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STIP DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The STIP is developed through collaboration with partner agencies at the local, regional, state, and federal level, and is the last step in the statewide planning process leading to implementation of projects and programs. This chapter describes the process TxDOT follows to develop and implement the STIP, in accordance with 23 CFR 450.218.

Development of the STIP

The STIP is one of several planning and programming documents developed by TxDOT, MPOs, and partner agencies to guide planning and programming activities and ensure that TxDOT plans and develops projects that best address state, regional, and local transportation needs (Figure 3).

[Connecting Texas 2050](#), TxDOT's SLRTP, serves as the strategic policy plan for transportation in Texas and establishes the statewide transportation goals and priorities. The SLRTP is updated every four years and has a planning horizon of 24 years or more. MPOs also develop regional long-range plans, or metropolitan transportation plans (MTPs), which are updated every four or five years and have a planning horizon of 20 years or more. MTPs are required to be consistent with the SLRTP.

The SLRTP, MTPs, corridor studies and plans, and other multimodal planning efforts provide a foundation for TxDOT to develop the [Unified Transportation Program](#) (UTP). The UTP is updated annually, covers a 10-year planning horizon, and authorizes funding for thousands of transportation projects across the state. The UTP is approved by the Texas Transportation Commission. More information about how projects are evaluated and prioritized can be found in the UTP.

LONG TERM VISION

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

24 YEARS

Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP)

Planning Horizon: A minimum of 24 years
Updated: Every four years
Purpose: Establish the vision, goals, and performance objectives for the state's transportation system to identify funding needs and set long-term strategy.

20 YEARS

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANS (MTP)

Planning Horizon: 20 years or more
Updated: Every four or five years
Purpose: Each MPO in Texas prepares an MTP for its respective region, which establishes the long-term transportation policy agenda for metropolitan areas.

10 YEARS

UNIFIED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (UTP)

Planning Horizon: 10 years
Updated: Annually
Purpose: Guides the development of specific transportation projects and programming linked to the goals, performance measures, and targets of the long-range plans.

4 YEARS

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)

Planning Horizon: 4 years
Updated: Every two years
Purpose: Provide a listing of transportation projects in the final stages of development. Once a project is listed in an approved STIP, TxDOT's two-year letting schedule authorizes and administers its construction.

Figure 3. Progression of Planning and Programming

The funds used to finance projects may come from federal, state, and/or local sources. TxDOT publishes forecasted revenues the department receives from fuel taxes, vehicle registration fees, bonds, federal reimbursements, local matching funds, and other state and local funds. Forecasted revenue numbers are then provided to the districts and MPOs for allocation to projects that are listed in the Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs).

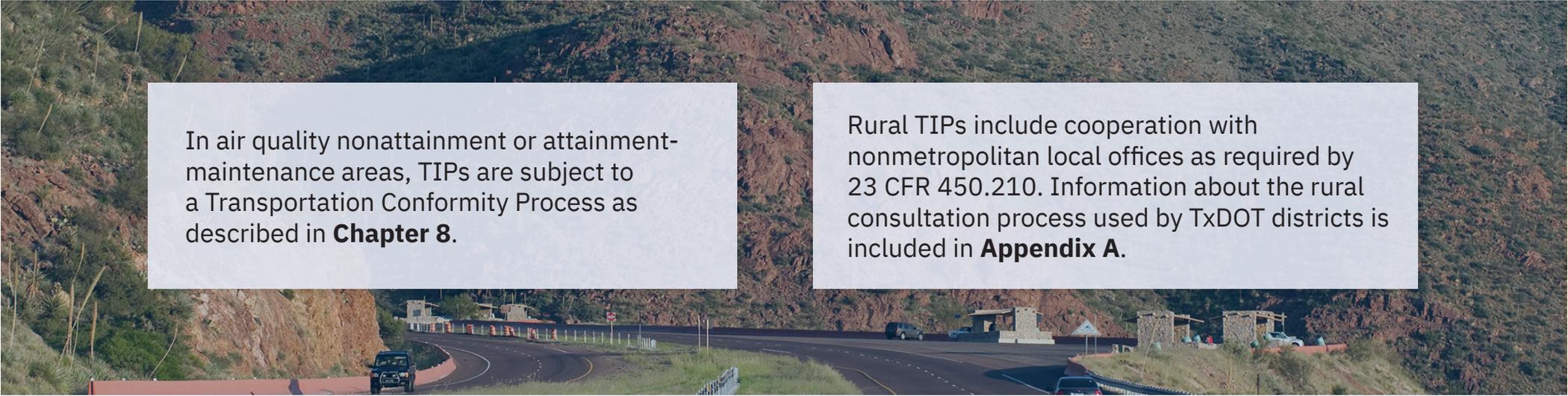
A TIP is a four-year program that contains a fiscally constrained list of multimodal transportation projects in a specific rural or metropolitan area. TxDOT districts develop TIPs for non-metropolitan or rural areas of the state in coordination with Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) and other stakeholders, and MPOs develop TIPs for urban areas. TIPs support the planning goals, objectives, and

achievement of targeted performance set in the SLRTP and MTPs. TIPs are subject to a local public involvement process, as described in **Chapter 5**.

