

## Transportation Improvement Program Revision Process

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# **NCHRP**

## **SYNTHESIS 419**

**NATIONAL  
COOPERATIVE  
HIGHWAY  
RESEARCH  
PROGRAM**

### **Transportation Improvement Program Revision Process**

***A Synthesis of Highway Practice***

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**NCHRP SYNTHESIS 419**

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**Transportation Improvement Program  
Revision Process**

***A Synthesis of Highway Practice***

**CONSULTANTS**

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## FOREWORD

Highway administrators, engineers, and researchers often face problems for which information already exists, either in documented form or as undocumented experience and practice. This information may be fragmented, scattered, and unevaluated. As a consequence, full knowledge of what has been learned about a problem may not be brought to bear on its solution. Costly research findings may go unused, valuable experience may be overlooked, and due consideration may not be given to recommended practices for solving or alleviating the problem.

There is information on nearly every subject of concern to highway administrators and engineers. Much of it derives from research or from the work of practitioners faced with problems in their day-to-day work. To provide a systematic means for assembling and evaluating such useful information and to make it available to the entire highway community, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials—through the mechanism of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program—authorized the Transportation Research Board to undertake a continuing study. This study, NCHRP Project 20-5, “Synthesis of Information Related to Highway Problems,” searches out and synthesizes useful knowledge from all available sources and prepares concise, documented reports on specific topics. Reports from this endeavor constitute an NCHRP report series, *Synthesis of Highway Practice*.

This synthesis series reports on current knowledge and practice, in a compact format, without the detailed directions usually found in handbooks or design manuals. Each report in the series provides a compendium of the best knowledge available on those measures found to be the most successful in resolving specific problems.

## PREFACE

*By Jo Allen Gause  
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Federal legislation requires metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to adopt and regularly update a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifying a prioritized list of projects covering a four-year period. This synthesis compiles and documents the different ways that MPOs approach revising the TIP once it has been adopted.

Information used in this study was acquired through a review of the literature and a survey of 45 MPOs across the country. Follow-up interviews with ten MPOs were conducted as case examples.

J. Scott Lane and Nicole Waldheim of the Louis Berger Group, Inc., collected and synthesized the information and wrote the report. The members of the topic panel are acknowledged on the preceding page. This synthesis is an immediately useful document that records the practices that were acceptable within the limitations of the knowledge available at the time of its preparation. As progress in research and practice continues, new knowledge will be added to that now at hand.



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# TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM REVISION PROCESS

**SUMMARY** To maintain their eligibility for federal funding, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are required to adopt and regularly update a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), identifying “a prioritized listing of projects covering a period of four years that is developed and formally adopted by an MPO as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process” (Title 23 U.S.C. Part 450.104). The TIP also has a formal revision process that occurs as either an administrative modification or an amendment. TIP administrative modifications are minor revisions that may include changes to phase costs, sources of funding, and initiation dates. The more substantive TIP amendments may include changes to the project scope, significant costs, or completion date, particularly if the project in question is not exempt from air quality conformity requirements in a nonattainment or maintenance area.

Federal legislation does not provide rigid process requirements for conducting TIP revisions. Although the definitions of amendments and administrative modifications are relatively straightforward, other factors can complicate the TIP revision process: a high volume of TIP revisions, insufficient information about the proposed change(s) to a project, internal (MPO) policy requirements for engaging the public or other process stakeholders, or uncertainty regarding the magnitude of the change and therefore its appropriate revision path. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 also placed pressure on the TIP revision process in some cases, as the deadlines for obligating funds were strictly applied.

This synthesis focuses on the Transportation Improvement Program and the different ways that MPOs approach TIP revisions. This study is especially timely because the ARRA requirements have placed new strains on the TIP revision process and therefore provide additional insight into how the TIP revisions are occurring under both normal and duress conditions. The study was informed by extensive outreach to MPOs around the country. A three-part survey program was conducted, informed by a literature review. This survey process—

1. Tapped the perspectives of the FHWA, FTA, and state department of transportation (DOT) officials to identify MPOs practicing innovative, efficient, collaborative, or engaging TIP revision processes;
2. Surveyed 45 MPOs to study the issues and processes associated with TIP revisions; and
3. Included 10 case examples to study process elements beyond the major requirements of the federal regulations. Effort was made to ensure geographic and size diversity in selecting the case examples.

A brief screening survey was distributed to 51 FHWA offices, 10 FTA offices, and 50 state DOTs. The questions in the screening survey asked respondents to suggest and provide contact information for one or more MPOs in their state that exhibited innovative,

collaborative, engaging, or timely TIP revision processes. Geographic distribution (in terms of FTA Region Office district), size of population, and air quality attainment status were also applied to help ensure diversity of the responding agencies. In all, 37 of the 45 MPOs initially contacted responded to the TIP Revision Process survey (82% response rate), and 10 follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with selected MPOs to better understand some of the responses given in the survey, as well as to provide an opportunity for informal dialogue to enrich the findings of the study. The 10 MPOs selected were based on geographic diversity, willingness to participate in a telephone interview, and if their responses to the survey indicated a process element or technique that warranted further examination.

The synthesis revealed differences in the current state of the practice for TIP administrative modifications and amendments. An administrative modification tends to follow a streamlined path, from initial input by telephone call, template form, or online database entry, often concluding without a meeting at the policy board level. Typically the amendment process is longer, owing in part to requirements to maintain fiscal conformity, air quality conformity, or conduct additional analysis. Furthermore, the study indicated that there may be a still-lesser level of revision, in which very minor adjustments that correct faulty language or make minor wording changes in the TIP are listed but do not include an individual approval action.

Although the issues raised were diverse and inconsistent among the MPOs studied, a number of challenges in the revision process were raised multiple times during the course of the study:

- *Timeliness and staff capacity*: Some larger MPOs struggled with the volume of changes, sometimes reaching into the hundreds per month, whereas the smaller MPOs often had competing priorities when faced with the quick turnaround times required by some TIP amendments.
- *Inadequate or untimely information*: When the initial information required to process a change was inaccurate, incomplete, or late, more pressure was put on the MPO and other agencies to process the revision faster or process a revision to the same project more than once.
- *Clarification of procedures*: Some MPOs had to work out procedural details with state DOTs and federal offices, creating divergent opinions on issues such as the frequency of publishing (either in paper or digital format) a revised TIP.

MPOs, state DOTs, and often their partnering agencies have addressed these challenges. Process improvements that make data entry more consistent or faster were common, as were process guidelines. Some MPOs noted that they either had developed or were working to develop online entry and database tools for the initial data entry and long-term management of TIP data. MPOs have also developed cost thresholds (expressed as a percentage of project cost, an absolute figure, or both) that help delineate different levels of revision.

Survey responses indicated that MPOs have responded to the federal TIP legislation by developing different types of revision processes for different types of TIP changes. Major changes to the TIP require a more formal and structured amendment process, whereas minor changes entail a more streamlined administrative modification process. Specific details on how those processes are conducted vary by MPO. Survey responses also revealed different innovative techniques that MPOs have developed for managing their TIPs, facilitating public involvement in the TIP process, and facilitating policymaker review and approval of TIP modifications. These practices may be of interest to other MPOs looking for ways to improve their TIP processes.

The findings identified several knowledge and practice gaps that suggest the need for future research, including an evaluation of the role that the MPO voting structure plays in the

TIP revision process; an analysis of the role of MPOs, along with the roles played by their respective state DOT and federal agencies (FHWA/FTA), in managing the TIP revision process; and an analysis of how MPOs and state and federal agencies perceive the process and the ways in which these perceptions influence their actions. Generally, MPOs appear to have made a comfortable transition into the era of congressional earmarks, increased public participation expectations, and federal stimulus funding requirements, even if the overall TIP planning process has occasionally been strained.



## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background information on this synthesis topic, the purpose of the synthesis, and the methodology used to conduct the study.

## BACKGROUND

Under the current United States Code (Title 23 U.S.C. Part 450), a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is the state- and federally designated entity responsible for overseeing regional transportation planning for a metropolitan planning area with a minimum urbanized area population of 50,000 people, as enumerated by the Bureau of the Census. MPOs range in size from places such as Ames, Iowa, with 51,000 people, to Los Angeles, California, which has more than 16 million people in its planning region. Regardless of size or complexity, all MPOs have the same basic transportation planning requirements. All MPOs need to comply with federal requirements concerning the metropolitan transportation planning process. This includes completing the four following major work products on a cyclical basis:

- A long-range (20-year) metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) or long-range transportation plan (LRTP);
- A short-range (4-year) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
- A statement of planning priorities and activities (Unified Planning Work Program); and
- A public participation plan that frequently includes language on how TIP revisions are to be coordinated with process stakeholders and the general public.

Additional responsibilities are assigned to MPOs with populations of more than 200,000 or those in an area designated as not conforming to federal air quality standards. These additional responsibilities include external federal certification reviews, air quality conformity analyses and reporting, direct programming authority of some federal funds, and the creation of a congestion management process to identify sources of congestion and mitigation options. This report does not delve into the various ways in which a TIP is developed but instead explores how revisions are made to an adopted TIP.

The TIP is a programming document that lists all transportation projects funded under Title 23 U.S.C. and Chapter

53 Title 49 U.S.C., as well as projects that are regionally significant or require federal action. The TIP is updated at least every 4 years, and covers a 4-year period of transportation investments. The projects listed in the TIP are chosen based on a set of criteria established by the MPO; have been vetted through a public participation process; are financially constrained; and have been coordinated with the state department of transportation (DOT) to ensure consistency with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), as well as local transit operators, land use entities, and environmental resource agencies. The TIP is then approved by the MPO governing board, which is composed of elected officials from different jurisdictions and transportation operators throughout the planning region. After that, the TIP is approved by the state governor and then is directly incorporated, without change, into the STIP. The STIP requires joint approval from the FHWA and FTA (*1*).

Projects, priorities, or funding levels may change within this 4-year timeframe. For example, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided more than \$26 billion in new money for transportation projects. These projects typically had to be amended into the MPO TIP and the STIP before they could proceed.

Once the TIP is adopted and incorporated into the STIP, it takes specific actions to revise both the TIP and the STIP, and federal approval of those actions is needed to complete the process. There are two basic ways to revise a TIP once it has been adopted. The first is referred to as an *administrative modification* (also called an adjustment, revision, correction, or administrative amendment). An administrative modification is a minor change to a TIP project, such as to its phase costs, funding sources, or phase initiation dates. This adjustment is usually the quickest means of changing a TIP. The second way is through a formal *amendment*, which involves a major change to the TIP such as addition or deletion of a project, a major change in the project cost or initiation dates, or a major change in the design concept or design scope. Amendments require a public review and comment period, a redemonstration of fiscal constraint, and potentially an air quality conformity determination (if in a maintenance or non-attainment area) for the proposed change to be considered.

Outside of the general definitions given in federal regulations (Title 23 U.S.C. 450.104), there is little detailed guid-

ance on TIP amendment and modification procedures. As a result MPOs have developed diverse processes for TIP revisions. Over the past 20 years, state DOTs and MPO(s) within each state have worked out the definitions of “modifications” and “amendments” and established internal procedures for adopting them. Sometimes this diversity has resulted in approaches that streamline the general process so that projects can move forward in a timely fashion while still complying with all regional, state, and federal requirements. Cooperative relationships among state DOTs, MPOs, FHWA, and FTA have fostered numerous innovative practices that make the TIP management process more efficient.

### PURPOSE OF SYNTHESIS

Although many MPOs have developed useful guidance or procedures on how to handle TIP amendments and modifications in a cooperative manner, there is not a one-size-fits-all approach. This synthesis examines the different approaches and identifies efficiencies in the revision process that can be transferred from one MPO to another.

The information gathered in this synthesis considers the following issues:

- Strengths and weaknesses of existing procedures, as perceived by MPOs, and how the former work and the latter are being addressed;
- How TIP revisions (administrative modifications and amendments) are initiated, reviewed, and approved, and the inclusion of traditional and nontraditional partners in the process;
- Average time from the initiation of a TIP revision to approval;
- Sources and magnitudes of delay to the TIP revision process generated from various administrative or process issues; and
- Use of technology, paperwork reduction, procedural streamlining, and other means to introduce increased efficiencies into the TIP revision process.

The purpose of this report is to share the experience and practice of TIP revisions among MPOs, in the hopes of making the TIP revision processes as efficient as possible to avoid project delays; enhance opportunities for engaging required stakeholder agencies; and improve information flows and relationships among MPOs, local agencies, DOTs, FHWA, and FTA.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of TIP revision processes conducted for this synthesis included both external documentation developed by research institutions, regional planning associations

[e.g., National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) and the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)], and federal transportation agencies; and internal documentation developed by the MPOs and state DOTs about their own processes. The external information is relatively sparse regarding specific language, guidance, or analysis on TIP revision processes; therefore, much of the literature review is derived from conference proceedings, not from peer-reviewed sources. Also providing insight into actual process elements and innovations are the state- and MPO-specific guidance documents prepared to assist MPOs in achieving a level of consistency and uniformity in TIP revision procedures, and conference proceedings specific to professional meetings on this subject. These guidance documents are summarized individually and linked to online (Internet-based) documentation, as available, in Appendix C. The literature review identified the themes and issues confronting MPOs in programming matters, including major influences on and motivating factors for TIP revisions.

MPOs have encountered a range of procedural challenges implementing federal provisions when those provisions directly impact TIP programming and revisions. Complicating TIP procedures has been the historical relationship between the state DOT and the congressionally mandated role of the MPO, which has been strengthening with each federal transportation reauthorization bill since the early 1970s (2). Even before ARRA (which set deadlines for programming and hence for TIP revisions) and before the economic recessionary effects being felt at the time of this writing, some transportation agencies were not entirely satisfied with the amount of time required to handle the many programming issues associated with their capital improvement programs. Some state DOTs and MPOs were in a better position to deal with fast-moving projects and project issues, as they already had programs or experiences dealing with those types of projects. Some state DOTs have cited a special revenue fund to deal with emergencies, public-private partnerships, or other nontypical project categories as a need or as an existing opportunity (3). Also, some MPOs have noted the need for a different set of planning tools to address fiscal constraint requirements for those projects comprising the 20-year, fiscally constrained transportation plan, of which the projects in the transportation improvement program are a subset (4, p. 10).

An example of the role the state DOT can play in improving consistency and quality of MPO products (and hence in reducing the potential for conflict within the TIP programming process) is when the state DOT takes an active role in determining programmable funds for fiscal constraint. California, for example, produces a Fund Estimate, a 5-year annual projection of available state and federal funds for transportation projects updated every two years. However, changing project cost estimates also trigger the need for many TIP administrative modifications or amend-

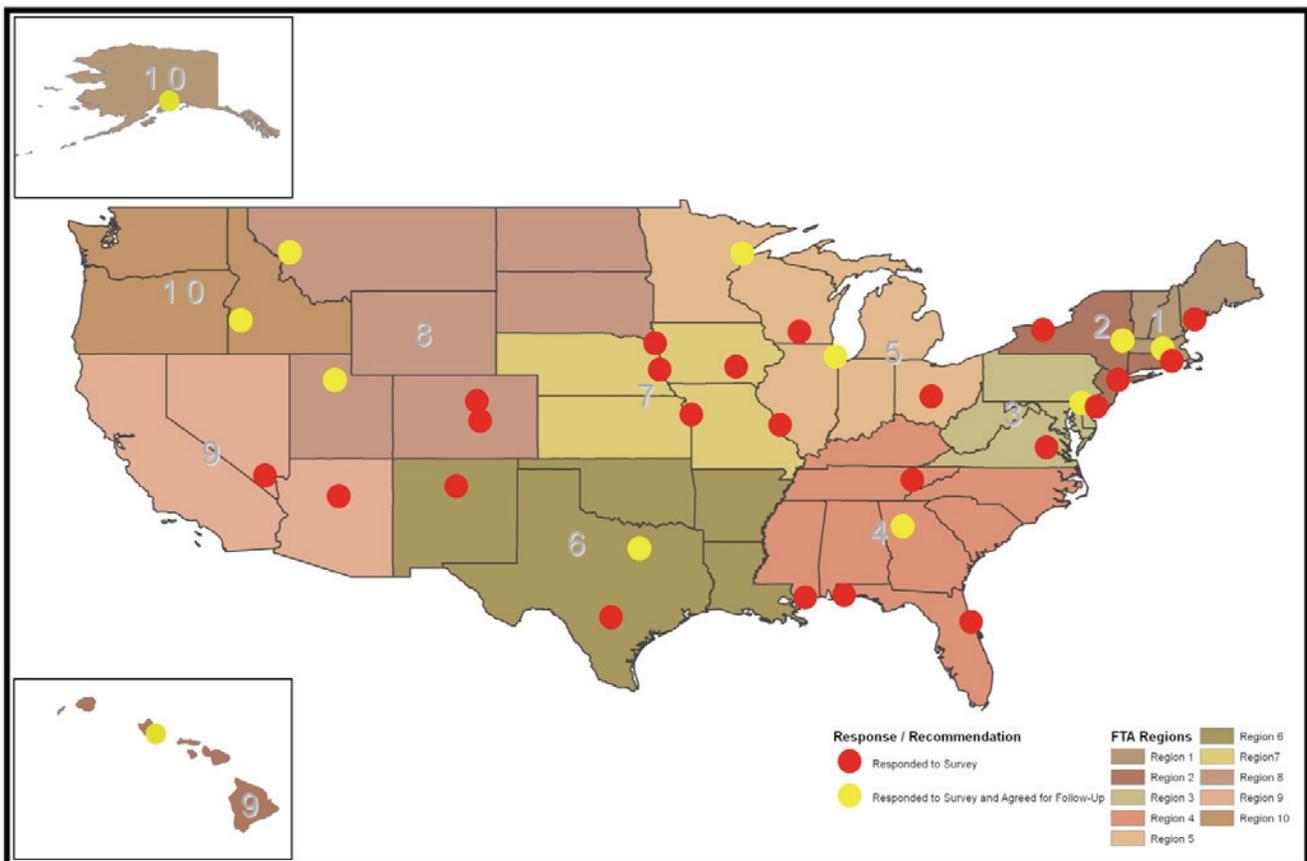
ments. Financial uncertainty, particularly when expressed by project cost underestimates or overestimates, can create programming problems. If the project was initially underestimated in the TIP, then funds will frequently be moved from other projects, requiring changes to both funding levels and scheduling elements in the TIP project descriptions. If the project cost was initially overestimated in the TIP, then that project will require a reduction in funding shown in the TIP, at a minimum (5,6).

Similarly, a lack of advance awareness of congressional earmarks often requires unexpected shifts in a regional allocation of dollars unanticipated by the sponsors of the project earmark (5,6). A report completed after a best practices scan in 2010 by AASHTO noted that volatility in TIPs and STIPs, in particular, results in the need for changes to project costs and schedules, as well as the addition of new projects. Metropolitan plans require changes less frequently, and therefore present far less of a challenge. The number of amendments and administrative actions that MPOs and DOTs take for TIPs and STIPs varies widely. Large, complex MPOs, such as the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, require hundreds of actions each year, whereas smaller MPOs and states may only require a handful. MPOs vary the frequency of amendments, from periods as brief as daily to as long as quarterly (6).

