

Introduction

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area is a staged, four-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 Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department, City of Lincoln Public Works & Utilities Department, Lancaster County Engineering, Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), StarTran, Lincoln Airport Authority, Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department, Lower Platte South Natural Resource District, 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) and extensions, 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.

### **Purpose of the TIP**

The primary purpose of this document is to provide information to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), transportation agencies and citizens regarding the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development process which:

- a. Depicts the Lincoln MPO's priorities for the expenditure of federal funds for all transportation funding categories by federal fiscal year including highway, public transportation, bicycle, pedestrian and transportation enhancement projects;
- b. Provides assurance to the FHWA that the project selection process has been carried out in accordance with federal requirements, Section 134 of Title 23, United States Code (USC), as amended; and
- c. Demonstrates that the TIP is financially feasible. The contents of this section include a brief description of the project selection process that was used for development of the TIP. This process is currently under review by the Lincoln MPO and the scope of recommended changes will be detailed and referenced in the financial element of the *Long Range Transportation Plan*. The projects included in this program represent Fiscal Years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015, for the purposes of fulfilling federal requirements.

## 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 2012-2015. 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 2011-2014 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 Metropolitan Planning Organization**

The governor designates the MPOs for urban areas in the state to be responsible for carrying out the urban transportation planning process, through the development of a Transportation Plan and TIP. The City of Lincoln is the designated MPO for the Metropolitan Area which includes the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County. The MPO is composed of elected and appointed officials representing local, state and federal governments and agencies having interest or responsibility in land use planning, the quality and the location of transportation facilities, transportation safety issues on all roads, and better planning and design.

The Mayor of the City of Lincoln is the “Executive Officer” of the Lincoln MPO. Under the Mayor, the MPO functions through a committee structure comprised of an Officials Committee, a Technical Committee, a number of subcommittees, and MPO administrative staff 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, NDOR, FHWA and FTA.

## **Planning Commission**

The Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning Commission plays an important role in the MPO transportation planning process. Advertised public hearings before the Planning Commission are part of the formal adoption of the MPO Transportation Plan and the City and County Comprehensive Plans. In addition, the Planning Commission reviews the TIP for conformance with the Transportation Plan. After public hearings are held, the Planning Commission forwards the MPO documents to the Officials Committee for approval.

## **Geographic Area the TIP Covers**

The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) is the geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process must be carried out. The boundaries of the MPA are determined by agreement between the Governor and the MPO. The Lincoln MPO Metropolitan Planning Area encompasses the entire County of Lancaster.

## **Certification**

FHWA and FTA conducted a Quadrennial Certification Review of the Lincoln MPO Transportation Planning Process in May of 2009. The final report of the FHWA/FTA Joint Certification Review was transmitted to the Lincoln MPO Officials on September 11, 2009 and the report was presented to the MPO Officials Committee on September 24, 2009. The result of this federal certification review included six commendations, seven programmatic recommendations and twelve corrective actions. The federal team conditionally certified the transportation planning process for the Lincoln Metropolitan area with the understanding that the solutions to the corrective actions would be addressed in a specified time frame and outlined in a federally approved Action Plan. The Lincoln MPO is working in cooperation with the FHWA and FTA resolve these issues and to meet the deadlines in the approved *MPO Action*.

## **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 multi-year 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's, County's, and State's Capital Improvement Programs which are brought forward at this time 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 is a listing of priority projects which are to be carried out within the next four fiscal years which include FYs 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015. Projects planned for implementation beyond this time frame are not listed in this program since local funding may be tentative and federal funds for these projects can not be obligated.

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. This program of projects depicts the MPO's priorities for the expenditure of federal funds for all transportation funding categories by federal fiscal year including highway, public transportation, bicycle, pedestrian and transportation enhancement projects. The TIP document may also include, for informational purposes, non-federally funded projects occurring in the planning area. The federal government regulations require the TIP to be updated and adopted by the local MPO at least every four years.

### **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.
- Regional projects requiring FHWA or FTA action or projects having significant system impacts.

## **The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**

The TIP becomes part of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) by reference and the frequency and cycle for updating the TIP is compatible with STIP development and approval process. NDOR and the Nebraska MPOs have established an annual update cycle.

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 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup> 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 two years and to include a minimum four-year listing of federal-aid projects for approval by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

## **Conformance with Long Range Transportation Plan**

All projects are drawn from, or consistent with, the MPO's *2030 Transportation Plan*, the *Lincoln and Lancaster County Comprehensive Plans*, the Railroad Transportation Safety District (RTSD) Railroad Transportation Study, Transit Development Plan, Lincoln Area Trails Master Plan, State Transportation Plans and Needs Studies and the recommendations of local governments and citizens. The projects reflect community goals and objectives and are assigned to the appropriate staging period based on the area's priorities, the individual project urgency, and the anticipated funding capabilities of the participating governments.

The TIP document was developed in conformance with the *Long Range Transportation Plan* for the Lincoln MPO as coordinated with the *Lincoln and Lancaster County Comprehensive Plans*. 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. To see that system improvements are programmed as transportation projects and continues to work in accord with the transportation plan, a review was undertaken and was found to be consistent with the current *Long Range Transportation Plan* system improvements.

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

## Project Selection

Projects listed in the TIP typically originate in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) developed by the MPO in cooperation with the respective implementing agencies involved in the planning process. These implementing agencies then carry out the transportation plan's specific elements in the TIP. As a result, the TIP serves as a strategic management tool that accomplishes the objectives of the MPO transportation plan.

