

# RAIL

*MOVING AMERICA FORWARD*



## Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program: Project Narrative and SOW

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# FRA Presenters



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# Agenda

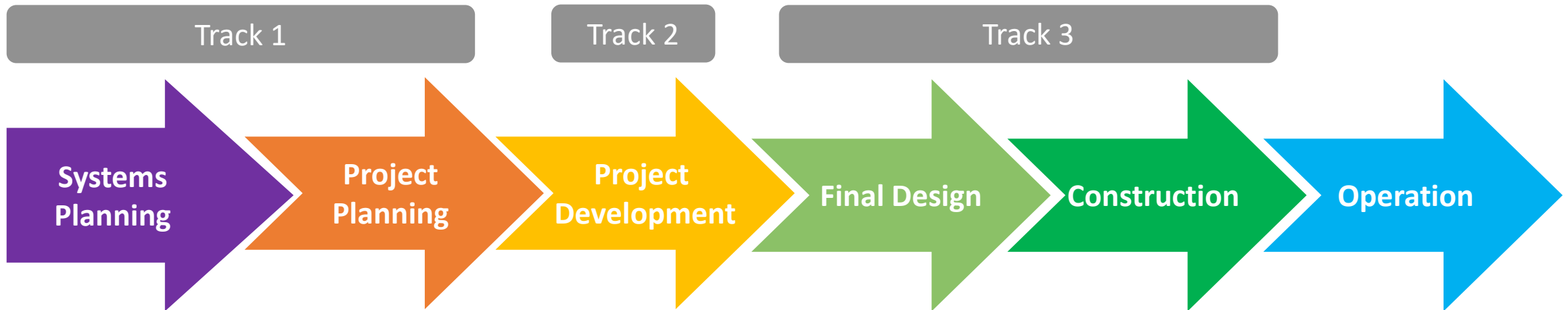
- 1 Overview of the Competitive Grant Process
- 2 Components of the Narrative
- 3 Components of Attachment 2
- 4 Tools and Resources
- 5 Q & A



[FY24 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program for Projects Not Located on the Northeast Corridor \(FSP-National\) NOFO](#)

# Best Practices for a Project Narrative

- Center your narrative around the track or tracks you are applying for.
- Make it clear you have completed the appropriate prerequisites for the track you are applying for.
- Ensure your narrative fully communicates the scope and benefits of your track and is supported by evidence.
- Applicants are not restricted from applying to multiple tracks, but are encouraged to apply for a single stage to ensure the project is sufficiently developed for the federal request



## Project Narrative Outline

A great narrative...

- ☑ Is structured in accordance with the Project Narrative Outline specified in the NOFO.
- ☑ Includes all elements identified in the outline.
- ☑ Follows the instructions for each element.
- ☑ Includes space for photos, maps, or other graphics.
- ☑ Adheres to 25-page limit (Cover Page and appendices exempt).

- I. Cover Page
- II. Project Summary
- III. Project Funding
- IV. Applicant Eligibility Criteria
- V. Project Eligibility Criteria
- VI. Corridor Identification Program Coordination (if applicable)
- VII. Detailed Project Description
- VIII. Project Location
- IX. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
- X. Project Implementation and Management

# Best Practices for a Project Narrative

 Reference: NOFO section D(2)(A)(i)

## Cover Page

A great Cover Page...

- ☑ Uses the table specified in the NOFO.
- ☑ Is clear and concise, relaying useful information to reviewers.
- ☑ Gives baseline information about your project, but does not tell the whole story.