**STUDY METHODOLOGY**

The study began with a literature review of existing processes, from which a survey process was developed. The findings of the report draw heavily from direct contact with MPOs generated through a three-phase process. The first phase consisted of a brief screening questionnaire sent to all state DOTs and FHWA and FTA offices to identify candidate MPOs for a detailed survey. The screening process identified 45 MPOs to survey. The MPO survey contained detailed questions about sources of delay, satisfaction with established processes, and issues encountered in both amendment and modification processes and the mitigations developed to respond to those issues. From the completed second-phase surveys, 10 MPOs were selected for case examples to further develop key concepts of agency relationships and individual experiences that may be transferable to other MPOs and state transportation agencies. From these efforts, the report concludes with a state-of-the-practice overview of TIP amendment/modification procedures and notable findings from the 10 case examples.

To identify MPOs for further study, each office of the FHWA (*n* = 50), FTA (*n* = 10), and state DOTs (*n* = 50) was sent a web-based screening questionnaire. The questionnaire



**MPO Response Weights and Recommendations for Surveys**

FIGURE 1 Map locating the MPOs studied.

asked the respondents what organization they represented, and if there were MPOs that exhibited notable characteristics of efficiency, public involvement, innovation, or collaboration in their TIP revision process. Respondents were invited to list up to five MPOs that exhibited one or more of these traits (refer to Appendix A for the complete text of the questionnaire). All of the respondents cited at least one, and as many as five, MPOs that exhibited some or all of these four characteristics. The distribution of MPOs engaged for further study is illustrated in Figure 1. The selection of participant MPOs relied heavily on the strength of recommendations from the screening questionnaire, as well as geographic distribution, size, and air quality conformity status.

Table 1 summarizes the techniques in place at MPOs to aid in the processing of TIP revisions in several different areas (procedural, technological, and standardization). The table summarizes information gathered from survey responses and case examples. The MPOs listed in Table 2 were selected for a second round of study.

Thirty-seven of the 45 MPOs surveyed responded to the questionnaire (response rate: 82%); 10 of those respondents were later contacted for additional interviews. Interviews were conducted with eight Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) and two non-TMAs. Additionally, eight of the ten case examples are in air quality conformity regions.

TABLE 1  
TIP REVISION ACTIONS OR INNOVATIONS

| Action or Innovation  | Innovation Area |            |                 |
|---|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
|   | Procedural      | Technology | Standardization |
| Development of Templates for Information Input  |                 | ■□         | ■□              |
| Online Database of TIP Revisions  |                 | ■□         | ■□              |
| Online Data Entry for TIP Revisions   | □               | □          | □               |
| Online Routing of TIP Revisions   | ■□              | ■□         |                 |
| Training Videos or Workshops on TIP Revision Tools  |                 | ■          | ■               |
| Absentee Voting   | □               |            |                 |
| Call for Unscheduled Board Meeting  | ■               |            |                 |
| Grouping Revisions for Next Scheduled Board Meeting   | □               |            |                 |
| Improve Communications in Early Stages of TIP Revision                                      | ■               |            |                 |
| Procedural Guidance (Statewide or MPO-Specific)   | ■□              |            |                 |
| Collaboration on Defining TIP Amendments and Administrative Modification Threshold Criteria | ■□              |            | ■□              |
| Modifications to Public Participation Requirements  | ■               |            |                 |
| Updates of TIP on Annual Basis  | ■□              |            |                 |

(■) Useful for Amendment; (□) Useful for Administrative Modification.

TABLE 2  
THE CANDIDATE SURVEY MPO EVALUATION

| FTA Region and MPO   | Size <sup>1</sup> | AQ <sup>2</sup> | Case Study |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| <b>Region 1: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut</b> |                   |                 |            |
| PACTS (Portland, ME)   | 194,896           | No              |            |
| Capitol Region COG (Hartford, CT)  | 721,320           | Yes             |            |
| Central MA RPC (Worcester, MA)   | 518,480           | No              | Yes        |
| RI Statewide Planning (State of RI)  | 1,048,319         | No              |            |
| <b>Region 2: New York and New Jersey</b>   |                   |                 |            |
| South Jersey TPO (Trenton, NJ)   | 565,601           | Yes             |            |
| CDTC (Albany, NY)  | 780,467           | Yes             | Yes        |
| North Jersey TPA (Newark, NJ)  | 6,310,989         | Yes             |            |
| Genesee Transportation Council (NY)  | 1,200,000         | No              |            |
| NYMTC (New York, NY)   | 12,068,148        | Yes             |            |

Table 2 continued on p. 9

Table 2 continued from p. 8

| FTA Region and MPO   | Size <sup>1</sup> | AQ <sup>2</sup> | Case Study |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| <b>Region 3: Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, District of Columbia</b>             |                   |                 |            |
| Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (Pittsburgh, PA)  | 2,656,007         | Yes             |            |
| Richmond MPO (VA)  | 811,108           | Yes             |            |
| WILMAPCO (Wilmington, DE)  | 586,216           | Yes             | Yes        |
| Regional Intergovernmental Council (WV)  | 251,662           | No              |            |
| <b>Region 4: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee</b> |                   |                 |            |
| West Florida Regional Planning Council (FL/AL)   | 392,058           | Yes             |            |
| Gulfport RPC (MS)  | 313,635           | No              |            |
| Knoxville MPO (TN)   | 476,542           | Yes             |            |
| Atlanta Regional Commission (GA)   | 3,890,582         | Yes             | Yes        |
| Volusia TPO (Daytona Beach, FL)  | 448,768           | No              |            |
| <b>Region 5: Illinois, Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan</b>                                 |                   |                 |            |
| CMAP (Chicago, IL)   | 8,150,789         | Yes             | Yes        |
| MORPC (Columbus, OH)   | 1,241,251         | Yes             |            |
| East-Central Wisconsin RPC (Menasha, WI)   | 55,365            | No              |            |
| Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (WI)  | 350,247           | No              |            |
| Indianapolis MPO (Indianapolis, IN)  | 1,299,722         | Yes             |            |
| Duluth MIC (Duluth, MN)  | 145,163           | Yes             | Yes        |
| <b>Region 6: Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and New Mexico</b>  |                   |                 |            |
| Santa Fe MPO (Santa Fe, NM)  | 92,407            | No              |            |
| North Central TX COG (Dallas, TX)  | 4,879,535         | Yes             | Yes        |
| ACOG (Oklahoma City, OK)   | 990,564           | Yes             |            |
| San Antonio-Bexar County MPO (TX)  | 1,415,906         | Yes             |            |
| <b>Region 7: Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas</b>  |                   |                 |            |
| East-West Gateway COG (St. Louis, MO)  | 2,482,935         | Yes             |            |
| MAPA (Omaha, NE)   | 658,810           | No              |            |
| Siouxland Interstate MPC (Sioux City, IA)  | 113,423           | No              |            |
| MARC (Kansas City, MO)   | 1,582,372         | Yes             |            |
| <b>Region 8: Colorado, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, and North Dakota</b>                            |                   |                 |            |
| Denver Regional COG (Denver, CO)   | 2,394,504         | Yes             |            |
| Pikes Peak COG (Colorado Springs, CO)  | 514,171           | No              |            |
| Wasatch Front RPC (Salt Lake City, UT)   | 1,328,198         | Yes             | Yes        |
| Missoula MPO (Missoula, MT)  | 81,144            | No              | Yes        |
| Cache MPO (Logan, UT)  | 79,453            | No              |            |
| <b>Region 9: Arizona, California, Hawaii, and Nevada</b>   |                   |                 |            |
| Flagstaff MPO (Flagstaff, AZ)  | 68,030            | No              |            |
| Fresno COG (Fresno, CA)  | 799,407           | Yes             |            |
| Oahu MPO (Oahu, HI)  | 860,560           | No              |            |
| RTC of Southern NV (Las Vegas, NV)   | 1,375,765         | Yes             |            |

Table 2 continued on p. 10

Table 2 continued from p. 9

| FTA Region and MPO                                      | Size <sup>1</sup> | AQ <sup>2</sup> | Case Study |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| <b>Region 10: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska</b> |                   |                 |            |
| Metro (Portland, OR)                                    | 1,313,695         | Yes             |            |
| COMPASS (Boise, ID)                                     | 406,160           | Yes             | Yes        |
| Anchorage MATS (Anchorage, AK)                          | 257,803           | Yes             |            |
| Puget Sound Regional Council (Seattle, WA)              | 3,275,847         | Yes             |            |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Estimated size of MPO population (2000).

<sup>2</sup>Air quality conformity status as indicated on MPO website.

CHAPTER TWO

## STATE OF THE PRACTICE IN TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM REVISION PROCEDURES

The survey of 45 MPOs asked recipients to describe the TIP revision process issues that they were encountering, as well as the strategies employed to address those issues (refer to Appendix A for details on survey questions).

The survey used the following definitions:

- Administrative Modification of the Transportation Improvement Program:** A minor revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP that includes minor changes to project/project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects, and minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. It does not require public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (in nonattainment and maintenance areas).
- Amendment of the Transportation Improvement Program:** A revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP that involves a major change to a project, including the addition or deletion of a project or a major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. It requires public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (for metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs involving “nonexempt” projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas). In the context of a long-range statewide transportation plan, it is approved by the state in accordance with its public involvement process.

The first content-related question in the questionnaire dealt with the number of TIP amendments and administrative modifications conducted over two time periods. Figure 2 illustrates the number of TIP amendments and modifications made during the ARRA period (2008–2009), and a 4-year period leading up to and slightly overlapping with the nearly 2-year ARRA period (2005–2008). The survey intentionally singled out the ARRA period as it represented an extenuating circumstance: the need to quickly program federal funds and update TIPs so that projects could move to construction with

120 days of funding award. The 2005–2008 period represents a more typical period for analysis of TIP modifications.

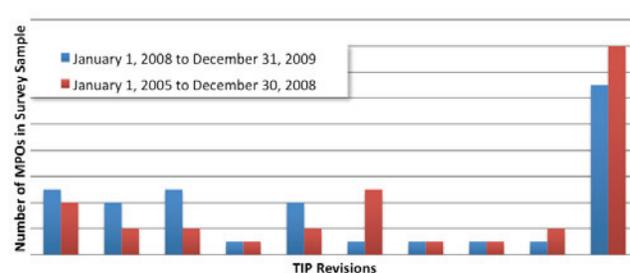


FIGURE 2 TIP changes during two time periods.

Thirty-six percent of the responding MPOs indicated that they had more than 50 changes to the TIP during the most recent 2-year period. Forty-four percent said that they had more than 50 changes to the TIP during the 4-year period. Although it is to be expected that more changes would occur over a 4-year than a 2-year period, many of the MPOs surveyed—particularly those that processed a relatively small number of changes to begin with—indicated instead that they processed *fewer* changes in the 4-year period, possibly because the most recent 2-year period included the ARRA adjustments.

Responses to questions about what process elements were a part of the adoption and processing of TIP amendments and modifications, and for how many weeks the particular process element typically required, are shown in Figures 3 and 4, respectively.

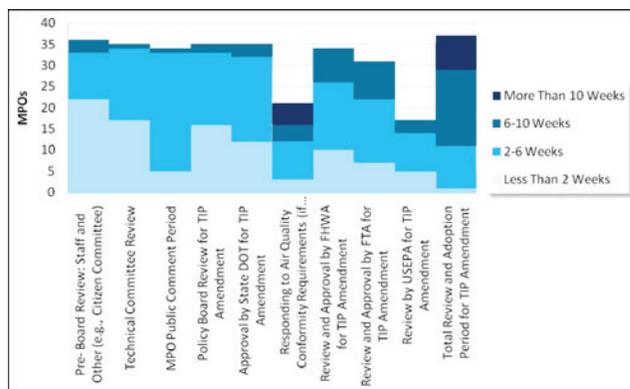


FIGURE 3 Elements of TIP amendments.

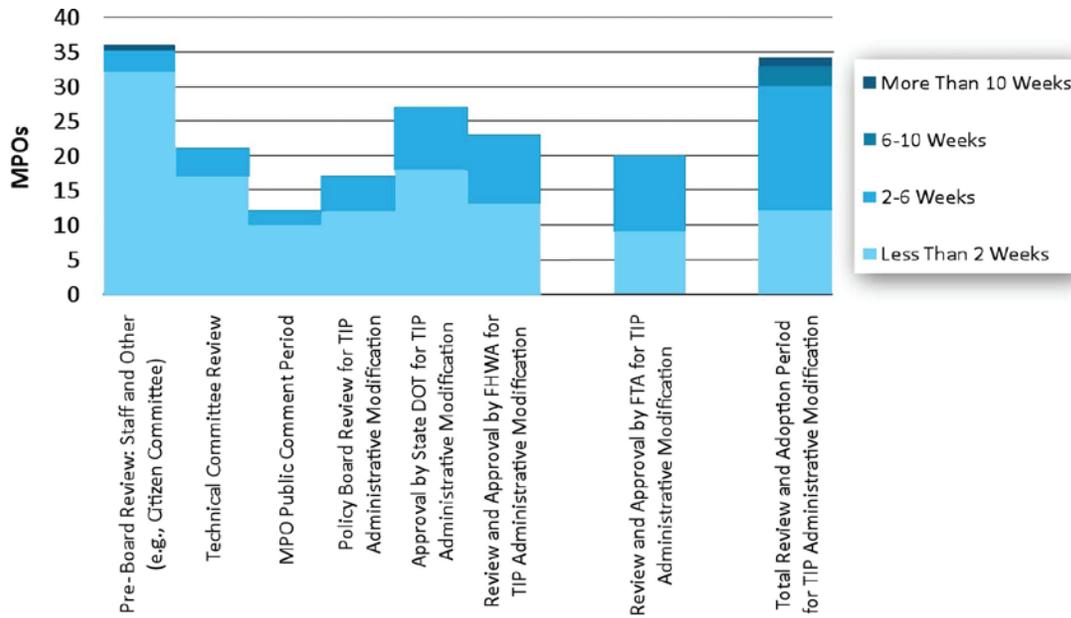


FIGURE 4 Elements of TIP administrative modifications.

Note that each of the process elements common to both amendments and administrative modifications, on average, required as much or more time for amendments in terms of schedule duration. One finding from this study is that TIP administrative modifications are being handled almost entirely internally, with minimal review of the MPO technical, policy, or other boards.

Figure 5 shows the survey responses to a question on how specified issues impacted the timely and effective processing of TIP amendments or administrative modifications. As with previous questions, “1” indicates the least impact and “5” indicates the greatest impact. By a substantial margin, the issue specified as “The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA or “stimulus bill”) has placed additional pressures or requirements on our TIP amendment/administrative modification processes” generated the most responses that indicated the greatest impact. Conversations conducted during the development of the case examples suggest that this impact goes beyond simple delays to scheduling and carries over into additional pressures on the MPO staff to “drop everything” and process sudden amendments and modifications.

Other issues cited as particularly impactful include “Getting internal stakeholders (e.g., member agencies and governments) involved” and “Getting external stakeholders (e.g., resource agencies, affected public, state and federal transportation agencies) involved.” Again, this result was validated by several MPO representatives during the development of the case examples.

Although the case example participants did note the 10- to 30-day public review and comment requirements as being

a source of delay in some open-ended comment opportunities on the survey, compared with other potential sources of delay in this question, the issue of “Our agency’s public participation plan or process requires extensive public input on TIP administrative modifications” got the least support of any of the issues specified in this question. When the case study respondents discussed this issue, the suggested rationale was that many of the agencies studied conducted minimal or no public engagement for TIP administrative modifications.

Figure 6 indicates the survey results to the question “What is the degree of satisfaction with the overall TIP amendment/administrative modification procedure as it is practiced currently?”

Nearly the same percentage of respondents (46%) indicated that they were “Satisfied” with the current TIP change process used by their MPO as the percentage (43%) of MPOs that indicated that their satisfaction with the current process “Varies or [is] Uncertain.” Only small percentages of MPOs were “Unsatisfied” (8%) or “Very Satisfied” (3%, or one respondent).

Additional research was also conducted for MPOs that processed a higher volume (more than 50) of TIP amendments compared with MPOs that processed a lower volume (fewer than 50) between January 1, 2008, and December 30, 2010. Note that the specific period here is simply to designate responses as being high-volume or low-volume in terms of the number of TIP revisions; the actual length of time required for TIP revisions (shown in Figure 7) does not necessarily refer to how TIP revisions were processed during this specific period.

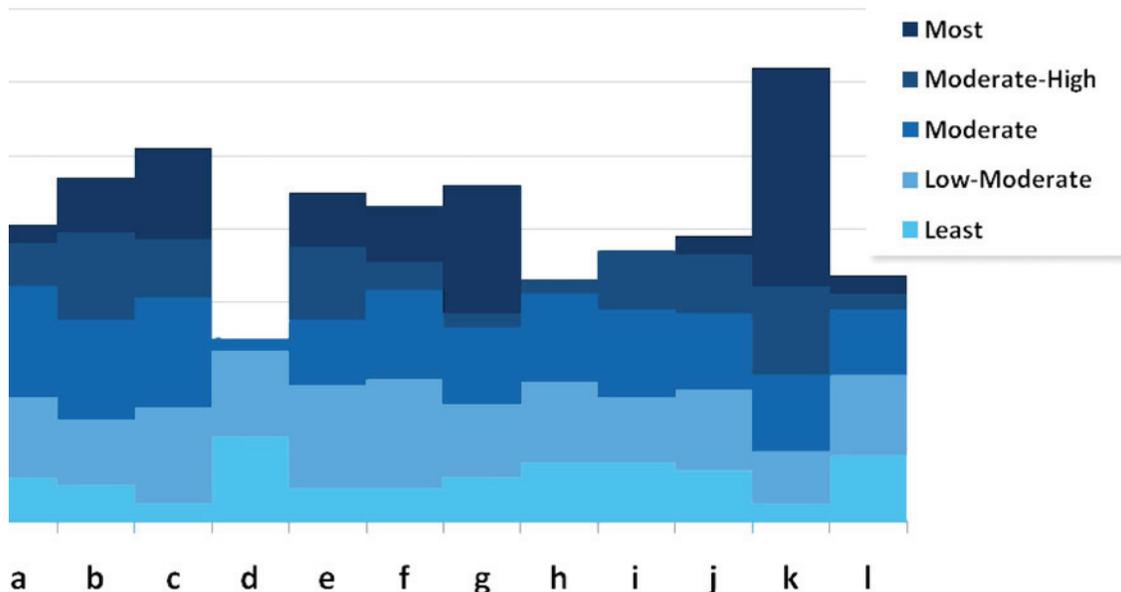


FIGURE 5 Issues affecting timely and effective TIP changes.

