

# **Virginia**

# **MTIP Preparation**

# **Guidance Update**

*Guidelines for Developing  
Metropolitan  
Transportation Improvement Programs*



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## I. INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of MTIP Preparation Guidance

The purpose of this document is to provide a uniform set of clear guidelines for understanding and developing MPO Transportation Improvement Programs (MTIPs) – including how projects are programmed. In addition, this **MTIP Preparation Guidance** documents the process and criteria for making MTIP revisions based on project changes.

While the goal of this guidance is to provide clarity and consistency with regard to MTIP development and revision processes throughout the Commonwealth, the guidance is not meant to dictate how each MPO's MTIP should be formatted or specifically how each MPO will carry out its MTIP development and revision processes.

### Transportation Improvement Program

A **Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)** is a prioritized listing/program of transportation projects developed by a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), in cooperation with the State, localities, and affected public transportation operators, as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process. The MTIP must be consistent with the applicable Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), be fiscally constrained, and cover a period of no less than four years. With a few exceptions (see [23 CFR 450.326 \(e and f\)](#) and [23 CFR 450.326](#)), all federally-funded and/or regionally significant projects that require an action by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) must be included in a current MTIP that has been approved by the MPO and the Governor before work can proceed.

**Fiscally constrained** means that the MTIP includes sufficient financial information for demonstrating that projects in the MTIP can be implemented using committed or available revenue sources, or revenue sources that may be reasonably expected to be available. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, projects included in the first two years of the MTIP shall be limited to those for which funding is available or committed.

Federal regulations define a **regionally-significant project** as a transportation project (other than projects that may be grouped in the MTIP or exempt projects as defined in the Environmental Protection Agency's transportation conformity regulation) that is on a facility that serves regional transportation needs (such as access to and from the area outside the region; major activity centers in the region; major planned developments such as new retail malls, sports complexes, or employment centers; or transportation terminals) and would normally be included in the modeling of the metropolitan area's transportation network. At a minimum, this includes all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer a significant alternative to regional highway travel.

## Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

A **Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)** is a federally required 4-year prioritized listing/program of surface transportation projects (highway, passenger rail, freight, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian). It is developed by the State in cooperation with the MPO for each designated metropolitan area, and includes surface transportation projects in both the metropolitan and rural areas of Virginia. It also includes projects on roadways in Virginia's National Parks and National Forests. The STIP must be consistent with the State long-range transportation plan (LRTP; [VTrans](#)), metropolitan transportation plans, and MTIPs. Each metropolitan TIP must be included without change in the STIP, directly or by reference, after approval of the MTIP by the MPO and the Governor. All federally funded projects must be included in the STIP. All regionally significant projects, regardless of fund source, must also be included in the STIP as well as projects otherwise requiring an FHWA or FTA approval, such as a NEPA document.

In Virginia, the Governor appointed Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) allocates public funding to transportation projects over six-fiscal years, comprising the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP), and updates the SYIP each year. As the Commonwealth's capital improvement program, the SYIP forms the basis for the STIP and the MPO MTIP update cycle must be consistent with the STIP update cycle.

In the [Commonwealth of Virginia Statewide Transportation Improvement Program \(STIP\) Procedures \(2019\)](#) document, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia's Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), FHWA, and FTA have agreed to processes and procedures for effectively managing Virginia's STIP.

## Relationship of the STIP to the Project Development Process

Decisions on transportation improvements that will yield the greatest benefits for the Commonwealth are guided by VTrans, the state's long-range transportation plan, advancing the vision, goals and objectives established by the CTB. Project planning begins by examining trends and identifying needs, prioritizing needs, and developing recommendations. Projects that address a VTrans need may become eligible for funding under SMART SCALE or various other funding programs. As individual projects are selected, they are included in the SYIP.

Public involvement for the STIP and the SYIP occur concurrently with many public involvement opportunities for the SYIP serving as public involvement opportunities for the STIP. Examples of such opportunities include the annual Fall and Spring transportation meetings, when the CTB adds a project to the SYIP, or when funding is changed/allocated to projects. Projects are then included or updated in the STIP, based on federal regulations, the Commonwealth's STIP Procedures Document, and VDOT and DPRT guidelines for STIP inclusion. Eligible projects in the highway portion of the STIP, may be included in the STIP as part of a STIP Grouping, rather than an individual line item. The grouping of projects in

the STIP allows flexibility and reduces the number of both MTIP and STIP amendments throughout the life of a project.

In Virginia, eligible projects may be grouped based on a project's scope/type of work. STIP grouping categories and work types/descriptions, agreed to by VDOT, FHWA, FTA, and DRPT, are documented in the Project Groupings Addendum of the Virginia STIP Procedures document. By agreement, projects receiving FTA grant assistance are not grouped in the STIP; therefore, groupings are only seen in the highway portion of the STIP. STIP Groupings are managed by VDOT using tracking sheets, which are accessible to FHWA, and published periodically on the VDOT STIP website.

