referred to as “Alternate Borrow Areas” in Section 2102.06 of the Iowa DOT Standard Specifications) the contractor shall be responsible for the necessary archeological reviews.

Check “Existing borrow area” if the borrow material will be supplied from a borrow site or stockpile owned by the Local Public Agency (LPA). It is assumed that such a borrow site or stockpile location has been previously disturbed. If not, check “New borrow area” instead.

Check “Within existing right-of-way” if the borrow material will come from a location within the existing roadway right-of-way. Such borrow areas do not need an archeological review because they are assumed to have been previously disturbed.

Check “Not yet determined” if the source of borrow material has not yet been identified. However, if checked, a revised Concept Statement shall be submitted as

soon as the source of the borrow material is known. The project will not be granted environmental concurrence until this information is supplied. Without environmental concurrence, the project may not proceed with right-of-way acquisitions or to letting. If a new borrow area (i.e., undisturbed land) will be used, either as optional or mandatory, this area will need to be included in the archeological reviews, as referenced in question 9.a.

Note: New or existing borrow areas may be designated as either optional or mandatory by the contract documents. If a mandatory borrow area is being considered, refer to Condition No. 6 in the [Public Interest Findings](#) document, located in Index No. 8.

- 7.d. Check “Yes” if any properties will be totally acquired for construction of the project, even if later a portion of the property will be disposed of as excess right-of-way by the LPA. If yes, provide an estimate, even if only a very rough one, of the number of properties that will be totally acquired.
- 7.e. Check “Yes” if any residential or business relocations will be required for construction of the project. If yes, provide an estimate, even if only a very rough one, of the total number of relocations that are likely, including both residential and businesses.
- 7.f. Check “Yes” if the access for any property will be permanently changed and such change will result in a negative impact on the property, either in terms of ease of access or property value.
- 8. Public Acceptance: If public opposition is anticipated, check “Yes” and explain the nature and reasons of the opposition. If more space is needed, use the cover letter to explain instead. If public opposition is expected, public hearings or meetings should be held to get public input into the project development process. This question must also be answered.
- 9. Environmental Impacts: All Federal-aid projects must comply with the process prescribed by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and the associated environmental regulations. Many of these questions are designed to help identify which aspects of NEPA process or regulations are applicable to the project.

Several of the questions within this section use the term “proximity.” Except where noted otherwise, features or resources will be considered in proximity to the project if they are within or adjacent to the existing or proposed right-of-way, including temporary easements. In other words, a feature or resource is in proximity to the project if it is close enough that some type of impact or effect can be reasonably foreseen.

For some types of features or resources, an impact can occur even if the feature or resource is not physically impacted by the project. For example, a highway project may affect the view from a scenic overlook or historic landmark. In some cases, this could be considered

a negative impact. Therefore, distance alone cannot always be used to determine if the feature or resource is in proximity to the project.

- 9.a. In general, land is not considered disturbed unless it was the site of prior construction activity that disturbed the soil to such a depth that the probability of finding archaeological or historic artifacts is unlikely. Farming activities may not disturb archeological or historic artifacts that lie beneath the surface of the ground. Therefore, areas that have been farmed should generally be considered as undisturbed land, unless prior disturbance can be documented.

To document that any areas to be acquired as permanent right-of-way, temporary easements, or new borrow areas for the project have been previously disturbed, attach photos, maps, plans, or drawings that show the location of the areas to be acquired. Also include a detailed description that identifies the nature of activities that caused the disturbance and the general timeframe in which they occurred.

- 9.b. For purposes of this question, known archeological sites shall include any of the following:
- Sites currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The [State Historical Society of Iowa](#) maintains an on-line list of [NRHP properties and districts in Iowa](#). Note: For some sites listed on the NRHP, a location is not given due to the cultural or religious significance of the site.
 - Sites identified by markers, plaques, or signs.
 - Sites within the same section(s), township and range as the project, as identified by [I-Sites](#). I-Sites is an on-line archeological Geographic Information System (GIS) and database provided by Iowa's [Office of the State Archeologist](#) (OSA).
- 9.c. Any structure over 50 years old will require, as a minimum, an historical evaluation to determine its historical significance. Such structures may or may not be historic. In some cases, an historical survey may also be required.
- 9.d. For purposes of this question, known historic buildings, districts, bridges, roadways, or structures shall include any of the following:
- Buildings, districts, bridges, roadways, or other structures listed on the NRHP. See the Iowa NRHP list, as noted in 9.b above.
 - Buildings, districts, bridges, roadways, or other structures identified as historic by markers, plaques, or signs.
- (1) Historic Roadways: Check "Yes" if the project is on or intersects an historic roadway, such as the Lincoln Highway. Historic roadways are often marked

with signs, plaques, or monuments. Local historical societies may also be able to provide assistance in identifying other historic roadways in the project area.

