

CRAFTING A STRONG PURPOSE & NEED STATEMENT

A GUIDE FOR LOTCIP APPLICANTS

A strong Purpose and Need Statement should clearly articulate:

✓ 1. “Need” — The Problem Being Solved

This is the justification for why the project is necessary. It should be based on observable, documented, and measurable issues, such as:

- Safety concerns: e.g., high crash history, pedestrian conflicts, unsafe crossings
- Infrastructure condition: poor pavement, structurally deficient bridge, substandard design
- Capacity issues: congestion, delays, operational deficiencies
- Access limitations: lack of ADA-compliant facilities, disconnected sidewalk networks
- Mobility and equity: lack of multimodal options, transit gaps, underserved populations
- Environmental vulnerability: flood-prone areas, poor drainage, climate resilience needs
- System continuity: gaps in regional networks (bike, pedestrian, freight)

 **Tip:** Reference data wherever possible - crash reports, traffic volumes, pavement condition ratings, CTDOT functional classification maps, local or regional studies.

✓ 2. “Purpose” — The Goals and Objectives of the Project

This should clearly define what the project intends to accomplish. It’s your solution goals, not the design itself.

Examples:

- Improve safety for all users at a high-crash intersection
- Address pavement deterioration to maintain acceptable ride quality
- Improve pedestrian access to a school or transit hub
- Eliminate flooding during storm events along a critical corridor
- Expand multimodal options along a regional trail corridor

 **Tip:** Avoid defining the solution itself (e.g., “widen the road”); instead, say “enhance capacity and reduce delays.”



What to Avoid

- Vague or generic statements like “to improve infrastructure”
- Justifying the project solely because funding is available
- Including design features as part of the purpose (that comes later)
- Using speculative or unsubstantiated needs

CTDOT/COG Guidance Highlights

- “Purpose and Need is the most important element of the pre-application process” — as noted in SCCOG’s LOTCIP guidance
- It should tie into regional plans, Complete Streets goals, ADA compliance, and identified deficiencies
- CTDOT typically looks for purpose/need that is data-supported, location-specific, and user-focused

Narrative Examples

Here are three fully written “Purpose and Need” narrative examples suitable for inclusion in a LOTCIP pre-application or full application. Each version is structured to clearly satisfy CTDOT and COG reviewer expectations.

LOTCIP Application – Purpose and Need: Roadway Reconstruction

Main Street (Route 123), between Elm Avenue and Oak Drive, is a critical collector roadway that serves multiple community institutions, including a public elementary school, a regional medical center, and a senior housing complex. This approximately 0.8-mile corridor is heavily traveled by both passenger vehicles and local transit, as well as pedestrians accessing services and destinations along the corridor.

The roadway is in poor condition, with significant pavement distress including widespread alligator cracking, rutting, and edge failure. According to a June 2024 pavement condition survey conducted by the Town’s Public Works Department, the segment has a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of 48. Storm drainage infrastructure along the corridor is aging and undersized, resulting in frequent localized flooding during even moderate rainfall events. These conditions negatively impact safety, rideability, and maintenance costs. Additionally, existing sidewalk segments are not continuous or ADA-compliant, and crosswalks lack proper signage and visibility.

The purpose of this project is to reconstruct the roadway to restore pavement quality, improve stormwater drainage, and enhance pedestrian accessibility and safety. The project supports municipal Complete Streets goals and aligns with recommendations from the SECOG Regional Transportation Safety Plan and local capital improvement priorities.

LOTCIP Application – Purpose and Need: Bridge Replacement

Bridge No. 04567 carries Maple Street over the Muddy River and provides a key connection between the town center and a residential neighborhood that includes a K–8 school, a fire station, and a senior community center. The bridge has been



identified as Structurally Deficient in CTDOT's 2023 Bridge Inspection Report, with a condition rating of 4 for its superstructure. Additionally, the bridge is hydraulically undersized, resulting in frequent overtopping and flood-related closures during heavy rain events. These closures restrict access for emergency vehicles and school buses and pose safety risks for the traveling public.

The bridge is currently 20 feet wide (curb-to-curb) with no shoulders and lacks dedicated pedestrian or bicycle facilities. This condition forces pedestrians and cyclists into the travel lane, creating conflict with motor vehicles. The existing structure does not meet the functional needs of the community, nor does it support current Complete Streets or ADA accessibility standards.

The purpose of this project is to replace the bridge with a structure that meets modern design and safety standards, improves hydraulic performance to reduce flood risk, and accommodates all users—including pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles—safely and reliably. The project will address documented infrastructure deficiencies and support community resilience and connectivity.



LOTICIP Application – Purpose and Need: Sidewalk & Trail Connection

The Town currently lacks a safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle connection between its town center and the regional commuter rail station located approximately 0.6 miles away along Route 82. This corridor, while heavily used by commuters, high school students, and residents of nearby low-income housing, has no sidewalks or marked crosswalks, forcing pedestrians to walk in the shoulder or travel lanes. Between 2018 and 2023, CTDOT crash records document three pedestrian-related incidents in this segment, underscoring the safety risk for vulnerable road users.

This route is identified as a priority corridor for non-motorized improvements in the SECOG Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2022), which calls for enhanced connectivity to regional transit and walkable access to schools and job centers. The corridor also aligns with the Town's Complete Streets policy and supports broader equity and climate resilience goals by reducing automobile dependency.

The purpose of this project is to construct a continuous, ADA-compliant sidewalk and multi-use path that provides a safe, direct, and attractive connection between the town center and the commuter rail station. The project will improve access to transit, reduce pedestrian and bicycle conflicts with vehicles, and promote healthier, more sustainable modes of transportation.

MAKING THE CASE FOR YOUR LOTCIP APPLICATION

A strong LOTCIP application does more than meet the technical requirements — it tells a clear story about why your project matters and demonstrates that it has the support to succeed. Municipalities that take time to build stakeholder buy-in and plan ahead for engineering costs are better positioned to advance their projects smoothly.



Building Stakeholder Support

- **Tell a Compelling Story** – Frame the project in terms of safety, mobility, and economic benefits for residents and businesses.
- **Highlight Regional Benefits** – Emphasize how the project improves not just your municipality, but also traffic flow, connectivity, or resiliency in the broader region.
- **Show Community Alignment** – Reference local plans (POCD, Complete Streets, Capital Improvement Plan) to demonstrate consistency with adopted priorities.
- **Engage Early & Often** – Involve local boards, commissions, neighborhood groups, and emergency services in project discussions to build consensus.
- **Use Visuals** - Maps, before-and-after renderings, and crash heatmaps can help make the problem and solution more tangible.
- **Leverage Success Stories** – Point to past LOTCIP projects in your town or neighboring communities that delivered visible benefits.
- **Document Letters of Support** – Collect endorsements from local leaders, businesses, school districts, and community groups to show broad backing.



Closing Funding Gaps for Engineering Costs

- **Budget Ahead in Your CIP** – Earmark local Capital Improvement Plan funds specifically for LOTCIP engineering match needs.
- **Phase the Design Work** – Spread engineering expenses across multiple fiscal years to ease local budget pressures.
- **Explore Regional Partnerships** – Consider joint projects with neighboring towns to share design and preliminary engineering costs.
- **Highlight Cost Avoidance** – Stress that LOTCIP construction funding eliminates the need for municipal bonding or local debt service, which can help justify covering engineering costs locally.