For federal transit projects in the STIP which DRPT applies for on behalf of grantees (FTA5310 and FTA 5311 funding) DRPT will coordinate with the MPO for projects selected for funding to be reflected in the MTIP; an amendment may be requested. For transit projects that are already in the MPO's MTIP, DRPT may ask for an adjustment to correctly reflect planned obligations. Transit grantees are responsible for advising their MPO on any new transit projects requiring amendments, or modifications to existing ones which use formula funding sources for which they are direct recipients (e.g. FTA 5307, FTA 5339). Note that some transit projects are added to the MTIP by the transit agencies who are direct recipients of federal funds. These projects may not be in the SYIP if there is no state match.

### **Project Development: from Need to the MTIP**

- Projects are conceived in response to a need, normally as developed from a plan or study and included in an MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
- Localities, regional bodies such the MPO, and transit agencies pursue funding for the projects identified in or consistent with the plan.
- Projects are prioritized within each grant program based upon their ability to meet certain performance targets, such as safety, system performance, asset management, environmental, economic development, and equity.
- Funding is awarded through the individual grant application process and approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) via the Commonwealth's Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP), the state's allocation/budgeting plan or other federal funding programs.
- If required under federal law (especially if federally funded), projects in the SYIP are added to the STIP, (and MPO's MTIP in MPO areas) the obligation plan, by project phase (VDOT STIP projects). The full STIP is updated every three years and includes ongoing projects as well as new projects funded and included in the most recent CTB approved SYIP, and scheduled for delivery during the four-year window of the STIP. If a project is not included in the MTIP/STIP at the time that the MTIP/STIP is developed, it will be added to the STIP based on the project schedule and SYIP inclusion and funding.
- Note: Prior to a project or project phase beginning, it must be included in the TIP and the STIP as well as receiving federal authorization. Typically, around the time of federal authorization, a project or project phase is also "open to charges" in VDOT's

financial system. Depending on the type of project, who is administering the project, and the project delivery method, there may be other process steps that need to be completed before or around the time that a project begins.

- If the ungrouped project cost or grouping category cost is higher than expected, a STIP/MTIP amendment or administrative modification may be needed (see section IV, MTIP Revision Process for more details)

## **Update Cycle**

Federal regulations require a full update of the MTIP and STIP at least every four years; in Virginia this occurs every three years, with the fourth year of each program serving as an overlap to the next program. The MTIP may be updated more frequently, but the cycle for updating the MTIP must be compatible with the STIP development and approval process. The MTIP expires when FHWA/FTA approval of the STIP expires.

While the previous paragraph refers to a full update of the MTIP and STIP (for instance, updating from the FY 2021-2024 MTIP/STIP to the FY 2024/2027 MTIP/STIP), project information in MTIPs and the STIP are generally revised regularly by way of amendments or administrative modifications. MTIP revisions are discussed in **Section IV – MTIP Revision Process**.

## II. MTIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) must be consistent with the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), so the development of the MTIP technically begins with the MTP – which must be fiscally-constrained, have a planning horizon of at least 20 years, and include transportation projects on which activity is planned to take place during that time period.

It is in the development of the MTIP, which must also be fiscally constrained, that transportation planning progresses to a shorter time frame for anticipated project delivery. The steps for developing the TIP are generally as follows:

1. Given the available funding and drawing from the current MTIP, the MPO, State agencies, localities, and affected transit operators develop a draft list of projects and studies on which activity is to occur during the four-year period of the TIP.

VDOT identifies the projects or services that have been allocated funding in the Virginia Six-Year Improvement Program and are scheduled for delivery in the four year window of the STIP, and sends those project lists to MPOs. Some projects in the list may be identified as being included in a STIP via a STIP Grouping based on the project scope and available STIP Grouping categories in Virginia. Transit operators work directly with their MPOs to add projects to the MTIPs to be included in the DRPT portion of the STIP.