- a. The definition or interpretation of the term “administrative modification” is too narrow.
- b. Getting internal stakeholders (e.g., member agencies and governments) involved.
- c. Getting external stakeholders (e.g., resource agencies; affected public, state, and federal transportation agencies) involved.
- d. Our agency’s public participation plan or process requires extensive public input on TIP administrative modifications.
- e. Our agency’s public participation plan or process requires extensive public input on TIP amendments.
- f. Redemonstration of fiscal constraint (for TIP amendments) is time-consuming and problematic for our agency.
- g. The definition or interpretation of “administrative modification” and/or “amendment” is confusing or poorly understood by our MPO officials, state DOT, or other partners.
- h. Major revisions (TIP amendments) are often contentious to one or more stakeholder groups that “watchdog” the MPO.
- i. An unclear understanding of the roles and responsibilities between our MPO and the state DOT causes delays to the TIP amendment or administrative modification process.
- j. Conflicts between the requirements for TIP amendments/administrative modifications and other regulatory or statutory requirements creates issues with the effective and timely processing of TIP amendments/administrative modifications.
- k. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has placed additional pressures or requirements on our TIP amendment/administrative modification processes.
- l. Occasional personality conflicts not related to other process issues between the MPO and state or federal agencies create various problems with processing TIP amendments or administrative modifications.

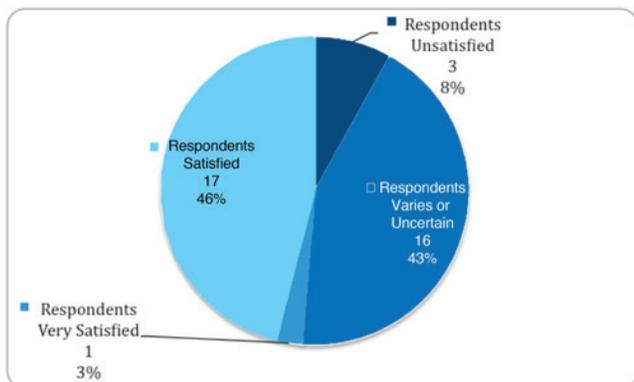


FIGURE 6 Satisfaction with the overall TIP amendment/administrative modification process.

The four TIP amendment process elements shown in Figure 7 exhibited the greatest degree of differentiation among the high-volume TIP amendment MPOs and the remaining MPOs in the survey. Staff reviews before board meetings and technical committee reviews took less time for the lower-volume MPOs, whereas public comment periods and FHWA review and approval took less time for the higher-volume MPOs.

For both the low-volume and high-volume amendment processing MPOs, public comment typically takes 2 to 6 weeks. This is not surprising given that adopted public participation plans with required minimum review times govern the time spent on public review. Perhaps of more significance

is that regardless of the volume of amendments, FHWA turns around the majority of reviews and approvals within 6 weeks.

Bigger differences lie between high-volume and low-volume MPOs when looking at pre-board review. The vast majority of reviews at MPOs conducting lower volumes of TIP amendments occur in less than 2 weeks, whereas at those with high volumes of amendments the reviews are as likely to be completed in less than 2 weeks as they are to be completed within 2 to 6 weeks. In both cases, it is unlikely to take more than 6 weeks.

Technical committee review is more likely to take 2 to 6 weeks to complete at MPOs processing low volumes of amendments, whereas at those processing high volumes, technical review is much more likely to be completed in

less than 2 weeks. Again, findings indicate that it is unusual for this process to take more than 6 weeks regardless of the number of amendments being processed.

When the same assessment is done for TIP administrative modifications, the results are somewhat different, as shown in Figure 8.

Here, the lower-volume MPOs tended to take longer than the high-volume MPOs to receive state DOT and FHWA approval, as well as take a longer time overall to process the administrative modification. If the assumption is made that the higher-volume MPOs have more motivation to streamline their revision processes, then these results are intuitively correct and may further suggest that some of the streamlining processes described in this report have a net positive effect.

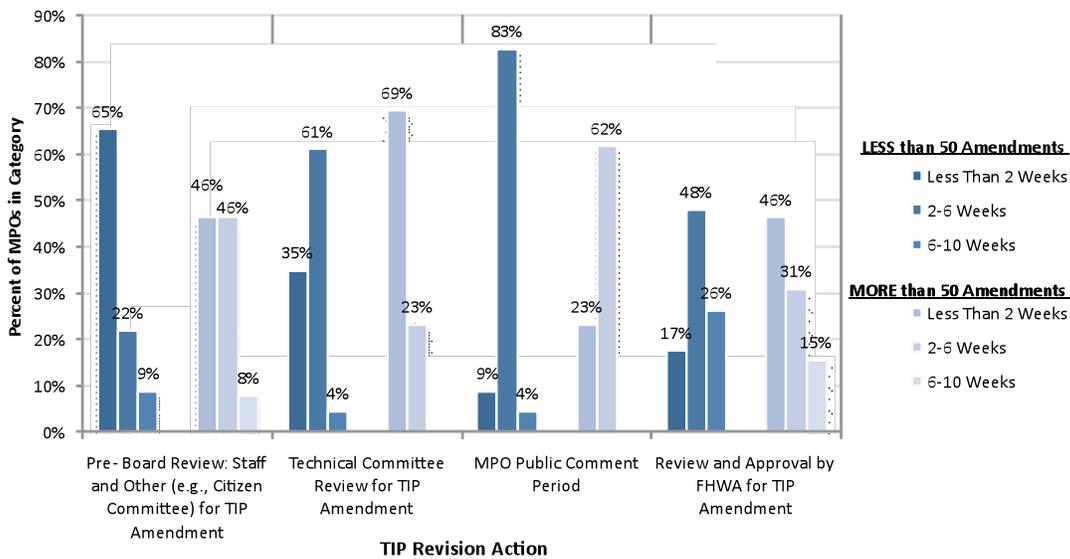


FIGURE 7 Length of time for TIP amendments of high-volume/low-volume MPOs.

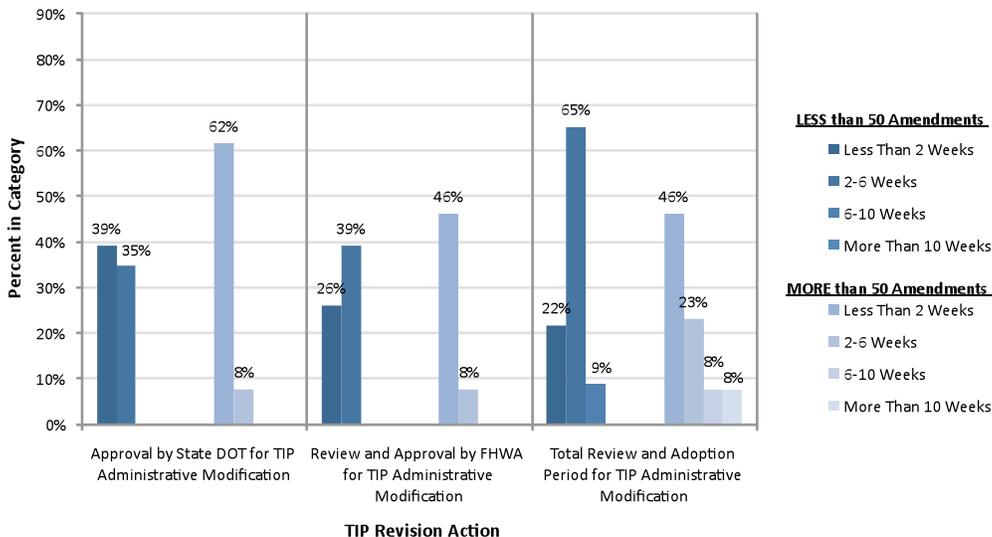


FIGURE 8 Length of time for TIP administrative modifications of high-volume/low-volume MPOs.

## CHAPTER THREE

## STATE OF THE PRACTICE FOR ADDRESSING TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM REVISIONS

The preceding chapters described the TIP revision process and time lines of various stages of that process. The following paragraphs highlight some of the findings from the 10 case examples conducted for this study. The methodology for selecting and conducting the MPO cases is discussed first.

### SUMMARY OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION CASE EXAMPLES

To delve more deeply into the challenges now faced in the TIP revision process, as well as to gain further insight on the responses that individual MPOs may contribute toward answering those challenges, 10 brief case examples were developed based on telephone interviews to supplement the findings of the literature review and MPO survey. The selection of the MPO cases was based on three factors: (1) affirmative responses when asked in the MPO survey instrument if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview; (2) geographic, air quality, and size diversity among the case studies; and (3) survey responses indicating that the MPO was employing innovative measures in its TIP modification process that could be of interest to other MPOs. The following 10 MPOs were chosen for case examples:

- Atlanta Regional Commission (Atlanta, GA)
- Capital District Transportation Committee (Albany, NY)
- Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (Worcester, MA)
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (Chicago, IL)
- Community Planning Association (Boise, ID)
- Duluth–Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (Duluth, MN)
- Missoula MPO (Missoula, MT)
- North Central Texas Council of Governments (Dallas, TX)
- Wasatch Front Regional Planning Commission (Salt Lake City, UT)
- Wilmington Area Metropolitan Planning Council (Wilmington, DE)

Each MPO was asked the same baseline questions for comparison purposes: population; air quality conformity

status and as appropriate impacts of conformity analysis on process schedule; TIP amendment and modification procedures; and triggers for a TIP revision. Every MPO was also asked specific questions tailored to that MPO in order to generate clarity or additional information related to prior survey responses.

Appendix B contains the complete notes from each telephone interview. The following paragraphs summarize the findings from the MPO case examples, surveys, and literature review.

### VOLUME AND FREQUENCY OF REVISIONS

One MPO requested as many as 300 to 1,000 TIP changes per month; other MPOs also cited volumes of changes in the hundreds in some fiscal quarters. Owing to external circumstances such as the economy, ARRA, other grant programs, air quality, and shifts in transportation priorities, the TIP has become a more dynamic document. With so many factors to consider, MPOs are struggling to limit both major and minor changes to projects. Some MPOs have successfully used forms and database technologies to manage TIP changes. For example, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has developed an online database tool for recording and even processing administrative amendments, and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has plans to do the same after the next TIP update. These tools allow revision sponsors (typically state DOTs, local governments, or other members of the MPO trigger the revision) to log in and suggest changes to the MPO staff, which then determines the level of process required to complete the revision. Systems such as these also hold project sponsors more accountable for the changes they make to projects, as they are the ones responsible for filling out the paperwork.

A second and more common way that MPOs are handling the large number of TIP revisions generated by ARRA is to group a number of revisions together for processing at a single series of MPO meetings (technical and policy boards). ARC has migrated to a quarterly system of processing administrative modifications, and is pushing the same for amendments as well. The staff at ARC reports good, albeit gradual, acceptance of the quarterly update system. Predictable update

cycles offer greater opportunities for cross-checking data to prevent a secondary, “clean-up” amendment later; more public awareness; and reduced staff time to process individual TIP changes. ARC staff noted that if any agency took issue with a proposed administrative modification, then the proposed revision immediately was withdrawn and moved to amendment status. The amendment would then require considerably more attention, analysis, public engagement, and board review than an administrative modification.

A few MPOs mentioned that because they update their TIP on a yearly basis, they do not have as many project changes as they would if they updated it less frequently.

### **INITIAL INFORMATION AND CONSISTENCY OF INFORMATION**

To process amendments and modifications, information detailing the change is needed from the sponsoring agency (often the state DOT). Some MPOs have successfully utilized forms or shared databases to track changes and streamline the process, whereas others report having struggled to get accurate and consistent information. A common theme in the case study interviews was that the MPOs may have a form, or in one case a database, for TIP changes, but they are not used. One of the reasons given for this is that the sponsoring agency is used to e-mailing one point person; the other is that filling out forms or entering information into a database is time-consuming and cumbersome for staff. However, the lack of a centralized system or at least common procedures and forms can lead to inconsistent information among the sponsoring agency, the MPO, and the DOT, thus creating more work at all levels. One MPO noted that the TIP has turned into a dynamic document, but because they receive word of TIP changes verbally or over e-mail they then have to work backwards to track down exactly what the change entails and why it is taking place. Other MPOs are realizing that they have differing information from their state DOTs regarding finances or project scopes, adding extra steps to the revision process. One state has implemented a system wherein once a TIP change has been adopted, the MPO is the entity that makes the change to the project in the STIP. Although this procedure adds an extra step for the MPO, all the information, particularly the financials, is consistent at all levels.

Without accurate and thorough information in the earliest stage of a TIP revision, the same project may go through multiple revisions that could have been accomplished all at once. Several MPOs noted that it was not uncommon for one project to go through multiple revision processes as new or updated information came available to the sponsoring agency (DOT or member jurisdictions). The responses to this situation were somewhat obvious, but important. First, some MPOs have created a project revision template or form

to ensure that all the information was entered into the form correctly (CMAP and ARC are two examples). Second, the change to a cyclic schedule for processing TIP administrative modifications was seen as another way of helping to ensure that a project sponsor considers the request thoroughly, because an error during the project submittal implies a considerable wait until the next cycle. The MPOs noted that, for TIP amendments, considerably more discussion occurs among the MPO, state DOT, or other sponsoring agency because the amount of information typically required to process the amendment is greater than that for an administrative modification. Amendments, for example, may require an understanding of forecasted travel impacts that requires new modeling efforts, fiscal impact assessments, or mobile source emissions analyses.

### **AMENDMENT AND MODIFICATION GUIDANCE**

Federal regulations contain overarching definitions of what constitutes an amendment versus a modification, but it is left up to the individual MPO to coordinate with the state DOT, transit operators, and federal transportation agencies to further define an administrative modification and amendment. To properly define the difference, some MPOs have created their own guidance and coordinate with their respective DOTs, others work under a single statewide guidance, and some have informal memorandums of understanding (MOUs) in place with their DOT. What has seemed to work, when guidance is lacking, is bringing all the MPOs in the state together with their DOT to discuss the problem areas and clarify what degree of change to a project will trigger an amendment.

The following are examples of the administrative modification and amendment threshold guidance reports obtained from MPOs.

#### **Capital District Transportation Committee**

The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) breaks out amendments according to minor and major amendments. Minor amendments can be approved by CDTC or New York State DOT (NYSDOT) in some cases or the Planning Committee in others. Major amendments go through the Planning Committee for recommendations and then to the Policy Committee for final approval. The CDTC sets thresholds for changes based on project additions as well as scope and cost changes.

- Addition of project under or equal to \$250,000: The Planning Committee internally discusses and approves. No Policy Board action is necessary unless the Planning Committee finds it necessary. If one element of a project is changed, then the CDTC or NYSDOT staffs can approve the revision.

- Addition of project over \$250,000: The Planning Committee makes recommendations on the change to the Policy Board, which has final approval over the change. If only one element of the project is changing, then no action by the Policy Board is required.
- Changes to the scope or cost of the project of 25% or more (min: \$250,000) or over \$500,000 require discussion of the Planning Committee but no Policy Board action. Cost changes over 50% of the total project value or more than \$3 million require actions by both the Planning Committee and Policy Board.

**Missoula MPO**

Montana MPOs work under draft procedures established cooperatively with the Montana DOT, but these procedures have not been formally adopted. The purpose is to clearly define administrative modifications and establish a procedure for processing them. Changes that do not meet the modification criteria are considered amendments and require public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (for “nonexempt” projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas).

Minor changes that do not affect scope, financial constraint, air quality conformity, or NEPA environmental documentation do not meet the thresholds for an amendment. Cost change thresholds for an amendment are as follows:

| <b>Project Cost</b>     | <b>Percentage Increase in Project Cost</b> |
|-------------------------|--|
| Under \$100,000         | 30%  |
| \$100,000–500,000       | 25%  |
| \$500,000–\$1 million   | 20%  |
| \$1 million–\$2 million | 15%  |
| Over \$2 million        | 10%  |

**North Central Texas Council of Governments**

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) established a quarterly revision cycle for TIP changes. Administrative amendments are TIP modifications that do not require action of the Regional Transportation Council (Policy Board) for approval. Instead, the Director of Transportation for the MPO approves TIP modifications that meet a multitude of conditions, which can be found in the full policies and procedures. Administrative amendments are allowed for cost increases up to the following percentages based on the total project cost.

| <b>Project Cost</b>     | <b>Percentage Increase in Project Cost</b> |
|-------------------------|--|
| <\$250,000              | 75%  |
| \$250,001–\$1 million   | 30%  |
| \$1 million–\$3 million | 20%  |
| >\$3 million            | 15%  |

**Duluth–Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council**

The Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC) is a bi-state MPO that has two sets of TIP procedures, one for Minnesota and one for Wisconsin. Within its Public Involvement Plan, the Minnesota formal TIP amendments are approved by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and MIC at regularly scheduled public meetings.

TIP administrative modifications are needed when a project is moved into the current TIP year from a later year. Justification is needed to explain which specific projects are deferred to maintain fiscal constraint. Administrative amendments are allowed for cost increases up to the following total project costs.

| <b>Project Cost</b>        | <b>Percentage Increase in Project Cost</b> |
|----------------------------|--|
| <\$1 million–\$3 million   | 50%  |
| \$3 million–\$10 million   | 35%  |
| \$10 million–\$50 million  | 20%  |
| \$50 million–\$100 million | 15%  |
| >\$100 million             | 10%  |

Major amendments in Wisconsin include a 30-day public comment period and analysis of air quality and community impact assessment/environmental justice. The amendment then proceeds through the regular MIC, TAC, and state DOT approval process. A major amendment is necessary if an added or deleted project meets the thresholds of 10% of the total federal funding programmed for the calendar year, or \$1,000,000.

**Atlanta Regional Commission**

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) defines its amendment process in Appendix D of its Public Involvement Plan. It will accept revisions from project sponsors at any point in

time, but holds them for processing until the next scheduled opportunity. Its administrative modifications are processed by staff with no official action required by the ARC Board. It spells out what triggers a modification and notes that there is no formal comment period required to process administrative changes. However, full advance disclosure of the proposed changes is made to all agencies with a vested interest in the affected project.

The monetary threshold for a modification is as follows:

- Revising a project description without changing the overall project scope and intent (e.g., less than 10% change in project length), conflicting with the environmental document or changing the conformity finding.
- Increasing the costs of project phases by less than \$2 million or 20% of the amount to be authorized. The 20% scenario amount may not exceed \$10 million.

### Wasatch Front Regional Council

The Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) spells out its modification process in the Appendix (Section X) of its 2010–2015 TIP. To reduce the number of potential amendments and streamline the process to modify the TIP, all the MPOs in Utah, Utah DOT, the Utah Transit Authority, and FHWA collaborate on the TIP/STIP modification process. They established “staff modifications,” “Board modifications,” and “full amendments.” The triggers for Board modifications are spelled out, and these require approval from the WFRC or WFRC delegated body and the Transportation Commission.

The following are thresholds and triggers for staff modifications and Board modifications:

- Staff modifications are minor changes and require administrative approval from the MPO and DOT executive directors. The cost threshold for staff modifications are project activities where there was a change in funding source and a need for additional funding less than 25% (but not more than \$250,000) of the programmed amount.
- The cost thresholds for a board modification are requests for funding greater than 25% (or over \$250,000) of the programmed amount.

### Central Massachusetts MPO

The Central Massachusetts MPO (CMMPO) lays out its amendment/adjustment procedures in its Draft 2011–2014 TIP. An amendment is called for when there is a significant change to the TIP (triggers for this are detailed in the document). It will require formal action by the Policy Board. An adjustment is called for when lesser actions affecting the TIP (triggers for this are detailed in the document) may be accommodated through an administrative procedure of the

CMMPO. Although the document lays out the minimum thresholds, the state and CMMPO may set stricter thresholds or require additional actions.