Project Title	Moon Monorail
Lead Applicant Name	City of Will
Joint Applicant Name(s)	City of Lauren
Amount of FSP Program funding requested under this NOFO	\$2
Amount of proposed non-Federal share	\$8
Source(s) of proposed non-Federal share	City of Will: \$4 City of Lauren: \$4
Amount of other Federal funding, if applicable	N/A
Source (s) of other Federal funding, if applicable	N/A
Total Project Cost	\$10
Total cost by Lifecycle Stage(s) for which funding is requested under this NOFO (list each Lifecycle Stage and cost separately)	Project Development: \$3, Final Design: \$3, Construction: \$3
Was a <u>Federal</u> grant application previously submitted for this project?	Yes, CRISI FY23-24: Same scope
City(ies), State(s) where the project is located	City of Will, MD City of Lauren, VA
Congressional District(s) where the project is located	MD-01, VA-01
Geospatial data for project location(s) in decimal degrees (with at least five decimal places of precision). If a track segment or corridor, provide start and end point data.	38.8758204, -77.0028503
Current Lifecycle Stage of project at time of application	Project Development
Anticipated completion date of current Lifecycle Stage	December 2024
Application Track and Lifecycle Stage proposed to be funded by this NOFO	Project Development, Final Design/Construction
Existing Intercity Passenger Rail service(s) on routes not more than 750 miles benefiting from the project	Carolinian, Northeast Regional
If applicable, existing Long-Distance service(s) (routes greater than 750 miles) benefiting from the project	Amtrak Auto Train
If applicable, existing Commuter Rail service(s) benefitting from the project	N/A
If applicable, what Corridor as identified in FY 2022 CID Selections is benefitting from the project	Commonwealth Corridor
Host Railroad/infrastructure owner(s) of project assets and property	CSX
Other impacted Railroad(s)	Amtrak
Tenant Railroad(s), if applicable	CSX, Amtrak
If applicable, is a 49 U.S.C. 22905-compliant Railroad Agreement in place or pending?	Complete
LOI/PFA requested?	No

## Project Summary

A great Project Summary...

- ✓ Serves as the elevator pitch for your project and gives reviewers a simple understanding of your project.
- ✓ Is brief, describing the project in only **4 to 6 sentences**.
- ✓ Highlights the challenges your project aims to address, what tasks are being funded under this application, and the benefits the project will bring once completed.
- ✓ Includes important information, such as the application Track/Lifecycle Stage and amount of funding you are applying for.



**Keep it simple! Don't frontload the summary with all your information.**



# Best Practices for a Project Narrative

 Reference: NOFO section D(2)(A)(iii)

## Project Funding

A great Project Funding section...

- ☑ Includes **TABLES** that only include eligible costs
- ☑ Specify each source of non-Federal match with
  - Supporting Documentation
  - Details about in-kind match
  - Indication of public- vs. private-sector match
- ☑ Identifies if the proposed match will not be available until a certain date or if funds must be spent by a deadline
  - States Competitive Funding or other competitive Federal sources
- ☑ Major Capital Projects
  - Annualized budget in year of expenditure dollars
  - Specify intent to seek Phased Funding Agreement (PFA)

Task #	Task Name/Project Component and Lifecycle Stage	Cost	Percentage of Total Cost	Source of Funds and Citation, as applicable
1	Project Management	\$1	10%	
2	Project Development: NEPA	\$3	30%	
3	Final Design	\$3	30%	
4	Construction	\$3	30%	
<b>Total Project Cost</b>		<b>\$10</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Federal FSP funding requested in this application		\$2	20%	FSP National FY24
Non-Federal Federal Funding (Local)		\$4	40%	City of Will
Non-Federal Federal Funding (Local)		\$4	40%	City of Lauren
Other Federal funding (pending)		\$2	20%	Pending under CRISI FY23-24. Same scope.



**The SF 424 is the *Official Funding Request***

## Applicant and Project Eligibility Sections

### Look at the NOFO

- Match Project to eligible project type
- Match Applicant to eligible applicant type

### Make your case

- Describe how your project meets the criteria and how you meet the criteria

### References

- Supporting Documentation
- Citations and Hyperlinks

## Corridor Identification Program Coordination

### ☑ Applicants who are CID Sponsors:

- Explain the status of the sponsor's corridor within the CID Program
- Explain how the proposed FSP-National project is consistent with the corridor sponsor's planning efforts under CID and will not preclude any outcomes from planning activities explored under CID

### ☑ Applicants who are not CID Sponsors:

- A letter of support from the Corridor Sponsor is encouraged



For a complete list of Corridor Identification and Development program selections:

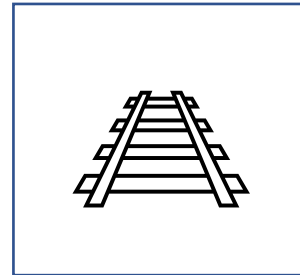
<https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/fy22-CID-program-selections>

## Detailed Project Description

A great Detailed Project Description...