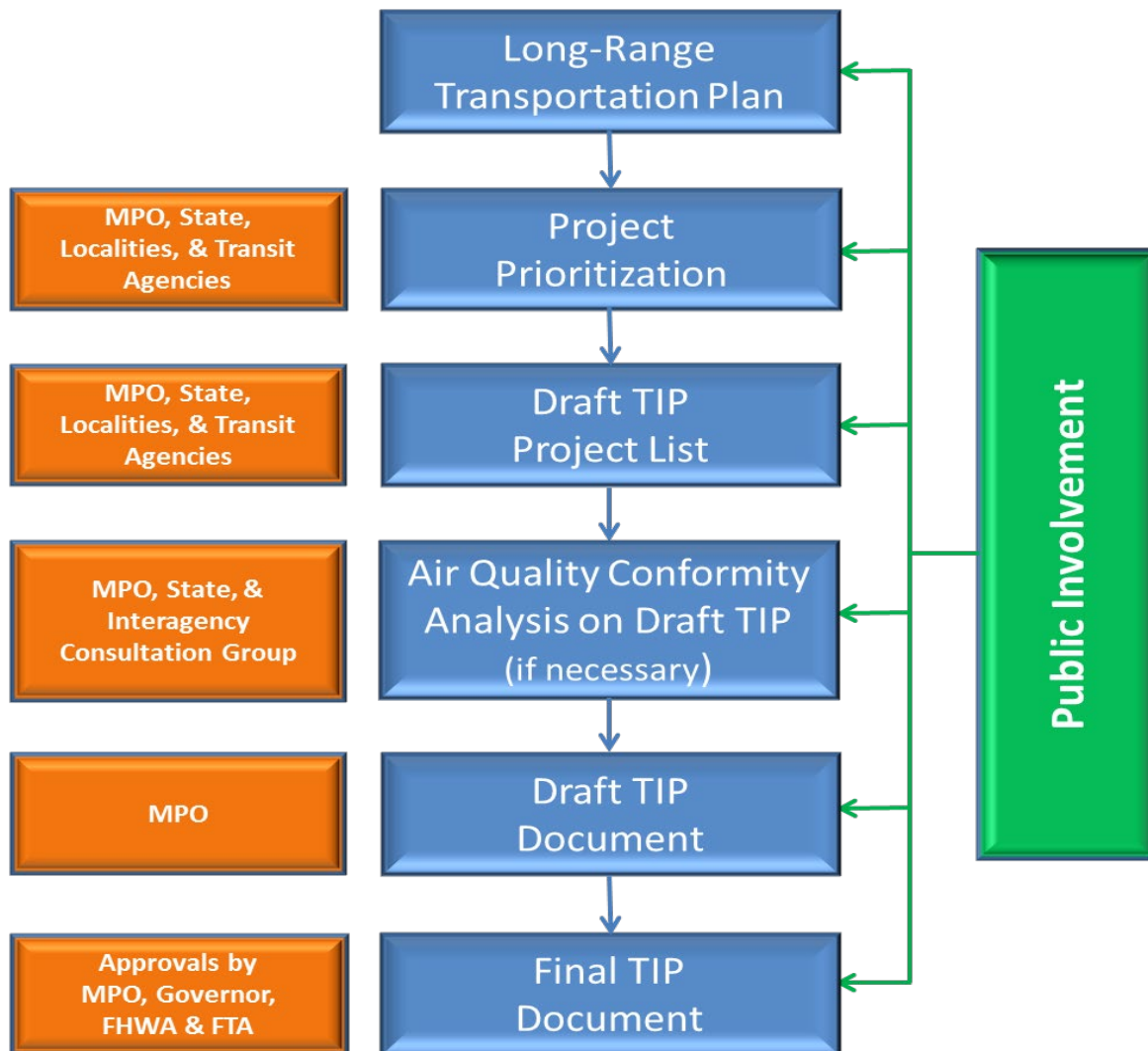
2. The MPO, VDOT, and DRPT will discuss how much financial information will be tracked by the MPO for each project (grouped or ungrouped) in the MTIP, and the MPO Board will approve how much project information it wishes to track.
3. The MPO develops the draft MTIP document, which, in addition to project information, may provide:
  - a. An overview of the document, its purpose, and its contents
  - b. An overview of the MPO region
  - c. A summary of the TIP development process
  - d. Information on air quality conformity requirements
  - e. A summary of public involvement opportunities related to the MTIP
  - f. The financial plan
  - g. A section on how to read the project information, including term definitions, project phases, and funding sources.
  - h. The MTIP's performance targets and policies
4. If an air quality conformity analysis is required, it may be carried out while the draft MTIP document is being produced.
5. The draft MTIP document is made available for technical and public review.



6. Comments received on the draft MTIP document are reviewed by the MPO Policy Board and addressed, as appropriate, and the final MTIP document is produced.
7. The final MTIP document is presented to the MPO Policy Board for approval.
8. Upon approval by the MPO Policy Board, the MTIP is forwarded to VDOT for the Governor's approval and incorporation into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP is then submitted to FHWA and FTA for joint approval.

The approved STIP and MTIPs typically become effective on October 1 – the first day of the federal fiscal year. **Figure 1** summarizes the MTP/TIP development process.

**Figure 1 – MTP/MTIP Development Process**



## Public Involvement

Transportation has a direct and personal impact on the population of a region and is of critical importance to economic vitality and quality of life. The cost of needed improvements to the transportation system generally far exceeds the funding available to address those needs and difficult decisions must be made regarding the use of scarce transportation dollars. For each project that is chosen for construction, many others will not be able to be built. The long-term effects of such decisions make it imperative that the public be provided with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the planning process for the multimodal transportation system. The importance of public involvement in the transportation planning process was recognized in federal law in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), and in every federal transportation act since.

As shown in Figure 1, the MTP/MTIP development process should include multiple opportunities for public input. Special efforts should be made to obtain input from the traditionally underserved, including low-income and minority populations, as well as those with limited proficiency in communicating in English. VDOT, DRPT, and the MPOs should look for opportunities to obtain public input together.

Public involvement activities related to the MTP/MTIP should be detailed in the MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP). The PPP should also specify the length of the public comment period for full updates of the MTIP and for amendments to the MTIP. Typical activities associated with informing and engaging the public and interested parties regarding the MTIP include:

- Issuing press releases regarding public comment opportunities on the draft MTIP. Press releases are usually posted on the MPO website and via MPO social media and newsletter, as well as to the news media.
- Notifying civic and community groups, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders. The MPO should build and maintain contact information for such groups for this purpose.
- Posting notices of opportunities for public comment in multiple languages in accordance with MPO Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policies.
- Reviewing and responding to all public comments received, and forwarding comments to state agencies, localities, and transit operators, as applicable.
- Summarizing, analyzing, and fully considering comments received during the development of the MTIP.
- Maintaining an up-to-date version of the current MTIP on the MPO website for easy access by the public.