The following are cost and/or percentage thresholds that trigger an amendment for FHWA- and FTA-financed projects.

#### FHWA

<\$10 million                      \$1 million increase

>\$10 million                      10%

#### FTA

>10% of the total project cost

### Florida DOT and MPOs

The Florida DOT and MPOs have collaborated on program management guidance for TIP processes, including revisions.

Project cost change thresholds for an amendment are simply 20% of project cost *and* \$2 million change; other thresholds include major scope changes, adverse impacts to fiscal constraint, and inconsistency with the long-range transportation plan or adopted project priorities.

### TIMELINESS OF REVISIONS

Although the ARRA stimulus money created urgencies to adopt TIP revisions, many MPOs and DOTs have had to deal with quick turnaround times to make changes to the TIP. Many MPOs noted that because their policy boards meet monthly, processing frequent changes is not a problem. However, in cases where a board does not meet as frequently or a change simply cannot wait, some MPOs and DOTs have agreed to procedures to expedite the process. One MPO has started to allow absentee voting when an action is required quickly to avoid project delays. Another MPO added a clause to its public participation plan that allows for major amendments to be processed, in extenuating circumstances, without the 30-day public notice as long as 75% of the Policy Board is present and approves the change. A different MPO, which has a strict schedule for processing all of its TIP changes quarterly, will, in special circumstances, process an out-of-cycle modification at the next available meeting.

### STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

MPOs noted that when new TIP revision processes are installed, it is important that these changes be communi-

cated both internally and externally. The ARC has developed the *Blueprint*, a comprehensive guide to LRTP, TIP, and other processes that it manages. This document also contains information specific to public–private partnerships, congressional earmarks, and other program elements. The ARC has also developed an interactive map of TIP projects, a project submittal form, and a significant portion of its website to help engage stakeholders and the public.

In an environment of frequent TIP revisions, especially multiple revisions to the same project, it is important to help the public understand what has prompted these changes and why they are necessary. Consolidating the TIP revisions to one specific meeting, instead of holding a meeting for each revision, and providing detailed project data in a standardized template are strategies cited for improving public awareness and engagement when there are multiple project adjustments.

## CHAPTER FOUR

**CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS**

This synthesis identified three subject areas in particular—technology, procedures, and standardization—that encapsulate the major techniques and practices that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) have adopted to streamline the TIP revision process.

- *Technology advancements.* For the larger MPOs surveyed, a trend appears to be emerging that allows TIP revisions (particularly administrative modifications) to be initiated and managed through adoption in a web-based program dedicated to this purpose. Where a dedicated program was unavailable, project revision forms or templates were made available for downloading and submission.
- *Procedural changes.* The MPOs studied often group together Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) revisions for processing at a single, regularly scheduled set of board meetings. Similarly, an annual update of the TIP captures the revisions made during the preceding year. In some instances, MPOs have enacted special meetings or even absentee voting to process TIP revisions more quickly, whereas others have modified their public participation requirements to move a TIP revision forward.
- *Standardization.* To provide the level of information necessary to process TIP revisions efficiently, some MPOs have developed a template that contains the project name, scheduling, annual costs, and other information.

Several MPOs surveyed for this synthesis have reached agreement with their federal and state partners on project cost thresholds that distinguish between administrative modifications and full amendments. Such thresholds help those MPOs avoid more time-consuming amendment processes because all the regulatory agencies are in agreement about what constitutes a minor change that can be made in a streamlined fashion.

Some MPOs have adopted procedures, with agreement from their state and federal partners, that allow them to make revisions to the TIP without having to publish a new paper version. They produce only one hard copy a year, regardless of how many revisions are made in that time.

MPOs are increasingly processing and disseminating TIP revisions electronically for administrative modifica-

tions as well as formal amendments. Electronic processing enables MPOs to keep the TIP current without having to reprint it after its initial release, relying instead on digital, web-based dissemination of updated TIP information. This can also be a good data management tool for the MPO to comply with key state and federal project tracking requirements. Of course, compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794d), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is required even with electronic dissemination.

Several MPOs are providing detailed guidance to project sponsors regarding the information required to process a TIP revision. In some cases, this guidance takes the form of an electronic submittal form; in others, it is simply providing project sponsors with a clearer understanding of the information needed to efficiently process a revision and reduce the time spent getting clarification.

Finally, MPOs noted that there are a number of opportunities to share information on the TIP revision process at meetings and conferences targeted to MPOs, such as Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations planning conferences and TRB sessions for MPOs. Some states have statewide organizations and MPO planning conferences that are a good forum for sharing strategies and lessons learned for making the TIP revision process more efficient.

This synthesis focused specifically on the TIP revision process as conducted by MPOs. It revealed a number of gaps in the body of knowledge related to efficient TIP revision processes. Following is a list of suggested future research to fill those gaps and a brief description of what form that research might take:

- *The relationship of voting structures to TIP revision efficiencies.* Studying the presence or absence of weighted voting and how those voting schemes might impact the timeliness of TIP revisions may provide additional clarification on the ability to call special meetings to expedite fast-paced approval processes.
- *Conduct an analysis of MPO, along with the roles played by their respective state department of transportation (DOT), and federal agencies (FHWA/FTA) in managing the TIP revision procedures.* State DOTs and MPOs do not manage TIPs in a vacuum. The TIP

revision process informs and is informed by MPO, state DOT, FHWA, and FTA processes. This synthesis indicates that these processes at the state and federal levels vary as they do at the MPO level. Truly understanding efficient TIP management practices at the MPO level then entails understanding the corresponding state DOT, FHWA, and FTA processes. Research tracing the TIP management process vertically through unique MPO–state DOT–federal relationships would shed important light on efficiencies practiced at higher levels than the individual MPO.

- *Analysis of the perceived purpose of the TIP by MPOs and state and federal agencies, and the ways these perceptions influence how each agency manages the revision process.* This synthesis suggests that different agencies intend to accomplish different things with the TIP. Varying interpretations of the purpose of the TIP—letter of the law versus spirit and intent of the law—may contribute to inefficiencies in how the TIP is managed. Additional research on these differences and their influ-

ence on various approaches to TIP reviews and processes can shed light on areas for increased efficiency.

- *Impact of electronic media on the TIP revision process.* Based on the frequency of changes and revisions in some TIP documents, the traditional view of the TIP as a primarily printed document that is infrequently changed is inaccurate. Several MPOs publish changes only on a website until the TIP is updated. This more flexible and dynamic digital medium—where TIP revisions are approved by one agency, reviewed by another, then adopted by a federal agency almost entirely through digital means with minimal delays—may imply a change in the role of the TIP for transportation agencies and is an area of potentially important research. The speed of these transactions, combined with the lack of public engagement noted by several MPOs, may also have implications for how well the MPO and state and federal partners communicate their future plans, particularly to populations with restricted access to the Internet.

## GLOSSARY

### **Administrative Modification of the Transportation**

**Improvement Program:** A minor revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that includes minor changes to project/project phase costs, funding sources of previously included projects, and project/project phase initiation dates. It does not require public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (in nonattainment and maintenance areas).

### **Amendment of the Transportation Improvement Pro-**

**gram:** A revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP that involves a major change to a project included in a metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP, including the addition or deletion

of a project or a major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or design concept or scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). Changes to projects included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. It requires public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (for metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs involving “nonexempt” projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas). In the context of a long-range statewide transportation plan, it is approved by the state in accordance with its public involvement process.

**TIP Revision:** In the context of this report, a revision inclusive of all adjustments to the Transportation Improvement Program, regardless of magnitude.

## REFERENCES

1. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23 USC Parts 450.324 and 450.326.
2. Poorman, J., “Conflict or Confluence? MPO and State DOT Programming Responsibilities, from Key Issues in Transportation Programming: Summary of a Conference,” *Transportation Research Board Conference Proceedings 43*, Nov. 12–14, 2006, p. 14.
3. Johnson, A., *Summary Report: MPO Peer Workshop on Addressing Financial Uncertainty & Year of Expenditure Requirements*, RSG, Inc., prepared for the Transportation Research Board. Jan. 2008, p. 9.
4. Howard, C., “A Regional Perspective, from Key Issues in Transportation Programming: Summary of a Conference,” *Transportation Research Board Conference Proceedings 43*, Nov. 12–14, 2006, p. 7.
5. Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, ARRA Information Survey Results, Dec. 2009.
6. Trabold, T., *Summary Report: MPO Peer Workshop on Addressing Financial Uncertainty & Year of Expenditure Requirements*, RSG, Inc. prepared for the Transportation Research Board. Jan. 2008, p. 10.
7. RSG, Inc., *Summary Report: MPO Peer Workshop on Addressing Financial Uncertainty & Year of Expenditure Requirements*, prepared for the Transportation Research Board, Jan. 2008, p. 15.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **MPO Survey**

Following are the complete results of the survey instrument used to obtain information from 37 metropolitan planning organizations on their TIP revision processes. Note that the survey was conducted with a web-based survey tool, and therefore the precise formatting was slightly different than that shown in this print version owing to some additional processing capabilities inherent in the digital survey tool. The final section of this appendix lists responses to three open-ended questions in the questionnaire.

Refer to Table 2 in the main body of the report for details on which MPOs responded to the survey and which MPOs were selected for case examples.

## NCHRP 20-05/TOPIC 40-11 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

MARCH 2010

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire dealing with **TIP amendment and administrative modification procedures**. The Transportation Research Board (TRB) is preparing a synthesis on TIP amendments and modifications. This is being done for NCHRP, in cooperation with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the Federal Highway Administration. The objective of this synthesis is to understand how MPOs define amendments and modifications and the ways they can make the process efficient, collaborative, coordinated, and/or innovative. Your MPO was identified by one or more of these agencies as having exemplary practices that are worth exploring for this project.

There are only 11 questions in the survey; a trial in a survey pre-test shows that the questionnaire can be easily completed within 30 minutes. All individual responses will be held in strictest confidence.

### Instructions for Completing the Survey

To complete this survey just click on [www.keysurvey.com/survey/284463/106c/](http://www.keysurvey.com/survey/284463/106c/). Once you click on this link (or copy-and-paste the link text into your Internet browser), the survey will start automatically in a new browser window. Choose or type in the correct response for each question; when finished, click on the "Submit" button at the bottom of the final screen. You can start the survey over again, but any earlier responses will be overwritten by later survey sessions. You can also share the link to the survey to others in your organization; they can complete their own version of the survey that will be recorded separately (we'll combine responses from the same agency later). We are also including the complete survey document on the following pages for convenience, in case you want to print out the survey in its entirety.

**Please submit your completed survey by April 2, 2010.** If you need additional time or information to complete the survey, please contact the principal investigator Scott Lane at [slane@louisberger.com](mailto:slane@louisberger.com) or 919.866.4412. Any supporting materials can be sent directly to Mr. Lane at the e-mail or telephone number shown on the questionnaire.

Section 1. This first section asks for the contact information for the person(s) completing this survey.

Please identify the contact information for those persons completing this survey. PLEASE ENTER A VALID E-MAIL ADDRESS at a minimum.

Agency:

Address:

City:

State:

ZIP:

Primary Questionnaire Respondent Name:

Position/Title:

Other Question Respondents (Names/Titles): \_\_\_\_\_

In case of questions and for NCHRP to send you a link to the final report, please provide:

Tel:

E-mail:

Section 2. This second of three sections deals with TIP Amendment/Administrative Modification Procedures. Please respond to the following questions concerning the way in which TIP changes are processed by your agency.

Prior to beginning the survey, please review the following definitions, which are derived directly from the *Final Rule on Metropolitan Planning Requirements* (March 2007).

**Administrative Modification of the Transportation Improvement Program:** means a minor revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that includes minor changes to project/project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects, and minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. An administrative modification is a revision that does not require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (in nonattainment and maintenance areas).

**Amendment of the Transportation Improvement Program:** means a revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP that involves a major change to a project included in a metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP, including the addition or deletion of a project or a major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. An amendment is a revision that requires public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (for metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs involving “non-exempt” projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas). In the context of a long-range statewide transportation plan, an amendment is a revision approved by the State in accordance with its public involvement process.

1. How many TIP changes (administrative modifications or amendments) has your agency processed between January 1, 2008 and December 30, 2009 (previous year)? Check one answer.

- 0
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- More than 50

2. How many TIP changes (administrative modifications or amendments) has your agency processed in the four years between January 1, 2005 and December 30, 2008? Check one answer.

- 0
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- More than 50

3. On average, how long in weeks does it take to complete the following elements of a TIP Amendment? Select "N/A" if you are not sure or if there has not been an applicable amendment element.

| TIP Amendment/Modification Process Element |  | Duration (Weeks) |     |     |          |     |
|--|--|------------------|-----|-----|----------|-----|
| A  | Pre- Board Review: Staff and Other (e.g., Citizen Committee) TIP Amendment | <2               | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| B  | Technical Committee Review TIP Amendment                                   | <2               | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| C  | Policy Board Review TIP Amendment  | <2               | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| D  | Approval by State DOT (Regional/District or Central Office) TIP Amendment  | <2               | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| E  | Update to Air Quality Conformity Requirements (if necessary) TIP Amendment | <2               | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| F  | Review and Approval by FHWA TIP Amendment                                  | <2               | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| G  | Review and Approval by FTA TIP Amendment                                   | <2               | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| H  | Review and Approval by USEPA TIP Amendment                                 | <2               | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| I  | Total Review and Adoption Period (A through G) TIP Amendment               | <2               | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |

4. On average, how long in weeks does it take to complete the following elements of a TIP Administrative Modification? Select “N/A” if you are not sure or if there has not been an applicable element to an administrative modification.

|   |   |    |     |     |          |     |
|---|---|----|-----|-----|----------|-----|
| A | Pre- Board Review: Staff and Other (e.g., Citizen Committee)<br>TIP Administrative Modification | <2 | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| B | Technical Committee Review<br>TIP Administrative Modification                                   | <2 | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| C | MPO Public Comment Period<br>TIP Administrative Modification                                    | <2 | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| D | Policy Board Review<br>TIP Administrative Modification  | <2 | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| E | Approval by State DOT<br>TIP Administrative Modification  | <2 | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| F | Review and Approval by FHWA<br>TIP Administrative Modification                                  | <2 | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| G | Review and Approval by FTA<br>TIP Administrative Modification                                   | <2 | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |
| H | Total Review and Adoption Period (A through G)<br>TIP Administrative Modification               | <2 | 2-4 | 5-8 | >8 Weeks | N/A |

Section 3. This third and final section addresses barriers and innovations with respect to conducting TIP Amendment/ Administrative Modification Procedures. Please respond to the following questions concerning the obstacles that your agency has encountered in conducting TIP Amendments or Administrative Modifications, and the ways in which you have or are going to overcome them.

5. Please briefly describe the issues that your agency has encountered in conducting TIP Amendments and/or Administrative Modifications. Please list these issues in PRIORITY ORDER, based on your opinion of the impact each issue has on the timely and effective processing of TIP changes. Examples of possible issues include delays, unexpected outcomes, re-reviews, requests for additional information, and so forth. Please describe how this issue impacts the TIP change process in your agency (2-3 sentences).

| Issue (Priority)                                   | Issue Description (2-3 Sentences) |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Please name the first-priority issue:<br>_____  | _____<br>_____<br>_____           |
| 2. Please name the second-priority issue:<br>_____ | _____<br>_____<br>_____           |

| Issue (Priority)                                  | Issue Description (2-3 Sentences) |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 3. Please name the third-priority issue:<br>_____ | _____<br>_____<br>_____           |
| Other Issue(s): Please Describe                   | _____<br>_____<br>_____           |

6. Based on the issue(s) listed and described in the previous question, how has your agency addressed or discussed addressing the preceding issue? If you have additional suggestions for addressing this issue, please describe your ideas and emphasize innovative technologies or strategies that could be shared with other MPOs.

| TIP Change Issues (from Question #3) | Action, Strategy, or Concept for Addressing TIP Barriers |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Issue No. 1 (from Question #3)    | _____<br>_____<br>_____                                  |
| 2. Issue No. 2 (from Question #3)    | _____<br>_____<br>_____                                  |
| 3. Issue No. 3 (from Question #3)    | _____<br>_____<br>_____                                  |
| Other Issue (from Question #3)       | _____<br>_____<br>_____                                  |

7. Please rate the following issues as to their impact on the TIMELY and EFFECTIVE processing of TIP Amendment/Administrative Modifications in you and your agency's experience. Choose "1" for least impact; and "5" for most impact.

| Specific Issues Impacting TIP Changes   | Rate Impact on TIP Process<br>(1 = least, 5 = most) |
|---|---|
| a. The definition or interpretation of the term "Administrative Modification" is too narrow.                                      | 1 2 3 4 5   |
| b. Getting internal stakeholders (e.g., member agencies and governments) involved.  | 1 2 3 4 5   |
| c. Getting external stakeholders (e.g., resource agencies, affected public, state, and federal transportation agencies) involved. | 1 2 3 4 5   |
| d. Our agency's public participation plan or process requires extensive public input on TIP Administrative Modifications.         | 1 2 3 4 5   |

| Specific Issues Impacting TIP Changes   | Rate Impact on TIP Process<br>(1 = least, 5 = most) |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| e. Our agency’s public participation plan or process requires extensive public input on TIP Amendments.   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Re-demonstration of fiscal constraint (for TIP Amendments) is time-consuming and problematic for our agency.   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. The definition or interpretation of “administrative modification” and/or “amendment” is confusing or poorly understood by our MPO officials, state department of transportation, or other partners.  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. Major revisions (TIP Amendments) are often contentious to one or more stakeholder groups that “watchdog” the MPO.  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i. An unclear understanding of the roles and responsibilities between our MPO and the state department of transportation causes delays to the TIP Amendment or Administrative Modification process.   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. Conflicts between the requirements for TIP Amendments/ Administrative Modifications and other regulatory or statutory requirements create issues with the effective and timely processing of TIP Amendments/ Administrative Modifications. | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA or “stimulus bill”) has placed additional pressures or requirements on our TIP Amendment/ Administrative Modification processes.  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| l. Occasional personality conflicts not related to other process issues between the MPO and state or federal agencies create various problems with processing TIP Amendments or Administrative Modifications.                                 | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8. For any response where you answered a “4” or a “5” in Question No. 7, please provide any additional clarification. Please note that if you did not give ANY issue in the preceding question a “4” or “5” rating then you can advance to the next question.\*

| TIP Change Issues (from Question #5) | Clarification |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Issue from Question #5            | _____         |
| 2. Issue from Question #5            | _____         |
| 3. Issue from Question #5            | _____         |

\*Note: The online version of this question is worded differently, since issues from the preceding question were automatically printed on the line where “Issue from Question #5” is shown in the print version of the survey.

9. What is the degree of satisfaction with the overall TIP Amendment/ Administrative Modification Procedure as it is practiced currently? (Check only one response.)

| Very Satisfied           | Satisfied                | Varies or Uncertain      | Dissatisfied             | Very Dissatisfied        |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. Would you be willing to provide a copy of your public participation plan and TIP amendment/modification procedures as an example?

