

# **Streamlining the Metropolitan Council Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Process**

## **Background**

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendments are approved based on four elements: fiscal constraint; consistency with the adopted regional transportation plan; air quality conformity; and opportunity for public input. Currently, all TIP amendments proceed through five committees within the Metropolitan Council for action. Amendments begin at the Funding and Programming Committee, move to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and are adopted by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). The Metropolitan Council's Transportation Committee and the full Council concur with the TAB's action. This process takes approximately 10-12 weeks to complete.

In September 2013, staff from MnDOT, the Metropolitan Council, and the Federal Highway Administration participated in a Kaizen event to evaluate the processes used in the region for TIP and State Transportation Improvement Program amendments and make recommendations on how to reduce the processing time. One of the recommendations from the group was to explore the possibility of streamlining the five-step Met Council process.

The Funding and Programming Committee previously discussed the possibility of streamlining this process in 2008. A concern at the time was that the proposed process included the amendment being sent to MnDOT after TAB approval with the Council receiving notification of the amendment. Due to the state statutes that designate the Metropolitan Council as the federally-required metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Twin Cities region, there were legal concerns about not having amendments go through the Council. The TAB is the region's method of complying with the federal requirement for MPOs to include local elected officials, but the TAB, in conjunction with the Council, comprise the MPO.

## **Potential Amendment Process Revisions**

Potential process changes could be done by the type of amendment. Amendments are either adding new projects or making changes to existing ones in the TIP.

Another way to view TIP amendments is by the funding source, if it originated from the regional solicitation or through an outside selection process. For the 2013-2016 TIP, only 35 percent of amendments were for projects with regional solicitation funding (including HSIP). Without HSIP, only 25 percent of amendments included regional solicitation funding.

### *Conditions for Using a Streamlined Amendment Process*

- Process flow outlined as attached

## Option 1) By Amendment Funding Source

### *Funded through Regional Solicitation*

- Does not relate to a scope change before the committee as a business item.
- The change does not result in any changes to air quality conformity.
- The project is consistent with the adopted Transportation Policy Plan.
- The project is not a regionally-significant project.

### *Funded through Outside Process*

- Any federal funding for the project is from a program not administered by the TAB and Metropolitan Council and constitutes “new money” added to the TIP.
- The amendment will not result in any change affecting the region’s air quality conformity determination.
- The project is not a regionally-significant project identified in the Transportation Policy Plan or is a regionally-significant project identified in the plan but is not changing the scope or any other elements that would potentially change the air quality determination.
- The project is consistent with the adopted Transportation Policy Plan.

## Option 2) By Amendment Type

### *Projects New to the TIP*

- Any federal funding for the project is from a program not administered by the TAB and Metropolitan Council and constitutes “new money” added to the TIP.
- The project is not a regionally-significant project.
- The project will not result in any change affecting the region’s air quality conformity determination.
- The project is consistent with the adopted Transportation Policy Plan.

### *Projects Currently in the TIP*

- The project is not a regionally-significant project identified in the Transportation Policy Plan or is a regionally-significant project identified in the plan but is not changing the scope or any other elements that would potentially change the air quality determination.
- The project will not result in any change affecting the region’s air quality conformity determination.
- The project is consistent with the adopted Transportation Policy Plan.

Example projects that could use this process:

- Congressional earmarks
- Projects funded through statewide programs, such as Section 5310 transit projects or Safe Routes to School (before 2017).
- Cost increases that do not affect the federal amount or project scope.

**Additional Discussion Elements**

Project descriptions in the TIP should be consistent and provide for some flexibility, such as using “intersection improvements” rather than specifying a signal or a roundabout, which can trigger an amendment if a change is made further into design. Amendments resulting from scope changes are different since those are funded through a competitive process. Areas for further discussion include how to deal with different types of scope changes consistently.

Further discussion may also be needed regarding streamlining the format of the amendments as they are presented to the committees.

Project sponsor submits TIP amendment request

Met Council TIP staff submits request for air quality & interagency reviews

Met Council TIP staff notifies TAC Executive Committee of submittals

TAC Executive Committee approves or denies streamlined process

Amendment follows full five-committee Council process

Denied

Approved

Amendment as action item at TAB

Amendment at Transportation Committee

Met Council concurrence