In addition, if the MPO is a Transportation Management Area (TMA) and is in nonattainment for any of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, at least one formal public meeting must be held during the MTIP development process.

### **Air Quality Conformity**

In accordance with federal regulations (23 CFR 450.324(a)), if an MPO is in a nonattainment or maintenance area for one or more of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), the MPO, FHWA, and FTA must make an official determination that the MTIP conforms in accordance with the requirements of the Clean Air Act and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93). For such nonattainment or maintenance areas, the air quality conformity process ensures that federal funding and approval goes to transportation activities that are consistent with air quality goals specified in the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The U.S. Department of Transportation cannot fund, authorize, or approve federal actions to support projects that do not conform to Clean Air Act requirements.

For nonattainment or maintenance areas, a full update of the MTIP always requires an air quality conformity determination. For revisions to an approved MTIP, the MPO and state agencies determine whether the proposed revision(s) require a new air quality conformity determination. In general, TIP revisions that add or remove capacity from the transportation network that is included in the travel demand model require an updated conformity determination; while revisions to projects that are not included in the travel demand model usually do not require an updated conformity determination.

When an air quality conformity determination is necessary, the MPO coordinates with the VDOT Environmental Division for air quality modeling of the projects in the TIP or proposed revised TIP. The results of the transportation conformity analysis are documented in a report, which is forwarded to FHWA and FTA for review. Upon completion of their review, FHWA and FTA issue a joint transportation conformity finding.

The air quality conformity process may take up to six months to complete.

### **Certification**

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.334, for all metropolitan planning areas (MPAs), concurrent with the submittal of the full update of the MTIP to FHWA and FTA as part of the STIP approval, the State and the MPO shall certify at least every four years that the metropolitan transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with all applicable requirements including:

1. 23 U.S.C. 134, 49 U.S.C. 5303, and this subpart.
2. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, sections 174 and 176 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7504, 7506 (c) and (d)) and 40 CFR part 93.
3. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) and 49 CFR part 21.

4. 49 U.S.C. 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity.
5. Section 1101(b) of the FAST ACT (Pub. L. 114-35) and 49 CFR part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in USDOT funded projects.
6. 23 CFR part 230, regarding the implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts.
7. The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and 49 CFR parts 23, 37, and 38.
8. The Older Americans Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance.
9. Section 324 of title 23 U.S.C. regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender.
10. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and 49 CFR part 27 regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

As shown above, the federal regulations regarding self-certification of the metropolitan transportation planning process contain references to multiple laws and regulations. To improve transparency of the self-certification process, it is recommended that the MPO produce a *Self-Certification Procedural Guide* that provides brief descriptions of the referenced laws and regulations as well as information on issues considered during the self-certification process. Links to examples of a *Self-Certification Procedural Guide* – including a sample certification page to be signed by representatives of the MPO, VDOT, and DRPT – are below:

HRTPO - [Self Certification Procedural Guide \(2020\)](#)

## **Federal Action**

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.330, FHWA and FTA shall jointly find that each metropolitan TIP is consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) produced by the continuing and comprehensive transportation planning process carried out cooperatively by the MPO(s), State(s), and public transportation operator(s) in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303. This finding shall be based on the self-certification statement submitted by the State and MPO under §450.336, a review of the MTP by FHWA and FTA, and upon other reviews as deemed necessary by FHWA and FTA.

In nonattainment and maintenance areas, the MPO, FHWA, and FTA shall determine air quality conformity of any updated or amended MTIP, in accordance with 40 CFR part 93. After FHWA and FTA issue a conformity determination on the TIP, the TIP shall be incorporated, without change, into the STIP, directly or by reference.

Where necessary in order to maintain or establish operations, FHWA and FTA may approve highway and transit operating assistance for specific projects or programs even though the projects or programs may not be included in an approved MTIP.

## Schedule for Full Update of MTIP and STIP

As noted in the Introduction, federal regulations require a full update of the TIP and STIP at least every four years which in Virginia is done every three years. The TIP may be updated more frequently, but the cycle for updating the TIP must be compatible with the STIP development and approval process. The TIP expires when FHWA/FTA approval of the STIP expires.

**Figure 2** is a recommended schedule for the development of a full update of the STIP and TIPs. The recommended schedule is based on lessons learned from past experiences on the development of the STIP and TIPs.