Yes       No

11. This study will provide a knowledge base to promote more efficient TIP management by MPOs, state DOTs, FHWA, and FTA. Please let us know if you and/or others in your agency would be willing to be interviewed for 30 minutes to describe your experiences with modifying or amending the TIP.

Yes       No

The survey is complete.

*Thank you for participating.*

## Responses to Open-Ended Questions

*Question Number 5: Please briefly describe the issues that your agency has encountered in conducting TIP Amendments and/or Administrative Modifications. Please list these issues in PRIORITY ORDER, based on your opinion of the impact each issue has on the timely and effective processing of TIP changes. Examples of possible issues include delays, unexpected outcomes, re-reviews, requests for additional information, and so forth. Please describe how this issue impacts the TIP change process in your agency (2–3 sentences).*

*Question Number 6: Based on the issue(s) listed and described in the previous question, how has your agency addressed or discussed addressing the preceding issue? If you have additional suggestions for addressing this issue, please describe your ideas and emphasize innovative technologies or strategies that could be shared with other MPOs.*

Issues and strategies identified in Questions 5 and 6 follow.

### **Issue One**

- Infrequency of Board meetings. The Board meets quarterly, which requires careful planning by member agencies to ensure that their requested amendments meet all deadlines so as not to have to wait an additional 3 months to have the amendment considered.

Strategy: We have not discussed addressing this issue as the current schedule has been in place for several years and agencies requesting TIP amendments understand that they must plan accordingly (Administrative Modifications do not require Board approval).

- The transit agency's 5-year plan update process does not coincide with our TIP amendment cycle.

Strategy: No changes will be proposed.

- Getting partner agency to adhere to amendment and administrative modification cycles and deadlines. We are constantly being advised of and having to respond to time-sensitive requests that make development of a regular schedule difficult.

Strategy: This is a gradual learning process, which our partner agencies are becoming more comfortable with. Formalizing the schedule in a policy document approved by the MPO Board and regular coordination meetings with DOT planning staff have helped.

- We have an MOU in place with our state Department of Transportation and Public Transit Authority to define and guide the TIP amendment process.

Strategy: Although it may need to be amended to add more detail, this MOU has helped our agency process TIP amendments effectively and efficiently.

- A lack of clarity from the state on whether a change is an amendment or administrative modification.

Strategy: Our state DOT is organizing a conference call with the three MPOs in the state to discuss a number of MPO administration issues. One major topic will be a clear, published policy on TIP amendments, administrative modifications, and the requirements of each.

- Our TIP amendments can be processed by our technical committee if under \$10 million but if over \$10 million they must be approved by full SPC commission and undergo 30 day public comment period and meetings. This process can hamper our ability to react quickly to any project requests that are over the \$10 million range.

Strategy: We are proposing a change to our TIP procedures that will specifically identify “Major TIP Amendments” by details and not specifically dollar amounts.

- Local agencies not getting information to us in time for appropriate public comment.

Strategy: We provided a form that local agencies must fill out and submit to MPO staff for TIP amendment/modification 10 days prior to public notice.

- Streamlining the modification and amendment process.

Strategy: An amendment process was adopted that enhances the timely programming of the projects and efficient management of the funds in the TIP.

- Lengthy federal approval process. We are subject to reviews by two separate FHWA divisions that do not coordinate amongst themselves.

Strategy: We have worked with our DOT partners to proactively identify and resolve issues.

- Obtaining accurate cost information from state transportation agency.

Strategy: We initiated a dialog with our state DOT to address this issue.

- Demonstration of fiscal constraint for amendments; submissions lack information to confirm that TIP remains fiscally constrained.

Strategy: None identified.

- Our biggest problem is the delay in receiving all project information needed to develop the TIP revision itself.

Strategy: Our MPO proactively informs our participating agencies of deadlines.

- Incomplete submittals that require us to obtain additional information from sponsors.

Strategy: We are working to develop a web-based process. This probably won't eliminate incomplete submittals but will make the process of getting the additional information easier as it will likely be more interactive.

- Timing of the Modification with appropriate scheduled meetings. As a result of the dynamics of various projects, the need to modify a project may be necessary between the regular scheduled meetings.

Strategy: Depending on the type of Amendment/Modification, we have alternated meetings such that either the Board or the Transportation Coordinating Committee (with some delegated authority to approve some modifications) meets almost every month.

- There is no defined time period for approval from FHWA and FTA once an amendment or modification has been submitted for review.

Strategy: We have worked closely with the DOT and FHWA in addressing items quickly. Changes in personnel have brought a more positive climate for communication.

- Allocation discrepancies with proposed obligations (RSTP/CMAQ).

Strategy: Requested DOT to provide allocation and previous obligation data with amendments/modifications.

- Local Program Administrator (LPA) compliance with MPO TIP amendment deadlines has historically been a significant issue (particularly by the state DOT) resulting in numerous emergency amendments.

Strategy: The MPO has improved communication and documentation of the TIP amendment process with the LPAs. Each LPA now has an MPO "manual" that among other things includes very detailed process information for the request and approval of TIP amendments. In addition, the MPO has implemented a TIP amendment request form that is required before an amendment will be considered. These changes, along with a stronger enforcement of these requirements, have resulted in significant improvements to the process and a reduction in the need for emergency amendments.

- Having to wait for Policy Committee Approval.

Strategy: We now have an Executive Committee that meets more frequently and we are discussing changing our policies to allow that committee to approve most amendments.

- Staff shortage at state DOT.

Strategy: None given.

- Delays are caused by the timing of an amendment arising and our Executive Board's meeting schedule. We need time for public comment and time for staff to prepare information. Sometimes this doesn't coincide with our meeting schedule, and we hesitate to call a special meeting for one or two TIP amendments.

Strategy: None given.

- Unexpected TIP Amendment request from either our state DOT without due notice (public comment) time period.

Strategy: To correct this issue, the MPO has amended the bylaws that now strictly prohibit any amendment to the TIP or LRP without public notice as specified in our Public Involvement Plan.

- We have a large number of modifications per quarterly cycle.

Strategy: Revising the current TIP policy may alleviate the number of administrative/amendments received.

- Fiscal constraint for small amounts of money and inconsistent rules regarding fiscal constraint.

Strategy: We would like to have written rules and an opportunity to discuss them along with other stakeholders.

- A high volume of amendments/modifications/projects. We complete approximately 200 amendments/administrative modifications per month, sometimes close to 1,000.

Strategy: Our agency has undertaken developing an online database that allows project implementers (30+) the ability to enter and review their own changes. The database also has built-in limitations and does not allow project implementers to enter changes or projects that may violate federal regulations regarding fiscal constrain and air quality conformity.

- We lack a clear understanding of the TIP revision process.

Strategy: We are working with a state task group to clarify the process.

- Interpretation of the change in federal planning regulations (Feb 2007).

Strategy: We revised our operating procedures to meet the regulation with thresholds, but there are still discrepancies and it is still a cumbersome process.

- Regionally significant projects. If a regionally significant project is advanced from a later horizon year to an earlier one, we are required to rerun our air quality model. The impact of advancing the project is negligible, but the TIP cannot be amended until the conformity is rerun.

Strategy: We are discussing the issue with the appropriate agencies.

### **Issue Two**

- The volume of revisions can be overwhelming. Our region and state has had severe challenges with implementation resulting in the need for multiple amendments and administrative modifications. In our quarterly administrative modification cycle, we routinely process 100–200 changes each time.

Strategy: Our DOT has restructured its project management process. We believe that this will result in more thoughtful and realistic programming assumptions that will reduce the need for future changes. Also, implementation of an early scoping phase in cooperation with our DOT will produce better information about likely implementation challenges before a project is ever programmed in the TIP.

- Keeping the policy board and technical committee informed of the modifications and amendments.

Strategy: We inform the technical and policy board members of modifications and amendments through the meeting agendas that are open to the public.

- Frequent amendments confuse the public review process; amendments are often submitted during review period for TIP documents making amendment and draft TIP inconsistent. Frequent amendments to the same project, often at back-to-back council meetings, make project changes difficult to track for stakeholders.

Strategy: None given.

- Delays caused when a monthly MPO Policy Board meeting is cancelled.

Strategy: Either schedule special meeting or delay the amendment.

- Project sponsors making changes in project scope or last minute cost increases without letting the MPO know until they are ready to proceed.

Strategy: We have improved open communication with DOT project managers and project sponsors so that concerns are identified earlier and strategies are coordinated to address them.

- No defined set of guidelines for modification/amendments. It is up to the MPO/DOT/FHWA to determine a standard for the area and that may be different throughout the state or in different MPOs. Lack of consistency can cause confusion.

Strategy: Our criteria are defined in our public participation plan, which makes it readily available for the public and agencies to review. However, a statewide guideline or federal guideline would aid in consistency. There are a lot of gray areas that are not covered in the federal regulations.

- Obligations can be inconsistent with local priorities.

Strategy: Local review and confirmation are sought prior to initiating action.

- On occasion, getting funding resolutions prior to the TIP Amendment draft.

Strategy: Working closer with the state DOT and our members throughout the project scoping and development stages.

- Staff turnover at the state and MPO have slowed our process down.

Strategy: We created a hardcopy TIP handbook to inform new staff of the process. Also, I trained two other coworkers in regards to the TIP and the database management software. Previously that information was held by one person only.

- The MPO TIP is not always completely included in the STIP.

Strategy: Communicate more closely with the state DOT on TIP/STIP issues.

- Requests for additional information from either the Technical or Policy Board.

Strategy: If there is not sufficient information in a Board mailing (that has strict limits as to the number of days received in advance of meeting), the TIP item will not be acted upon and the new information would have to be re-distributed in the normal manner at either a scheduled meeting or a specially called meeting of the MPO Board.

- Multiple modifications on the same project.

Strategy: We work closer with our partners to assure a modification request satisfies all issues related to project.

- Intricacy of project development and implementation.

Strategy: We have focused on strengthening the collaborative efforts between project implementers and the MPO. We also offer project implementers training on not only how to work the online TIP database, but also what federal regulations apply.

- Consistency of the Long Range Plan financial assessment versus financial constraint of the TIP.

Strategy: Not resolved; we would welcome a peer exchange on this matter.

- Matching TIP with STIP. The state DOT was not awarding projects because our TIP did not show projects in the fiscal year that funds were awarded. This was an issue when a project went out for bids in September/October, but the awards were occurring in October/November.

Strategy: We worked with the state DOT to justify that once funds are obligated, the project does not have to be listed in the next year's TIP because the funds had been set aside. We are not required to carry over projects to the next fiscal year so they can be awarded.

### **Issue Three**

- Lack of distinct federal guidance on what constitutes an amendment versus an administrative modification leads to frequent requests to “bend the rules” to classify a change as an administrative modification to shorten the approval time frame. We have locally adopted guidance in our public participation program, but requests to deviate from these rules remain frequent.

Strategy: We try to be flexible with our amendment and administrative modification schedules to accommodate time-sensitive requests, rather than arbitrarily reclassifying an amendment as an administrative modification.

- Delayed feedback and input from oversight groups and responsible authorities.

Resolution: Can't do much. Wish we could have better cooperation.

- Coordinating the TIP revision process with state DOT, FHWA, FTA, and EPA partners.

Strategy: Conduct monthly liaison meeting with appropriate staff from the state DOT, FHWA, FTA, and EPA to coordinate modification and amendment issues.

- Re-demonstrating fiscal constraint.

Strategy: We require a statement by the sponsor regarding impact on other programmed projects

- ARRA. Owing to the need for all sorts of very fast actions to meet various deadlines, ARRA necessitated non-traditional processing of both policy amendments and administrative modifications.

Strategy: For ARRA, we requested authority from MPO committees for modified procedures and greater staff authority to address revisions administratively.

- Getting confirmation from the state DOT that an amendment/modification was approved by FHWA/FTA.

Strategy: We requested that the DOT provide a reporting mechanism.

- The database management software we were using (TELUS) was cumbersome and not user-friendly.

Strategy: We are changing to a custom database management system in preparation for our new TIP.

- Amendments made to the STIP without informing the MPO.

Strategy: We are communicating much more closely with our DOT on TIP/STIP issues.

#### **Issue Four**

- This MPO utilizes an online electric TIP system and the state DOT utilizes online electronic TIP/STIP amendments, which dramatically reduces time and effort for amendments.

- Obtaining local government comments on state amendments.

Strategy: Additional coordination needed.

- TIP changes requiring new nonexempt projects, moving non-exempt projects' completion years across scenario years, and plan addendums are included in a biannual TIP Amendment/Conformity Analysis/Plan Update.

Strategy: The MPO Policy Committee approved a memo allowing TIP Amendment/Conformity Analysis/Plan Update to only occur twice a year.

- Review of fiscal constraint is time consuming. The TIP now an accounting document versus enabling tool.

Strategy: Although regulations and guidance do not specify ledger accounting, there is really no other way to demonstrate fiscal constraint when fully programmed.

*Question Number 8: For any response where you answered a "4" or a "5" in Question No. 7, please provide any additional clarification. Following are explanations for specific issues that respondents rated as having the highest impact on the TIP process.*

Explain a. The definition or interpretation of the term "Administrative Modification" is too narrow.

- It would be helpful if we could process more amendments this way; maybe a higher monetary threshold would help.
- Sometimes you can't cover all the "simple" changes.
- Our members could not reach consensus agreement on the interpretation of the 2007 definition in the context of MPO operating procedures. The definition of an Administrative Modification is very different from definition of Project Selection in the previous guidance and much more restrictive.

Explain b. Getting internal stakeholders (e.g., resource agencies, affected public, state, and federal transportation agencies) involved.

- Getting the requesting agency to accurately explain their amendment in writing is sometimes time consuming.
- Project sponsors sometimes do not check on whether a TIP amendment is needed until the last minute.
- Amendments require votes from the technical committee and the policy committee, who meet quarterly. Amendments that are requested when a meeting is not scheduled are difficult to complete in a timely manner.
- When something needs to happen quickly, it can be difficult to get our Board together.
- Staff levels for internal stakeholders do not support the ability to enter and keep up current information in the TIP.

Explain c. Getting external stakeholders (e.g., resource agencies, affected public, state, and federal transportation agencies) involved.

- Feedback and oversight are sometimes not timely.
- Requires additional time to coordinate with the external agencies.
- Allowing for stakeholders to review and discuss an amendment that is minor in nature is time consuming for members and for government agencies. It becomes difficult to track and generally produces little value on the majority of the projects.

Explain d. Our agency's public participation plan or process requires extensive public input on TIP Administrative Modifications.

No MPO respondent rated this issue as having a strong impact on the TIP process.

Explain e. Our agency's public participation plan or process requires extensive public input on TIP Amendments.

- Comment period ranges from 10 to 30 days. In many situations, this is essentially "dead time" in the process that often produces no useful input.
- Our PPP currently requires 30 days notice in the newspaper of a TIP amendment. We are working to loosen this, but it is difficult to meet the 30 days when unforeseen issues arise that might require an amendment.  
Public advertisement is required for 21 days for an amendment, which may be excessive in some cases where the funding levels are changing slightly but the project itself is not changing.  
There is no differentiation in public involvement/advertisement with regard to type of amendment (i.e., completely new or change in funding, etc.).
- We go overboard (in a good way) to ensure the public has ample opportunity to be involved.
- Our Public Plan requires a longer notification process via media channels than that of the state.

Explain f. Re-demonstration of fiscal constraint (for TIP amendments) is time-consuming and problematic for our agency.

- As a bi-state MPO we are subject to two sets of expectations regarding fiscal constraint.
- Amendments from state DOTs may lack information to reconfirm fiscal constraint.
- It is time-consuming and not terribly accurate.

Explain g. The definition or interpretation of "administrative modification" and/or "amendment" is confusing or poorly understood by our MPO officials, state department of transportation, or other partners.

- It takes time to figure out whether a change to the TIP is one or the other given the lack of clear guidance from state and federal organizations. MDT is working on this, so we hope it's resolved this year.
- Different rules for different MPOs and the state can lead to confusion especially when it gets to the federal level.

- Our members could not collaboratively agree on the interpretation of the 2007 in the context of MPO operating procedures. The removal of major and minor classification of amendments is one example of differing interpretations and the restrictiveness of the latest guidance.

Explain h. Major revisions (TIP Amendments) are often contentious to one or more stakeholder groups that “watchdog” the MPO.

- Major revisions can come at times when stakeholders are not expecting to be reviewing the TIP. This makes public outreach more costly and difficult.

Explain i. An unclear understanding of the roles and responsibilities between our MPO and the state DOT causes delays to the TIP Amendment or Administrative Modification process.

- Currently, there is nothing in writing regarding roles and responsibilities. It would help greatly to have a written document to provide clarification.
- Proposals are sometimes brought at last minute and little practical choice is left to the majority of the group.
- Particularly for transit projects (other than the major operator) DOT has not provided timely information on projects needing an amendment.
- The DOT via their STIP procedures are not and maybe should not be, consistent with the TIP amendment procedures for the MPO TIP.

Explain j. Conflicts between the requirements for TIP Amendments/Administrative Modifications and other regulatory or statutory requirements creates issues with the effective and timely processing of TIP Amendments/Administrative Modifications.

- FHWA regulations require TIP to be fiscally constrained, but FTA requires proposed projects to be in the TIP before it considers/awards annual grants. Once the grant is awarded, the TIP must be changed to reflect the amount of the award.
- The only issue here is the interpretation of Administrative Modification or Amendment.

Explain k. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA or “stimulus bill”) has placed additional pressures or requirements on our TIP Amendment/Administrative Modification processes.

- We got innovative for ARRA and added an “illustrative” list for the TIP. The public seemed to understand the process and that these additional projects may not end up funded, but that we wanted to include them for the possibility of funding.
- We have processed two amendments and seven administrative modifications related to ARRA projects. Many of these would have occurred regardless due to issues with other projects, but the level of transparency and documentation required for ARRA has made each change cycle time consuming.
- The majority of the TIP amendments that we completed over the past several months were in conjunction with ARRA funded projects.
- In order to meet the requirements of ARRA and our PPP, we had to hold several “emergency meetings” or the Technical and Policy Committees.
- The fast turnaround on ARRA projects caused us to hold special meetings to amend TIP.
- The timelines for ARRA do not always lend themselves to the often lengthy TIP amendment process. Additionally, staff resources at all levels (MPO, state, federal) have been negatively impacted by ARRA.
- Time pressures for projects and the number necessitated special meetings of the technical committee and MPO Policy Board.
- Required an amendment and several modifications where this would not normally occur.
- The short time frames of ARRA made it very hard to find eligible projects.
- Additional workload, redoing illustrative projects.

- We needed to make many changes quickly to our TIP.
- The initial rhetoric was to expeditiously move ARRA funding, but more barriers were in place in the name of transparency to include requiring every ARRA action as an amendment with public review, even if it was only a fund switch. Staff resources were needed to add effectively another year of projects thus delaying the development of a new TIP. The expectations of local municipal officials were raised, yet many project proposals were deemed ineligible.
- The transparency requirements of ARRA made our state DOT go back and revise many of the procedures in place to amend the STIP. The changes to the amendment process trickled down to the MPO amendment process.

