

III. Developing the 2011-2014 TIP

The SPC transportation planning process is guided by the requirements of SAFETEA-LU while focusing on the region's needs related to congestion, safety, public transportation service, highway and bridge reconstruction, economic development and future growth. This section identifies basic planning practices required by SAFETEA-LU and describes the process used by SPC to develop the 2011-2014 TIP.

SPC Planning Practices

Fiscal Constraint

Metropolitan Transportation Planning Regulations (23 CFR Part 450) (October 28, 1993) require a fiscally constrained TIP. There must be a reasonable expectation that sufficient revenue from federal and non-federal sources will be available to cover the project costs identified in the transportation improvement program. Details of the 2011-2014 TIP Financial Plan are presented in Appendix 1 for the Highway Program (Title I, Surface Transportation Program) and in Appendix 3 for the Public Transportation Program (Title III, Public Transportation Act of 2005).

An additional Pennsylvania revenue source, Act 44, was signed into Law by the State legislature in July 2007. This Act establishes an inflation-sensitive, long term funding stream to address Pennsylvania's transportation funding crisis by generating additional income to help pay for the repair and maintenance of local roads and bridges, and to help fund the 73 transit agencies in Pennsylvania. Revenues generated under Act 44 have also enabled Pennsylvania to make much needed repairs to state-owned bridges. Southwestern Pennsylvania has more than 400 projects in the region totaling \$1,801,041,513. Of those projects, 235 call for the repair of structurally deficient bridges.

The 2011-2014 TIP is a fiscally constrained program where the cost of projects must match the region's allocation of federal and state funding as identified in *Pennsylvania's 2010 Transportation Program Financial Guidance*, which is included in Appendix 8. The Title I Highway Program meets the required overall balance between revenues and project costs. SPC meets the required year-to-year balance in combination with the TIPs of other regions in the Commonwealth within the State TIP. PennDOT has provided SPC with assurances that the required year-to-year balance has been achieved in the STIP. The Title III Transit Program requires that transit operators demonstrate that they have the financial capacity to operate and maintain their systems at the identified levels of service. This information appears in Appendix 3.

Public Participation

The general public and other interested are provided many opportunities for involvement in SPC's TIP development process, much of it through SPC's Public Participation Panels (PPPs) in each member county. SPC's public involvement

activities also include proactive efforts by SPC, member agency staffs, the region's transit operators and PennDOT to meet throughout the year with various groups interested in transportation projects.

A discussion of SPC's public outreach activities is detailed in the Public Participation Report. The Public Participation Report was produced upon conclusion of the 35-day public comment period from June 9 through July 13, 2010. The report describes public involvement in the 2011-2014 TIP update process, and includes a summary of the public comments received, as well as the SPC response to comments on the Draft 2011-2014 TIP and Draft Air Quality Conformity Determination for the Pittsburgh Transportation Management Area. The full text of all written and electronic comments received throughout the public involvement process is included in the Public Participation Report.

Project Prioritization

Metropolitan planning regulations require that MPOs prioritize transportation projects in the TIP. Each project included in the 2011-2014 TIP has been identified as falling within Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, or Year 4 of the program. Project priorities were cooperatively developed by the participating agencies.

SPC's Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) works in consultation with its member governments, interested parties and the public to develop the Title I Surface Transportation (Highway) Program. The Transit Operators Committee (TOC) similarly develops the prioritized project listing for the Title III Transit Program.

TIP Modifications and Project Selection

Once a fiscally constrained TIP has been developed and approved in accordance with the planning regulations, projects can then be modified, if needed, or selected from the TIP for implementation. The first year of the TIP constitutes a consensus list of projects for project selection purposes, and no further project selection action is required for the implementing agency to proceed. The process for making changes to the adopted TIP appears in Appendix 7.

Intermodal Facilities and Programs

The 2011-2014 TIP contains a number of projects reflecting the increasingly intermodal character of the regional transportation system. Those projects include a number of new intermodal facilities; park-and-ride lots; intelligent transportation technologies; and several bikeway, trail and walking projects. Those projects demonstrate an intermodal and multi-modal response to the region's transportation needs.

Relationship to the Long Range Plan

SAFETEA-LU requires that TIP projects be drawn from, or be consistent with, the long range plan. A number of projects in the 2011-2014 TIP are individually described in the *2035 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania (2035 Plan)*. Others are related to line items in the 2035 Plan for highway and bridge

preservation and maintenance projects. All are consistent with the 2035 Plan's policies for promoting an effective, efficient and affordable transportation system.

Roles of the TTC and TOC in the 2011-2014 TIP Development

The Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) is responsible for developing, monitoring, and maintaining project details and recommending projects to the Commission for the 2011-2014 TIP Title I Highway Program, and is also authorized to approve minor TIP amendments. Preliminary project lists for the 2011-2014 TIP were developed through regional work sessions of SPC members within each PennDOT District. Recommended project lists for the CMAQ Program and Transportation Enhancement Program were developed by TTC-appointed subcommittees tasked for these special program areas.