**Figure 2 – Recommended STIP/MTIPs Development Schedule**

February - June (Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close out projects and clarify STIP Groupings of projects as much as possible before the TIP/STIP “snapshot” for Draft TIP Project List</li> </ul>
June (Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kick-off for preparation of STIP/MTIPs update</li> <li>VDOT/DRPT develop “working” scenarios for STIP/MTIPs update</li> </ul>
July (Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VDOT Budget and Funds Management Division sends Draft MTIP Project Lists to Districts and MPOs for Data Quality Review – coordinated by District Planners and Planning staff</li> </ul>
September (Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VDOT Districts return Data Quality Review of Project Lists</li> <li>Air Quality Conformity process begins on affected MTIPs</li> </ul>
October (Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VDOT Budget and Funds Management Division receives Maintenance Grouping data from Asset Management Division (AMD)</li> <li>VDOT Budget and Funds Management Division receives fiscal-constraint data</li> </ul>
November – December (Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VDOT Budget and Funds Management Division prepares and provides planned obligation information for all MPOs – starting with large project volume MPOs</li> <li>VDOT Budget and Funds Management Division provides fiscal constraint information to all MPOs – starting with large project volume MPOs</li> <li>VDOT Budget and Funds Management Division prepares planned obligation information for rural (non-MPO) areas</li> <li>MPOs coordinate with Human Service and Transit agencies on their planned obligations for MTIPs</li> </ul>
January – February (Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MPOs produce draft MTIP documents</li> </ul>

February - March (Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conformity determinations initiated in orphan maintenance areas (prior to and consistent with the planned initiation of public involvement)</li> </ul>
March (Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MPOs conduct public involvement on draft MTIPs</li> <li>Air Quality Conformity finding by FHWA/FTA/EPA for affected MTIPs due</li> </ul>
April (Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MTIPs approved by MPOs and submitted to VDOT/DRPT for inclusion in STIP submission to FHWA/FTA</li> </ul>
May – June (Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VDOT/DRPT conduct public involvement on draft STIP</li> <li>STIP fiscal-constraint information finalized</li> <li>VDOT Budget and Funds Management Division compiles STIP document</li> </ul>
June (Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conformity determinations approved for orphan maintenance areas</li> </ul>
July (Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated STIP submitted to FHWA/FTA for approval</li> </ul>
September (Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FHWA/FTA approval of the STIP/MTIPs expected</li> </ul>
October (Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved STIP posted on VDOT website; Approved MTIPs posted on MPO websites</li> </ul>
October (Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VDOT Budget and Funds Management Division submit STIP Rollover amendment(s) to FHWA; MPOs take appropriate action in TIPS</li> </ul>

### III. MTIP REQUIRED CONTENTS

Federal regulations (23 CFR 450.326) include detailed information regarding what is required to be included in the TIP, as well as items that are optional. In general, the TIP must meet PBPP requirements as indicated in CFR 450, include capital and non-capital surface transportation projects (or phases of projects) within the boundaries of the metropolitan planning area (MPA) to be funded with federal funds, as well as all regionally significant projects that cannot be grouped requiring an action by FHWA or FTA, regardless of the source of funding.

#### **Project Information**

For each ungrouped non-transit project or project phase (preliminary engineering, environmental/NEPA, right-of-way, design, or construction), the MTIP must include the following:

1. Sufficient descriptive material (scope, termini, length) to identify the project or phase. This includes a unique project identification number that cannot be changed or reused (UPC number for VDOT projects; STIP ID number for DRPT projects, assigned by the MPO).
2. Estimated total project cost, which may extend before or after the four years of the TIP.
3. The amount of federal funds proposed to be obligated during each program year for the project or phase.
4. Identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project or phase.

VDOT Only:

5. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, identification of those projects which are identified as Transportation Control Measures in the applicable State Implementation Plan.
6. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, included projects shall be specified in sufficient detail (design concept and scope) for air quality analysis in accordance with the EPA transportation conformity regulation.
7. In areas with Americans with Disabilities Act required paratransit and key station plans, identification of those projects that will implement these plans.

In addition to the minimum required information listed above, MPOs may enhance the usability and transparency of their TIPs by including additional project information, such as:

- Project location map
- Allocation information per year
- Phase cost estimates
- Phase schedules

- Expenditure information by phase
- Project photos
- Statement of need for the project
- Other information to help TIP users better understand the project

## **Grouping Projects**

Federal regulation (23 CFR 450.326(h)) states that “Projects that are not considered to be of appropriate scale for individual identification in a given program year may be grouped by function, work type, and/or geographic area using the applicable classifications under 23 CFR 771.117(c) and (d) and/or 40 CFR part 93.” In addition, “projects proposed for funding under title 23 U.S.C. Chapter 2 that are not regionally significant may be grouped in one line item or identified individually in the TIP.”

For nonattainment and maintenance areas, project classifications must be consistent with the “exempt project” classifications contained in the EPA transportation conformity regulation (40 CFR part 93).

The grouping of projects provides increased flexibility in managing the TIP and STIP. Some benefits include the ability to more quickly address project changes and shifts in priorities – certain types of project revisions can be made without undergoing the amendment or administrative modification process – at the cost of a decrease in transparency. This is because the obligation information for the grouping categories are included in the MTIP – not the obligation information for each project in the group. MPOs with populations greater than 200K are directly responsible for project selection and the allocation of funds under the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and the Regional Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (RSTBG) in their MPO areas. Some, although not all, MPOs choose not to group projects receiving this type of federal funding.

While DRPT does not group projects as described above, VDOT encourages the grouping of certain types of projects. For more information on how VDOT handles project grouping and the types of reporting available on grouped projects, see the VDOT Groupings section of the [\*Commonwealth of Virginia Statewide Transportation Improvement Program \(STIP\) Procedures \(2019\)\*](#).