Project prioritization is an important element of the TIP, especially since the demand for Federal-aid transportation projects usually exceeds the level of Federal funds available for use. State highway projects in the TIP have been prioritized by the Nebraska Department of Roads. Local Federal-aid highway improvement projects programmed by the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County and coordinating agencies have been prioritized according to resource availability. And other projects may be dependent on the availability of competitive funding using federal Surface Transportation Program (STP), Enhancement Program, and FTA funds. Other selected projects are accomplished through a coordinated effort among all parties to advance projects which preserve the existing system, relieve congestion, improve air quality and preserve the quality of life and promote economic development. Readiness to proceed and financial capacity were also considered in project selection. System improvement projects in the MPO's urbanized area are generally selected and prioritized based on the following process:

### General Project Selection Criteria (not a hierarchical listing)

1. *Consistency with Plans.* Project is identified in the Long-Range Transportation Plan or supports land use and growth plans, or other local planning documents.
2. *Project Ready.* Programmed or partially programmed in the current Transportation Improvement Program or project ready for implementation.
3. *Funding Availability.* The proposed project or program strategy has a ready source of available and qualified funds for implementation.
4. *Economic Impact.* Project supports the economic vitality of the metropolitan area by promoting economic or growth related value to the community and specifically improves or enhances development of smart growth objectives and job creation.
5. *Safety and Congestion.* Increases the safety and decreases the congestion of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
6. *System Preservation.* Project emphasizes the preservation and rehabilitation of the existing transportation system rather than expansion and improves the capacity to move all forms of traffic.
7. *Non-motorized.* Factors that support non-motorized transportation activities such as sidewalks and shared-use trails that enhance or adds capacity or mobility to the system for non-motorized travel.
8. *Freight.* Increase the accessibility and mobility options for freight movement and enhances or adds capacity or mobility to the system to move freight.
9. *Environmental and Quality of Life.* Evaluated in terms of its ability to protect and enhance the environment and improve quality of life and reduces impacts on the environment and supports community cohesion and design.
10. *Government Objectives.* Proposed project or program strategy is advanced to meet governmental objectives or actions.

Projects initiated locally are jointly prioritized according to the type of activity scheduled in the TIP and the Federal funding category. The process of prioritizing projects is also influenced by state and local policy-level decision making and the availability of Federal, state, and local funds. Wherever possible, technical and non-technical factors are jointly used to identify projects which have the greatest need and value for implementation. A effort is made to advance projects which preserve the existing system.

### **Maintenance and Operation of Current Transportation Systems**

The highest priority in the selection of projects for the TIP is to ensure the adequate reconstruction, maintenance and operation of the current transportation system. Twenty-six (26) of the thirty-six (36) road projects listed are targeted at the reconstruction for road widening, bridge rehab and replacement, or maintenance and operation on our existing systems. Nine (9) of these project involve bridge reconstruction or replacement. Ten (10) projects have a specific maintenance or safety focus. These projects are necessary to ensure the investment in our transportation infrastructure is preserved. However, the responsibility for the everyday maintenance and operation of the local infrastructure lies with the owner of the road or local jurisdiction. The state, county, cities, and villages are each responsible for the maintenance and operation of their own roads. Each jurisdiction has developed their own methodology for maintenance and operations.

### **Public Transportation Project Prioritization Process**

Public Transportation projects are typically funded through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The Public Transportation Element of the TIP includes the capital improvement programs of City of Lincoln. The prioritization process of transit projects originate from StarTran's Vehicle Replacement Program, project analysis of future needs and recommendations from the Transit Development Plan (TDP). The TDP includes a list of major findings and prescribed service delivery enhancements that are based on analyses of route performance, employment growth and ridership trends. The TDP provides an assessment of current StarTran services, peer comparison analysis, as well as recommendations over the planning period.

### **Financial Plan Statement**

The projects identified in the TIP are financially constrained, meaning they can be implemented using current and proposed revenue sources based on the programs contained in the TIP. The expected and anticipated revenue sources are, therefore, reasonably expected to be in place when needed. Revenues for federally funded projects during each year are shown in the Financial Plan.

### **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 MPO *2030 Long Range Transportation Plan* and the *Lincoln and Lancaster County Comprehensive Plans* 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 four to 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.

### **Annual Listing of Projects**

Pursuant to the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 134(j)(7)(B) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(c)(5)(B), the MPO has published an annual listing of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. These are listed in the TIP by jurisdiction within each section. The published document is available for public review from the MPO and on the MPO website under the TIP Section.

### **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)**

The SAFETEA-LU legislation provided funds to be utilized in Clean Air Act non-attainment and maintenance areas for transportation programs and projects that contribute to attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Since the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area is compliance with the latest air quality standards, the MPO does not specifically program for CMAQ funding.

### **Amendment Process**

The TIP may be modified at any time, provided that appropriate public involvement occurs. However, minor TIP amendments or administrative modifications may, unless specifically required by the MPO's Public Participation Plan, be made without public involvement. The TIP must be approved by the MPO and the Governor of the State of Nebraska. A conformity determination must also be made by the FHWA and the FTA. Once approved, the TIP then becomes, without modification, part of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The frequency and cycle for updating the TIP should be compatible with that of the STIP. NDOR and the Nebraska MPOs have established an annual update cycle.