- ✓ Thoroughly discusses the transportation challenges and benefits.
- ✓ Includes data to support project benefits.
- ✓ Describes how project components are related and will be sequenced.
- ✓ Includes photographs or diagrams.
- ✓ Identifies all host railroads, operators, and beneficiaries using Table 3 to show:
  - Daily, weekly, or annual train counts.
  - Current ridership data and delays.

### v. Project Description



Picture of Project



Location of Project Area

Simple description of challenges and proposed solution. Relevant history **OF** project.

- These XX grade crossings are slowing trains and we want to create a grade separation

Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative benefits of this project.

- XXX trip times will be decreased by this project

Summary of who benefits.

- Town residents
- Emergency Services
- Freight

Host Railroad – status of negotiations

- Draft negotiation document,
- Summary of ongoing conversations, demonstration of support



Don't let this be the only time you talk about benefits

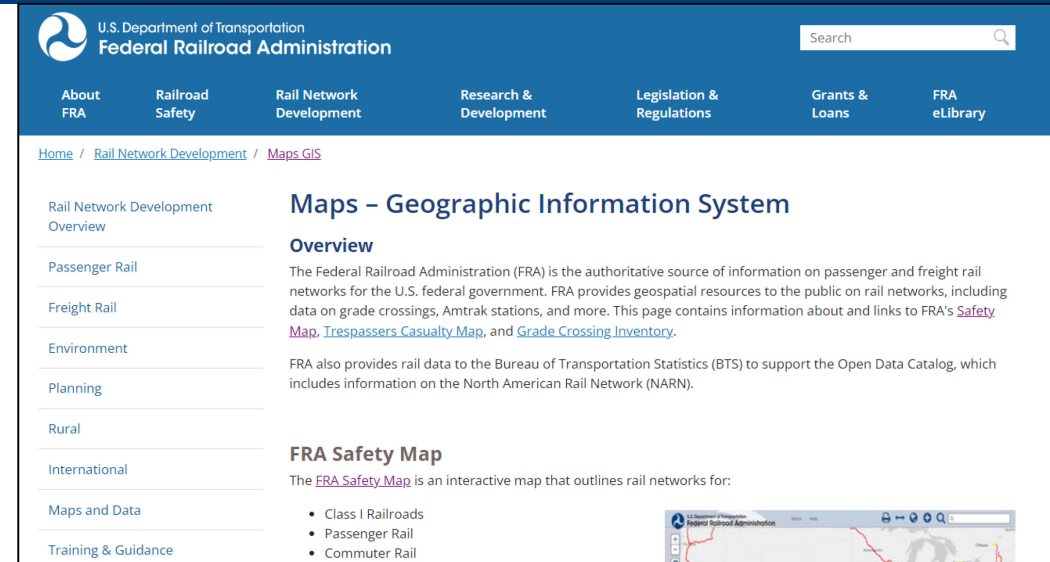
# Best Practices for a Project Narrative

 Reference: NOFO section D(2)(A)(viii)