- (2) Brick Pavers: Brick pavers may or may not have historical value. Additional information will be needed to determine if special measures are needed to mitigate impacts. Please indicate in the cover letter if the pavers are under asphalt, have been disturbed by utility installation, or if there are historic districts or historic structures nearby.
 - (3) Historic Bridge: Check “Yes” if the project involves any bridges listed on the Iowa DOT’s [Historic Bridges of Iowa](#) web page. This on-line inventory shows all bridges that are either eligible for or are currently listed on the NRHP.
- 9.e Check “Yes” if the archeological or historical investigations indicated by questions 9.a – 9.d are complete and have been approved by the State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO). If yes, attach a copy of the approval letter from the SHPO. Check “No” if these investigations are not complete, or have not been approved by the SHPO. If questions 9.a – 9.d have all been answered no, check “N/A.”

Note: If archeological or historical investigations are required but have not been approved, the Iowa DOT’s environmental review of the project cannot be completed until this information is received. These investigations may consist of an archeological assessment or survey, and / or an historical evaluation or survey, depending on the likelihood of impacts to archeological sites or historic properties. For more information concerning the necessary archeological and / or historical investigations, refer to the [Cultural Resource Regulations](#), located in Index No. 6.

- 9.f. Check “Yes” if any recreational areas or wildlife or waterfowl refuges are in proximity to the project. If yes, answer the additional questions according to the instructions below:
- (1) Check “Yes” if the property has been officially designated as a recreational area or wildlife refuge by the agency having jurisdiction over the property; or if the agency having jurisdiction has determined that one of the property’s primary uses or functions is for recreational or wildlife refuge purposes. To be considered a wildlife refuge, the primary function of the property must be to serve as a sanctuary for the protection of animal species.
 - (2) Check “Yes” if a public agency possesses the deed to the property; or if the public agency has a permanent easement for use of the property.
 - (3) Check “Yes” if the recreational area can be visited by the general public. The recreational area does not have to be open 24 hours a day to be considered open to the public. Check “No” if visitation is permitted for a select group only. This question is only applicable to recreational areas. Check “N/A” if only wildlife refuges are in proximity to the project.

If the Environmental Data Sheet ([Form 517006](#)) is required, refer to the [Environmental Data Sheet Instructions](#) for more information.

- 9.g. The term, “waters of the United States” is defined in [33 CFR 328.3](#). In summary, it refers to any navigable body of water and all tributaries to a navigable body of water, even ones that flow intermittently.

Wetlands are also defined by this regulation as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.” Refer to the [Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual](#), 1987 for detailed technical assistance in locating wetlands. For additional information about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 Permit, refer to County Engineers Instructional Memorandum (I.M.) [3.13](#).

- 9.h. Check “Yes” if any part of the project construction will be in the flood plain or floodway. Section 455B.261 of the Code of Iowa defines the term “flood plain” as, “the area adjoining a river or stream which has been or may be covered by flood water.” This Code section also defines the term “floodway” as, “the channel of a river or stream and those portions of the flood plains adjoining the channel which are reasonably required to carry and discharge the flood water or flood flow of any river or stream.” County Engineers [I.M. 3.131](#) contains a detailed description of the Iowa DNR regulations that govern construction in the flood plain or floodway.
- 9.i. For more information on the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements for construction projects, refer to [Storm Water Permits](#) located in Index No. 8 of the Packet.
- 9.j. The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating ([Form AD-1006](#)) is required by the Farmland Protection Policy Act. For the definition of farmland and instructions for complying with this legislation, refer to the [Farmland Protection Policy Act Guidelines](#) and [Flow Chart No. 6E, Farmland Protection Policy Act Process](#), located in Index No. 6 of the Packet. If Form AD-1006 has already been submitted and reviewed, no further action is necessary. If not, begin this process as soon as the amount of farmland to be acquired is known.
- 9.k. The State threatened or endangered species are listed in [571 IAC 77](#). The Federal threatened or endangered species are listed in [50 CFR 17](#), Subpart B. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife service also provides a Threatened and Endangered Species System, an on-line resource that can be used to display a list of [Federal threatened or endangered species in Iowa](#).

