



Section 2 – Bridge Soft Match Credit Program

OVERVIEW

Federal regulations originating in Section 123(e) of the 1987 Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act (STURAA) provides that agencies (state, county, or city) may receive soft match credit for the cost of a locally funded bridge replacement or rehabilitation which would count toward the local match on federally funded bridge replacement projects. It is not the intent of the program to give credit for all bridge work that is done by the local agency, but only for the eligible replacement and rehabilitation work, which is performed according to the appropriate guidelines.

GENERAL

The bridge being replaced or rehabilitated for which the agency desires credit must meet the contractual requirements of the local agency and the MoDOT intent of the HBP as defined under Federally Funded Bridge Projects in [Section 1](#) of this Manual.

One of the purposes of the Bridge Soft Match Credit Program is to provide an alternate process for Local Agencies to remove deficient bridges from the Bridge Inventory. A number of requirements that would apply to projects receiving HBP funding are waived in the Soft Match Credit Program. (These exceptions are highlighted in bold print in this Section.)

The federal contract requirements and clearances by federal agencies may be waived, but all state and local contract requirements and clearances shall still be met. Projects may be constructed by qualified local agency forces, competitive bid, or negotiated bid. (See [Section 9](#) for information regarding work by local forces.)

The design drawings shall be prepared under the direction of a registered professional engineer and signed and sealed. By signing and sealing the drawings, the engineer of record will be representing that the MoDOT intent has been met in accordance with the criteria set forth in Section 1 of this manual. A registered professional engineer shall direct the construction inspection.

PROJECT SELECTION

The bridge must be on MoDOT's eligible list for funding for off federal-aid routes. These functional classifications include rural local, rural minor collector, and urban local.

Projects involving removal of an eligible bridge that is replaced with something other than a new bridge are eligible. (For example, replacing a bridge over an abandoned railroad with roadway fill.)

ELIGIBLE COSTS FOR SOFT MATCH CREDIT

An agency may receive credit for no more than 80% of the eligible costs. The items that are eligible for receiving credit include preliminary engineering services, surveys, environmental and cultural documentation, subsurface investigations, right-of-way services, bridge construction, minimal road construction, construction engineering for inspection, and those portions of utility relocation costs for which the county is obligated.

The following federal funds from other federal agencies may be used on credit projects but only up to a maximum of 20% of the eligible costs.

1. Community Development Block Grant Funds if authorized by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
2. Local Public Works Funds authorized by the Economic Development Administration.

Any federal funds above this 20% will reduce the costs eligible for credit.

Only a minimal amount of approach work may be counted. Eligible limits may include reasonable approach roadway necessary to connect to the existing road and to return the new grade to normal ground. This corresponds to eligible limits of HBP projects authorized to date.

FINAL DESIGN

For projects for which credit is desired, the engineer of record shall have the responsibility for the selection of the specific design parameters along with verifying that the MoDOT intent of the HBP is being met as described and given in [Sections 1 and 8](#) of this Manual.

The specifications and job special provisions for the project shall also be determined by the engineer based on specific site conditions and guidance given in Section 9 of this manual.

A preconstruction itemized engineer's cost estimate is required to be retained by the engineer with the project file. This estimate will be based either on the local forces constructing the project or on a contractor constructing the project.

CONSTRUCTION LETTING

The Federal-Aid contract requirements of [Section 10](#) are not required. When the local agency elects to build the project by contractor, then the State and Local requirements for competitive bidding shall be used.

CONSTRUCTION

The federal requirements for construction in Section 11 may be waived. The construction inspection, testing, and sampling shall be done under the direction of registered engineer.

REQUEST FOR CREDIT SUBMITTAL

Formal acceptance of the project for credit will be requested by the local agency after the project has been completed, documentation of final construction cost submitted, and the bridge has been added to the bridge inventory. Submittal at the PS&E stage of the project is not necessary. However, if the engineer or local agency has specific eligibility questions regarding the project that they would like MoDOT to address before construction then we are receptive to receiving the PS&E submittal. Specific questions should be provided by the engineer or local agency on their cover letter with the submitted package.

