

# State Grant Programs and Oak Ridge

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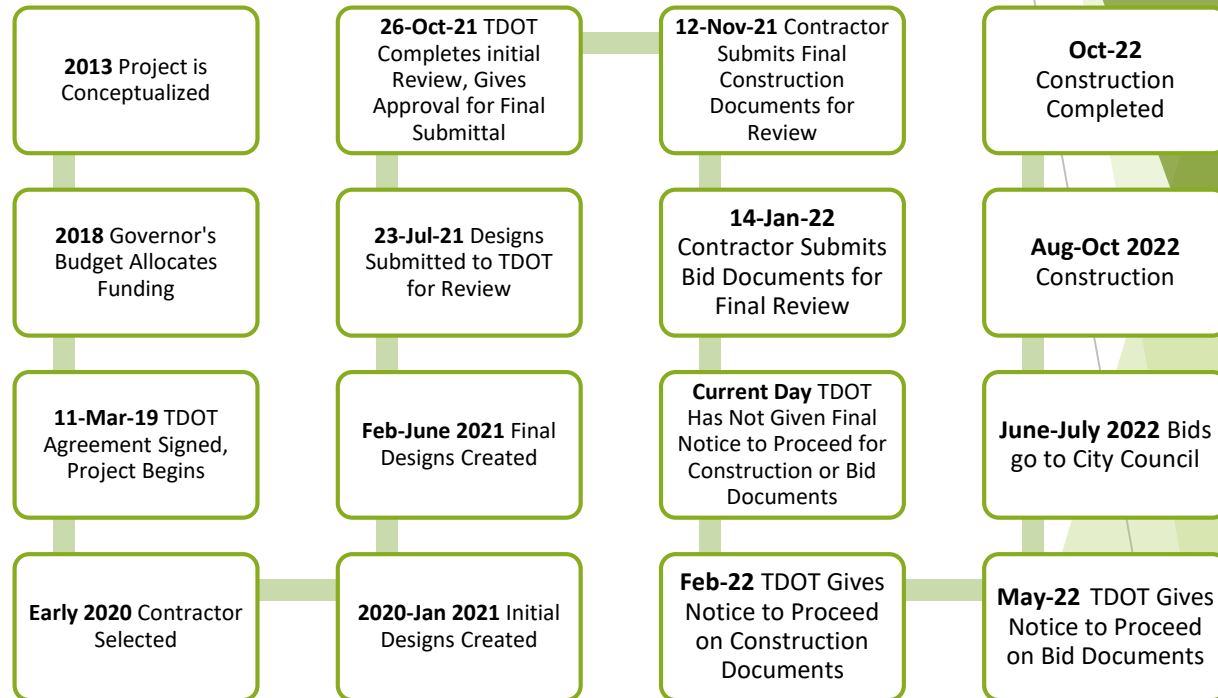
# City of Oak Ridge Gateway Project

- ▶ Project began in 2019 with \$500,000 from the Governor's Budget allocated through TDOT Local Programs Development.
- ▶ Project is to construct a 15'x30' "gateway" sign to be placed on the TDOT land workers and scientists come in and exit to Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Y-12, and downtown Oak Ridge.
- ▶ This wall is using 22% or \$112,073 of funding for engineering and technical services.



