

MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)
Handbook

Prepared by:

GULF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



June 2011

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION

II. THE MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST MPO

III. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

IV. TIP STRUCTURE

V. TIP GUIDELINES

VI. TIP PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

APPENDIX

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose is to provide a clear guide on the processes used to develop the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the project selection. This handbook has been developed for the member jurisdictions of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to explain the policies and procedures of the TIP. As mandated, all federally funded projects carried out within the boundaries of a metropolitan planning area serving a transportation management area shall be selected for implementation from the approved TIP by the metropolitan planning organization designated for the area in consultation with the State and any affected public transportation operator.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization

The MPO was created by federal legislation and is governed by 23 U.S.C. 134-135. Every urbanized area, a geographic area with a population of 50,000 or more as designated by the Bureau of the Census, must have a designated MPO to qualify for federal highway or transit financial assistance. MPOs were formed to ensure federal transportation funds are spent in a manner that has a basis in metropolitan region-wide plans. These plans are developed through inter-governmental collaboration, rational analysis, and consensus-based decision-making. In accordance with the regulations referenced above, MPOs must develop transportation plans and programs which encourage and promote safe and efficient management, operation, and development of transportation systems which embrace the various modes of transportation in a manner that will maximize the mobility of people and goods and foster economic growth while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution. The MPO serves to evaluate transportation alternatives, scaled to the size and complexity of the region, to the nature of its transportation issues, and to the realistically available options to advance the area's goals. All transportation projects within the MPO planning area must be supported by the MPO's long range transportation plan to be eligible for federal funding.

Surface Transportation Program (STP) Funds

Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds provide flexible funding that may be used by States and localities for projects on any Federal-aid highway. STP funds are apportioned to the State and a portion is made available to metropolitan planning areas to advance local priorities. The funds may be used for a variety of planning, program or improvement projects as listed in Section III of this document. The MPO distributes the funds to the fourteen jurisdictions based on the region's highest priority transportation projects defined in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the criteria listed within this document.

II. THE MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST MPO

MPO Planning Area

The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO planning area is the entirety of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson counties. GRPC is the designated MPO for the two urbanized areas within these counties, which include the Gulfport-Biloxi and Pascagoula urbanized areas. An Urbanized Area (UZA) is a statistical geographic entity designated by the Census Bureau, consisting of a central core and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 50,000 people, generally with an overall population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile.

The Gulfport-Biloxi urbanized area consists of the cities of Waveland, Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Long Beach, Gulfport, Biloxi, D'Iberville and Ocean Springs. The Pascagoula urbanized area consists of the cities of Gautier, Pascagoula, and Moss Point. Census 2000 population for the Gulfport-Biloxi urbanized area was 205,754, therefore, the Secretary of Transportation it a Transportation Management Area (an urbanized area population of over 200,000) in the *Federal Register* on July 8, 2002.

The MPO is charged with developing criteria for project selection that meets the goals of the region and addresses federal planning requirements, particularly with regard to congestion management. With that the governing body responsible for such decisions in accordance with federal guidelines 23 *CFR* 450.306, shall consist of local elected officials, officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan area, and State officials. The following governing bodies serve in this capacity of the Gulf Coast MPO.

Transportation Policy Committee

The TPC meets four times a year for the purpose of discussing transportation planning and programming issues as they affect regional transportation planning goals and objectives. Among other duties and obligations, the TPC is responsible for the adoption of a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvements Program (TIP), and for establishing policies and procedural guidelines that comply with federal regulations. The TPC is guided by the recommendations presented by the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). The govern policy body, Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), for the Mississippi Gulf Coast includes the following officials or their designated representatives:

- Presidents of the Board of Supervisors for Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties
- Mayors of Waveland, Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Long Beach, Gulfport, Biloxi, D'Iberville, Ocean Springs, Gautier, Pascagoula and Moss Point.
- Gulf Regional Planning Commission, Chairman
- Coast Transit Authority (CTA), Chairman
- Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), Executive Director
- Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport, Executive Director