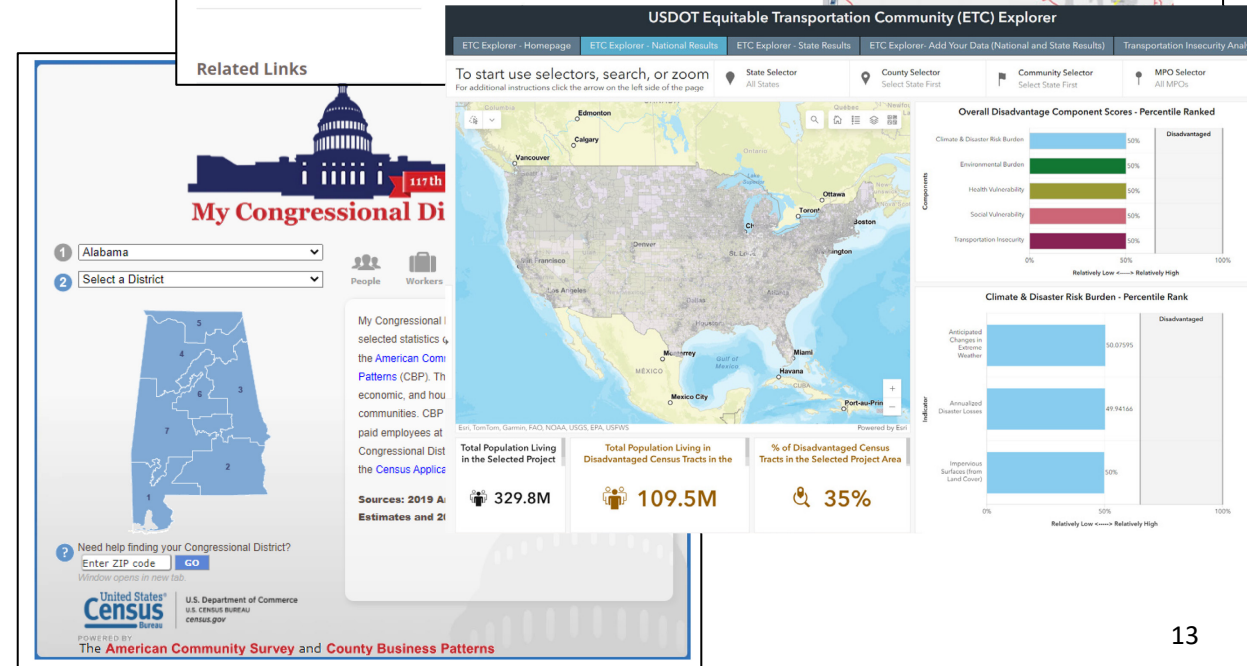
## Project Location

A great Project Location section...

- ✓ Identifies the project location in multiple ways
- ✓ Includes the cities, counties, states, and congressional districts where project is located
- ✓ Includes longitude and latitude and other geospatial data
  - ✓ Longitude and Latitude should be to the fifth decimal
- ✓ Includes a map or maps of the project
- ✓ Identifies railroad mileposts
- ✓ Includes demographic Data if applicable
  - Justice40 Rail Explorer
  - Equity



The screenshot shows the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) website. The main navigation bar includes links for About FRA, Railroad Safety, Rail Network Development, Research & Development, Legislation & Regulations, Grants & Loans, and FRA eLibrary. The page title is "Maps - Geographic Information System". The "Overview" section states that FRA is the authoritative source of information on passenger and freight rail networks. It provides geospatial resources to the public on rail networks, including data on grade crossings, Amtrak stations, and more. Links are provided for FRA's Safety Map, Trespassers Casualty Map, and Grade Crossing Inventory. The "FRA Safety Map" section describes an interactive map that outlines rail networks for Class I Railroads, Passenger Rail, and Commuter Rail.



The screenshot shows the USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer tool. The interface includes a search bar, a map of the United States, and several data visualization components. The "Overall Disadvantage Component Scores - Percentile Ranked" section shows five categories: Climate & Disaster Risk Burden (50%), Environmental Burden (50%), Health Vulnerability (50%), Social Vulnerability (50%), and Transportation Insecurity (50%). The "Climate & Disaster Risk Burden - Percentile Rank" section shows a bar chart for "Anticipated Changes in Extreme Weather" with a score of 50.07395. The "Total Population Living in the Selected Project" is 329.8M, "Total Population Living in Disadvantaged Census Tracts in the Selected Project Area" is 109.5M, and "% of Disadvantaged Census Tracts in the Selected Project Area" is 35%. The tool is powered by Esri and uses data from the American Community Survey and County Business Patterns.