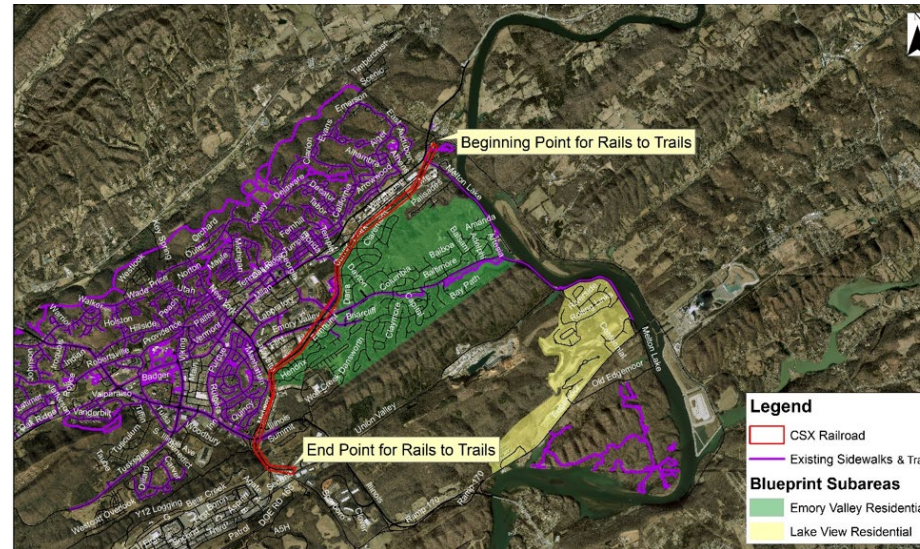
# City of Oak Ridge Gateway Project

- ▶ Initial Projected Timeline had the project ending in Spring 2022
- ▶ Current Timeline projects project completion in October 2022
- ▶ Over 4 years since funds were initially allocated
  - ▶ Over 3 years since agreement with TDOT signed
- ▶ Project started with a joint project between the COR and the Rotary Club



# City of Oak Ridge Rails to Trails

- ▶ City began Rails to Trails Project in 2017
- ▶ COR last submitted to TDOT in July 2021. City still has not received a notice to proceed, 6 months later
- ▶ October 2021, TDOT warned COR that it was at risk of violating the grant manual due to not having submitted an invoice
  - ▶ COR had to explain to TDOT that we could not submit any invoices because we had not received a Notice to Proceed from TDOT and could not continue any work on the project



# City of Oak Ridge Rails to Trails

## Main Flow Chart

Seventh Edition, March 2018 (rev. March 15, 2019) Local Government Guidelines for the Management of Federal and State-funded Transportation Projects