To determine if there are any Federal or State threatened or endangered species in the project area, the local [County Conservation Board](#) may be able to provide assistance.

The Iowa DNR also will conduct a Natural Resources review upon request. This review, among other things, will include identification of any State or Federal threatened or endangered species in the project area. Refer to the [Iowa DNR Environmental Reviews](#) web page for more information.

If the Environmental Data Sheet ([Form 517006](#)) is required, refer to the [Environmental Data Sheet Instructions](#) for more information.

- 9.l. If the project will require the clean-up or removal of any hazardous materials, check “Yes” and list the materials in the space provided. Typical hazardous materials encountered in transportation projects may include, but are not limited to, contaminated soil and asbestos. Soil may be contaminated from leaking fuel tanks, surface fuel spills, industrial waste areas, etc. Asbestos may be encountered when removing or demolishing buildings or bridges (e.g., utility conduit insulation). Before removing or demolishing buildings or bridges, the structure should be inspected for possible asbestos containing materials.

The Iowa DOT neither regulates hazardous materials or waste sites nor monitors compliance with the applicable State and Federal regulations. However, the Iowa DOT has developed a Notification of Demolition ([Form 536101](#)), which may be used for transportation projects to provide the required notice to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Iowa DNR). For more information about hazardous materials inspections, testing, notification, and removal procedures, refer to the Iowa DNR [Air Quality](#) and [Contaminated Sites](#) web pages.

- 9.m. Check “Yes” if the project will increase noise levels to the point that interference with adjacent lands uses may occur, or if air quality may be significantly affected by increased levels of congestion, or if storm water runoff will significantly affect the water quality of nearby streams or lakes; and these anticipated impacts are likely to raise public concern or require special mitigation. If yes, describe which type of impacts are likely to occur and if any special mitigation measures are proposed.

Check “No” for typical noise, air quality, and water quality impacts caused by construction activities that will be properly permitted or regulated.

10. Miscellaneous Items:

- a. Certain construction activities may require notification of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) if the proposed construction, including construction equipment, is located within a defined area around an airport. See County Engineers [I.M. 3.15](#) for more details.
- b. Railroad Crossings: If the project involves a new railroad crossing, or requires modifications to the existing railroad crossing materials, underpass or overpass structures, or signals, an agreement between the LPA and the railroad will be required. An agreement will also be required if the railroad places additional

requirements on the contractor, beyond those required by the Iowa DOT Standard Specifications (e.g., higher liability insurance coverage). It is critical to contact the appropriate railroad officials early in the project development process to determine what they will require. Processing and approving a railroad agreement can be an extremely lengthy process. If the project requires a railroad agreement, begin this process immediately.

- c. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) elements typically include variable message signs, traffic monitoring devices, and remote traffic control and / or incident management centers. All ITS projects that receive Federal-aid are required to be based on systems engineering analysis. System engineering analysis insures consistency with a regional architecture or, in the absence of a regional architecture, consistency with the national architecture. If no regional architecture is in place at the beginning of the project, the project may proceed with the completion of a project architecture at the time of the project design. A regional architecture is required to be in place within four years of the project beginning.

Project Design Elements (Pages 3 - 5)

If the project contains more than one significantly different roadway section, use a separate page for each section. For example, separate pages should be used for rural (open ditch) vs. urban (curb and gutter) cross sections; 2-lane vs. 4-lane sections; or mainline vs. side road sections. In most cases, only one or two of these pages will be needed. Any unused pages may be discarded.

Check to the appropriate [Federal Functional Classification Map](#) to determine the functional classification for each roadway section listed. For cities with a population of 5,000 or greater, refer to the urban area maps. For counties or cities less than 5,000 population, refer to the county maps. Check "N/A" if the facility is a trail or shared use path.

Existing traffic volume data for some city and county roads may be obtained from [Iowa DOT Average Annual Daily Traffic Flow Maps](#).

For an explanation of each design element listed, refer to the design guidelines listed. The urban design guidelines are contained in Index No. 5 of the Packet. The rural design guidelines are contained in County Engineers I.M.s [3.210](#) and [3.214](#). For bicycle trails or shared use paths, refer to the [Iowa Statewide Urban Design Standards](#), Chapter 8, Section 2, Table 2.1. The Urban Design Standards are part of the Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS) manuals.