Explain I. Occasional personality conflicts not related to other process issues between the MPO and state or federal agencies create various problems with processing TIP Amendments or Administrative Modifications.

- Inherent different agency perspectives that we continue to resolve.

*Question Number 9: What is the degree of satisfaction with the overall TIP Amendment/Administrative Modification Procedure as it is practiced currently? (Check only one response.)*

- It generally works well.
- Quarterly administrative modification cycle works fairly well. Still much work to be done on instituting a more regular amendment cycle and ability to “hold” changes that impact conformity for a full plan update process.
- Overall it works well but there are some issues that could be internally clarified through a revision to our MOU.
- The process works well. We have never had a “major” amendment necessitating public hearing. Major is defined as more than \$5 million or 10% of total funding programmed.
- We have three levels of Amendment/Modifications that simplify the process.
- Need better coordination between agencies and stakeholders.
- The MPO needs to refine our process for developing the TIP and tracking projects. We also need to improve coordination and communication with our state DOT.
- We are looking to modify our amendment process, perhaps by limiting requests four times a year. We are also looking into ways to improve coordination. Sometimes we get an amendment request for a project that is on the same month’s project letting. A little planning might ensure that projects are added to the TIP at least a little bit ahead of time.

## APPENDIX B

### Case Examples Interview Summaries

#### Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS)

| Standard Question (all case examples)   | Response  |
|---|---|
| <b>What is your most recent MPO population estimate (year)?</b>   | 599,110 (2009)  |
| <b>What is the air quality conformity status of the MPO at this time?</b>   | A portion of the area served by the MPO is a maintenance area for PM10 and carbon monoxide (northern Ada County). The rest of the MPO area is in attainment for all pollutants.   |
| <b>Please discuss, step-by-step, your TIP amendment and modification procedures.</b>  | <p>The proposed revision initially is reviewed by the MPO, then submitted to the Balancing Committee (COMPASS is made up of two urbanized areas, one of which is a TMA and one is not) that deals with the five non-TMA MPOs. The state DOT (ITD) is on this committee as well. The five MPOs in Idaho collectively get \$8 million (STP funds) directly allocated (plus the money that is allocated through STP-DA to the one TMA in the state). The state tends to manage projects that aren't attributable to the MPO funding pool. The Balancing Committee then recommends a change to the MPO boards, both technical and policy boards (unless a timing issue forces it to go straight to the policy board).</p> <p><u>TIP Amendments</u><br/>If the project meets one of the criteria listed at <a href="http://www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/transimprovement.htm">http://www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/transimprovement.htm</a>, then it becomes a resolution item in front of the board, and it MAY have to go out for public comment (new project, air quality conformity, level of controversy) for 15 days. There is also a requirement to go to a standing interagency consultation committee for air quality conformity concurrent with the technical board and public review time periods. The amendment is then taken to the policy board with any comments (seldom get any comments).</p> <p><u>TIP Administrative Modifications</u><br/>Acted upon by the MPO staff and placed as an informational item in the boards' agenda packets. Safety, termini change, transit projects generally, etc., are modifications. They no longer have a monetary threshold to determine an administrative modification v. amendment (20% or \$1 million).</p> |
| <b>How do you decide if a change should be processed right away or can be held until you have a group to process?</b>                             | After the Balancing meeting, they will do the revisions immediately. There is some holding of projects back, but not more than about 1 month to ensure that the reviews are complete.   |
| <b>In your words, what triggers an amendment vs. a modification? How comfortable are you with your own understanding of this differentiation?</b> | The MPO staff is comfortable with the definitions of amendments and administrative modifications. The written definitions ( <a href="http://www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/transimprovement.htm">http://www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/transimprovement.htm</a> ) were first reviewed by FHWA/FTA and the state DOT, both of whom have good relations with the MPO.   |
| <b><i>AQ Maintenance Status MPOs Only:</i> Describe how air quality conformity process conflicts with the TIP update process?</b>                 | The standing ICC review adds several weeks to the process, since there is a formal 30-day posting requirement. Very few revisions impact air quality conformity and the technical analysis would be done concurrently (so no additional time for the technical analysis).   |

**Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)**

| Standard Question (all case examples)   | Response  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>What is your most recent MPO population estimate (year)?</b></p>                      | <p>Measuring the population is somewhat challenging since there are parts of five counties and all of 13 counties within our MPO boundary. The most recent estimate is approximately 4.8 million (2009). For the air quality conformity modeled area, which is a larger area comprising 20 counties (including another MPO), the population estimate is 5.2 million.</p>  |
| <p><b>What is the air quality conformity status of the MPO at this time?</b></p>            | <p>The ARC region is nonattainment for ozone and particulate matter currently.</p>  |
| <p><b>Please discuss, step-by-step, your TIP amendment and modification procedures.</b></p> | <p><u>TIP Administrative Modifications</u></p> <p>Accept modification requests anytime but only process them quarterly (every 3 months). Deadlines for submittal of requests are coordinated with the technical committee meeting dates. The format is informal, although the ARC does have a form available, but it is rare that the form is actually used (but the request has to be in writing or contained in an e-mail). No public involvement done or required. No votes are required by any committee, but are handled administratively. Changes are published in a complete project list after a 2-week period; this is not a new TIP but a refreshed project list in a master MS-Excel™ spreadsheet to the technical committee and a PDF published to the ARC website. If there is a protest it is withdrawn and moved to an amendment process (never been done, although some corrections were required owing to a typographical or interpretation error).</p> <p><u>TIP Amendments</u></p> <p>Not as well organized as the administrative modification process and much more sporadic. The recently approved policy is to work towards conducting an annual non-conformity amendment in conjunction with the regular 3rd quarter administrative modifications (Sept). A conformity amendment will occur every other year. It's likely to take some time before this schedule can be institutionalized. Work collaboratively with sponsor (typically DOT) to develop the information required for the amendment. There is an attempt to try and align with the quarterly administrative modification cycle—this has been aligned reasonably well, and the most recent (10th) amendment is currently scheduled to cycle at the same time. Public involvement occurs from anywhere between 10 (no cost change and noncontroversial) and 30 days (cost or scope change). Information is released to technical committee in advance as a courtesy, but no vote is required before release to the public. The technical committee reviews comments and the proposed amendment to decide if it goes to the TAQC (Transportation and Air Quality Conformity) board. Once passed by the TAQC it goes to the full ARC board. Once passed by the ARC board it goes to GRTA (on behalf of the Governor).</p> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | Once passed by GRTA it goes to USDOT if air quality conformity determination is required.  |
| <b>How do you decide if a change should be processed right away or can be held until you have a group to process?</b>                             | A formalized procedure in our Transportation Public Participation Plan has been enacted that dictates this standard.   |
| <b>In your words, what triggers an amendment vs. a modification? How comfortable are you with your own understanding of this differentiation?</b> | The ARC definition is based on the SAFETEA-LU guidance for this differentiation. There is a good relationship with FTA/FHWA that helps get clarification on gray areas. Significant cost increases (over 20% or \$2 million); air quality; controversial in nature all trigger an amendment.   |
| <b>AQ Maintenance Status MPOs Only: Describe how air quality conformity process conflicts with the TIP update process?</b>                        | The air quality amendment time frame increases significantly owing to the need to update/run the model, modify the air quality report, etc. This may occur in 2 weeks for a simple change, but a more complex issue (e.g., managed lanes) the scoping and modeling can take over a month by itself. The 30-day public comment option is always used for amendments that impact the air quality analysis. |

**How have you promulgated and enforced schedule and process elements?**

*The TIP Administrative Modification process works well and people are used now to the quarterly format. The Blueprint update took a half-dozen work sessions and offered an opportunity to go through and consider the process in great detail. Members are reminded of upcoming deadlines frequently. In all cases, there is a striving for transparency.*

**How has ARRA impacted scheduling?**

*The majority of amendments in 2009 were ARRA-related. All ARRA changes were treated as amendments, not as administrative modifications unless the project was already in the TIP and federally funded then it was converted to ARRA through an administrative modification. If it was a new project or an existing project using only local or state funding then the project was processed as an amendment. This process was vetted by the Georgia office of FHWA. There was a lot of effort put into the reporting requirements (a whole section of website devoted to tracking in near-real time), authorization, contract amounts, and so forth. This represented a new level of oversight and management for ARC, more than they had ever done before. This was done because there was a lot of scrutiny anticipated to ensure that the money wasn't being wasted. However, there were not many questions asked about the details of how the ARRA money was spent.*

**Missoula MPO**

| Standard Question (all case examples)   | Response  |
|---|---|
| <b>What is your most recent MPO population estimate (year)?</b>   | 75,000  |
| <b>What is the air quality conformity status of the MPO at this time?</b>   | Maintenance CO; Non-attainment for PM10   |
| <b>Please discuss, step-by-step, your TIP amendment and modification procedures.</b>  | <p><u>TIP Amendments</u><br/>MPO will receive a request from the sponsor agency in need of the amendment, discuss change with Missoula DOT (MDT), put it out for 30-day public comment, put before TAC for recommendations, and bring to Policy Board (PB) for final approval.</p> <p><u>TIP Administrative Modifications</u><br/>MDT and MPO will assess and discuss the proposed change. If it is accepted as a modification by both entities, it will be shared with TAC/PB for informational purposes only.</p> |
| <b>How do you decide if a change should be processed right away or can be held until you have a group to process?</b>                             | Most items can be processed at the monthly policy meetings. However, they added a clause to their public participation plan that allows for amendments to be processed (in extenuating circumstances) without the 30-day public notice if 75% of the Board approves the amendment at their policy committee meeting.  |
| <b>In your words, what triggers an amendment vs. a modification? How comfortable are you with your own understanding of this differentiation?</b> | The MPO confers with MDT on every revision to decide if it is an amendment or a modification. For changes in funding, MDT has provided guidance about whether the revision is a modification or amendment based on the total cost of the project and the percent amount to be changed.  |
| <b>AQ Maintenance Status MPOs Only: Describe how air quality conformity process conflicts with the TIP update process?</b>                        | This hasn't been an issue. We address air quality conformity during the Long Range Plan Update process.   |

**What role should state play in differentiating between an amendment and a modification?**

*Right now, the MPO discusses every change with MDT. It pays to get in touch with the state before they start the process—always seek concurrence on whether something is an amendment or a modification.*

**Has conference call with state happened and, if so, what was the outcome?**

*The MPOs in the state and MDT set up a conference call and one of the most pressing issues to arise was the lack of clarity between an amendments and a modification. There is now a working memo that everyone is generally working under, but there are still no formal guidelines.*

**Have you implemented any sorts of procedures in the event of "quick-turnaround" situation, such as ARRA?**

*As mentioned above, the MPO added a clause to their Public Participation Plan that allows for amendments to be processed (in extenuating circumstances) without the 30-day public notice if 75% of the Board approves the amendment at their policy committee meeting. Public notice is still given via the regular channels, but potentially for a less than 30-day period.*

**Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)**

| Standard Question (all case examples)   | Response   |
|---|--|
| <b>What is your most recent MPO population estimate (year)?</b>   | Approximately 500,000 people (2000)  |
| <b>What is the air quality conformity status of the MPO at this time?</b>   | Nonattainment for ozone, mostly from being in proximity to Boston and other large areas. Conformity is done as a single unit for the state (although not the entire state is nonconforming).   |
| <b>Please discuss, step-by-step, your TIP amendment and modification procedures.</b>  | <p><u>TIP Amendments</u><br/>                     An email or fax is received (typically from DOT) that outlines the proposed change.<br/>                     The MPO typically goes along with the change from DOT at the technical and policy boards.<br/>                     Public notices are sent out and a hearing is held for the amendment, usually a 30-day comment period.</p> <p><u>TIP Administrative Modifications</u><br/>                     No public hearing or review period; public involvement isn't done because there isn't a lot of money for the program in the MPO and commensurately very little interest.</p> |
| <b>How do you decide if a change should be processed right away or can be held until you have a group to process?</b>                             | No need to have a living document due to the low level of programming/funding available. There are only 2 to 3 projects funded through their own authority, and some additional state projects. The elected officials will not meet more than they already are (8–10 times a year). Hence, they will also try to group them together to avoid another meeting of the boards.   |
| <b>In your words, what triggers an amendment vs. a modification? How comfortable are you with your own understanding of this differentiation?</b> | The MPO is the one that tries to make a change for an administrative modification instead of an amendment.   |
| <b>AQ Maintenance Status MPOs Only: Describe how air quality conformity process conflicts with the TIP update process?</b>                        | The state DOT does all the conformity changes and reporting; the MPO relies on the state to tell them if there is an issue or not. Since the MPO is linked to the bigger, more complex Boston MPO in air quality conformity the biggest concern is actually from outside the MPO.  |

**How many FTEs do you apply to TIP Management?**

*A number of people get involved, but no one specific individual is assigned to the task of managing TIP changes. Documentation is particularly emphasized at the MPO. There are a lot of things that everyone has to do, and that is the biggest challenge: working a sudden change that demands immediate attention.*

**What in the Public Participation Plan is adding to the schedule?**

*There are requirements for 30-day review periods that add to the delays and schedule. There are often very few, if any, comments received. Sometimes they will come to a public hearing about one project and comment on a completely different project.*

**Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO)**

| Standard Question (all case examples)   | Response  |
|---|---|
| <b>What is your most recent MPO population estimate (year)?</b>   | 632,000 (May 2010)  |
| <b>What is the air quality conformity status of the MPO at this time?</b>   | Nonattainment   |
| <b>Please discuss, step-by-step, your TIP amendment and modification procedures.</b>  | <p><u>TIP Amendments</u><br/>                     There is a standard form that Maryland DOT (MDOT) or Delaware DOT (DelDOT) fills out. There have been hardly any locally sponsored projects, so almost every amendment or modification is coming from DOT and they must submit this a month and a half before the Council meeting. In that time, the proposed change goes out for public review, to the AQ subcommittee (if necessary), to the TAC for review and recommendation, then to the Council for adoption. The TAC is made up of 25 representatives and meets monthly, whereas the Council meets every other month and is made up of 9 individuals.</p> <p><u>TIP Administrative Modifications</u><br/>                     They are currently revising the information for what triggers a modification (recent meeting mentioned below), but right now the MPO procedures require a letter from the sponsoring agency, describing the change. Staff then internally decides if the change is a modification and if it is accepted as such, it will be added to the TAC and Council agendas for information purposes.</p> |
| <b>How do you decide if a change should be processed right away or can be held until you have a group to process?</b>                             | All changes are saved for the TAC and Council meetings. Unless it's an emergency situation (such as ARRA—where amendments were processed without the committee's meeting in person, but over the phone), then all amendments and modifications go through the MPO process.  |
| <b>In your words, what triggers an amendment vs. a modification? How comfortable are you with your own understanding of this differentiation?</b> | There has been confusion on this as the DOTs, MPOs in both states, and federal offices have had different interpretations. The entities recently got together to discuss this and came to consensus on the most glaring concern, which was the percentage of change a project needed to incur to trigger an amendment. They have decided that more than a 30% change to a project will trigger an amendment.  |
| <b>AQ Maintenance Status MPOs Only: Describe how air quality conformity process conflicts with the TIP update process?</b>                        | Amendments that trigger AQ conformity are avoided and held until the next TIP development process. The TIP is fully updated once a year, so projects do not have to wait that long. DOT runs the model for the MPO, so it's in their interest to wait and just re-run it once a year.   |

**What kind of fiscal information do you carry forward and what would you prefer to have from your member agencies?**

*The MPO is currently re-working their submission form in order to get better details on where the money is coming from for project changes. There is an MOU in place with the DOT to share this information.*

**Wasatch Front MPO**

| Standard Question (all case examples)   | Response   |
|---|--|
| <b>What is your most recent MPO population estimate (year)?</b>   | 1.5 million (2009)   |
| <b>What is the air quality conformity status of the MPO at this time?</b>   | Attainment   |
| <b>Please discuss, step-by-step, your TIP amendment and modification procedures.</b>                                  | <p><u>TIP Amendments and Administrative Modifications</u></p> <p>The TIP Modification process is divided into three categories: staff modifications; MPO board modifications; full amendment.</p> <p>Prior to an amendment or modification to the TIP, WFRC staff will consult with UDOT and others as necessary to identify which process is necessary for the particular action.</p> <p>A “Staff Modification” includes project activities where there is a change in funding source, a need for additional funding less than 25% (but not more than \$250,000) of the programmed amount, a minor change in the project scope, or rescheduling of projects within the first 4 years of the program. These modifications do not require a conformity determination or a public comment period.</p> <p>A “Board Modification” includes those actions where adjustments to the TIP/ STIP involve either a minor modification to a regionally significant project from phase 1 of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) or addition of a new non-regionally significant project. A “Board Modification” is also required for requests for funding greater than 25% (or over \$250,000) of the programmed amount. These projects do not require a new regional emission analysis, but they require an updated conformity determination memorandum and a public comment opportunity. This public comment opportunity is provided at a regular WFRC policy meeting. These “Board Modifications” require approval from the WFRC or WFRC delegated body and the Transportation Commission.</p> <p>A “Full Amendment” to the TIP/STIP is only is used for new regionally significant projects or significant changes in concept or scope to existing regionally significant projects in phase 1 of the current RTP. This modification requires an amendment to the RTP, a new regional emission analysis, a conformity determination, and a 30-day public comment period. Following the comment period, the WFRC and the Transportation Commission need to take action to approve the amendment. FHWA and FTA need to concur in the conformity finding.</p> |
| <b>How do you decide if a change should be processed right away or can be held until you have a group to process?</b> | Generally, modifications to the STP- and CMAQ-funded projects are reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) who make recommendations to the MPO Board’s “Transportation Coordinating Committee” (Trans Com). Trans Com will meet five times a year and has received delegated authority to approve Board Modifications. All other TIP/ STIP modifications are taken care of as quickly as MPO Board or Trans Com meetings are scheduled so that projects experience as little delay as possible.  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>In your words, what triggers an amendment vs. a modification? How comfortable are you with your own understanding of this differentiation?</b></p> | <p>A "Full Amendment" to the TIP/STIP is only used for new regionally significant projects or significant changes in concept or scope to existing regionally significant projects in phase 1 of the current RTP. Any other changes are considered either a staff or Board modification,</p> |
| <p><b>AQ Maintenance Status MPOs Only: Describe how air quality conformity process conflicts with the TIP update process?</b></p>                        | <p>The process is fairly involved, requiring reports to FHWA based on travel and air (MOBILE) modeling results from the MPO. The delay from this part of the process is 3 months if everything goes smoothly.</p>   |

**Describe how they have delegated authority to make some TIP changes by technical committee (not sending everything to policy board).**

*FHWA had the initial idea for partitioning off the revision process into three categories and streamlining the process by reducing public comment periods. The process took about a year-and-a-half to develop.*

**Describe how you have improved communication with DOT project managers and project sponsors.**

*The MPO works under very favorable conditions, with great collaboration among UDOT, UTA, and local governments. The relationship has been very good from the beginning. Monthly meetings are conducted with UDOT staff.*