TIPs may include projects outside of the four-year program. These are included in the STIP for informational purposes and are not part of the fiscally constrained projects subject to review or approval by FHWA/FTA. The TIPs developed by the TxDOT districts and MPOs are then included in the STIP, which must be fiscally constrained to the forecasted funding. The STIP also includes the Central Federal Lands TIP developed by Central Federal Lands Highway Division. The STIP is subject to a statewide public involvement process that culminates in a single statewide public hearing. More information about the public involvement process is included in **Chapter 5**.

Once approved by the TxDOT Executive Director, with authority delegated by the Governor, the STIP then goes to FHWA and FTA for review and approval. Federal dollars cannot be expended on a project in a TIP unless that project is listed, individually or by reference, in the STIP. Once a project is listed in an approved STIP, TxDOT's two-year letting schedule authorizes and administers its construction. The [Statewide Planning Map](#) shows future projects in various stages of development.

At any point along this path, TxDOT and its planning partners may alter their decisions to implement projects as a result of changing conditions or expectations, or the project may evolve based on changing community needs, environmental findings, or cost considerations.



In air quality nonattainment or attainment-maintenance areas, TIPs are subject to a Transportation Conformity Process as described in **Chapter 8**.

Rural TIPs include cooperation with nonmetropolitan local offices as required by 23 CFR 450.210. Information about the rural consultation process used by TxDOT districts is included in **Appendix A**.

Revisions to the STIP

While TxDOT usually adopts a new STIP about every two years, changes to project cost, schedule, scope, or other factors necessitate the STIP to be revised regularly. A STIP Revision is required for a major change to a project included in a MTP or TIP. A STIP Revision requires public review and comment and re-demonstration of fiscal constraint.

STIP Revisions follow a similar process to the development of the initial STIP. TxDOT districts and MPOs complete required public involvement before amending their TIPs which, in the case of MPOs, are then approved by MPO policy boards. The revised projects are included in the STIP Revision, posted on the TxDOT website for public review, and are submitted to FHWA and FTA for review and approval.

Minor changes, such as a change in project ID or a change in the letting date that is still within the four-year STIP window, may be made administratively. Administrative Amendments do not require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (nonattainment/maintenance areas).

STIP Revisions, including public involvement notices, financial summaries, and project listings, can be found on the TxDOT [STIP](#) website as they become available.

Tribal Lands

The STIP is developed in consultation with Tribal governments at both the regional and state level. Each MPO has a process to identify issues of concern and for Tribal governments to provide input on the development of their MTP. Tribal coordination by TxDOT districts is conducted in coordination with RPOs. At the state level, the STIP public hearing process provides Tribal governments with opportunity to comment on the draft STIP.

Tribal governments work in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration [Office of Tribal Transportation](#) to develop Tribal Transportation Program planning on Tribal lands. Tribal Transportation Program TIPs are included without change in the STIP, once approved by FHWA, as required by 23 CFR § 450.218 (e).

Federal Lands

The STIP also considers the concerns of federal land management agencies with jurisdiction over lands within Texas. The Federal Land Highway Program provides funding for use by the Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMAs) and Federal Highway Administration for the planning, design, construction or reconstruction of designated public roads that provide access to, through or within Federal or Tribal lands. All regionally significant FLMA projects, regardless of funding source, that affect the public are coordinated with the appropriate State or local agencies responsible for planning implementation of transportation improvements. The [Central Federal Lands Highway Division TIP](#) is included without change in the STIP, once approved by FHWA, as required by 23 CFR § 450.218 (e).

National Environmental Policy Act

Transportation plans and programs are not subject to the environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), but federal planning rules provide guidance that has allowed TxDOT to better incorporate information, analysis, and projects from its planning process into project-level NEPA documents. Project-level NEPA evaluation and coordination occurs when projects advance from long-range plans into TxDOT's UTP. The potential impacts of transportation projects on the natural and human environment can be minor to significant as they vary in type, size, and complexity. TxDOT works with the MPOs, state and federal oversight agencies, and the FHWA and FTA, to ensure NEPA processes are complete before a project in the STIP is constructed or implemented with federal funds.

Operations and Maintenance

According to federal law, states must demonstrate that the existing transportation system is being maintained and that the system is operating efficiently before considering expansion of the transportation system (additional lanes or new facilities). Effective long-term operation of infrastructure is regularly achieved through transportation asset management. TxDOT's [2022 Transportation Asset Management Plan](#) (TAMP) presents a 10-year strategy for managing the state's pavements and bridges, including an asset inventory and condition and performance analysis of pavement and bridges owned by TxDOT or that are part of the National Highway System in Texas. The plan includes a summary of the cost of future programmed work to implement strategies and expected levels of funding over a 10-year period. TxDOT also manages operations through the [Transportation Systems Management & Operations \(TSMO\) Statewide Strategic Plan](#) and the [Pavement Management Plan](#).