The credit submittal should include the following:

1. As built plans and specifications (size 11 x 17) signed and sealed by a registered professional engineer and approved by the local agency. See [Section 9](#), "Final Design" for specific requirements.
2. Structural Inventory and Appraisal (SI&A) sheet completed for the bridge improvement with load rating calculations and Load Rating Summary Sheet signed and sealed by a registered professional engineer. See [Section 9](#), "Final Design" for specific requirements.
3. Beginning and completion dates for construction.
4. A certification by the local agency stating that the project is not controversial and that the project being considered has been constructed in accordance with the standards applicable to the HBP except as set out. Certification by the bridge owner that all of the required clearances were obtained prior to construction. Also, certification that the project was constructed substantially in conformity with the plans and specifications.
5. Documentation of eligible final costs, and certification by the local agency that the costs claimed are the actual costs incurred. If quantities documented for costs don't match the list of quantities as compared to the engineer's pre-construction itemized cost estimate, the local agency should submit justification for a change in the planned quantities. If the existing structure is currently eligible for rehabilitation only and the local agency elects to replace the structure, the amount of eligible federal funding will be limited to that which will not exceed the rehabilitation cost estimate unless appropriate justification is provided by the local agency that a new structure represents the best value. If the rehabilitation cost is at least 68% of the replacement costs, it can generally be assumed that the new replacement structure will provide a better value than the rehabilitation of the existing structure and therefore a better use of federal bridge funds.
6. A minimum of two photographs showing bridge along roadway and stream opening.

Additional photographs showing the bridge construction are also recommended but not required.

7. After construction has been completed, a MoDOT district representative shall perform a final “walk-through” inspection to verify that the bridge was constructed in general conformance with the submitted “as built” plans. Typically, the inspection should verify that the bridge location, type, width, length, and members correspond to the “as built” plans. Also, the inspection should verify that the bridge is considered to be in “good” condition. It should be noted on the cover letter with the submittal package that the final inspection was completed and it is recommended that credit be given for the structure.

USE OF SOFT MATCH CREDIT

The eligible costs may apply as credit toward the 20% local match required on federal-aid bridge projects. This credit provision does not increase an agency’s allocation of HBP funds, but will permit usage of funds already allocated to an agency at a rate up to 100%.

Any BRO project submitted for programming by a local agency will be set up using soft match credit, if available. As a result, the local agency’s preliminary engineering costs will be eligible for more than 80% federal reimbursement. As the project moves to construction authorization, credit will continue to be applied, as long as it is available. Counties will not be allowed to have a negative soft match credit balance.

If a local agency does not want to use their soft match credit on a project, they will need to submit a letter to the MoDOT District Office indicating this.

Soft match credit can be applied to the construction phase of a bridge project at the time of construction authorization, even if soft match credit was not used for the design phase.

The federal reimbursable share of design costs cannot be increased by applying additional soft match credit after the preliminary engineering authorization date.

A local agency may elect to transfer its soft match credit earned under the Off-System Bridge Credit Program to another local agency. The following guidelines should be followed to transfer credit:

1. A request must be submitted to the MoDOT District Office on the local agency’s letterhead, stating the receiving agency and the dollar amount. All the county commissioners or city officials must sign the request.
2. The request must be approved prior to using the soft match credit on a bridge project.

A local agency may elect to transfer its soft match credit earned under the Off-System Bridge Credit Program to another local agency for BRO funds. The following guidelines should be followed to transfer credit for funds:

1. Both counties must submit requests to the MoDOT District Office on their local agency's letterhead, stating the amount of BRO funds and credit to be transferred by each county. All the county commissioners or city officials must sign the requests.
2. The request must be approved prior to using the soft match credit and BRO funds on a bridge project.
3. No transfer can result in a negative balance of BRO or credit funds.