

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

SEDA-COG Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

2025-2028 SEDA-COG Transportation Improvement Program

Procedures for Transportation Improvement Program Revisions

Background

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes the procedures to be used for processing revisions to the 2025-2028 SEDA-COG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). MPOs use a TIP to identify transportation projects and strategies they will pursue over the next four years. A TIP is a region's means of allocating its transportation resources among the various capital, maintenance, and operating investment needs of the area. The TIP is based on a clear set of short-term transportation priorities prepared through a performance-driven process. All projects receiving FHWA and/or FTA funding or requiring a Federal Action must be included in the TIP. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is the aggregation of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) TIPs.

The STIP is the official transportation improvement program document mandated by federal statute [23 CFR 450.218](#) and recognized by FHWA and FTA. The STIP includes a list of projects to be implemented over a four-year period as well as all supporting documentation required by federal statute. The STIP includes regional TIPs developed by the MPOs and RPOs, the PennDOT developed Interstate Management (IM) Program and other Statewide Programs. Statewide Programs are coordinated initiatives, projects or funds that are managed by PennDOT's Central Office on a statewide basis. Examples of Statewide Programs include, but are not limited to, the Secretary of Transportation's Discretionary (Spike), the Major Bridge Public Private Partnership (MBP3) Program, the Rapid Bridge Replacement (RBR) Project developed via a Public Private Partnership (P3), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) set-a-side, the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program, Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety (RRX), Surface Transportation Block Grant Program set-a-side (TAP) funds, Green-Light-Go (GLG), Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE), Multi-Modal (MTF), Recreational (Rec) Trails, Transportation Infrastructure Investment Fund (TIIF), Statewide Transit and Keystone Corridor projects. The Interstate Management Program will remain its own individual program and includes prioritized statewide Interstate projects. The Commonwealth's 12-Year Program (TYP), required by state law (Act 120 of 1970), includes the STIP/TIPs in the first four-year period. The TYP is not covered by Federal statute. Therefore, this MOU covers revisions only to the STIP/TIP.

For more information on the development of the STIP/TIP, see *Pennsylvania's 2025 Transportation Program General and Procedural Guidance* and *Pennsylvania's 2025 Transportation Program Financial Guidance*. These documents were both released on April 19, 2023 and can be at <https://www.talkpatransportation.com/how-it-works/stip> on the STC Website under 2025 Guidance Documents.

STIP/TIP Administration

FHWA and FTA will only authorize projects and approve grants for projects that are programmed in the current approved STIP. If an MPO/RPO, transit agency, or PennDOT wishes to proceed with a federally funded project not programmed on the STIP/TIP, a revision must be made.

The federal statewide and metropolitan planning regulations contained in [23 CFR 450](#) govern the provisions for revisions of the STIP and individual MPO TIPs. The intent of this federal regulation is to acknowledge the relative significance, importance, and/or complexity of individual programming amendments and administrative modifications. If necessary, [23 CFR 450.328](#) permits the use of

alternative procedures by the cooperating parties to effectively manage amendments and/or administrative modifications encountered during a given TIP cycle. Cooperating parties include PennDOT, MPOs, RPOs, FHWA, FTA, and transit agencies. Any alternative procedures must be agreed upon and documented in the TIP.

STIP/TIP revisions must be consistent with Pennsylvania's Transportation Performance Management (TPM) requirements, Pennsylvania's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and the associated MPO's/RPO's LRTP. In addition, STIP/TIP revisions must support Pennsylvania's Transportation Performance Measures, the Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP), the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan, the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and Congestion Management Plan (CMP), as well as PennDOT's Connects policy. Over the years, Pennsylvania has utilized a comprehensive planning and programming process that focuses on collaboration between PennDOT, FHWA, FTA, MPOs/RPOs, and transit agencies at the county and regional levels. This approach will be applied to continue the implementation of TPM and Performance Based Planning and Programming (PBPP). PBPP is PennDOT's ongoing assessment, target setting, reporting and evaluation of performance data associated with the STIP/TIP investment decisions. This approach ensures that each dollar invested is being directed to meet strategic objectives and enhances the overall performance of the Commonwealth's transportation system.