The Transit Operators Committee (TOC) is responsible for developing, monitoring, and maintaining project details and recommending projects to the Commission for the 2011-2014 TIP Title III Transit Program. In addition, any public transportation projects eligible for Title I funding have been reviewed and approved by the TTC. This includes selecting projects from Title I public transportation line items, recommending individual public transportation projects for Title I funding, and recommending budget levels for Title I public transportation line items. The TOC is authorized to approve minor amendments to the public transportation programs.

2011-2014 TIP Development Process

The preliminary Transportation Improvement Program is developed using a process where projects that are identified, but not fully completed, in the preceding TIP have first priority for funding. The cost of completing each of these continuing projects is first updated and, if funding is available, their full costs are provided for in the subsequent TIP. A review is performed to ensure project sponsors do not carry over to the next TIP any project that is not needed, and that both the cost and schedule for carryover projects is realistic. Projects are reviewed to ensure that the local match is available. Lower priority projects may be voluntarily dropped from the existing program by their sponsors to create capacity to cover cost increases for other existing projects or to add new projects.

New projects to be added to the updated TIP are subjected to a technical evaluation process that rates the technical need for each new project and overall funding availability. This evaluation process is generally conducted by a sub-committee of the Transportation Technical Committee. Occasionally, however, evaluations of project need are supplied by outside entities. Such is the case with the bridge improvements funded under the Act 44 program. Detailed bridge inspections were completed by PennDOT statewide, and a risk assessment model was developed to identify the repair/replacement of the bridges most in need of repair. Given that a large percentage

of the state-owned bridges in Pennsylvania were found to be in a state of serious disrepair, a directed effort to focus transportation investment dollars to the repair of bridges has been implemented statewide. The 2011-2014 TIP clearly illustrates the statewide focus on bridge repairs over the next four years. The bridges identified for repair in the 2011-2014 TIP were selected using the results of the PennDOT Risk Assessment model, and in keeping with federal requirements for fiscal constraint.

The addition or deletion of new projects into the regional TIP requires several specific actions by the staff and technical committees:

- Make funding available by removing a project(s) from the current, approved TIP for which money has been obligated (the funding agency or project sponsor will notify SPC requesting removal of the project(s) in question).
- Update project information to reflect the most current available cost estimate and schedule.
- Monitor the status of projects that are due to be let (contracted) before the new TIP period begins. These costs are not counted against the available TIP funds, but if the project is delayed for some reason, the new TIP will have to be adjusted to include the unexpected costs.
- Compare the total cost of remaining projects to the revenue estimate for the new TIP. Determine if there is a deficit or if there is capacity for adding new projects.
- If there is a deficit, project phases included in the approved TIP receive priority for funding before new phases can be added to advance an existing project.
- If there is fiscal capacity for new projects, the TTC and/or TOC, as appropriate, will then recommend projects from the candidate list for inclusion on the TIP, while preserving fiscal balance by program year. Project sponsors also have the discretion to defer an existing project and not include it in the TIP update in order to create financial capacity for a higher priority new project.
- In cases where additional funds are identified, such as with Act 44 funds, additional fiscal capacity is created, permitting the net addition of new projects to the regional TIP. However, projects may only be added to the TIP to the extent that funds have been made available for them. The deferral of existing projects from the TIP to create *additional* financial capacity for high priority initiatives may still be required to achieve program objectives.

In recent years, discretionary funding programs at the federal and state level such as the American Reinvestment and Revitalization Act of 2009 and the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative have provided an influx of new funding for transportation projects selected through a competitive application process external to the regional Transportation Improvement Program. The successful candidates for such discretionary funding are added to the regional Transportation Improvement Program in accordance with existing SPC processes.

The TIP update process strives to accommodate the scheduling differences inherent between the development of the TIP and the actual obligation of programmed funds.

Candidate Project List

SPC's planning partners seek early and coordinated public input through public meetings early in the TIP development process. During the working meetings for Draft TIP development, SPC presents summaries of the project testimony on project needs and candidates for TIP funding. Technical committee members, including PennDOT, transit operators and County/City Planning staffs, ensure that the input of PennDOT District Executives, County Commissioners, and the City of Pittsburgh on priority project candidates is reflected in the draft project lists.

The candidate project list is developed cooperatively by PennDOT, the State Transportation Commission, SPC and its members, as well as the project sponsors. SAFETEA-LU management and monitoring systems, corridor studies, and needs and feasibility studies related to long range plan implementation are some of the tools that support decisions in developing the candidate list and evaluating project needs.

