

# I Want To... Understand How Projects Are Selected



## Aviation Division

### Overview

Historically, TxDOT Aviation has not had a formal project evaluation, prioritization, and selection process but we are now implementing a multi-step approach. This process will provide a defensible, predictable, and quantifiable way of selecting projects and developing the TxDOT Aviation Capital Improvement Program (ACIP). The following process involves some federal requirements. Though state airports are not subject to the same criteria, state funded projects will follow the same process with certain variations.

### Initial Evaluation

The first step in project evaluation is to determine if a requested project is eligible, justified, and feasible. All three must be demonstrated for a project to be considered for funding.

**Eligibility** The first step is determining eligibility. For federal projects, the FAA's Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Handbook provides guidance on project eligibility. For state funds, we generally apply the same eligibility criteria, though certain federally ineligible items *may* be funded with state funds.

**Justification** Eligible projects are then evaluated for justification. Different projects have different justification requirements. Some examples include having a hangar waiting list for a hangar project or having the operations needed to justify a runway extension or increased airfield geometry. Another consideration in justification is if the demand to be met with the request is already being met at another airport. For example, if Airport A requests a runway extension to 5,000' but there are multiple airports in the surrounding area that already have 5,000' runways and provide adequate coverage to Airport A's service area, Texas' overall aviation system would not see an appreciable increase in access to a 5,000' runway so the project would not be justified, even if other justification criteria are met.

**Feasibility** Last is feasibility. Feasibility could be in the form of financial, constructability, environmental, land, or other. A project might be eligible and justified but it is not financially feasible for us to fund the project with the financial resources we have. Other situations might arise where a project is eligible, justified, and even financially feasible, but for various reasons cannot be constructed due to various limitations such as environmental clearance, land availability, supporting infrastructure, the grading and slopes in the project area, etc.

All three – eligibility, justification, and feasibility – must be demonstrated for TxDOT Aviation to even begin considering a project for funding. These are often the first three steps a project request must go through. **Ineligible, unjustified, and unfeasible projects or elements can always be funded 100% locally.**

### Project Evaluation and Ranking

**Scoring** Once a project has been determined to be eligible, justified, and feasible, it is then ranked against other requests for that fiscal year. The basis for ranking for both state and federal programs is the FAA's National Priority System (NPS) formula which considers airport classification and the project's component, type, and purpose as detailed in Appendix E of FAA Order 5090.5, Formulation of the NPIAS and the Airports Capital Improvement Plan. A list is then developed with projects listed in order of NPS score. Special considerations are then considered to move projects up or down. One example might be a smaller airport that has a lower classification input value so their project does not score well. That project might not score high enough to get funded but if the airport is in dire need of the project for safety, we can move that project up. This will result in two prioritized lists: one for state funding and one for federal funding. These two lists make up the draft TxDOT ACIP.

**Cost Estimating** Once a prioritized list has been developed, starting at the top of each list, we apply TxDOT developed or airport provided cost estimates to each, moving down the list until the cumulative costs of the projects reach our annual budget targets. Once we reach that point, we then work with sponsors to confirm the local ability to implement the project as planned, make final changes to the draft ACIP based on that coordination, and those projects become the final TxDOT ACIP.

**Projects that aren't selected** Those highest-ranking federal projects that are not selected for funding will then be considered for FAA Discretionary funding. We will work with the FAA to evaluate Discretionary candidates. For all state and federal projects not ultimately selected for funding, we can consider the project for a future year or we can re-scope the project to improve its competitiveness.