Whether the MTIP will include grouping categories and, if so, which projects may be grouped, is at the discretion of the MPO. As these projects are created in the VDOT systems, VDOT district Planning and/or Programming should request MPO concurrence as to it being grouped or ungrouped.

Although individual projects may not be shown in the MTIP if a project is grouped, grouped projects are tracked via STIP Grouping Tracking Sheets, which are regularly published on the VDOT STIP website.



## **Financial Plan**

As noted in the introduction, the TIP must be fiscally constrained. Only projects, or phases of projects, for which full funding can reasonably be anticipated to be available within the time period contemplated for completion may be included in the TIP. This fiscal-constraint – which must be demonstrated and maintained by year – is documented by inclusion of a financial plan.

Fiscal constraint has been a critical part of the planning, programming, and project development processes since the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991. Fiscal stewardship is engrained throughout the transportation decision-making process. The State and MPOs actively strive for transparency, consistency, and reasonableness with regard to planned expenditures of public resources and endeavor to ensure that consistent messages are provided throughout the planning and programming processes.

Federal regulation (23 CFR 450.326(j)) states that the financial plan must demonstrate how the approved TIP can be implemented, indicate resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be made available to carry out the TIP, and recommend any additional financing strategies for needed projects and programs. Revenue and cost estimates for the TIP must be provided in year of expenditure (YOE) dollars. For purposes of transportation operations and maintenance, the financial plan must contain system-level estimates of costs and revenue sources that are reasonably expected to be available to adequately operate and maintain Federal-aid highways.

For transit projects receiving FTA formula or discretionary funding to be included in the DRPT STIP, the amounts are to be included in the federal fiscal year in which the funding is planned to be obligated. The TIP should include specific federal funding sources, avoiding “Other Federal” if possible.

In nonattainment and maintenance areas, projects included in the first two years of the TIP must be limited to those for which funds are available or committed.

Regulations call for MPOs, State departments, and public transportation operators to cooperatively develop the financial plan. In Virginia, since VDOT and DRPT pull together most of the transportation funding information for the development of the Six-Year Improvement Program and coordinate the obligation of federal funds with FHWA and FTA, MPOs receive most of the information necessary to produce the financial plan for the TIP from VDOT and DRPT.

## IV. MTIP REVISION PROCESS

An MTIP revision is a change that is made between full updates of the MTIP, done every three years in coordination with the state's STIP update cycle. Most MPO TIPs are revised on a regular basis to update project information. Fiscal constraint of the MTIP must be maintained when the TIP is revised. There are two types of MTIP revisions – amendments and administrative modifications.

### Amendment

An ***amendment*** involves a major change to a project in the MTIP. An amendment to the MTIP requires an opportunity for public review and comment. A revision request that involves any of the following items must be processed as an amendment:

- Addition or deletion of an ungrouped project
- Ungrouping a project that is currently grouped.
- Major changes in ungrouped project cost or grouping category total estimated cost.

Note: STIP Groupings are included in the MTIP as an individual line item. Estimate increase thresholds apply to STIP Groupings, just like individual projects and thus STIP Groupings may be amended.

- Major changes in ungrouped project/phase initiation dates
- Major changes in ungrouped project design concept or design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes or changing the number of stations in the case of fixed guideway transit projects.)
- Any change that requires an updated air quality conformity determination
- Any change that requires re-demonstration of fiscal constraint

### Administrative Modification

An ***administrative modification*** involves a minor change to the TIP. An administrative modification does not require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or an updated air quality conformity determination. The following are examples of items that may be processed as administrative modifications:

- Minor changes in ungrouped project/phase costs
- Minor changes to ungrouped funding sources for previously included projects
- Minor changes to ungrouped project/phase initiation dates
- Splitting or combining individually listed ungrouped projects – as long as overall cost, schedule, and scope remain unchanged.

## **Procedures for Revising the MTIP**

To help ensure that proper coordination occurs between all necessary parties so that MTIP revisions may be processed in a consistent and efficient manner, it is recommended that each MPO, in cooperation with the applicable VDOT District Office and DRPT, document procedures for processing revisions to the MTIP.

### **Schedule for TIP Revisions**

Although the schedule for processing MTIP revisions will vary from one MPO to another, it should ensure adequate time to carry out the following typical steps:

1. The requester (usually the project administrator – such as a locality, transit agency, VDOT, DRPT, etc.) makes initial contact with MPO staff, usually via email, providing information on the proposed MTIP revision request.
2. MPO staff determines whether the proposed MTIP revision may be processed as an administrative modification or must be processed as an amendment. For MPOs to which air quality conformity requirements apply, MPO and VDOT staff determine whether the requested change will require an updated conformity finding.
3. VDOT and/or DRPT verify that the current cost estimates, allocations, obligations, expenditures, and funds available for transfer (if required) in the proposed revision request are correct.
4. MPO staff reviews the official request letter and coordinates with the requester to ensure the request is processed in as timely a manner as possible. TIP revision requests are processed as follows:

#### **If the request is processed as an Amendment:**

- a. MTIP revision request is included in the agendas of the next meetings of the MPO technical advisory committee (if applicable) and policy board.
- b. MPO staff conducts a public review and comment period as specified in the MPO Public Participation Plan.
- c. Upon approval by the MPO policy board, MPO staff revises the MTIP and sends documentation specifying this action to VDOT and/or DRPT so that the STIP may be revised accordingly once an air quality conformity finding, if required, has been made. Transit amendments require further approval by the FTA before they are updated to the DRPT STIP.
- d. The requester should receive a copy of the documentation of the MPO action.