Focus on Preservation

SAFETEA-LU emphasizes preservation of the existing transportation system. Regional system preservation projects cover a wide range of improvements, including bus fleet replacement, transit facility maintenance, highway restoration and major reconstruction, bridge replacement and rehabilitation, and safety improvements.

Development of Line Items

Line items have been identified for projects that are air quality exempt such as bridge preservation, interstate restoration, betterments, enhancements, and rail/highway grade crossing projects under the Title I Highway Program. The Title III Transit Program has also identified line items for projects such as transit asset maintenance.

The following guidelines are utilized for line items:

- Only TIP line items budgeted in the current year of the TIP can be accessed for funding.
- When a project sponsor identifies a specific project that will use line item funds, relevant project information is presented to the technical committee for review. If approved, the project is added to the TIP and the line item budget is reduced accordingly.
- Any changes in the overall line item budget, as deemed by the appropriate technical committee, will be subject to the approved TIP amendment procedures. Changes within the current budget line item do not require an amendment.
- A list of the projects or phases to be considered as candidates for line item funding will be provided by line item sponsors for inclusion in the TIP. The technical committee may approve additions to the candidate list once the TIP has been adopted. As a rule of thumb, the estimated cost of the list of

projects included as candidates for line item funding cannot exceed two and a half times the line item budget.

- The line item sponsor shall notify the MPO when a funding request is submitted for U.S. DOT funding approval so that technical committees can monitor the current cost of pending funding requests. Project sponsors should also notify the MPO of federal approval of project funding requests.

Flexibility in Funding Categories

National Highway System, Interstate Maintenance, and Surface Transportation Program funds will be considered interchangeable funding sources for highway projects. Section 5309 and Section 5307 funds will be considered interchangeable sources for transit projects. When either PennDOT or a transit operator deems it appropriate to shift funding between the sources listed above, SPC will be notified in advance for record keeping and information purposes. SPC will inform the member agencies, but no formal action by SPC will be required.

Statement on Fiscal Constraint

There must be a reasonable expectation that sufficient revenue (federal and matching funds) will be available to cover the total project cost of projects within any phase of the TIP. Project sponsors must document sources of local funds for projects and phases proposed for TIP years 1 and 2 before those projects and project phases can be considered as TIP candidates.

In some cases, eligibility for discretionary funding programs, such as Hiring Initiatives to Restore Employment (HIRE), may require that candidate projects contingent on anticipated funding be included on the regional Transportation Improvement Program before it is possible to determine fiscal constraint for such projects. To retain maximum flexibility and project eligibility, such candidate projects may be included in the regional Transportation Improvement Program without meeting the requirement for fiscal constraint. Such projects are clearly identified in Appendix 3.

Determination of Project Need (Project Evaluation)

While there are many factors that go into identifying and prioritizing transportation projects, the four main areas of consideration are local needs and priorities; regional needs and priorities; technical project evaluation; and, funding. SPC and its planning partners continually work to improve and enhance the current technical project evaluation portion of this decision-making process. This effort includes an assessment of all the technical data and project information that is needed and the processes that are used to gather, interpret, and provide this information to decision-makers. This information helps decision-makers weigh the costs and benefits of projects including their impact on congestion, freight, economic development, safety, accessibility, the environment, the physical condition of the existing transportation system, and other factors.

Critical to this technical project evaluation process are the management systems and tools maintained by SPC and its planning partners, including SPC's travel demand models, PennDOT's Bridge Management System, the regional Congestion Management Process, SPC's Environmental Justice assessment, PennDOT's Roadway Management System, Regional ITS Architecture, and the Regional Operations Plan.

A key achievement of the technical project evaluation efforts has been the development of a framework to categorize different types of projects. The project categories defined by SPC and its planning partners include:

- Roadway Preservation
- Bridge Preservation
- Roadway Reconstruction
- Bridge Reconstruction / Replacement
- Roadway & Bridge Widening / Capacity Upgrade
- Interchange Completion
- New Roadways / Interchanges / Bridges
- Efficiency / Operations
- Travel Demand Management
- Safety
- Pedestrian & Bicycle
- Other Transportation Enhancements
- Public Transportation - New Capacity
- Public Transportation - Operations
- Public Transportation – Capital Maintenance, System Preservation and Modernization
- Intermodal / Freight

SPC uses these project categories as a tool for strategically targeting investments in the long range plan, as well as a mechanism for developing and implementing the improved technical project evaluation processes. As the TIP is updated in future cycles, the project evaluation framework can serve to further improve the connection between the long range plan and TIP update processes.

Other Funding Programs

In addition to the funding programs identified earlier, certain state and federal programs provide funding for transportation improvements that are required to be included in the regional TIP. These include Transportation Enhancements, Hometown Streets and Safe Routes to School, and projects funded by federal agencies other than the Federal Highway Administration or Federal Transit Administration.

Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program - Ten percent of the funding distributed to states through the federal Surface Transportation Program is set aside for the Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program. The TE Program focuses on better integrating the transportation system with the communities it serves. Funding from this program focuses on projects from the following Enhancements categories:

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Education Activities
- Acquisition of Scenic or Historic Easements and Sites
- Scenic or Historic Highway Programs, including Tourist and Welcome Centers
- Landscaping and Scenic Beautification
- Historic Preservation
- Rehabilitation and Operation of Historic Transportation Buildings, Structures, or Facilities
- Preservation of Abandoned Railway Corridors
- Control and Removal of Outdoor Advertising
- Archaeological Planning and Research
- Mitigation of Highway Runoff and Provision of Wildlife Connectivity
- Establishment of Transportation Museums

Hometown Streets/Safe Routes to School (HS/SRTS) Program - The HS/SRTS Program, in conjunction with the TE Program, focuses funds on projects that help to revitalize existing communities and projects that improve walking routes to elementary and secondary schools.

SPC's Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) utilizes its TE and HS/SRTS subcommittees to technically review and evaluate all candidate projects. Subcommittee recommendations are then forwarded to the TTC for their approval. For the 2001-2014 TIP, rather than listing TE/HS/SRTS projects individually, the TIP creates enhancement line items that will be drawn down on a first-come, first-served basis as project sponsors are ready to proceed, as long as funding remains in the line item. The list of approved TE/HS/SRTS projects is identified in Appendix 5.

2011-2014 TIP Conformity with CAAA 90

In accordance with the federal Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated several nonattainment areas within Southwestern Pennsylvania for four separate National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The four air quality standards are: the carbon monoxide NAAQS (one designated area – City of Pittsburgh's Central Business District), the PM-10 NAAQS (one designated area – five municipalities within Allegheny County), the 8-hour ozone NAAQS (three separate areas that, combined, cover nine of the ten counties within SPC's planning area), and the PM2.5 NAAQS (three separate areas that, combined, cover five entire counties and parts of four other counties within SPC's planning area). Transportation conformity must be addressed by SPC for each area.

The EPA promulgated regulations on November 23, 1993 (the Transportation Conformity Rule) regarding criteria and procedures for demonstrating and assuring conformity of transportation plans, programs and projects with the Clean Air Act. The EPA periodically revises and amends the Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR Part

93). All conformity findings must be based on criteria and procedures outlined in the Rule.

A regional conformity assessment and new conformity finding for the transportation plan and program is required before MPO adoption, acceptance, approval, or support of a regional plan, TIP or their amendment; or the approval, funding, or implementation of transportation projects. Conformity findings must be approved by the MPO before the regional plan or TIP, or their amendment, is approved by the MPO or accepted by U.S. DOT.

A companion document to this report, the Air Quality Conformity Determination for the Pittsburgh Transportation Management Area, documents the process used by SPC in May 2008 for making the transportation-related conformity determination for the 2011-2014 TIP and the 2035 Plan. SPC's conformity finding is based upon criteria and procedures described in EPA's Transportation Conformity Rule and satisfies all applicable conformity requirements.

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 directs federal agencies (and others who receive federal funding, such as MPOs) to develop strategies to identify and address the effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. The Order is also intended to promote nondiscrimination in federal programs substantially affecting human health and the environment, and to provide minority and low-income communities' access to public information on, and an opportunity for public participation in, matters relating to human health or the environment.

Consideration of environmental justice has been integrated into all aspects of SPC's transportation planning process, from planning through implementation. SPC also works continuously on the refinement of the public participation process to encourage expanded participation in the transportation planning process by representatives of minority and low-income residents.

When properly implemented, environmental justice principles and procedures improve all levels of transportation decision-making by ensuring that transportation decisions meet the needs of all residents; enhancing the public involvement process, strengthening community-based partnerships, and providing minority and low-income populations with opportunities to learn about and improve the quality and usefulness of transportation; improving data collection, monitoring, and analysis tools that assess needs and analyze potential impacts of transportation improvements on minority and low-income populations; and minimize and/or mitigate unavoidable impacts by identifying concerns early in the planning phase and providing offsetting initiatives and enhancement measures to benefit affected communities and neighborhoods.

In accordance with Federal Order 12898, SPC has conducted a socio-demographic and geographic assessment of regional transportation investments to determine the fairness

of the regional transportation improvement program. The results of this assessment indicate that no individually identifiable population segment or geographic area benefit are disproportionately benefitted (served) or burdened (disrupted and/or inconvenienced) as a result of the proposed transportation investment program. This information is presented in the *Environmental Justice Benefits and Burdens Assessment for the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program for Southwestern Pennsylvania*, a companion document to the 2011-2014 TIP.