

Transportation Improvement Program

Definitions

February 2023

Administrative Modification means a minor change in cost to a project or project phase, a minor change to funding sources, a minor change to the start or end date of a project or project phase, a minor change in design concept or design scope, minor corrections, or adding, modifying, or removing a project or project phase involving advance construction. This revision does not require public review and comment or a redemonstration of fiscal constraint.

Advance construction (AC) allows states to begin a project even in the absence of sufficient Federal-aid obligation authority to cover the Federal share of project costs. It is codified in Title 23, Section 115. Advance construction eliminates the need to set aside full obligational authority before starting projects. As a result, a state can undertake a greater number of concurrent projects than would otherwise be possible. In addition, advance construction helps facilitate construction of large projects, while maintaining obligational authority for smaller ones. At some future date when the state does have sufficient obligation authority, it may convert an advance-constructed project to a Federal-aid project by obligating the permissible share of its Federal-aid funds and receiving subsequent reimbursements. Advance construction allows a state to conserve obligation authority and maintain flexibility in its transportation funding program.

Amendment means a major change to a project or project phase including the addition or deletion of a project, a major change in cost to a project or project phase, a major change to the start or end date of a project or project phase, a major change in design concept or design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes or changing the number of stations in the case of fixed guideway transit projects). Changes to a project that is included only for illustrative purposes does not require an Amendment. This revision requires a public review and comment period and a redemonstration of fiscal constraint.

Congestion management process means a systematic approach required in transportation management areas (TMAs) that provides for effective management and operation, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy, of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C., and title 49 U.S.C., through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies.

Consideration means that one or more parties takes into account the opinions, action, and relevant information from other parties in making a decision or determining a course of action.

Consultation means that one or more parties confer with other identified parties in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action(s), considers the views of the other parties and periodically informs them about action(s) taken. This definition does not apply to the “consultation” performed by the States and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in comparing the long-range statewide transportation plan and the metropolitan transportation plan, respectively, to State and tribal conservation plans or maps or inventories of natural or historic resources (see section 450.216(j) and sections 450.324(g)(1) and (g)(2)).

Cooperation means that the parties involved in carrying out the transportation planning and programming processes work together to achieve a common goal or objective.

Coordination means the cooperative development of plans, programs, and schedules among agencies and entities with legal standing and adjustment of such plans, programs, and schedules to achieve general consistency, as appropriate.

Design concept means the type of facility identified for a transportation improvement project (e.g., freeway, expressway, arterial highway, grade-separated highway, toll road, reserved right-of-way rail transit, mixed-traffic rail transit, or busway).

Design scope means the aspects that will affect the proposed facility's impact on the region, usually as they relate to vehicle or person carrying capacity and control (e.g., number of lanes or tracks to be constructed or added, length of project, signalization, safety features, access control including approximate number and location of interchanges, or preferential treatment for high-occupancy vehicles).

Financial plan means documentation required to be included with a metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (and optional for the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP) that demonstrates the consistency between reasonably available and projected sources of Federal, State, local, and private revenues and the costs of implementing proposed transportation system improvements.

Financially constrained or Fiscal constraint means that the metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, and STIP includes sufficient financial information for demonstrating that projects in the metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, and STIP can be implemented using committed, available, or reasonably available revenue sources, with reasonable assurance that the federally supported transportation system is being adequately operated and maintained. For the TIP and the STIP, financial constraint/fiscal constraint applies to each program year.

Illustrative project means an additional transportation project that may be included in a financial plan for a metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP if reasonable additional resources were to become available.

Long-range statewide transportation plan means the official, statewide, multimodal, transportation plan covering a period of no less than 20 years developed through the statewide transportation planning process.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) means the policy board of an organization created and designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Metropolitan transportation plan means the official multimodal transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon that the MPO develops, adopts, and updates through the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Obligated projects mean strategies and projects funded under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 for which the State or designated recipient authorized and committed the supporting Federal funds in preceding or current program years and authorized by the FHWA or awarded as a grant by the FTA.

Project phase refers to typical phases for project development which are Planning (planning studies, NEPA approval), Design (PE1, preliminary engineering, PE2, final design), Right of Way (ROW), Construction (CON), and Inspection (INSP), or Program Phases such as Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3, etc.

Project selection means the procedures followed by MPOs, States, and public transportation operators to advance projects from the first 4 years of an approved TIP and/or STIP to implementation, in accordance with agreed upon procedures.

Regional ITS architecture means a regional framework for ensuring institutional agreement and technical integration for the implementation of ITS projects or groups of projects.

Regionally significant project means a transportation project (other than projects that may be grouped in the TIP and/or STIP or exempt projects as defined in EPA's transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part §93, subpart A)) that is on a facility that serves regional transportation needs (such as access to and from the area outside the region; major activity centers in the region; major planned developments such as new retail malls, sports complexes, or employment centers; or transportation terminals) and would normally be included in the modeling of the metropolitan area's transportation network. At a minimum, this includes all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer an alternative to regional highway travel.

Revision means a change to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP that occurs between scheduled periodic updates. A major revision is an "Amendment" while a minor revision is an "Administrative Modification."

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) means a statewide prioritized listing/program of transportation projects covering a period of 4 years that is consistent with the long-range statewide transportation plan, metropolitan transportation plans, and TIPs, and required for projects to be eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53.

Transportation improvement program (TIP) means a prioritized listing/program of transportation projects covering a period of 4 years that is developed and formally adopted by an MPO as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process, consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan, and required for projects to be eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. chapter 53.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) means a statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area. At a minimum, a UPWP includes a description of the planning work and resulting products, who will perform the work, time frames for completing the work, the cost of the work, and the source(s) of funds.

Visualization techniques means methods used by States and MPOs in the development of transportation plans and programs with the public, elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders in a clear and easily accessible format such as GIS- or web-based surveys, inventories, maps, pictures, and/or displays identifying features such as roadway rights of way, transit, intermodal, and non-motorized transportation facilities, historic and cultural resources, natural resources, and environmentally sensitive areas, to promote improved understanding of existing or proposed transportation plans and programs.