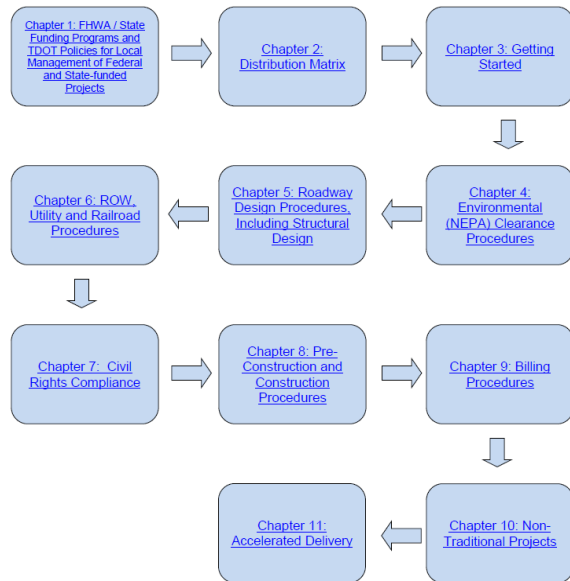


Figure P-1 – Main Flow Chart

## Example: Ch. 5 Flow Chart

### CHAPTER 5 - ROADWAY DESIGN PROCEDURES, INCLUDING STRUCTURAL DESIGN

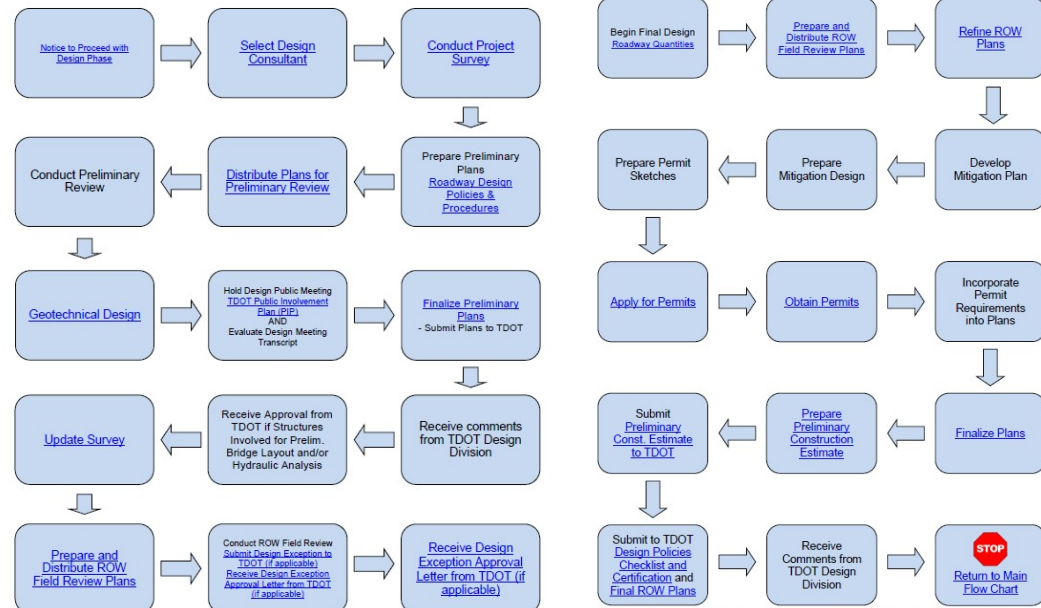


Figure 5-1 – Design Phase Flow Chart

Figure 5-1 – Design Phase Flow Chart (continued)



# Blankenship Field Renovation

- ▶ In 2016, COR applied for a TDEC Local Park and Recreation Fund (LRPF) Grant for renovation of historic Blankenship Field
- ▶ Contract was signed January 1, 2018, and would run through December 31, 2019
- ▶ COR received a 6-month extension of grant through June 30, 2020
- ▶ Private donations of \$500,000 were pledged to meet the local match requirement



# Blankenship Field Renovation

- ▶ Due to COVID, COR asked for a 2<sup>nd</sup> extension to see project to completion
  - ▶ TDEC would not allow it, and required COR to enter into a new grant agreement
  - ▶ COR was told it would take 6-8 months for the new grant agreement
  - ▶ The new grant agreement was finally signed September 15, 2021, **7-9 months longer** than TDEC claimed
  - ▶ No work was done for 14 months because it would be ineligible for reimbursement
- ▶ Lack of Communication and Change
  - ▶ TDEC also changed the LPRF Grant Manual 3 times since the project began, and required COR to change to all new provisions from original agreement, losing time and costing administrative oversight
- ▶ Details
  - ▶ COR purchased a prefab restroom from Texas. Plans identified a coat hanger on a bathroom door was measured at 4 feet to the hook for ADA compliance. TDEC required plans to be changed to “48 inches” which delayed the project by 4-5 months.

# Multimodal Transportation and CMAQ II Projects

- ▶ In 2017, COR was awarded a TDOT grant for multimodal transportation improvements of Oak Ridge Turnpike (TN-95)
  - ▶ COR expected that a grant for CMAQ II Improvements was also coming, and that grant was awarded in 2018
- ▶ A decision was made early on to delay the multimodal project in order to have the timeline match CMAQ II to reduce construction time on Oak Ridge Turnpike
  - ▶ TDOT concurred with this decision, and provided a 1-year extension
- ▶ In January 2021, COR bid both projects using separate sets of plans together as one contract
  - ▶ TDOT also approved the bidding plan



# Multimodal Transportation and CMAQ II Projects

- ▶ With TDOT aware of COR's plans and having approved the plans, COR requested a two-year extension of the multimodal project in order to let it fully line up with the CMAQ II timeline
  - ▶ TDOT refused to grant a 2-year extension, and instead approved a 1-year extension that will expire March 2022
  - ▶ This will require COR to apply for an additional extension
  - ▶ While this is not expected to delay either project, it unnecessarily increases the administrative burden on both COR and TDOT
- ▶ NEPA Issues
  - ▶ TDOT has informed COR that the original NEPA plan that was approved in October 2017 is no longer valid because they changed their standards in 2019
  - ▶ COR was not informed of this issue until Dec 3, 2021, two years after the change

# Where Do We Go From Here?

- ▶ Grant programs process must be expedited to achieve faster implementation
- ▶ Appropriate staffing is needed at state levels for legal, financial, and technical review
- ▶ Small and large Tennessee cities should not have to financially “tote the note” on grants more than any private contractor
- ▶ Allow flexibility for grant recipient to get all projects done and money spent
- ▶ Simplify state review based on complexity of the project
- ▶ Improve average “start to finish” times to no more than 24-36 months

Questions?

