

Introduction

Preface

Federal regulations require that a region's urban transportation planning process include the cooperative development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a staged multi-year program of projects consistent with a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The TIP is developed cooperatively by agencies within the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR).

The Metropolitan Planning Organization

The MPO is composed of elected and appointed officials representing local, state and federal governments or agencies having interest or responsibility in comprehensive transportation planning. MPOs are responsible for carrying out the urban transportation planning process, through the development of a LRTP and a six-year TIP. There are three MPOs located within the state of Nebraska (Omaha, Lincoln, and Sioux City). For the Lincoln/Lancaster Metropolitan Area, the MPO is the City of Lincoln.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a programming document that identifies the timing and funding of all highway, bridge, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation projects scheduled for implementation in the MPO planning area over a six-year period using federal transportation funds. According to federal regulations governing transportation planning (SAFETEA-LU), the transportation improvement program is to be a staged multiyear program of transportation improvement projects that *"shall cover a period of not less than four years and be consistent with the urban area transportation plan."*

The TIP is directly related to the City and County's Capital Improvement Programs and is prepared in conjunction with the Lincoln CIP each year. The TIP identifies funding amounts by source of funding, jurisdictional responsibility, type of project, and year of funding for these projects. This program includes "Priority Year" projects which are a listing of projects to be carried out within the first three years of the program, FYs 2007, 2008 and 2009. The "Outyear" projects listed in this program are for informational purposes to show the programming intent for future years.

The TIP reflects the priorities and direction of the region and its state and federal partners in the transportation planning process. The TIP and the projects it contains must be consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the current Long-Range Transportation Plan for Lincoln and Lancaster County. The TIP is part of the MPO's effort to establish and maintain the planning process required by the federal government as a condition for receipt of federal transportation funding. The TIP development process requires only projects eligible for federal aid. However, the TIP document may include, for informational purposes, non-federally funded projects occurring in this region. The federal new government regulations require the TIP to be updated and adopted by the local MPO at least every four years.

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Since the TIP becomes part of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the frequency and cycle for updating the TIP is compatible with STIP development and approval process.

The STIP begins as a compilation of the regional TIP's that have been adopted by the MPOs and develops into a comprehensive list of all highway (state or local) and all transit (capital or operating) projects in urban and rural areas that propose to use federal funds. All federally funded projects proposed to begin between October 1st and September 30th from all of the regional TIP's across the state are included in this STIP. Federally funded projects in rural areas are also included in the STIP. The STIP is required to be updated every four years and to include a minimum four-year listing of federal-aid projects for approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Long Range Transportation Plan

The *Long Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP) for the Lincoln MPO is contained in the *Lincoln and Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan*. Included in the LRTP are specific long-range plans for the Lincoln Area Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trails facilities; Future Urban Street and Road Network Plans which include the Functional Street and Road Classifications, Urban Area Street Improvements, and County Road Improvements; a Goods and Freight Movement Plan; and generalized plans for Public Transportation, Railroads, and Airports and Airfields.

During the FY 2001-2002, the City and County initiated the planning effort for the creation of the new Comprehensive Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan. This Plan was reviewed by the Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Commission and was recommended to the Lincoln City Council and Lancaster County Board on April 3, 2002. The Lincoln City Council and Lancaster County Board held joint public hearings on May 8 and May 22, 2002. The final Plan was adopted on May 28, 2002 by the City Council and County Board; and the Mayor signed the resolution on May 29, 2002. The Lincoln MPO Officials Committee review and action with the MPO endorsement was executed on June 13, 2002.

To see that this year's program of transportation projects is working in accord with the transportation plan, a review was undertaken with the *Plan*. This listing of transportation projects was found to be consistent with the current *Long Range Transportation Plan* with the exception of segment of one project within the Antelope Valley set of projects. A Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Transportation Plan addresses this difference is to run concurrent with the TIP review and adoption process.

Geographic Area the TIP Covers

The Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area encompasses the entire metropolitan statistical area as defined by the Bureau of the Census which is the County of Lancaster. Projects *outside* the MPO metropolitan planning area fall primarily under the purview of the NDOR.