- Mississippi State Port Authority at Gulfport, Executive Director
- Jackson County Port Authority, Executive Director
- Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission, Director
- The Federal Highway Administration, Division Administrator (non-voting)
- Federal Transit Administration, Regional Administrator (non-voting)
- The Mississippi Trucking Association, President (non-voting)

Technical Coordinating Committee

The TCC meets at least four times a year and elects a chairman and vice-chairman annually. Among other duties and obligations, the TCC is responsible for making recommendations to the TPC with respect to the adoption of the UPWP and the TIP; policies and procedures to be enacted by the MPO; and guidance to MPO staff on various transportation planning activities. The Technical Coordinating Committee consists of individuals whose skills, training and professional status qualify them to take an active role in helping to shape and to oversee the transportation planning program for the region. The membership of the committee consists of:

- A maximum of two representatives from each of the three counties
- A maximum of two representatives from each of the eleven municipalities
- Gulf Regional Planning Commission, Executive Director
- Coast Transit Authority, Executive Director
- Mississippi Department of Transportation, State Planning Engineer
- Mississippi Department of Transportation, District 6 Engineer
- Mississippi Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Administrator
- One representative from Naval Station Pascagoula
- One representative from Keesler Air Force Base
- One representative from the Naval Construction Battalion Center
- Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport, Executive Director
- Mississippi State Port Authority at Gulfport, Executive Director
- Jackson County Port Authority, Executive Director
- Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission, Director
- Southern Rapid Rail Transit Commission, Executive Director
- One representative from CSX Transportation, Kansas City Southern Railroad and Amtrak
- One representative from the Mississippi Trucking Association
- Gulf Coast Civic Action and Jackson County Civic Action
- The Federal Highway Administration Planning Engineer (non-voting)
- Federal Transit Administration, Community Planner (non-voting)

MPO Goals

As stated earlier the MPO must develop criteria for project selection that meet the goals of the region. The goals adopted by the MPO were developed with the assistance of the residents of the gulf coast and the jurisdictions. The MPO's transportation planning program requires all planning and proposed projects to demonstrate the following overall goals are achieved and addresses the objective. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the criteria in place to select projects, performance measures were developed and included as part of the congestion management plan.

Goal 1.0: Enhance Transportation System Mobility, Accessibility, and Quality for All Roadway Users and Modes

Goal 2.0: Enhance Regional Connectivity and Economic Viability

Goal 3.0: Enhance Public Safety and Security

Goal 4.0: Preserve and Protect Environmental Quality

Goal 5.0: Support Regional Sustainability and Local Values

Goal 6.0: Preserve Existing Community Resources

III. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Federal regulations require the Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC), as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Gulf Coast, to develop and maintain a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a four-year program of project implementation, and identifies available federal and non-federal funding for the included projects to maintain fiscal constraint. The TIP must include all federally funded projects, including those STP funded projects selected by the MPO, as well as locally funded projects of regional significance in the urbanized areas. The TIP for each MPO in the state is incorporated into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which addresses all the transportation needs of the State of Mississippi, including those areas outside the MPO urban areas. The TIP is updated every two years through a cooperative effort of local leadership, state officials, transit operators, federal agencies, including participation by the general public. In between TIP updates, changes to the TIP, in the form of amendments and administrative modifications, are approved by the TPC.

TIP Facts:

- Includes all federally funded projects
- Covers a 4 year period
- Is updated every 2 years
- May be amended every 6 months
- Is financially feasible
- Approved by the MPO, Governor, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration
- Included in the STIP

Eligibility

To be eligible as a STP funded TIP project, the improvement must be located within the MPO urbanized area and on the functional classified network. The network includes all roads that the MPO has designated as a principal arterial, minor arterial, or collector. STP projects may not be undertaken on roads functionally classified as local or rural minor collectors except in certain cases defined by federal regulations.