## Evaluation and Selection Criteria

### ☑ Project Readiness:

- NEPA & Environmental
- Lifecycle Stage(s)
- Project partner coordination and commitments and Corridor ID coordination
- Financial readiness, including commitment of funds for proposed non-federal matching sources

### ☑ Technical Merit

- Appropriateness of tasks outlined in the SOW
- Technical qualifications of key personnel
- Private sector participation
- Legal, financial, and technical capacity to carry out proposed project
- Innovation
- Consistency of the project with planning guidance, and documents set forth by USDOT

## Evaluation and Selection Criteria

### ☑ Project Benefits:

- Effects on system and service performance
- Effects on safety, competitiveness, reliability, greenhouse gas emissions, trip or transit time, and resilience
- Effects of anticipated positive economic and employment impacts
- Efficiencies from improved integration with other modes
- Ability to meet existing or anticipated demand
- Whether the proposed project serves historically unconnected or under connected communities

### ☑ Quantitative and Qualitative

- Relevant Benefits only – don't digress to other projects
- ☑ Address each component
  - **Address it again!**
  - Separate out each section – don't bunch



Refer to section E.1.a-c of the NOFO for the complete evaluation rubrics to understand how your application will be evaluated on each component!

## Project Implementation & Management

A good Project Implementation & Management section...

- ☑ Highlights the applicant's past experience managing and overseeing similar projects, including FRA- or DOT-funded projects
  - FRA or DOT-Funded projects, such as RAISE (TIGER, BUILD), CRISI
  - Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants
  - State Grants
  - Management of Local Funding
- ☑ Describes the expected arrangements for project contracting, contract oversight, change-order management, risk management, and conformance with Federal requirements for progress reporting
  - Experience with intercity passenger rail – GREAT!
  - Major Capital Projects' Project Management Plans have additional requirements and must include the following:
    - Project planning and concept design, environment, design management, project delivery, construction management, construction close out, start up and revenue operation, real estate acquisition and management, and rolling stock acquisition and management



Assume your reviewer has never heard of you!

### Examples of USDOT Grants:



BUILD: Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Program  
CRISI: Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant Program  
RAISE: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Grants  
TIGER: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Program (FY 2009-2000)



# In Summary...Help Your Reviewer

- **Keep it simple and straight forward**
  - More information is good....as long as it's relevant
    - Supporting Documentation – submission vs. hyperlink
  - Repetition is key – don't sell yourself short
- **No detective work**
  - Benefits, costs, scope, project stage
  - Qualitative and quantitative
- **No assumptions**
  - Location
  - Technical experience
  - Project



# Narrative Tools

## I. Cover Page

- [Developing SF 424 Project Titles](#)

## II. Project Summary

- [FY21 FSP SOGR Selections](#)
- [FY22-23 FSP National Selections](#)

## III. Project Funding

- [Capital Cost Estimating Guidance](#)
- [FRA Budget Tool](#)

## IV. Applicant Eligibility Criteria

- [FSP-National NOFO](#); [FSP-NEC NOFO](#)

## V. Project Eligibility Criteria

- [FSP-National NOFO](#); [FSP-NEC NOFO](#)

## VI. Corridor Identification Program Coordination (if applicable)

- [FY22 Corridor Identification and Development Program Selections](#)

## VII. Detailed Project Description

- [Guidance on Development and Implementation of Railroad Capital Projects](#)

## VIII. Project Location

- [Justice40 Census Tracts](#)
- [Congressional Districts](#)
- [Rural Eligibility](#)
- [FRA Safety GIS Map](#)

## IX. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

- [FSP-National NOFO](#)
- [Metrics and Minimum Standards for IPR Operations](#)

## X. Project Implementation and Management

- [FRA Reporting](#)
- [FRA Statement of Work Templates](#)
- [FRA Project Development Resources](#)

# Best Practices for an Attachment 2: Articles 4-7

# Best Practices – Attachment 2 (Articles 4-7)

- ☑ See the [FRA Discretionary Grant Agreements](#) web page
- ☑ SOW (Article 4)
- ☑ Award Dates & Estimated Project Schedule (Article 5)
- ☑ Award and Project Financial Information (Article 6)
- ☑ Performance Measurement Information (Article 7)