#### Contacts

Your Designated TxDOT Aviation Planner

TxDOT Aviation Main Line

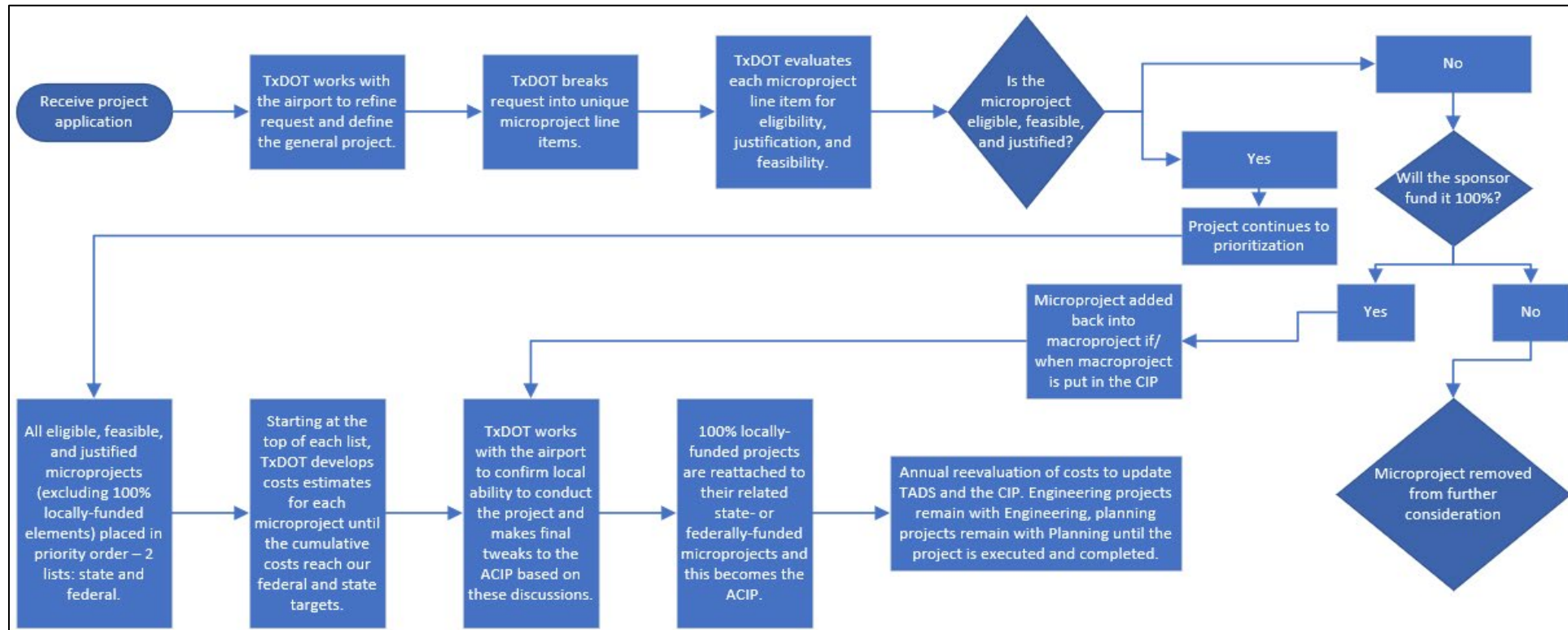
512-416-4500

or

1-800-687-4568 (68-PILOT)

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## What Does the Project Selection Process Look Like?



## Helpful Links

TxDOT Aviation: <https://www.txdot.gov/about/divisions/aviation-division.html>

Texas Airport System Plan: <https://www.txdot.gov/projects/planning/aviation-capital-improvement/airport-system-plan.html>

TxDOT Aviation Capital Improvement Program: <https://www.txdot.gov/projects/planning/aviation-capital-improvement.html>

FAA AIP Handbook: [https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip/aip\\_handbook/](https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip/aip_handbook/)

FAA Order 5090.5, Formulation of the NPIAS and the Airports Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP): [https://www.faa.gov/airports/planning\\_capacity/npias\\_acip\\_order](https://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/npias_acip_order)

## The ACIP

TxDOT's Aviation Capital Improvement Program (ACIP) is a list of planned projects. We all know that things can change, though. Local priorities, TxDOT funding, local match availability, and a variety of other reasons can cause changes to the ACIP and force projects to move in or out or to another year.

Inclusion of a project in the ACIP is not a commitment for future funding; however, it is an indication to the sponsor that the project is under consideration for funding. Sponsors will receive a more definite commitment of funding when a project moves into the current year of the program and is approved by the Texas Transportation Commission. If TxDOT causes a change to the ACIP, impacted projects will receive the highest priority for funding in following years. If a change to the ACIP is initiated by an airport, that project must once again be reevaluated and ranked against requests and there is no guarantee that the project will be able to be selected in a near-term future year, if at all.