Type of Projects

The types of projects that are eligible as TIP projects are defined by STP regulation 23 USC 133, which includes but is not limited to construction improvements, highway and transit safety improvements, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), Transportation Control Measures, (TCM), operational improvements, enhancement activities, management systems, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Table 1.0 describes many improvements measures that are implemented through the TIP.

Project Types (*) May qualify for 100% funding		
Minor Intersection Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal-retiming • Remove signal • Restrict turns • Restrict trucks • Improve signage* • Re-striping* • On-way operations 	Intersection Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add signal* • Geometry improvement • Add turn lanes* • Roundabout* • Traffic circle • Intersection beacon 	Corridor Reconstruction – Access Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontage roads • Driveway control • Curb and gutter • Add/improve medians • Reconstruct roadway • Add or widen shoulders* • Lane widening • Lane narrowing*
Transit System Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express bus service • Expanded service • Commuter rail • Light rail • Technology improvements • Bike and Bus program • Improved transit stops • Bus traffic signal priority* • Transit marketing • Transit pull-outs • Shelters 	Bike/Pedestrian Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike lanes • Shared use paths* • New paved shoulders* • Wider paved shoulders* • New sidewalks • Improved sidewalks • Marked/raised crosswalks • Bike/pedestrian signals • Improved signage • Curb extensions • Bike parking • Pedestrian refuge area* 	Corridor Reconstruction – Operations and Channelization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronize signals • Pavement signs* • Reversible lanes • Add turn lanes • Minor reconstruction • Ramp metering • Accel, Decel lanes • Extended turn lanes • Movable barrier* • Reconfigured or improved pavement marking*
Travel Demand Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOV lanes • Bus lanes • Park and ride lots • Vanpool program* • Carpool program* • TDM marketing & signage 	Safety Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guard rails* • Roadway lighting* • Rumble strips* • Safety edge* • Roadway safety audits* • Railroad crossing closure* • Raised centerline markers* 	Traffic Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic surveillance • Computerized signal systems • Motorist information systems • Incident management
Minor Bridge Reconstruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge maintenance • Bridge replacement 		Corridor Reconstruction – Center Lane <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center turn lane
Traffic Calming Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chokers* • Bulbouts* • Speed tables* • Speed humps* • Chicanes* • Neckdowns* 	New Construction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New road • New interchange • Overpass • Underpass 	Add Base Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add lanes • Extend roadway • Interchange reconstruction

TABLE 1.0

IV. TIP DEVELOPMENT AND UPDATE PROCESS

TIP Development

A new TIP is developed every two years. The TIP development process is described and notable policies are outlined below. Project incorporation into the Mississippi Gulf Coast TIP is *not* a guarantee of project implementation or construction. Ultimately, the requesting jurisdiction is responsible for project completion. In the event that problems arise, such as engineering obstacles, environmental conflicts or changes in priorities, adjustments may be made to the projects on the TIP. The following are the procedures and requirements for developing the TIP.

1. GRPC will send a letter with a TIP application packet to each of the fourteen jurisdictions within the MPO planning area to initiate the TIP application process.
2. The project application must be completed with the required information on the proposed project and returned to GRPC before the 5pm on the stated submission deadline.
3. Each completed project application must include a letter or resolution of transmittal signed by the mayor of the city or the president of the board of supervisors. The letter must demonstrate the jurisdiction has allocated the required funds to construct the project and the project meets the goals of the jurisdiction.
4. After receiving the project applications for the TIP, GRPC will rank the projects based on the TIP project evaluation process.
5. GRPC will assemble a draft TIP based on the project rankings and available funding.
6. The draft TIP will be presented to the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for recommendation and Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) for approval.
7. The approved TIP will be submitted to the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
8. GRPC and MDOT kick off a 45-day public review period and will host public meeting during the review period concerning the proposed projects for the TIP. GRPC will then advertise in primary newspapers within the urbanized area for public input on the Draft TIP. The advertisement will include a listing of the proposed projects and directions to where the Draft TIP may be reviewed.
9. Public comments will be reviewed by GRPC and forwarded to the project sponsor. A file for public comments will be recorded as an appendix to the TIP. The file will include the concluding decision and explanation with respect to each public comment.