#### **If the request is processed as an Administrative Modification:**

- a. MPO staff makes appropriate changes to affected projects in the MTIP.
- b. MPO staff sends documentation to VDOT and/or DRPT specifying the changes made to the TIP so that the STIP may be revised accordingly. The requester should

receive a copy of the documentation of the MPO action. No federal action is required.

VDOT/DRPT will send to the MPO confirmation regarding the STIP administrative modifications so the MPOs may update their MTIP document.

5. VDOT and/or DRPT staff should provide confirmation to MPO staff once the STIP has been revised to incorporate the requested revision.

It is helpful to all parties, particularly MTIP revision requesters, for the MPO to provide a calendar highlighting the various deadlines associated with the MTIP revision process. **Figure 3** provides an example of such a calendar. It is recommended that such a calendar be made accessible on the MPO website.

**Figure 3 – Sample TIP Revision Calendar**



**Deadline Dates for TIP Revision Requests**

- Deadline for locality/transit agency to submit proposed TIP revision to HRTPO and VDOT or DRPT for initial review
- Deadline for VDOT/DRPT to respond to locality/transit agency
- Deadline for locality/transit agency to submit final TIP Amendment request letter to HRTPO

**NOTES:** Submittals should be made the month prior to when the revision is needed.  
 The HRTPO Board does not meet in April, June, September, or December.  
 The joint HRTPO/HRPDC Legislative Meeting with the Hampton Roads General Assembly Caucus is held in August and may not include the consideration of action items.

**January 2022 - December 2022**



## V. MTIP MAINTENANCE

Between full updates of the MTIP – which are required at least every four years but are usually conducted every two to three years – the MTIP is kept up-to-date primarily through the use of amendments and administrative modifications. Close coordination between the MPO, VDOT, DRPT, and applicable public transportation agencies helps ensure that consistency between the TIP and STIP is maintained, which is a requirement per federal regulations.

As mentioned in **Section III – MTIP Required Contents**, some MPOs have enhanced the usability and transparency of their TIPs by including project information beyond the minimum information required by federal regulations, such as:

- Allocation information per year
- Phase cost estimates
- Phase schedules
- Expenditure information by phase
- Project location map
- Project photos
- Statement of need for the project
- Other information to help TIP users better understand the project.

Maintenance of the items listed in the first five bullets above requires coordination between the MPO, VDOT, and applicable public transportation agencies. VDOT provides a **Monthly MPO Detailed Report** in Excel format to all MPOs. This report is very helpful for updating funding allocation information, project phase schedules, and expenditures per phase. Phase cost estimates can also be updated using this report as long as there is no change to the total cost of the project. (Any data elements in the highway portion of the MTIP that are common between the MTIP and STIP, like total project costs and funding obligations, should only be updated by way of MTIP amendments or administrative modifications based on TIP data provided by VDOT.)

Maintenance of items related to the last three bullets may be carried out by MPO staff using other sources.

## VI. ANNUAL OBLIGATION REPORT

### Required Contents

According to Federal regulations (23 CFR 450.332):

- a) In metropolitan planning areas, on an annual basis, no later than 90 calendar days following the end of the program year, the State, public transportation operator(s), and the MPO shall cooperatively develop a listing of projects (including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) for which funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 were obligated in the preceding program year.*
- b) The listing shall be prepared in accordance with §450.314(a) and shall include all federally funded projects authorized or revised to increase obligations in the preceding program year, and shall at a minimum include the TIP information under §450.324(e)(1) and (4) and identify, for each project, the amount of Federal funds requested in the TIP, the Federal funding that was obligated during the preceding year, and the Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years.*

As described above, the **Annual Obligation Report (AOR)** is to be produced within 90 calendar days following the end of the program year (or federal fiscal year, which ends on September 30). The AOR must include projects for which federal funds were obligated during the just-ended federal fiscal year. For each project, the following information (at a minimum) must be provided:

- Sufficient descriptive material (i.e., type of work, termini, and length) to identify the project or phase.
- Identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project or phase
- Planned obligations (the amount of federal funds requested in the TIP)
- Actual obligations (the federal funding that was obligated during the preceding year)
- Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years.

**Figure 4** (next page) is a Guide Sheet on AOR data provided by VDOT. The Guide Sheet shows a sample project and provides descriptions of the data included in the AOR listings.