**Duluth–Superior Metro Interstate Council**

| Standard Question (all case examples)   | Response  |
|---|---|
| <b>What is your most recent MPO population estimate (year)?</b>   | 145,000 (2010)  |
| <b>What is the air quality conformity status of the MPO at this time?</b>   | Maintenance   |
| <b>Please discuss, step-by-step, your TIP amendment and modification procedures.</b>  | <p><u>TIP Amendments</u><br/>                     DOT (WI or MN depending on where project is) will verbally alert the MPO about an amendment (either their own project or one from a local jurisdiction). The MPO will put the amendment on the policy board agenda, put out a public notice, and then seek approval from the Policy Board. The Board meets every month.</p> <p><u>TIP Administrative Modifications</u><br/>                     DOT (WI or MN depending on where project is) will verbally alert MPO about a modification. Staff will make sure that the change meets the MPO’s criteria for modifications and, if so, they will bring these to the Board for informational purposes (Board does not take action on these).</p> |
| <b>How do you decide if a change should be processed right away or can be held until you have a group to process?</b>                             | All changes are processed the same way at the same time. The bylaws changes got rid of any “on the fly” amendments that did not fall within the MPOs timeframe for an upcoming meeting. The Policy Board does meet monthly though, which does not prolong the wait time for amendments/modifications. If a project is determined to be of high importance (ARRA) then special meetings of the Policy Board can be called. These can be done in person or by phone in certain circumstances (never by e-mail).   |
| <b>In your words, what triggers an amendment vs. a modification? How comfortable are you with your own understanding of this differentiation?</b> | Amendments vs. modifications are defined in the MPO Public Involvement Plan. The staff uses these procedures as well as an internal review process to discuss the potential differences between the two for certain projects where it may be slightly uncertain.  |
| <b>AQ Maintenance Status MPOs Only: Describe how air quality conformity process conflicts with the TIP update process?</b>                        | There is almost no growth in the area, so there are not major infrastructure projects requiring air quality determination.  |

**Have you thought of any ways to get clarification on amendments vs. modification?**

*The Duluth MPO works with two different DOTs (WI and MN), each of which have their own procedures separate from those of the MPO and each other [for example: TIP amendments in Minnesota do NOT require the 30-day public notice, but they (major amendments) in Wisconsin do require the 30-day comment period].*

**What changes did you make in bylaws or other guidance to address issues concerning lack of info and timing?**

*The bylaws focus on the process the MPO follows pertaining to the notice of public meetings. In particular, that any item that is to be voted upon must follow a set public notice process.*

**What ways would reduce the time required to adopt minor changes?**

*The issue with both amendments and modifications is that there is no form to be filled out when there is a proposed change. All changes are verbalized to the MPO from the respective DOT. This wasn't an issue when there weren't many changes to the TIP, but now it's a dynamic document, with multiple changes. Minnesota has Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs). Within each DOT District in the state, there are authoritative bodies made up of the DOT, MPO, and local municipalities and stakeholders. Each ATP submits its draft Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP) to MN/DOT's Central Office (Office of Capital Program and Performance Measurement) for their approval. The MN/DOT Central Office will then work with their District office if changes need to be made. The ATP will then be apprised of what changes take place at the regularly scheduled meetings. This process aids in collaborative decision-making up front, which could lead to less project changes down the line.*

| Standard Question (all case examples)   | Response  |
|---|---|
| <b>What is your most recent MPO population estimate (year)?</b>   | 6,599,850   |
| <b>What is the air quality conformity status of the MPO at this time?</b>   | Non-attainment  |
| <b>Please discuss, step-by-step, your TIP amendment and modification procedures.</b>  | <p><u>TIP Amendments</u><br/>                     An “administrative” amendment does not require action from the Policy Board (Regional Transportation Council). Under the administrative amendment policy, the Policy Board has authorized the Director of Transportation to approve these types of changes. They are also reviewed by the Air Quality team and the Long Range Transportation Planning team. Although the Transportation Director has final approval on these, they go out to the public, the technical committee, and the policy board (on a quarterly basis) for informational purposes.</p> <p><u>TIP Administrative Modifications</u><br/>                     These are bundled and are approved on a quarterly basis by the Policy Board. These must go through the Long Range Transportation Plan group to make sure the project is still consistent with the current Mobility Plan, the Air Quality group to make sure the project is included in the resulting Air Quality Conformity Analysis, a 30-day public comment process, and then to the Policy Board for final approval.</p> |
| <b>How do you decide if a change should be processed right away or can be held until you have a group to process?</b>                             | All TIP administrative amendments and revisions are processed quarterly for final approval at the Policy Board meeting, even though the Policy Board meets monthly. In special instances, an out of cycle modification can occur where the Policy Board will review a modification outside of the normal quarterly review schedule.   |
| <b>In your words, what triggers an amendment vs. a modification? How comfortable are you with your own understanding of this differentiation?</b> | Definitions of each are spelled out very clearly in their TIP Modification Policy and Procedures manual and they rarely have any push back from the state on their definitions or decisions on certain projects. If questions arise, they work closely with the state DOT and FHWA to resolve all issues concerning specific projects.  |
| <b>AQ Maintenance Status MPOs Only: Describe how air quality conformity process conflicts with the TIP update process?</b>                        | TIP Modifications will not be processed if the project is inconsistent with the current Mobility Plan and Conformity Analysis. If the TIP modification request requires an update to the current Mobility Plan, these changes would be incorporated in the next scheduled Mobility Plan Update and Conformity Determination Analysis before being placed in the TIP/STIP. During the quarterly modification process, projects are forwarded to our Plan team which then forwards, as appropriate, to the Congestion Mitigation team for Single-Occupant Vehicle (SOV) analysis of arterials and then on to the AQ team for Conformity review. The AQ team will calculate air quality benefits (for CMAQ-funded projects) and verify that the projects are included in the resulting air quality conformity analysis. This process is also done for out-of-cycle modifications as well. It usually takes about 2 to 3 weeks to determine whether or not the modification can move forward.   |

## North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)

### Additional Questions

#### **Why are the same projects being modified several times and are you doing anything about it?**

*Projects may encounter multiple changes through the implementation process and these changes may not occur at the same time, thus triggering multiple modifications. Examples may include increases or decreases in project cost, change in scope/description, issues with right-of-way, utilities, etc. The majority of modifications processed are usually due to projects being added into the 4-year window of the TIP/STIP. The MPO works closely with its partners in determining if the request received requires an actual modification. The MPO uses a TIP database to track all projects and associated changes that have occurred for each individual project. The MPO also uses an online submittal form (mentioned more in the next question below), which allows our partners to see detailed project information and helps in determining if a change is needed or required.*

#### **What kind of information do you carry forward and what would you prefer to have from your member agencies?**

*About 50% of modifications come to the MPO from the state DOT and the other 50% come from the municipalities and other transportation agencies. In the past, modifications have been conveyed to the MPO staff either verbally or in e-mails. The MPO has implemented a central database and online submittal form for entities to enter the pertinent information for a modification (reduce the vagueness of the requested changes). However, the system is not being fully utilized and agencies are still making requests through verbal request and e-mail. The MPO is trying to convey its importance through the public involvement process and at technical committee and policy board meetings so that project information remains consistent at all levels.*

#### **What changes would you make to TIP policies to address these two issues?**

*TIP policies and procedures were last updated in October 2005. The policies clearly define the difference between a TIP "Administrative" Amendment vs. TIP "Revision," but the MPO would like to seek ways in decreasing the number of modifications occurring within a the 4-year window of the TIP/STIP.*

**Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)**

| Standard Question (all case examples)  | Response  |
|--|---|
| What is your most recent MPO population estimate (year)?   |   |
| What is the air quality conformity status of the MPO at this time?   | Non-attainment  |
| Please discuss, step-by-step, your TIP amendment and modification procedures.  | <p><u>TIP Amendments</u><br/>Major amendments are sent to the Policy Board for final approval, but must be sent through the Planning Committee first for their recommendations.</p> <p><u>TIP Administrative Modifications</u><br/>Specific changes, which are smaller in nature, are sent directly to the Planning Committee for review and approval. <i>The Planning Committee may defer approval to Policy Board, if desired.</i></p> <p>Minor Modifications: MPO procedures spell out specific changes that can be approved by MPO and/or DOT</p> |
| How do you decide if a change should be processed right away or can be held until you have a group to process?                             | All changes are processed at upcoming Board meetings—there are no special meetings.   |
| In your words, what triggers an amendment vs. a modification? How comfortable are you with your own understanding of this differentiation? | There is never a question about whether a change is an amendment or a modification.   |
| AQ Maintenance Status MPOs Only: Describe how air quality conformity process conflicts with the TIP update process?                        | This has not been an issue.   |

**Additional Questions**

**What kind of fiscal information do you carry forward and what would you prefer to have from your member agencies?**

*Because the MPO now actually modifies the STIP (using eSTIP software), there is now the potential for financial information to be consistent at all levels.*

**Please clarify the statement "consider STIP issues before making a TIP amendment": what are the STIP issues that are referred to in this statement?**

*The MPO now actually makes all of the TIP changes to the STIP. This came about because the DOT was not directly incorporating the TIP document and the changes into the STIP. So this creates an extra step for the MPO, but it's a good thing because it means that the information at the MPO level is consistent with the information at the state level, particularly when it comes to the financial elements. However, because the TIP & STIP rules and formatting are not exactly the same, the potential exists for CDTC to make a change to the TIP, which when incorporated into the STIP may still not meet the needs of the project implementer. Therefore, CDTC must now first consider the STIP implications of a TIP change.*

**Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)**

| Standard Question (all case examples)   | Response  |
|---|---|
| <b>What is your most recent MPO population estimate (year)?</b>   | 8.6 million (2010)  |
| <b>What is the air quality conformity status of the MPO at this time?</b>   | <p>Ozone—1997 8-hour standard (moderate). However, IEPA has submitted a redesignation request, which should be approved. We are not expected to attain whatever new standard is adopted in August.</p> <p>Fine Particulate (PM2.5)—annual standard (no level). A redesignation request is being prepared. It should also be approved.</p> <p>NO<sub>2</sub>—hourly standard. Designations have not been made yet, but one monitor in the region violates the standard.</p> <p>SO<sub>2</sub>—standard not updated yet, but it will be soon. The region will be in nonattainment, but this is a power plant issue, not mobile sources.</p>   |
| <b>Please discuss, step-by-step, your TIP amendment and modification procedures.</b>                                  | <p>Project revisions are submitted by implementing agencies. In advance of CMAP Transportation Committee meetings, the revisions are reviewed by CMAP staff and classified as modifications or amendments.</p> <p>The list of project modifications and the projects making up the amendment are posted to the CMAP website seven days in advance of the Transportation Committee meetings—the modifications for information (they take effect upon submission and review by staff), and the amendment for public comment. The amendment (generally made up of a number of project revisions) is considered for approval at the next Transportation Committee meeting. Project revisions requiring air quality conformity analysis are held for consideration semi-annually by the MPO Policy Committee.</p> <p>All revisions are (collectively) analyzed with the travel demand model and MOBILE6 for their emission impacts. The list of revisions, constituting a “conformity amendment,” and the summary of the analysis are posted for a thirty-day comment period.</p> <p>The response to the comment(s), if any, is reviewed through consultation, taken to the Transportation Committee for recommendation, and considered by the MPO Policy Committee and CMAP Board for a conformity determination and approval of the amendment.</p> |
| <b>How do you decide if a change should be processed right away or can be held until you have a group to process?</b> | The TIP Change procedures identify the difference between a modification (processed immediately) and an amendment, which is processed in accordance with the IDOT letting schedule and CMAP Transportation Committee meeting schedule. Project changes that affect air quality are taken twice a year and must be released for a 30-day public comment.   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>In your words, what triggers an amendment vs. a modification? How comfortable are you with your own understanding of this differentiation?</b></p> | <p>In general, modifications are minor revisions to a project, or revisions made to correct an obvious error in the project information. Amendments are significant changes to projects. Through consultation, the region has developed a detailed description of what constitutes an amendment; it is relatively straightforward to distinguish modifications from amendments.</p> |
| <p><b>AQ Maintenance Status MPOs Only: Describe how air quality conformity process conflicts with the TIP update process?</b></p>                        | <p>It takes longer and they have to run the travel demand model and the air quality model; therefore, CMAP only approves changes that affect air quality twice a year. October reviews must be submitted by mid-July; for the March review the project revisions have to be submitted by mid-December.</p>  |

**Additional Questions**

**How meaningful are the engagement and technical processes when the MPO is making hundreds of changes each month (relative to public, stakeholders, official, etc)?**

*The implementing agencies really handle a lot of the public review on projects; by the time a project reaches the MPO it has gone through significant public review. Thus, there are very few public comments on TIP changes. Likewise, public officials tend to monitor projects in their communities through their professional staffs. The closest review of TIP revisions is from agency staff that needs to keep abreast of regional funding status and the status of projects being implemented by peer agencies.*

**Describe online project revision database, as well as the member training.**

*The MPO worked with a consultant to create a web-based database (implemented in SQL Server). The database contains basic project information, detailed financial information, data for the travel demand model (when needed), notes, associated documents, and project milestone dates. A webinar has been posted to the CMAP website to facilitate training of the agency staff in the region who maintains their projects. Additional training is done as database enhancements are implemented.*

## **APPENDIX C**

### **State DOT and MPO TIP Revision Guidelines**

The following are synopses of specific state-level TIP revision procedures, including Internet locations for access to specific documentation.

#### **Title: TIP/STIP Guidance**

Author: NY State DOT

Updated: November 2009

Link: [https://www.nysdot.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/planning-bureau/MPO\\_program\\_update\\_guide/repository/TIP-STIP%20Guidance.pdf](https://www.nysdot.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/planning-bureau/MPO_program_update_guide/repository/TIP-STIP%20Guidance.pdf)

This 21-page document is devoted specifically to providing guidance on TIP/STIP development and amendment/modification. The NYSDOT issues new guidance for every 4 to 5 years, aligning with update cycles to help the DOTs and MPOs within the state comply with the federal requirement for the TIP and STIP. The update cycle is mutually agreed upon by the state MPOs and DOTs, all of which utilize the technology “eSTIP” to manage projects as well as amendments for both the TIP and STIP. The NYSDOT offers training on this system. Included in this guidance are rollover guidelines from the FHWA NY Division office, which states that because the STIP is adopted up to 6 months after the TIP, some of the TIP projects may “slip” during this window. However, MPOs can roll these projects into the newly adopted STIP (as long as fiscal constraint is maintained) through an administrative action instead of an amendment. The “Amendment Process and Procedures” section states that “each MPO must carefully review their respective procedures for project selection, amendments, and administrative modifications...and make sure that these are consistent with SAFETEA-LU requirements.” This section also includes a note that although a TIP project can be moved to any year of the TIP without an amendment as long as the project does not change; the change has to be made in the eSTIP software and approved by the MPO and the NYSDOT program supervisor. Illustrative projects, or those that demonstrate critical transportation needs but may not have the funding readily available, can be included in the TIP. Changes to these projects do not require amendments unless funding is made available, and then these projects must go through the federal amendment requirements.

**Title: TIP Preparation Guidance**

Author: Wisconsin DOT

Updated: April 2009

Link: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/planorg/docs/tip-guidance.pdf>

This 39-page document helps MPOs prepare all elements of their TIP. The DOTs and MPOs both use the technology called FIIPS (Financial Integrated Improvement Programming System) to plan, schedule, estimate, fund, and track projects, which aids in TIP development. This guidance recognizes the SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) definitions of amendments and modifications, but also adds guidance specific to Wisconsin. Modifications can be processed through the MPO administrative processes with communication of the changes to the MPO Policy Board, WisDOT, and FHWA/FTA. WisDOT further categorizes amendments as minor or major and provides the specific definitions and acceptance processes for both. Ultimately, WisDOT must approve all TIP amendments, which need to be submitted electronically and include signed Policy Board resolutions, updated TIP tables, and an updated fiscal constraint table.

**Title: KYTC and MPO Coordination**

Author: Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

Updated: July 2007

Web Link:

[http://transportation.ky.gov/planning/mpo\\_files/Consolidated%20Process%20Document%205\\_31\\_07.pdf](http://transportation.ky.gov/planning/mpo_files/Consolidated%20Process%20Document%205_31_07.pdf)

This 28-page document recommends ways to streamline the development and revision processes for the TIPs and STIP in Kentucky. A founding principle of the document is to encourage coordination at all levels, as well as flexibility in carrying out responsibilities. The document defines what constitutes an amendment and modification, and states the procedures for implementing them. Modifications are tracked by the MPO and made available to their appropriate committees, and then a letter or e-mail is sent to the appropriate person at the

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC, the Kentucky DOT). However, if the MPO regards the modification as having the potential for conflict, then it must be noted as such when sent to the KYTC. Amendments have a more detailed process, and need to have sufficient descriptive material, include the total estimated cost, and be vetted through the public participation plan as spelled out by the MPO. The MPO is responsible for notifying KYTC, FHWA-KY, FTA-R4, and others of the amendment by email or letter, including all the relevant paperwork showing that the correct processes had been followed (signed resolution, TIP replacement page, conformity finding, and public notice documentation). To expedite the process, the MPO can approve an amendment by email or phone if its bylaws allow for it. For STIP amendments in metropolitan areas, public involvement is not necessary, as the requirement was already fulfilled by the MPO.

### **Title: Revising the CLRP and the TIP**

Author: TPB (DC)

Updated: January 16, 2008

Web Link: <http://www.mwcog.org/clrp/process/amendments.asp>

This web page summarizes the TIP amendment and modification procedures for the Transportation Planning Board (TPB, the MPO for the Washington, DC, metropolitan area), DDOT, MDOT, and VDOT (DC, Maryland, Virginia, respectively). When a DOT needs to revise TIP project information, its procedures must be consistent with the TPB procedures for revising its regional TIP. The page discusses the regional definitions of amendments and modifications as well as the procedures for adoption of each. Modifications are approved by the Director of the Department of Transportation Planning of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and, if approved, are directly incorporated into the STIP. Amendments are submitted to the Chairman of the TPB and then presented to the TPB Steering Committee, which has full authority to approve nonregionally significant items. Amendments are then placed on the TPB agenda for approval after meeting all federal regulations.

**Title: Richmond Area MPO TIP Amendment and RSTP/CMAQ Allocation Transfer****Guidelines**

Author: Richmond Area MPO, VDOT, and VDRPT

Updated: Revised June 8, 2006

Web Link:

[http://www.richmondregional.org/Publications/Reports\\_and\\_Documents/TIP/TIP\\_RSTP-CMAQ\\_Alloc\\_Transf\\_Guidelines\\_Approved\\_6\\_8\\_06.pdf](http://www.richmondregional.org/Publications/Reports_and_Documents/TIP/TIP_RSTP-CMAQ_Alloc_Transf_Guidelines_Approved_6_8_06.pdf)

This document is a collaborative effort by the Richmond Area MPO, VDOT, and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to streamline the TIP amendment review and approval process by identifying those amendments that can be approved by MPO staff (adjustments) versus those that need a higher level of attention (amendments). The guidelines go through the criteria and stipulations for eligible adjustments and then describe the process for implementation. If the revision is an adjustment, the Richmond VDOT staff e-mails the MPO and the appropriate federal agencies the project information. The MPO then reviews and shares the information with the local jurisdiction or agency affected to reach agreement on the adjustment. Once a decision has been made, the MPO incorporates the project into its TIP or decides the adjustment needs a more formal review (becoming an amendment). Projects that cannot be adjusted but must be amended require TAC review (or action, if appropriate) and MPO review and action. If there are no comments from the TAC, the project can be sent directly to the MPO for action without having to be presented at a TAC meeting. For the MPO to take action, the amendment has to get on the meeting agenda at least 3 days before the agenda mail-out. However, a clause in the MPO bylaws states that an MPO member can request that an item be added to the agenda at the actual meeting.