*Drafting and finalizing the SOW is a key step toward receiving a grant award.*

# Best Practices – Attachment 2 (Articles 4-5)

## Article 4: Statement of Work

- Identifies:
  - General Project Description: concise description of the Project funded under the agreement
  - Project Location: specific and detailed, including maps and GPS location, as applicable
  - Project Scope: lists standard FRA project tasks and deliverables defined by project lifecycle stage
  - Required environmental commitments as applicable

## Article 5: Award Dates and Estimated Project Schedule

- Identifies award dates and project schedule, which lists significant milestones in Project advancement

**Table 5-A: Estimated Project Schedule**

Milestone	Schedule Date
[Preliminary Engineering Completion]	[Insert Date]
[NEPA Completion]	[Insert Date]
[Final Design Completion]	[Insert Date]
[Construction Substantial Completion]	[Insert Date]

# Best Practices – Attachment 2 (Articles 6-7)

## Article 6: Award and Project Financial Information

- Outlines the award amount, obligation, funding source and availability, project budget, and other relevant financial information for the project
  - There are several budget tables provided in Article 6; ensure the appropriate table is used based on the project

## Article 7: Performance Measurement Information

- Performance measures enable FRA to assess the Recipient’s progress in achieving grant program goals and objectives
- The Recipient will report on these performance measures in accordance with the frequency and duration specified (in Table 7-A)
- FRA develops the initial draft based on FRA’s framework for measuring performance for certain projects as well as the information the Applicant provided in the grant application

Table 7-A: Performance Measurement Table

Goal	Objective	Performance Measure	Description of Measure	Measurement	Reporting
Goal 1				Pre-Project (Baseline) Performance as of:	Frequency:
				Expected Post-Project Performance:	Duration:
Goal 2				Pre-Project (Baseline) Performance as of:	Frequency:
				Expected Post-Project Performance:	Duration:

## Best Practices – Attachment 2

- ☑ Organize the scope of work into discrete and logically sequenced tasks
- ☑ Provide appropriate timing for tasks
- ☑ Identify the deliverables required to communicate progress and completion of tasks to FRA
- ☑ Check the budget to ensure numbers are consistent with cost information submitted in forms and other areas of the application



NOT INTENDED FOR EXECUTION WITHOUT MODIFICATION

### ARTICLE 4: STATEMENT OF WORK

#### 4.1 General Project Description

*Instructions: Provide a concise description of the Project funded under this Agreement. Section 4.1 should state the objective of the Project and the benefits that that the Project is intended to achieve. Project objectives and benefits inform—and should be consistent with—the Performance Measures in Article 7 of this Attachment 2, Performance Measurement Information.*