STIP/TIP revisions must correspond to the adopted provisions of the MPO's/RPO's Public Participation Plans (PPPs). A PPP is a documented broad-based public involvement process that describes how the MPO/RPO will involve and engage the public and interested parties in the transportation planning process to ensure that their comments, concerns, or issues are identified and addressed in the development of transportation plans and programs. A reasonable opportunity for public review and comment shall be provided for significant revisions to the STIP/TIP.

All projects within a nonattainment or maintenance area will be screened for Air Quality significance. PennDOT will coordinate with regional MPO/RPOs to screen Statewide Program projects for Air Quality significance. If a revision adds a project, deletes a project, or impacts the schedule or scope of work of an air quality significant project in a nonattainment or maintenance area, a new air quality conformity determination will be required if deemed appropriate by the PennDOT Air Quality Interagency Consultation Group (ICG). If a new conformity determination is deemed necessary, an **amendment** to the STIP and region's TIP shall also be developed and approved by the MPO/RPO. The modified conformity determination should be based on the amended TIP conformity analysis and follow public involvement procedures consistent with the MPO/RPO region's PPP. Upon adoption of the revised conformity determination, air quality resolution and amended TIP, the MPO/RPO will then provide a formal request to PennDOT to submit the determination to FHWA/FTA for their review and approval. FHWA and FTA will coordinate with EPA to achieve concurrence and then subsequently issue a joint approval on the air quality conformity determination.

The federal planning regulations, 23 CFR 450.324(a) & (c) and 23 CFR 450.330(c), define update cycles for MPO/RPO LRTPs. Per 23 CFR 450.330(c), "Until the MPO approves (in attainment areas) or the FHWA and the FTA issue a conformity determination on (in nonattainment and maintenance areas) the updated metropolitan transportation plan, the MPO may not amend the TIP." MPOs/RPOs in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas are required to update their LRTP every 4 years, and their LRTP clock is reset with the joint FHWA/FTA air quality conformity action on their adopted plan. If the LRTP in a nonattainment or maintenance area has expired due to lack of a conformity approval, the MPO/RPO cannot amend the LRTP or TIP and the State cannot amend the affected portion of the STIP. This includes any projects on the IM TIP or Statewide TIP occurring within the MPO/RPO area. Accordingly, MPOs/RPOs in nonattainment or maintenance areas should allow at least 60-90 days between Board adoption and their LRTP conformity expiration date to allow for the necessary federal coordination and joint approval processes to be completed.

MPOs/RPOs in orphan maintenance or attainment areas are required to update their LRTP every 5 years, and their LRTP clock is reset with Board adoption of their plan. If an orphan maintenance or attainment area MPO/RPO does not adopt their LRTP by the expiration deadline, their LRTP will expire. During an LRTP expiration, the MPO/RPO cannot amend the LRTP or TIP and the State cannot amend the affected portion of the STIP.

TIP Revisions – Amendments and Administrative Modifications

In accordance with the federal transportation planning regulations [23 CFR 450](#), revisions to the STIP/TIP will be handled as an *Amendment* or an *Administrative Modification* based on agreed upon procedures detailed below.

An *Amendment* is a revision to the STIP/TIP that:

- **Affects air quality conformity regardless of the cost of the project or the funding source.**
- Adds a new federally funded project or federalizes a project that previously was 100% state and/or locally funded. A new project is a project that is not programmed in the current STIP/TIP and does not have previous Federal obligations.
- Deletes a project that utilizes federal funds, except for projects that were fully obligated in the previous STIP/TIP and no longer require funding. In this case, removal of the project will be considered an administrative modification.
- Adds a new phase(s), deletes a phase(s) or increases/decreases a phase(s) of an existing project that utilizes federal funds where the total revision of federal funds exceeds the following thresholds within the four years of the TIP:
 - \$2 million for the SEDA-COG MPO. Any changes above this threshold would constitute an amendment by the SEDA-COG MPO procedures.
 - \$10 million for the Interstate Management (IM) Program.
 - \$1 million for other federally funded Statewide Programs.
- Involves a change in the scope of work to a project(s) that would:
 - Result in an air quality conformity reevaluation.
 - Result in a revised total project programmed amount that exceeds the thresholds established between PennDOT and the MPO/RPO.
 - Result in a change in the scope of work on any federally funded project that is significant enough to essentially constitute a new project.

