

Date: August 10, 2011

To: MPO/RTPO Coordinating Committee

From: Jack A. Lord, FHWA

Re: TIP/STIP Topics – Response to Working Group Memorandum of May 20, 2011

General

Since beginning discussions after the 2011-2014 STIP Update there have been six amendments. The quality and quantity of the information provided in those amendments has been progressively better and has resulted in fewer projects for which corrections have been needed. It is expected that the 2012-2015 STIP Update will be a substantial improvement over the current STIP as a result of implementing the new software and a concentrated effort to provide better and more complete information.

We have agreed that during the transition process there would not be any STIP disapprovals or delays. The Washington Division will not disapprove an entire STIP. Beginning with the 2012-2015 STIP Update and subsequent amendments, we will expect that all projects include complete information. In order to make sure the overall program is not jeopardized, we may approve a STIP or amendment with exceptions for projects until complete information is provided.

Project Descriptions, Funding, and Total Costs Issues

- The quality of project descriptions has improved immensely. Titles and descriptions are much clearer and much more complete. Continued diligence on the parts of MPOs and WSDOT is needed to make sure the project information includes the appropriate design concept (the type of facility identified for a transportation improvement project) and design scope (the aspects that will affect the proposed facility's impact on the region, usually as they relate to vehicle or person carrying capacity and control). Further clarification for design concept and scope can be found in 23CFR450 Subpart A – Definitions.
- The descriptions do not need to be lengthy or include excessive language justifying the project. There are many projects for which the descriptions are so long that the text is truncated due to field restrictions. While this issue may be

resolved with the implementation of the new software, the goal is to provide a project description that is both brief and complete.

- It is recommended that MPOs and WSDOT begin to look at projects in the TIP/STIP in terms of “completeness.” If there were an opportunity to provide a picture of a “whole project” in a small amount of space, what would that picture look like? When there is a difference between the total cost and the amount of funding programmed, it raises questions as to what is missing. The amounts previously obligated and the phases for which they were obligated are critical to the picture. Implementing agencies have this information available and can include it with the rest of the project information. The benefit will be derived from providing complete project information so that TIPs and STIPs can be approved and funds can be authorized.
- The issue of providing the completion date for phases should be resolved when the new STIP software is fully implemented and only the program year will be shown. Until the new system is in place, there will be no further comments on date discrepancies.
- With regard to questions about programmed funds relative to project descriptions, as long as descriptive information is complete and the complete funding/phase information is included for the project, this will not be an issue.

Federal Project Numbers

- If projects have had Federal-Aid funds (FHWA) obligated, the information is available in the Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS) which is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the FHWA (FTA funds are not included in this system). Federal project numbers are necessary to find projects in FMIS. But this system is not available to everyone so efforts need to continue to make the STIP a “stand-alone” document.

Projects without Federal Funds

- The TIP/STIP has to include projects proposed to be funded with 23 USC and 49 USC Chapter 53 funds, and must include “all regionally significant projects requiring an action by the FHWA or the FTA whether or not the projects are to be funded with 23 U.S.C. Chapters 1 and 2 or title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 funds.” The regulation goes on to say that “for public information and conformity purposes, the TIP shall include all regionally significant projects proposed to be funded with Federal funds other than those administered by the FHWA or the

FTA, as well as all regionally significant projects to be funded with non-Federal funds.” The question is whether and how to show projects that don’t fall within these criteria in the TIP/STIP. Because such projects are included for information (or conformity) purposes, how they are shown is not critical, as long as they are explicitly identified. It is recommended that the subcommittee discuss this issue and develop a consistent method of showing these projects that is agreeable to all process participants.

Environmental Status

- The committee assessment is correct, with the key being to monitor the project and update the category as needed.

Right-of-way

- This field has become more critical as a result of process reviews for right-of-way acquisition. As with Environmental Status, projects should be monitored and the category updated as needed.

Boundary Issues

- How to address projects that cross metropolitan boundaries will require further coordination. Once there is concurrence among the parties, the methodology should be applied to all participants.

Removal of projects/phases after obligation

- It is problematic that phases are removed as soon as the obligation takes place because the information that is removed is critical to showing a complete project as is discussed in the first part of this memo. The TIPs and STIP are required to be fiscally constrained by program year and if adjustments for obligations must be made, it makes more sense to adjust at a “natural” breaking point such as the end of a program year. A further consideration is that removing the information raises questions about the accuracy of the fiscal constraint demonstrations that accompany proposed STIP amendments. This is an important topic that requires further discussion.