#### 4.2 Project Location

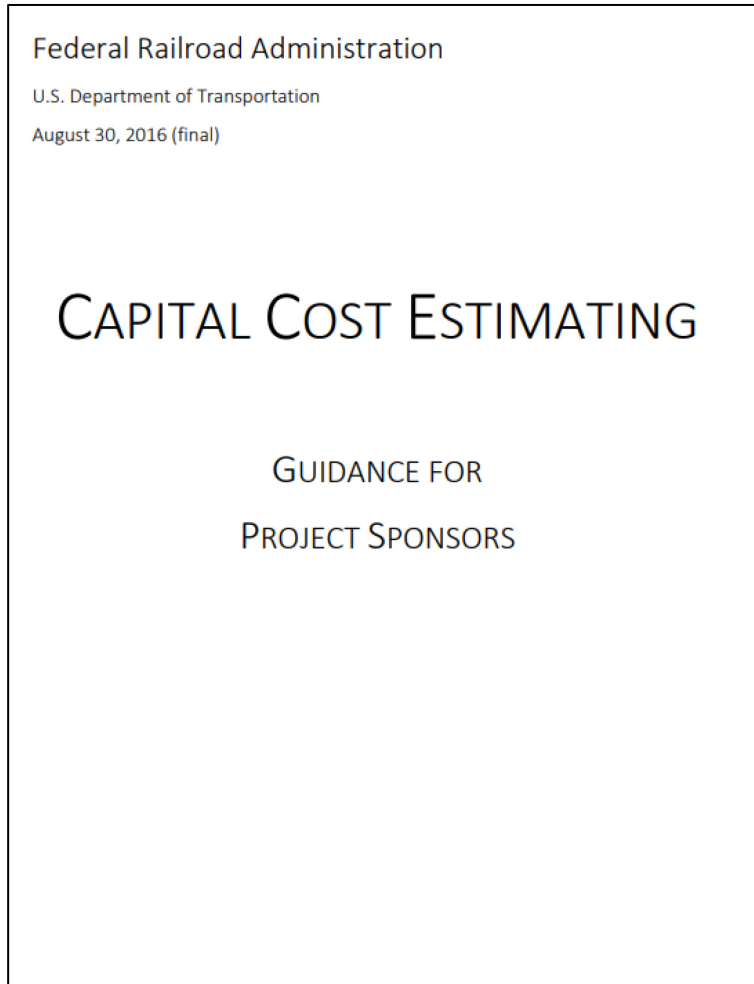
*Instructions: Provide information related to the geographic scope of the Project and identify important, related intercity corridors or service. The Project location should be specific and detailed, including GPS location(s) and mileposts, where possible. Planning projects should identify the study area and provide a map identifying, at a minimum, the major markets intended to be served.*

#### 4.3 Project Scope

*Instructions: In this Section, divide the Project scope into discrete and delineable tasks. If the Project funded under this Agreement is part of a larger effort, describe that larger effort, but link tasks specifically to the FRA-funded portion of the Project. Clearly define the work to be performed in each task and be sure tasks are linked to deliverables and incorporated into the Project Schedule. Use the instructions below to develop this Section.*

The Recipient will notify FRA in writing of any requested changes in Project Scope and will not proceed with the changed scope unless approved by FRA in writing. If approved, changes to Project Scope may require additional environmental review or an amendment to this Agreement.

# Best Practices — Attachment 2



- Capital Cost Estimating Guidance:
  - <https://railroads.dot.gov/rail-network-development/training-guidance/capital-cost-estimating-guidance>
- Utilize FRA’s Standard Cost Categories as a way to organize the scope of work and budget
  - <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/mp-33-scc-worksheets>
- Ensure consistency among the project narrative, statement of work, benefit-cost analysis, and other application materials

FRA MAIN WORKSHEET								Issue Date 5/4/16	
Grantee Name							Today's Date		8/28/14
Project Name and Location: Rail Project A, Two cities with rural in-between							Yr of Base Year \$		2014
Current Phase : Final Design, Ready to Procure Construction							Yr of Revenue Ops		2017
Standard Cost Category	Unit	Quantity	Base Year Dollars					YOE Dollars Total (X000) <i>(from Inflation Worksheet)</i>	
			Without Contingency (X000)	Allocated Contingency (X000)	TOTAL (X000)	Unit Cost (X000)	Percent of Construction Cost		Percent of Total Project Cost
<b>10</b> <b>Guideway &amp; Track Elements</b>	<b>Lineal Miles of Guideway</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1,520,000</b>	<b>140,000</b>	<b>1,660,000</b>	<b>15,810</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>1,718,100</b>
10.010	Guideway: At-grade exclusive right-of-way	Lineal Miles of Guideway	100	550,000	50,000	600,000	6,000		
10.020	Guideway: At-grade semi-exclusive (allows cross-traffic)	Lineal Miles of Guideway		0		0			
10.030	Guideway: At-grade in mixed traffic	Lineal Miles of Guideway		0		0			
10.040	Guideway: Aerial structure	Lineal Miles of Guideway		0		0			



# Contact Us

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## FSP-National Program and Application Process

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## Benefit-Cost Analysis

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U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Railroad Administration

*Learn more about FRA Competitive Discretionary Grant Programs  
at [railroads.dot.gov/grants](https://railroads.dot.gov/grants)*