Guide Sheet - MPO Annual Obligation Report													
Tri-Cities MPO Study Area													
Federal Obligated Funds: 10/1/2020 - 9/30/2021													
Locality	UPC / Description	NHSP	STP/STBG	EBWG	Funding Source/Amount			SAFE	TOTAL				
					CMQA	HIP	RSTP	DEMO					
Coconut Heights													
Fennsburg	101237 DUPUY AVE - MINOR WOENING - WCL COLONIAL HTS. 0.10 MI W RTE 1 (BOULEVARD) (0.3800 MI)												
	FedID(6) 6427349												
	8026	(1) TIP: \$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$46,150	\$0	(1A) \$46,150				
		(2) Obligated: \$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$47,088	\$0	(2A) \$47,088				
								(3) Remaining:	\$46,076				
Fennsburg	101239 PUGOLECOOK RD - IMPROVE INTERSECTION - 0.08 MI S INDUSTRIAL DR. 0.08 MI N INDUSTRIAL DR. (0.1610 MI)												
	FedID(6) 6427353, 6427366												
	1286	(1) TIP: \$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$467	\$0	(1A) \$467				
		(2) Obligated: \$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(2A) \$0				
								(3) Remaining:	\$347,556				
Fennsburg	90021 ST ANDREWS ST - REPLACE BRIDGE - APPROACHES AND BRIDGE (0.0200 MI)												
	FedID(6) 5127394												
	8006	(1) TIP: \$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(1A) \$0				
		(2) Obligated: \$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(2A) \$0				
								(3) Remaining:	\$21				
								(3) Remaining:	\$447				
URBAN SUBTOTAL													
		(4) TIP: \$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$445,930	\$0	(4A) \$445,930				
		(5) Obligated: \$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$470,088	\$0	(5A) \$470,088				
		(6) Released: \$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$109,855	\$0	(6) Remaining: \$188,542				
MPO SUBTOTAL													
		(7) TIP: \$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$2,697,098	\$0	(7A) \$2,716,098				
		(8) Obligated: \$9,378,079	\$1,443,409	\$368,800	\$0	\$0	\$1,086,436	\$0	(8A) \$13,264,407				
		(9) Released: \$0	\$0	\$1,084,168	\$163,409	\$0	\$479,350	\$0	(9A) \$1,728,940				
								(5) Remaining:	\$0				
PROJECT OBLIGATIONS													
		(1) Planned obligations by fund											
		(2) Actual obligations by fund											
		(1A) Total planned obligations - Total of (1)											
		(2A) Total actual obligations - Total of (2)											
		Difference between FFY21 planned obligations (Funds Remaining Available for Subsequent Years)											
		(3) * Indicates no funds remain											
		(R) Obligations released from the project											
		(inCO) Project in consolidated vouchers											
		(FedCO(3)) FMS ID associated with UPC											



## **Agency Coordination**

It is recommended that agency coordination for production of the AOR be documented in the Metropolitan Planning Agreement between the State, MPO, applicable public transportation agencies, and other stakeholders. Sample language regarding the AOR for inclusion in the Metropolitan Planning Agreement is included below:

*Within 90 days after the close of a federal fiscal year, the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation shall provide the MPO with Annual Obligation Report information. To the extent possible, this report(s) will contain the projects (including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) for which federal highway or transit funds were obligated in the preceding program year. It shall include all federally funded projects authorized, including those revised to increase obligations in the preceding program year; at a minimum include TIP project description and implementing agency information; and identify, for each project, the amount of Federal funds requested in the TIP, the Federal funding that was obligated during the preceding year, and the Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years. The MPO shall publish the Annual Obligation Report on the Web and in accordance with any other procedures outlined in the Public Participation Plan to ensure adequate access by the public and other interested stakeholders.*

## **Posting of AOR for Public Review**

According to Federal regulation (23 CFR 450.332(c)), the AOR must be published or otherwise made available in accordance with MPO public participation criteria for the TIP. It is recommended that MPOs satisfy this requirement by posting the AOR on the MPO website.



## VAMPO FY 23 Direction-Setting and Priorities Responses

VAMPO's officers for FY 2023 – FY 2024 sought input from the Board to set direction for the organization in the coming year. During the September 19, 2022 VAMPO Board meeting, we solicited input from the Board via a set of questions using Slido, then shifted to open discussion.

1. *What staff training/professional development topics would be valuable for you and your staff?*
  - Equity Analysis in Transportation Planning
  - New IIJA Planning Requirements
  - IIJA Funding Opportunities
  - Grant Management with a small staff
  - Rail Infrastructure Terminology
  - Managing relationships with state partners
  - Title VI/Equity in Planning Resources to help our stakeholders with BIL grants
  - Virtual public engagement
2. *In addition to the TIP Preparation Guide, what resource documents could VAMPO develop?*
  - A guide on discretionary grants available to MPOs.
  - Equity analysis in metropolitan transportation plans
  - Guide to grant management
  - A 101/intro that can be used to share with stakeholders to explain MPO roles
  - Best practices/resources for public engagement to reach underrepresented communities
  - UPWP development - strategically developing programming over multiple year
  - Consultant procurement
3. *Would an On-Call Consultant Clearinghouse resource document be useful?*
  - a. 60% Strong Yes
  - b. 40% Possibly, but I have questions
4. *Should VAMPO conduct annual General Assembly legislative tracking on transportation issues of statewide import?*
  - a. 80% Yes
  - b. 20% We have other sources for that information
  - c. 0% Not Interested
5. *Should VAMPO explore hiring a legislative liaison to undertake this work as a possible additional expense to VAMPO members?*
  - a. 0% Yes
  - b. 38 % Maybe, but I have questions
  - c. 63% No