Approval by the MPO/RPO is required for *Amendments*. The MPO/RPO must then initiate PennDOT Central Office approval using the eSTIP process. An eSTIP submission must include a Fiscal Constraint Chart (FCC) that clearly summarizes the before amounts, requested adjustments, after change amounts, and detailed comments explaining the reason for the adjustment(s), and provides any supporting information that may have been prepared. The FCC documentation should include any administrative modifications that occurred along with or were presented with this amendment at the MPO/RPO meeting. The supporting documentation should include PennDOT Program Management Committee (PMC) and Center for Program Development and Management (CPDM) items/materials, if available. Before beginning the eSTIP process, the Planning Partner/District/CPDM staff should ensure that projects involved in the eSTIP are meeting funding eligibility requirements and have the proper air quality conformity status and region exempt codes (as appropriate) in PennDOT's Multimodal Project Management System (MPMS).

All revisions associated with an amendment, including any supporting administrative modifications, should be shown on the same FCC, demonstrating both project and program fiscal constraint. The identified grouping of projects (the entire action) will require review and/or approval by the cooperating parties. In the case that a project phase is pushed out of the TIP period, the MPO/RPO and PennDOT will demonstrate, through a FCC, fiscal balance of the subject project phase in the second or third four years of the TYP and/or the respective regional LRTP.

The initial submission and approval process of the Interstate Program and other federally funded Statewide Programs and increases/decreases to these programs which exceed the thresholds above will be considered an amendment and require approval by PennDOT and FHWA/FTA (subsequent placement of these individual projects or line items on respective MPO/RPO TIPs will be considered an administrative modification). In the case of Statewide Programs, including the IM Program and other federally funded statewide programs, approval by PennDOT's PMC and FHWA is required. Statewide managed transit projects funded by FTA programs and delivered via Governor's apportionment are selected by PennDOT pursuant to the Pennsylvania State Management Plan approved by FTA. These projects will be coordinated between FTA, PennDOT, the transit agency and associated MPO/RPO and should be programmed within the TIP of the urbanized area where the project is located. These projects and the initial drawdown will be considered an amendment to the Statewide Program.

An ***Administrative Modification*** is a minor revision to a STIP/TIP that:

- Adds a new phase(s), deletes a phase(s) or increase/decreases a phase(s) of an existing project that utilizes federal funds and does not exceed the thresholds established above.
- Adds a project from a funding initiative or line item that utilizes 100 percent state or non-federal funding.
- Adds a project for emergency relief (ER) program, except those involving substantial functional, location, or capacity changes.
- Adds a project, with any federal funding source, for immediate emergency repairs to a highway, bridge or transit project where in consultation with the relevant federal funding agencies, the parties agree that any delay would put the health, safety, or security of the public at risk due to damaged infrastructure.
- Draws down or returns funding from an existing STIP/TIP reserve line item and does not exceed the threshold established in the MOU between PennDOT and the MPO/RPO. A reserve line item holds funds that are not dedicated to a specific project(s) and may be used to cover cost increases or add an additional project phase(s) to an existing project.
- Adds federal or state capital funds from low-bid savings, de-obligations, release of encumbrances, or savings on programmed phases to another programmed project phase or line item and does not exceed the above thresholds.
- Splits a project into two or more separate projects or combines two or more projects into one project to facilitate project delivery without a change of scope or type of funding.
- Adds, advances, or adjusts federal funding for a project utilizing August Redistribution obligation authority based upon the documented August Redistribution Strategic Approach.