Types of Projects Included in the TIP

Federal regulations require that any transportation project within the metropolitan planning area that is to be funded with U.S. Department of Transportation funds must be included in the TIP. The types of projects listed below are eligible for federal funding.

- Projects on the federal aid system (road and bridge construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, etc.)
- Public transportation (vehicle maintenance and operations, capital improvement projects, mass transit system construction, etc.)
- Projects that are not on the federal aid system, but may be eligible for federal funding for other reasons (e.g. bridge projects, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, etc.). The projects, however, must be linked to the transportation network.

Public Involvement Process

The transportation planning process allows for public involvement at various points within the transportation plan and program development. This involves a series of steps from the adoption of the *Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan* and *Long Range Transportation Plan* to the programming of projects and the actual construction of the transportation facilities. The critical decision points in the transportation planning process are: 1) the development of a 25 year transportation plan, 2) the street improvement program which identifies priorities for planned projects, 3) Capital Improvement Programs for a period of six years, 4) Project Design and Project Construction. The first two steps are included in the long range planning process, the third step consolidates the Capital Improvement Programs of the City and County with the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the last step is the specific project design and development.

The City and the County each have an established procedure for adopting improvement programs. Both City and County processes include review by the City-County Planning Commission for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and formal advertised Public Hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council or County Board. The Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD) also allows for public input within open advertised public meeting. The consolidation of these improvement programs are coordinated in the TIP as reviewed by the Technical Committee before it is referred to a formal hearing by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission forwards their recommendation to the MPO Officials Committee for execution and transmittal to the State for inclusion in the STIP.

INTERIM GUIDANCE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SAFETEA-LU PLANNING PROVISIONS

Below is the joint FHWA/FTA interim guidance for State/Local planning partners in implementing SAFETEA-LU as they apply directly to STIPs and metropolitan TIPs. These are short summaries of key changes to the statutory requirements for planning reviews followed by guidelines for how FHWA Division and FTA Region Offices will administer and oversee highway and transit programs during this TEA-21/SAFETEA-LU transitional period. The new SAFETEA-LU legislation adds new provisions that will need to be fully implemented for metropolitan TIPs adopted after July 1, 2007. We can begin addressing these new elements this year since they readily fit into our process and program.

TIP/STIP Cycles and Scope: STIPs and metropolitan TIPs must be updated at least every 4 years and must contain at least 4 years of projects and strategies. *The 4-year frequency cycle and the 4-year scope requirements go hand-in-hand and must be implemented together, for any STIP or metropolitan TIP adopted after July 1, 2007.*

Visualization Techniques in Plans and Metropolitan TIP Development: As part of transportation plan and TIP development, MPOs shall employ visualization techniques (see amended 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(5)(C)(ii) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(i)(5)(C)(ii)). States shall also employ visualization techniques in the development of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (see amended 23 U.S.C. 135(f)(3)(B)(ii) and 49 U.S.C. 5304(f)(3)(B)(ii)). States and MPOs must employ visualization techniques prior to adoption of statewide and metropolitan transportation plans and metropolitan TIPs addressing SAFETEA-LU provisions.

Publication of Plans and TIP/STIP: MPOs shall publish or otherwise make available for public review transportation plans and TIPs “including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web” (see amended 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(6) on plans and 23 U.S.C. 134(j)(7)(a) on TIPs, and for transit, amended 49 U.S.C. 5303(i)(6) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(j)(7)(a)). States also shall use a similar approach for the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (see amended 23 U.S.C. 135(f)(8)) and 49 U.S.C. 5304(f)(8)). *These publication requirements must be in place prior to adoption of transportation plans and TIPs addressing SAFETEA-LU provisions.*

Annual Listing of Obligated Projects: SAFETEA-LU specifies that the development of the annual listing “shall be a cooperative effort of the State, transit operator, and MPO” and also shall include two new project types, “investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities” for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. *This revised requirement for an annual listing must be in place prior to adoption of transportation plans and programs addressing SAFETEA-LU.*