



U.S. Department of
Transportation

Lessons Learned from the TIGER Discretionary Grant Program

Presented at the AAPA Seminar
“*Communicating the Importance of
Infrastructure Investment*”

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Overview

- Innovative TIGER Reviews & The Evaluation Criteria
- Requirements
 - Including Benefit Cost Analysis
- Details Matter
- Summary



Who Reads Applications?

- Innovative TIGER Review Process
 - Each application was reviewed by a team of transportation experts from a variety of agencies within the DOT.
 - Why does this make a difference?



Multi-Modal Team Members

Description of Project Benefits:

“Cantilevered gantry cranes can turnaround a tow in one day from a 2,000 LF dock.”



Avoid Industry Jargon

Description of Project Benefits:

“Once constructed, the 2,000 linear foot dock will accommodate (x number of) truckloads of freight per day. This project will strengthen the capacity of the dock and will enable cantilevered gantry cranes to be used for loading and unloading of barges. These type cranes are more productive than the older model cranes now in use.”



An Intense Multimodal Review Process

- Applications were logged into a system established specifically for the TIGER grant program and vetted for basic eligibility
- Evaluation Team
- Review Team
- Economic Team
- Environmental Team
- Legal Team
- Final Departmental Review



Adjectival Rating System:



Highly Recommended: The project aligns extremely well with the objectives of the selection criterion under consideration

Recommended: The project aligns well with the objectives of the selection criterion under consideration

Not Recommended: The project provides limited value with respect to the selection criterion under consideration, or the project's alignment with the criterion was not addressed in the application

Ineligible: The project provides limited value with respect to the selection criterion under consideration, or the project's alignment with the criterion was not addressed in the application



TIGER is a highly competitive program

You Want to be “Highly Recommended”

	Apps Received	Funding Requested	Funding Appropriated	Grants awarded to Ports
TIGER ARRA (I)	1,454	\$64 billion	\$1.5 billion	\$120,440,000
TIGER II	<1,000	\$19 billion	\$600 million	\$94,840,133

One Chance to Make a First Impression



Suggestion: begin your narrative with:

- Succinct description of the project
 - Explanation of the need for the project (describe market, define customer)
 - Summary of the benefits of the project for the region
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- Then provide background, details, pictures and data to support your request.



How Strong is your Geography?

Most applicants included:

- Image of port location
- Aerial of port
- Photo of problem

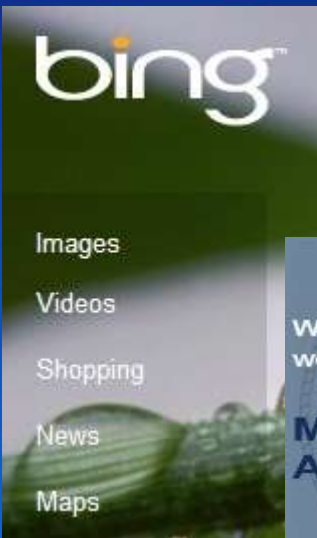
- **Suggestion:**
- Map of your port and market area served
- Aerial of port with intermodal connectors identified
- Photo of problem with drawing showing how project will make a difference



Check your Brand on the 'Net



WIKIPEDIA



Application Requirements ~ NEPA



- Demonstrate compliance with the requirements for NEPA
- Provide a chart of permits required for your project, the issuing agency for each and the status of each permit including expiration dates



Application Requirements ~ Benefit-Cost Analysis



- Benefit – Cost Analysis should be manageable if a project has been planned carefully
- Consequences of not funding project?
- Discuss range of possible actions (repair, rebuild, or replace)



Application Requirements ~ Benefit-Cost Analysis (continued)

- Explain your demand forecasts
- Explain how you calculated benefits and costs
- Emphasize public sector benefits attributable to transportation improvements



Demonstrate Support for Project

- Most provided:
 - Support letters and emails

A few provided:

- YouTube videos
 - problem area,
 - public outreach session clips,
 - local industry endorsements for project



Beware of the Details

- Economic Analyses – Watch dollar thresholds - are you subject to economic analysis requirements?
- Additional Environmental Requirements – Applications should include information about all necessary environmental approvals



Provide Funding Details

- ✓ Local, regional and federal funding sources and contributions by each entity,
- ✓ Design and engineering costs and if already funded,
- ✓ Permitting costs and if already funded, and
- ✓ If the project has 'been on the books' for a long time, explain why it has not yet been funded.



Secondary Selection Criteria



- **Innovation**: Applications should be given a rating, supported by a narrative, based on the project's use of innovative strategies to pursue the long-term outcomes highlighted in the solicitation
- **Partnership**: Applications should be given a rating, supported by a narrative, based on the project's demonstration of strong collaboration among a broad range of participants and/or integration of transportation with other public service efforts



More Suggestions From Reviewers:

If you use acronyms, please include a reference sheet listing them in alphabetical order?

When inserting hyperlinks for supporting materials, spell the link out so the reviewer can cut and paste the link if needed.

If using industry terms, include a reference sheet with a brief definition of each.

Turn off “Track Changes” before submitting your application

- Be consistent when using industry terminology. Are you building a pier, dock, quay or wharf?

- Smaller print to get more information per page is great but - Century Gothic 10 font is hard on the eyes.



Make sure your IT department is not modifying or deleting web-based document pages during the review timeframe.



Summary

- Describe your project clearly and provide supporting data
- Ensure estimates including permit dates, construction timelines, environmental and cost-benefit statements and jobs to be created are realistic and achievable
- Convince the reader why your project will make a difference to your region
- Provide a range of prioritized options for the reviewers to consider for funding



Final Message

- *As you are reading the application package, consider these two questions:*
 - ❖ What is the intent or focus of the grant program?
 - ❖ What information should be included in an application to make your application a responsive one?



Thank you

Federal grant programs
are announced on:

www.grants.gov

See also:

www.marad.dot.gov

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