**Title: Delaware DOT Modification Procedures for the STIP and TIP**

Author: Delaware DOT

Updated: Revised August 2008

**Web Link:**

[http://www.deldot.gov/information/business/drc/misc\\_files/modification\\_procedures\\_for\\_stip\\_and\\_tip.pdf](http://www.deldot.gov/information/business/drc/misc_files/modification_procedures_for_stip_and_tip.pdf)

This 5-page document establishes procedures for processing modifications and amendments. For administrative modifications, DelDOT has to notify FHWA, FTA, the MPO Executive Directors, and the Sussex County Executive, via letter or e-mail, describing the change and how it meets modification criteria. The Executive Director of the MPO then has 3 days to respond via e-mail or letter to the Secretary of Transportation on whether they need more information or would like to proceed with a more formal review by their TAC. Proposed amendments need to go through the “MPO’s usual,” TAC, PAC (Public Advisory Committee), and Council process for action, and the TAC and PAC need to be aware of the amendment at least 7 days before it can be approved. An amendment requires an advertisement and a 30-day public comment period, and the state and MPO public involvement processes will be coordinated whenever possible. DelDOT is in charge of submitting TIP and STIP amendments to FTA and FHWA for federal approval as well as ensuring that the amendment processes and public involvement procedures are followed. If disputes arise, the guidance states that DelDOT, the MPO, FHWA, and FTA “will consult with each other to resolve the question.”

**Title: TIP Program Modification Policy—Policies and Procedures to Streamline Project****Delivery**

Author: North Central Texas COG (Dallas–Fort Worth MPO)

Updated: October 2005

Web Link: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/tip/ModificationPolicy.pdf>

These procedures are specific to the North Central Texas COG in Dallas–Fort Worth and walk through the policies associated with amendments (called modifications in the text), projects not requiring amendments, administrative amendments, and major amendments to projects. The general amendment policies talk mostly about project costs and how to manage these changes. For example, the MPO maintains a cost overrun funding pool, and program funds must be available through the pool or from other sources in order to process modifications involving

project cost increases. Overall, there are 12 policy provisions that spell out how changes to projects can be made. Full amendments (the definition for the MPO is spelled out in the text) require approval from the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), which is the policy board for the MPO. The definitions of administrative amendments are also detailed. They do not require action by the RTC; the Director of Transportation for the MPO can approve them if they meet the criteria spelled out in the definitions. After approval, they are sent to the RTC and the STTC (the technical committee) for informational purposes unless they are merely processes to support previous RTC project approval. Three instances are spelled out in which a minor change can happen without any type of amendments (administrative or otherwise). In those cases, the changes will simply be noted in the MPO project tracking systems.

**Title: Procedures for Developing the Oklahoma MPOs TIP and the Oklahoma STIP**

Author: Oklahoma DOT (in cooperation with the MPOs, FHWA, and FTA)

Updated: 2008

Web Link: [http://www.okladot.state.ok.us/hqdiv/p-r-div/stip/2009/pdfs/50-Development\\_procedures.pdf](http://www.okladot.state.ok.us/hqdiv/p-r-div/stip/2009/pdfs/50-Development_procedures.pdf)

These procedures were written by the Oklahoma DOT (ODOT), in cooperation with the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Indian Nations COG, Lawton MPO, the Bi-State MPO, FTA, and FHWA, and any changes to the procedures require formal approval from all the organizations. The document gives general definitions for an update, amendment, and administrative modification and spells out the procedures for amendments. For TIP amendments, the MPO must advertise the change and allow a minimum of 14 days for public review. Once the MPO approves the amendment, it must provide ODOT a copy of the amendment with the public review comments and responses for approval and then inclusion into the STIP. ODOT has responsibility for TIP amendment approval as the designee of the Governor. If ODOT approves an amendment to the STIP in one of the MPO areas, then it must send the amendment to FHWA and FTA for formal action as well as making a written request to the MPO to amend its TIP. ODOT also has to provide the public review comments and responses to the MPO. In the event of any amendment conflicts, written comments need to be sent to the agency making the amendment request within 15 days of receipt.

**Title: Genesee Transportation Council TIP Procedures Manual**

Author: Genesee TC

Updated: Around 2005

Web Link: [http://www.gtcmpo.org/Docs/TIP/GTC\\_TIP-ProceduresManual.pdf](http://www.gtcmpo.org/Docs/TIP/GTC_TIP-ProceduresManual.pdf)

This manual goes through the definitions of amendments and modifications and the actions that need to be taken for a variety of potential project changes. The Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) has a TIP Development Committee (TDC) made up of representatives from the local DOT and the municipalities in the MPO region. The TDC reviews all amendment requests and then makes a recommendation to the MPO Planning Committee, which reports to the GTC Board. The TDC meets quarterly or as needed. Under GTC Resolution 78-4, the Planning Committee is allowed to authorize amendments when minor changes are made to the TIP (scope, cost, schedule, and funding source) as long as no member of the committee objects to the change. If objections are made, then the amendment must go before the GTC Board. Resolution 78-4 also states that all of these minor changes must be provided to the GTC Board, which can request within 10 days of the notification that the amendment should seek approval of the Board and not the Planning Committee. If the Board does not seek action on minor amendments, then the amendment (approved by the Planning Committee) takes effect 10 days after notice of the action. The GTC Executive Director is responsible for notifying the Board Chairperson of any actions by the Planning Committee. Amendments not meeting the requirements of 78-4 are presented to the Board for consideration.

**Title: MOU between SJTPO and the NJDOT and NJ Transit Corporation—Procedures to Amend and Modify the TIP and STIP**

Author: SJTPO, NJDOT, NJ Transit

Updated: August 2006

Web Link: <http://www.sjtpo.org/MOU.pdf>

This document sets the procedures for TIP amendments and expedited project selection for modifications. In the case of amendments, there are four determined instances when an amendment is required. However, it is up to the MPO to establish classifications of amendments for the purpose of public participation and committee review. Once the MPO Board has approved an amendment, the Executive Director will forward the approved amendment, including information on the necessary federal requirements (i.e., conformity, fiscal constraint, etc.) to the New Jersey DOT (NJDOT). The NJDOT will pass it along to FHWA and FTA for federal approval and then notify the MPO of the outcome. The MOU lists seven actions (agreed to by the parties involved) that are considered modifications, but do not require further MPO action because of this agreement. The purpose is to expedite projects that have minimal changes. For modifications that are minor but still require administrative action (the MOU details 10 specific ones), the MOU allows for the Executive Director of the MPO, upon consultation with the affected subregions, to approve the action administratively. There are also four detailed circumstances in which a modification would require action at the Board or Committee level. To address fiscal constraint for amendments and modifications, the MPO set up a Fiscal Constraint Bank, which takes the money from deleted projects, excess funds, etc., and applies them to amendments that increase the cost of a project. There is also a 60-day grace period paragraph that allows for projects appearing in the fiscal year of the previous year's TIP/STIP to be authorized within 60 days of the new fiscal year without invoking an amendment or modification.

**Title: Regional TIP for the Thurston Region**

Author: Thurston RPC

Updated: October 2008

Web Link: [http://www.trpc.org/resources/01\\_rtip2009\\_2012.pdf](http://www.trpc.org/resources/01_rtip2009_2012.pdf)

The section on amendment procedures recognizes that local agencies are anxious to proceed with their projects, so the TIP/STIP revision processes needs to be as efficient as possible. The Regional Planning Committee (RPC) spells out the definitions of a formal amendment, a streamlined administrative amendment, and a technical correction. Formal amendments take 3 to 4 months to complete, and there is a diagram of the process. Once an amendment is submitted, it

is reviewed for air quality impacts and then put out for a 2-week public comment. The comments are reviewed by the TPB (Transportation Policy Board), whose recommendations are reviewed by the Regional Council. If there are no problems, all the necessary paperwork is sent to the Washington State DOT (WSDOT) to incorporate the amendment into the STIP. The WSDOT bundles requests together into a monthly STIP amendment and sends it to FHWA and/or FTA for authorization. Administrative amendments are reserved for projects that have already been reviewed and approved for the TIP and are in compliance with air quality requirements. There is a list of items that can trigger administrative actions. The difference between processing these versus amendments is that they move from the RPC staff directly to WSDOT staff, with the time of approval reduced to a month. There is also guidance on technical corrections that works through the same procedures as an administrative amendment and typically takes less than a month to complete.

**Title: 2009–2012 TIP for Southwestern Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh Area)**

Author: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Updated: October 2008

Web Link: [http://www.spcregion.org/pdf/TIP2009-12/App%207%20TIP%20Revision%20Procedures\\_2009TIP.pdf](http://www.spcregion.org/pdf/TIP2009-12/App%207%20TIP%20Revision%20Procedures_2009TIP.pdf)

PennDOT has an MOU with FHWA and all the MPOs in the state—this document represents the specific MOU with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), the MPO for the Pittsburgh region. The document advocates for advance planning and coordination among agencies when an amendment is upcoming as the best way to streamline the amendment process. Amendments can be processed in as little as 4 weeks or as long as 6 months (if air quality conformity is required). There is a specific format and paperwork that is required for a TIP change, and all requests must be received by the SPC at least a week before a technical committee meeting. All amendment requests coming from a highway project should be routed to the SPC through the PennDOT division office, and transit projects go through the SPC staff assigned to the Transit Operators Committee (TOC). There are specific actions for what triggers an amendment versus what triggers an administrative action. Once amendments are approved by the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) or SPC, they are forwarded to PennDOT and FHWA and/or FTA

for approval. All changes that require air quality conformity testing or exceed a certain cost threshold must be advertised for a 30-day public comment period. It is at the discretion of the SPC Executive Director whether or not to hold a public meeting, depending on the nature of the comments. Although administrative actions are handled directly by SPC and PennDOT and do not require federal approval, FHWA and/or FTA reserve the right to disallow them if they are not consistent with regulations or the MOU. There is a section that refers to TIP revisions for projects for emergency relief purposes—these can be added to the TIP/STIP through an administrative action. The MOU also notes a “Special Approval Option”—if the SPC is not scheduled to hold a meeting, but TIP amendments are timely and only involve a change in cost to a project, the Executive Director may grant approval authority to the Technical Committee.

**Title: FTIP Amendment Procedures**

Author: The Council of Fresno County Governments

Updated: December 2008

Web Link: <http://www.fresnocog.org/files/FTIP/2009Interim/APPENDIX%20I-111708ReviseFinal.pdf>

Fresno COG has Formal Amendment, Formal Amendment—Director Delegation, and Administrative Modification procedures. The COG has an agreement with FHWA and the California DOT (Caltrans) to limit the number of amendment cycles to one per 2-month period (with exceptions for safety or emergency reasons), and in return Caltrans and FHWA have agreed to provide expeditious review of the amendments. The Formal Amendment—Director Delegation allows the COG Executive Director to approve an amendment without taking it before the Board, thus saving about a month of processing time. These amendments still require full state and federal approval. The criteria for these types of amendments are spelled out, and proposed amendments not meeting these criteria must be approved by the COG Policy Board. The criteria for administrative modifications are defined, and the COG Executive Director has the authority to approve modification or select them to be formal amendments. These also need Caltrans approval and are sent to the federal agencies for purposes of notification. Changes to illustrative projects do not require amendments or modifications. The public participation element for amendments and modifications is described in the public participation plan.

**Title: TIP/LRTP Blueprint: A Users Manual for the Atlanta Region’s Transportation Improvement Program and the Regional Transportation Plan**

Author: Atlanta Regional Commission

Updated: 2010 (Draft document reviewed)

Web Link:

[http://www.atlantaregional.com/File%20Library/Transportation/Transportation%20Plans/tp\\_tip-rtpblueprintdraft\\_050610.pdf](http://www.atlantaregional.com/File%20Library/Transportation/Transportation%20Plans/tp_tip-rtpblueprintdraft_050610.pdf)

As the introductory paragraph of this document notes, its purposes are to “serve as a convenient, comprehensive, and user-friendly reference guide to assist project sponsors in understanding and adhering to standard practices governing how projects are programmed and documented in the Atlanta region’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). It does not replicate or replace overarching policies, goals, or objectives of the regional planning process related to project prioritization, performance measures, equity, modal priorities, and other issues. Rather, it explains the mechanics of how a project is managed in regional planning documentation once a policy decision has been reached, through the regular Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) process, to include the project in the TIP/RTP.” The original, 2003 *Blueprint* was updated in 2010 to reflect changes in federal and state policies as well as to extend the coverage of the document to include the long-range element of the Regional Transportation Plan (MTIP). The document and processes it describes rely on the implementation of “Guiding Principles,” “Core Functions,” and “Business Rules” to provide guidance on mission values, work program development, and day-to-day operations. As a sample of the layout of the document, the first core function under the first guiding principle is reproduced here.

**Guiding Principle 1.** Project information will be presented in a user-friendly, concise, and informative manner.

Core Function 1.1. Produce lists of projects contained in the fiscally constrained TIP and RTP.

*Business Rule 1.1.1.* ARC will produce a summary project list in PDF format that is sorted based on the ARC project identification number.

*Business Rule 1.1.2.* ARC will produce a summary project list in PDF format that is sorted based on the GDOT project identification number.

*Business Rule 1.1.3.* ARC will produce a summary project list in Excel format that is initially sorted based on the ARC project identification number. This list will be capable of manipulation by external stakeholders and will be supplemented by an explanation of the data contained therein and any issues related to the manipulation and use of said data.

*Business Rule 1.1.4.* ARC will produce a fact sheet in PDF format for each project that includes more detailed information on the scope and location of a project than available in the summary lists.

Although the Guiding Principle/Core Function/Business Rule format is used to describe revision processes associated with traditional MTIP projects, the *Blueprint* also includes supplemental guidelines for initiating and processing congressional earmarks; projects generated from the ARC Livable Centers Initiative; and P3 (public-private partnership) efforts, based in part on the Georgia DOT guidelines (<http://www.dot.state.ga.us/informationcenter/p3/administration/Pages/Guidelines.aspx>). As noted in the *Blueprint*, “These projects have unique issues related to when the conversion from a traditional funding arrangement to a P3 must occur in the TIP/RTP, what information can be presented in order to ensure transparency while still respecting any relevant confidentiality or proprietary agreements between implementation partners, and the best way to depict the relationship between public and private costs and the distribution of revenue derived from the project.”

**Title: Wasatch Front TIP/STIP Change Process**

Author: Wasatch Front Regional Council

Updated: February 2006

Web Link: None available; details received from Ben Wuthrich in an e-mail dated July 18, 2010

The Wasatch Front (Salt Lake City, UT) MPO has adopted a three-tiered system of amendments, with the first level of administrative modification called a “Staff Modification,” the next “Board Modification,” and the third tier “Full Amendment.” The staff modifications are approved by the MPO staff only, with a notification e-mail being sent to affected parties. The thresholds adopted by Wasatch Front for defining a staff modification and board modification hinge on both the federal definitions as well as locally adopted cost thresholds: A project change of 25% of total project cost or \$250,000 will trigger a board modification action. Board modifications and full

amendments are advertised to the public, and ultimately adopted by both the MPO Board and Transportation Commission (technical and policy bodies for the MPO). The chief differences associated with a full amendment are (1) the need for FHWA approval with respect to air quality conformity; and (2) a required 30-day public comment and review period. Since both of these requirements are in place to meet air quality conformity rules, non-air quality conformity MPOs (and the Wasatch Front Regional Council actually serves one air quality and one non-air quality conformity MPO) only have to deal with the first two tiers of amendment. Both full amendments and board modifications trigger a notification letter to affected stakeholders, which include DOT project managers, FHWA, and may include FTA, transit, and air quality resource agencies. The TIP and STIP are updated “live” on their agencies’ respective websites.

**Title: Metropolitan Planning Organization Program Management Handbook, Chapter 5**

Author: Florida DOT Office of Policy Planning and Florida MPOs

Updated: July, 2007

Web Link: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/metrosupport/mpohandbook/>

The Florida DOT Office of Policy Planning, in cooperation with the MPOs in Florida, has developed a program management guide. Chapter 5 specifically discusses the TIP and revision procedures. Review procedures, contents of the TIP, and the relationship of the TIP to the work program are developed in this manual. Chapter 5.13 discusses TIP amendments and processes. An amendment is required when any of the following conditions are met for a project revision: a project is added/deleted; adverse impact on fiscal constraint; result in a cost change of 20% and \$2 million; or incurs major changes to the scope of work. Each of these five conditions is detailed in this chapter, as well as special provisions for FTA-funded projects. For example, major scope changes include changes to the project limits, capacity, type of work, or consistency with the long-range transportation plan or project priority listing. This chapter concludes with a listing of the required information and routing provisions necessary to process TIP revisions for both new and existing projects, and provides a link to the project revision form online ([www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/metroplanning/tipamendments.htm](http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/metroplanning/tipamendments.htm)).

Abbreviations used without definition in TRB Publications:

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| AAAE      | American Association of Airport Executives   |
| AASHO     | American Association of State Highway Officials  |
| AASHTO    | American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials                             |
| ACI-NA    | Airports Council International-North America   |
| ACRP      | Airport Cooperative Research Program   |
| ADA       | Americans with Disabilities Act  |
| APTA      | American Public Transportation Association   |
| ASCE      | American Society of Civil Engineers  |
| ASME      | American Society of Mechanical Engineers   |
| ASTM      | American Society for Testing and Materials   |
| ATA       | Air Transport Association  |
| ATA       | American Trucking Associations   |
| CTAA      | Community Transportation Association of America  |
| CTBSSP    | Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program  |
| DHS       | Department of Homeland Security  |
| DOE       | Department of Energy   |
| EPA       | Environmental Protection Agency  |
| FAA       | Federal Aviation Administration  |
| FHWA      | Federal Highway Administration   |
| FMCSA     | Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration  |
| FRA       | Federal Railroad Administration  |
| FTA       | Federal Transit Administration   |
| IEEE      | Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers  |
| ISTEA     | Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991                                       |
| ITE       | Institute of Transportation Engineers  |
| NASA      | National Aeronautics and Space Administration  |
| NASAO     | National Association of State Aviation Officials   |
| NCFRP     | National Cooperative Freight Research Program  |
| NCHRP     | National Cooperative Highway Research Program  |
| NHTSA     | National Highway Traffic Safety Administration   |
| NTSB      | National Transportation Safety Board   |
| SAE       | Society of Automotive Engineers  |
| SAFETY-LU | Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act:<br>A Legacy for Users (2005) |
| TCRP      | Transit Cooperative Research Program   |
| TEA-21    | Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998)  |
| TRB       | Transportation Research Board  |
| TSA       | Transportation Security Administration   |
| U.S.DOT   | United States Department of Transportation   |

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