

Introduction

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area is a staged, six-year schedule of transportation improvements using (or expected to use) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding, state funds, and other projects that have significant system impacts. The TIP is developed cooperatively by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Technical Committee and agencies within the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area which include the City of Lincoln Public Works & Utilities Department, Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department, Lancaster County Engineering, Lincoln Airport Authority, Lower Platte South Natural Resource District, Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), and others agencies as transportation related projects are developed.

Federal regulations require that each urbanized area, as a condition to the receive federal capital or operating assistance, have a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process. The MPO is the organization designated to carry out the 3-C process which results in plans and programs that are consistent with the comprehensively planned development of the urbanized area. The TIP, along with the Long Range Transportation Plan, is a key element of this process. The most recent transportation act, the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU), continues these basic planning requirements. In order to remain eligible for federal transportation funding, the planning process must demonstrate that the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area is in compliance with all federal requirements for metropolitan transportation planning.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization

The governor designates the MPOs for different urban areas of a state who are responsible for carrying out the urban transportation planning process, through the development of a Transportation Plan and TIP. The MPO is composed of elected and appointed officials representing local, state and federal governments and agencies having interest or responsibility in comprehensive transportation planning. The designated MPO for the Lincoln-Lancaster Metropolitan Area is the City of Lincoln.

For the Lincoln MPO, the Mayor of Lincoln is the “Executive Officer” who works with the MPO Officials Committee as the policy body to establish and approve the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the TIP and other work of the MPO. The MPO Officials Committee is composed of elected and appointed officials representing local, state and federal governments or agencies having interest or responsibility in the comprehensive transportation planning process. These include the Mayor of Lincoln, and representatives from the Lincoln City Council, Lancaster County Board of Commissioners, Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

Federal Requirements for Transportation Improvement Programs

The final planning and programming regulations to implement SAFETEA-LU were issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation on February 14, 2007 included specific requirements for development and content of TIPs. These are summarized below and addressed within this document.

- **Time Period** – *The TIP shall cover at least a four-year period and be updated at least every four years.* The financial and project tables included in this document cover FY's 2009-2014. NDOR and the MPOs have established an annual update cycle.
- **Public Comment** – *The TIP process shall provide opportunity for public review and comment on the TIP.* The Lincoln-Lancaster transportation planning process allows for public involvement at various points within the transportation plan and program development. The public participation process is summarized below in this section.
- **Specific Project Information** – *The TIP is to list capital and non-capital surface transportation projects to use a variety of federal funds or regionally significant projects requiring FHWA or FTA action. For each project or project phase the TIP shall include sufficient descriptive material including type of work, termini, length, total cost, amount of federal funds, and responsible agency. Line items may be used for projects that are not considered to be of appropriate scale for individual identification.* A complete detailed project listing is organized by planning agency, funding sources or project type for each project.
- **Consistency with the Transportation Plan** – *Each project or project phase in the TIP shall be consistent with the Transportation Plan.* For each project included in the detailed project listing, a Transportation Plan conformity reference is provided.
- **Financial Plan** – *The TIP shall include a financial plan including system-level estimates of costs and revenue sources that are reasonably expected to be available to adequately operate and maintain Federal-aid highways and public transportation.* Each agencies summarizes the expected financial resources and the last section summarizes the TIP financial resources.
- **Prioritization Process** – *The TIP should identify the criteria and process for prioritizing projects from the Transportation Plan for inclusion in the TIP.* The project selection process is summarized below in this section.
- **Status of Projects from FY 2008-2013 TIP** – *The TIP should list major projects from the previous TIP that were implemented or delayed.* Each section lists projects under construction, completed, delayed, or moved out of the current programming period.

Transportation Control Measures – *The TIP should describe the process of implementing TCMs.* The Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area is in conformance for air quality and does not specifically address TCMs for the purpose of reducing emissions.

- **Air Quality** – *The TIP shall document conformity with the State Implementation Plan.* The Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area is in conformance for air quality and the state does not require a State Implementation Plan for meeting Clean Air Act requirements.

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 four years of the program, FYs 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. 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. Projects identified in the TIP 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 development process requires that the TIP only include 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) by reference, 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 including federally funded projects in rural areas. 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 and Federal Transit Administration.

Long Range Transportation Plan

The *Long Range Transportation Plan* for the Lincoln MPO is contained in the *Lincoln and Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan*. Included in the *Transportation Plan* 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; Congestion Management Planning Activities; and generalized plans for Public Transportation, Railroads, and Airports and Airfields.

The current *2030 Lincoln-Lancaster Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Plan* was approved by the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County on November 16, 2006 and endorsed by the Lincoln MPO on January 4, 2007. The transportation planning process included the identification of the social, economic, and environmental impacts for alternative sketch transportation plans. The *2030 Transportation Plan* included a needs assessment and financial plan. The Transportation Plan was transmitted to the State Department of Roads and to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration.

To see that this program of transportation projects is working in accord with the transportation plan, a review was undertaken and was found to be consistent with the current *Long Range Transportation Plan*.

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 20 year transportation plan, 2) the street improvement program which identifies priorities for planned projects, 3) the development of 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 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.