

Federal-aid Swap FAQ

Q: Will Public Interest Findings (PIF) be required for Swap projects?

A: Please refer to [I.M. 3.760](#). There are two conditions in which projects that do not use Federal-aid would still need a Public Interest Finding.

Q: Does having a Federal-aid agreement in place Federalize a project?

A: No. The list of items that Federalize a project or may Federalize a project are listed in the Swap Communication that was sent by Local Systems GovDelivery system on February 13, 2018. Swap Project Funding Agreements will be available soon.

Q: How does the County Highway Bridge Program (HBP) change with Swap?

A: As long as a project has not already been Federalized, a county can change the project to a Swap project. The Federal HBP program for counties required a 20% match; the Swap HBP will not require match and is funded at 100% Swap HBP funds. Most rules regarding the County HBP stay the same. The bridges must still “qualify”; in order to qualify, they must be Structurally Deficient or Functionally Obsolete, have a Sufficiency Rating of 80 or less, and have an Average Daily Traffic count of 25 or more vehicles per day. The amount of funding each county receives will still be calculated in the same manner (see [I.M. 2.020](#) for details). The rules for accumulating 3 years of funds, and borrowing ahead 6 years, remain the same at this time. Counties are no longer able to fund bridge inspections with HBP funds (neither Swap HBP nor Federal HBP). Counties also can’t use the Swap HBP funds for consultant design; they can, however, use their FM account for consultant inspection, as long as the project is on an FM route.

Q: Are touchdown points, as listed in [I.M. 2.020](#), still required?

A: Yes.

Q: How do I convert a project from being Federal-aid to Swap funded?

A: As long as the project hasn’t been Federalized, it can be converted to a Swap project. This can be done in this year’s TIP/STIP. There are some changes being made to TPMS to assist with this process.

Q: Do I have to do a concept statement?

A: No. The first project milestone that needs to be turned into the Iowa DOT is check plans. This is similar to county Farm-to-Market (FM) projects, for those familiar with that process.

Q: How do I navigate through the Environmental Process?

A: There are several I.M.s that have been updated. They include [I.M. 3.111](#) on Threatened and Endangered Species, [I.M. 3.114](#) on Cultural Resource Regulations, and [I.M. 3.130](#) on 404 Permit Process. A summary of these changes can be found in the [February 13, 2018 I.M. Revision Notice](#). The I.M.s can also be read in detail, by clicking the links above. The Environmental Clearances should be finished before Check Plan submittal (Check plans are basically Final plans, and Final plans can’t be complete if no environmental work has been completed).

Q: When will I get my NEPA clearance for Swap projects?

A: There is **no** NEPA clearance on Swap projects, just like how there is no NEPA clearance for Farm-to-Market or Local funded projects. NEPA clearances through the Iowa DOT, Office of Location and Environment are only for Federal-aid projects. However, Environmental clearances are still needed. Refer to the question above. Please refer to the Environmental portion of the [email Local Systems](#) sent out on February 13, 2018. Also refer to the I.M.s that are linked in the email.

Q: How is Construction Administration and Inspection handled with Swap projects?

A: This will be relatively similar to how things are now. All these details are not yet worked out; however, we do know a few things. Project inspection is still required, to ensure that the project is being built according to plans and specifications. The project engineer should follow all Materials Inspection requirements; however, these projects will likely be Category 4 ([Materials I.M. 103](#)), so Quality Assurance samples will not be needed (side by side air tests with DOT District Materials, etc). Local Public Agencies can still request DOT Materials Testing, and will be charged according to [Materials I.M. 103, Appendix A](#).

Q: Are there restrictions on use of salvage materials like RAP, bridge beams, plank, or precast sections on SWAP projects like there are for Federal-aid projects?

A: No. Salvaged materials are prohibited on Federal-aid contracts, due to Federal regulations. For any project that is not Federal-aid, the LPA can require the contractor to use salvaged materials, or salvage items from the project and require them to become property of the LPA. If an LPA wants to salvage materials, or require use of salvaged materials, information should be included in the plans so all contractors are aware and can bid the project accordingly. Refer to [I.M. 3.505, Attachment A](#), for more information.

For Federal-aid projects, please also refer to [I.M. 3.760](#) for Public Interest Findings; Conditions 5 and 6 talk about requiring the contractor to use salvaged materials or requiring items salvaged from the project to become the property of the LPA.

Q: RPA long range transportation plans are partially federally funded. Does listing a project in the Long Range Transportation Plan federalize the project?

A: No. Having a project listed in the Long Range Transportation Plan does not federalize the project.