Administrative Modifications do not affect air quality conformity, nor involve a significant change in the scope of work to a project(s) that would trigger an air quality conformity re-evaluation; do not add a new federally-funded project or delete a federally-funded project; do not exceed the threshold established in the MOU between PennDOT and the MPO/RPO, or the threshold established by this MOU (as detailed in the Amendment Section aforementioned); and do not result in a change in scope, on any federally-funded project that is significant enough to essentially constitute a new project. A change in scope is a substantial alteration to the original intent or function of a programmed project.

Administrative Modifications do not require federal approval. PennDOT and the MPO/RPO will work cooperatively to address and respond to any FHWA and/or FTA comment(s). FHWA and FTA reserve the right to question any administrative modification that is not consistent with federal regulations or with this MOU where federal funds are being utilized.

Transit – Funds Related to Prior-Year Unobligated Funds

This section relates to Federal Transit funds which have been programmed for obligation in a Federal Fiscal Year (FFY), but which have not been obligated in an FTA grant in the current FFY. FTA requires all funds to be shown in the year of obligation in compliance with 23 CFR 450.326(g). Federal Transit funding – including Section 5307 and Section 5337 funds – which are apportioned and

programmed but not obligated in the year of programming may be shifted to the next FFY and considered eligible as an Administrative Modification unless the project is undergoing significant changes as well.

Fiscal Constraint

Demonstration that STIP/TIP fiscal constraint is maintained takes place through an FCC. Real time versions of the STIP/TIP are available to FHWA and FTA through MPMS. All revisions must maintain year-to-year fiscal constraint, per [23 CFR 450.218\(l\)&\(m\)](#) and [23 CFR 450.326\(g\)\(j\)&\(k\)](#), for each of the four years of the STIP/TIP. All revisions shall account for year of expenditure (YOE) and maintain the estimated total cost of the project or project phase within the time-period [i.e., fiscal year(s)] contemplated for completion of the project, which may extend beyond the four years of the STIP/TIP. The arbitrary reduction of the overall cost of a project, or project phase(s), shall not be utilized for the advancement of another project.

STIP/TIP Financial Reporting

PennDOT will provide reports to each MPO/RPO and FHWA no later than 30 days after the end of each quarter and each FFY. At a minimum, this report will include the actual federal obligations and state encumbrances for highway/bridge projects by MPO/RPO and Statewide. In addition, PennDOT will provide the Transit Federal Capital Projects report at the end of each FFY to all of the parties listed above and FTA. These reports can be used by the MPOs/RPOs as the basis for compiling information to meet the federal annual listing of obligated projects requirement in [23 CFR 450.334](#). Additional content and any proposed changes to the report will be agreed upon by PennDOT, FHWA and FTA.

STIP/TIP Transportation Performance Management

In accordance with [23 CFR 450.326\(c\)](#), PennDOT and the MPOs/RPOs will ensure that STIP/TIP revisions promote progress toward achievement of performance targets.

Statewide or Multi- UZA Transit Projects

Statewide managed transit projects funded by FTA programs and delivered via Governor's apportionment are selected by PennDOT pursuant to the Pennsylvania State Management Plan approved by the FTA. These projects should be programmed within the TIP of the urbanized area where the project is located.

MPO/RPO TIP Revision Procedures

As each MPO's/RPO's TIP is adopted, their respective MOU with PennDOT will be included with the TIP documentation. The MOU will clarify how the MPO/RPO will address all TIP revisions. **In all cases, individual MPO/RPO revision procedures will be developed under the guidance umbrella of this document.** If a MPO/RPO elects to set more stringent procedures, then FHWA and FTA will adhere to those more restrictive procedures, but the MPO/RPO established provisions cannot be less stringent than the statewide MOU.

This document will serve as the basis for PennDOT when addressing federally funded Statewide Program TIP revisions.

This Memorandum of Understanding will begin October 1, 2024, and remain in effect until September 30, 2026, unless revised or terminated. Furthermore, it is agreed that this MOU will be reaffirmed every two years.

We, the undersigned, hereby agree to the above procedures and principles:

Mr. Steve Herman
Chairman
SEDA-Council of Governments MPO

Date

Mr. Brian Hare
Director
Center for Program Development and Management
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Date