

Problem Screening Guideline

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on performing the Problem Screening Phase of the NJDOT Project Delivery Process. This guide is intended for use by the Division of Capital Investment Strategies and others involved in this phase of work.

Introduction

Problem Screening (PS) is the first phase of work in the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Capital Project Delivery process. Problem Statements are developed from information generated from the NJDOT Management Systems. The purpose of this PS Phase is to verify the problem, discuss the need, and recommend a course of action.

The Division of Capital Investment Planning and Development (CIPD) staff evaluates the Problem Statement and to ensure that it agrees with the Statewide Capital Investment Strategy goals determines the path that a Problem Statement could reasonably follow. CIPD staff also evaluates existing NJDOT data (traffic/crash data, bicycle and pedestrian) to determine if the problem is in concert or conflict with any other existing or proposed work. It is important to note that the PS Screening should be performed with only the existing data that is readily available within the NJDOT from various databases or from past studies. If necessary, data will be obtained by contracting out to consultant. Decisions are made in the PS Screening effort that will dictate the direction of each Problem Statement.

Major work efforts involved in PS Screening

Review Problem Statement

The Problem Statement is a document that describes an apparent transportation problem. It identifies the type of transportation problem (e.g., safety, congestion, operational, etc.), the location of the problem, route, milepost, limits, municipality and county. The Division of Capital Investment Planning and Development (CIPD) receives and reviews all Problem Statements submitted from internal/external stakeholders and weighs its merit against data and information contained in the Department's various management systems. Upon receipt of the Problem Statement, CIPD:

- Reviews and checks the Problem Statement form (TP-1) to ensure that all pertinent information regarding the transportation problem in question is included and the problem is well defined.
- Reviews the Problem Statement for possible duplication of an existing project/proposed project/Problem Statement.

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Collect and Analyze Data

Request Management System Input Data

During the Problem Statement Review, it is imperative that a search of all the management systems be conducted to determine the ranking/priority of the Problem Statement, which will support the need to advance the transportation problem.

If applicable, CIPD sends a memo to the owners of applicable management systems and other SMEs requesting the following information:

- Relative ranking/priority on the management system
- Available traffic data
- Recently completed or concurrent work-orders/projects
- Other relevant information

The request memo includes a brief description of the problem being investigated, milepost, county and municipality.

Request Updated Management System Input

The Management System Input will be provided in the Problem Statement Review Package. However, the information may be outdated depending on when the Problem Statement Review or Request for Management System Input was completed. A comparison of the updated Management System Input versus the input from the Problem Statement Review will be performed to reassess the need of the Problem Statement.

Request Crash Rates and Crash Records

Crash Rates become critical in supporting the need for the Problem Statement, especially when the Problem Statement is not listed in the Safety Management System. Crash Rates determine how an overall section of the roadway where the Problem Statement is located compares with the statewide average rate.

Crash Records or Police Reports are also a strong indicator of whether a segment of a roadway with deficient or substandard elements is actually in need of repair and attention and thus, further support the need for the Problem Statement.

The Project Manager will submit a request for crash rates and crash summary reports (via an Analysis Request Form sent by e-mail) from the Bureau of Safety Programs (BSP). Crash rates and Crash Summary Reports will include all data for crashes occurring at the specified location for the past three years. They also help identify unsafe areas of roadway where repairs are needed.

Perform Supplemental Data Collection

Additional data and information may be needed by CIPD to assess the transportation problem.

The CIPD may:

- Request all data and information needed to evaluate the Problem Statement.

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- Obtain As-built plans and jurisdictional plans by submitting an Engineering Documents Unit Plan Request Form to the Engineering Documents Unit.
- Send a request to the Bureau of Traffic Engineering and Investigations for traffic signal plans.
- This request should include route number, milepost, municipality and county. Request other pertinent document and information from appropriate external source.

Coordinate with Subject Matter Experts

During the Problem Statement Review, CIPD will coordinate with several SMEs to investigate if the Problem Statement can be addressed with a quick fix (such as striping work, signage, etc.). Sometimes the SMEs may recommend that geometric improvements may be needed and, due to the complexity of the transportation problem, it may require further data collection.

Determine Problem Statement Report Recommendation

Once the Problem Statement has been reviewed and checked for conformance with CIPD goals, CIPD is prepared to make the following decisions and recommendations:

- Withdraw Problem Statement due to lack of need or duplication.
- Assignment as a NJDOT maintenance work order
- Advance Problem Statement to Concept Development

The recommendation is included as part of the Problem Screening Report

Prepare Problem Screening Report

The Problem Screening Report is prepared by CIPD and includes the findings of the Problem Statement review, supporting documentation, and a recommendation. . It may contain the following:

- Original Problem Statement
- Management System Rankings/Input
- Traffic/Crash Data (when appropriate)
- As-builts, Photographs and other supporting information

The report is provided to the Problem Statement initiator and the Division receiving the Problem Screening (DPM or Maintenance). Once decisions and recommendations are made, Problem Statement database updates are made to reflect changes in status until the Problem Statement is assigned.

Obtain CPSC/CPC Approval

CIPD prepares a concurrence memo to document the Problem Screening recommendation for the

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Division of Project Management or maintenance. Once concurrence is received, CIPD prepares a Capital Program Committee (CPC) Memo to obtain CPC approval. The concurrence Memo along with the Problem Screening Report is sent to the CPC for approval. The CPC reviews the Problem Screening Report recommendation and determines whether to advance the Problem Statement as a Concept Development Study or as a Maintenance Work Order. The CPC decision is documented in the CPC meeting minutes.

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