Amendment and update cycles

- We have agreed not to pursue changes to the current cycle at this time.

Amendment criteria

- This topic is also something that will require further discussion. Please consider that changes in total project cost can occur for a number of reasons, not all of

which should prompt an amendment. The STIP is a program and it is changes in the programmed amounts that should trigger an amendment.

The following set of Criteria is **an example for your consideration**.

Amendments are required for:

- addition or deletion of any project (except as noted in the *Administrative Modifications* section below);
- substantial changes to the scope of a project (e.g. changing the number of through traffic lanes, changing the type of project such as from rehabilitation to reconstruction)
- changes to any project that would affect air quality conformity;
- changes in the availability (adding or deleting funds by Congressional action) of earmarked (special appropriation) funds;
- moving a project into or out of the first four Federal Fiscal Years of a TIP;
- changes in a project's total programmed amount greater than 15% (or any amount greater than \$2,000,000);
- changes in a project's fund source(s) from non-Federal to Federal; and
- changes in the termini of a capacity project of any length OR any project in which the total length changes more than ½ mile.

Administrative Modifications can be made for:

- any revisions that do not meet the Amendment criteria listed above, such examples as
 - changes in a project's programmed amount less than 15% (up to \$2,000,000);
 - minor changes to the scope of a project
 - minor changes to the termini of a non-capacity project (one that increases or decreases the total length of the project by no more than ½ mile);
 - adding or deleting a project development phase of a project (Env. Doc, PE, Design, ROW, Constr. or Other) without major changes to the scope to the project;
 - moving a project's funds to another Federal Fiscal Year **provided** they are not being moved into or out of the first four FY's of a TIP;
 - minor changes to funding sources of a project in the TIP (including switching Federal funding categories);
 - changes in a project's fund source(s) from Federal to non-Federal with no changes to the project's scope (however, the disposition of the "freedup" Federal funds remain under the authority of the MRMPO and are subject to TIP Revisions as appropriate);
 - changing a project's lead agency when agreed upon by the two agencies affected

- changes made to an existing project's amount of local or state **nonmatching funds provided** no other funding, scoping or termini changes are being made to the project;
- changes made to an existing project's programmed FTA funds, National Scenic Byway funds, Safe Routes to School funds, Federal Lands Highway Program funds (FH, IRR, PRP, PLHD, WRR & DAR) HSIP, and Federal Recreational Trail funds, **in order to reflect the actual amount awarded** by the federal agency and the corresponding required amount of matching funds;
- adding a project to the TIP which utilizes FTA funds, National Scenic Byway funds, Safe Routes to School funds, Federal Lands Highway Program funds (FH, IRR, PRP, PLHD, WRR & DAR), HSIP, Federal Recreational Trail funds, or 100% state and/or local funds, **provided** the total project amount is **\$2,000,000 or less, and** the project is consistent with the MTP having minor impact on the overall metropolitan transportation system **and** it will not add or reduce through-travel lanes on any roadway functionally classified as an *urban collector* or *rural major collector* or higher;
- adding a project to the TIP which is split from a "parent project" **provided** the cumulative, total amount of Federal funding in each funding category in the parent and split projects remains intact **and** the overall scope of work intended to be accomplished does not change; and
- combining two or more projects already in the TIP **provided** the cumulative, total amount of Federal funding in each funding category of the combined projects remains intact **and** the overall scope of work intended to be accomplished does not change.

STIP Statistics as of July 31, 2011:

▪ Total number of projects in Original 2011-2014 STIP	1,148
▪ Total number of projects in Current STIP (w/11-06 amdmnt)	1,652
▪ Total number of amendments to 2011-2014 STIP	6
▪ Average number of projects per amendment	107
▪ Average number of days for federal review and approval	12
▪ Total Cost for All Projects in Current STIP	\$21,577,012,391.00
▪ Total Programmed Amount for All Projects in Current STIP	\$12,674,258,000.00
○ Total FHWA Programmed	\$2,079,015,000.00
○ Total FTA Programmed	\$548,090,000.00
○ Total State/Local Programmed	\$10,047,153,000.00
▪ Total Number of Projects with Federal-Aid Obligations*	347
○ Total Number of Projects with PE Obligations	161
○ Total Number of Projects with RW obligations	17
○ Total Number of Projects with CN obligations	187
▪ Total Federal-Aid Funds Obligated*	\$315,793,368.42
○ Total PE Obligations	\$32,770,041.00
○ Total RW Obligations	\$27,624,202.00
○ Total CN Obligations	\$276,756,680.42

*Obligations through June 30, 2011 for PE, RW, CN