10. The cities and counties will then submit any additional or alternate projects resulting from public input.
11. Eligible projects that do not get recommended for the financially constrained TIP, can be placed in a stand by category and will be considered during the 6-month TIP amendment and evaluation process if funds become available.
12. After approval by the MPO and the Governor, the TIP shall be included without change, directly or by reference, in the STIP required under 23 U.S.C. 135.
13. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, a conformity finding on the TIP must be made by the FHWA and the FTA before it is included in the STIP. A copy of the approved TIP shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA.
14. The State shall notify the MPO and Federal land management agencies when the TIP has been included in the STIP.

TIP Update

Every six months GRPC will initiate an amendment and evaluation process to consider the addition of “new” projects funded with gulf coast STP funds to the TIP. All project additions will be considered based on the availability of funds in the financially constrained TIP. This process will provide fair and impartial consideration to all requests from each jurisdiction. It will also give GRPC opportunity to evaluate implementation schedules of each project to ensure Federal monies are obligated on time to avoid a funding lapse.

On an as needed basis existing TIP projects may need adjustments. These adjustments are usually needed to expedite the development of the process as project scope or funding may change. Changes such as these will be qualified as either TIP “amendment” or “modification” based on the criteria in the table below.

Change Requested	Change Type
Addition or deletion of a project	Amendment
Major changes in design or scope such as changes that do impact travel demand models or an approved air quality conformity analysis (i.e. travel lanes, etc.)	Amendment
Termini changes	Amendment
Financial changes in a project's total programmed amount of federal funds greater than that listed on the "Administrative Modification Sliding Scale"	Amendment
Minor changes in design or scope such as changes that do not impact travel demand models or an approved air quality conformity analysis (i.e. shoulders, sidewalks, intersection modifications, etc.	Modification
Funding changes within "Administrative Modification Sliding Scale"	Modification
Shifting funds between federal fiscal years of the approved TIP provided fiscal constraint is maintained.	Modification
Adding projects with grouped projects within the TIP, provided fiscal constrain is maintained	Modification
Changing the federal funding source program (as long as STP fiscal constraint is maintained)	Modification
Shifting funds between federal fiscal years of the approved TIP provided fiscal constraint is maintained	Modification
Splitting an entry already in the TIP, or breaking out another project or phase from the original entry. The intent is not to add a new project but to facilitate project development by phasing implementation.	Modification
Removing a project reported as obligated or completed	Modification
Correction for omissions or errors in an approved project provided the action does not affect another agency's project or impact the travel demand model or approved air quality analysis.	Modification

Table 2.0

Amendment - Amendment means a major revision to the TIP. Formal amendments are processed on an as needed basis at the quarterly MPO meetings. Amendments will be evaluated based on TIP project evaluation guidelines found in the TIP Handbook. All comments and recommendations will be forwarded to the Transportation Policy Committee for consideration. Amendments that affect an approved air quality analysis for the region will also be subject to review and approval by the Interagency Consultation Group in addition to state and federal agencies.

Public Review - GRPC will advertise in primary newspapers within the urbanized area for public input regarding proposed amendments to the TIP. GRPC will provide the public a period 10 days to review and provide comment.

Modification - The revisions that qualify as administrative modification are minor in nature and there is no distortion of fiscal constraint and the availability of funds is assured. Administrative modifications are processed by GRPC staff. The modifications do not require public review or TPC approval. GRPC retains the right to require a formal amendment for any proposed modification to the TIP that, in the opinion of staff, requires public review and the formal endorsement of the Transportation Policy Committee.

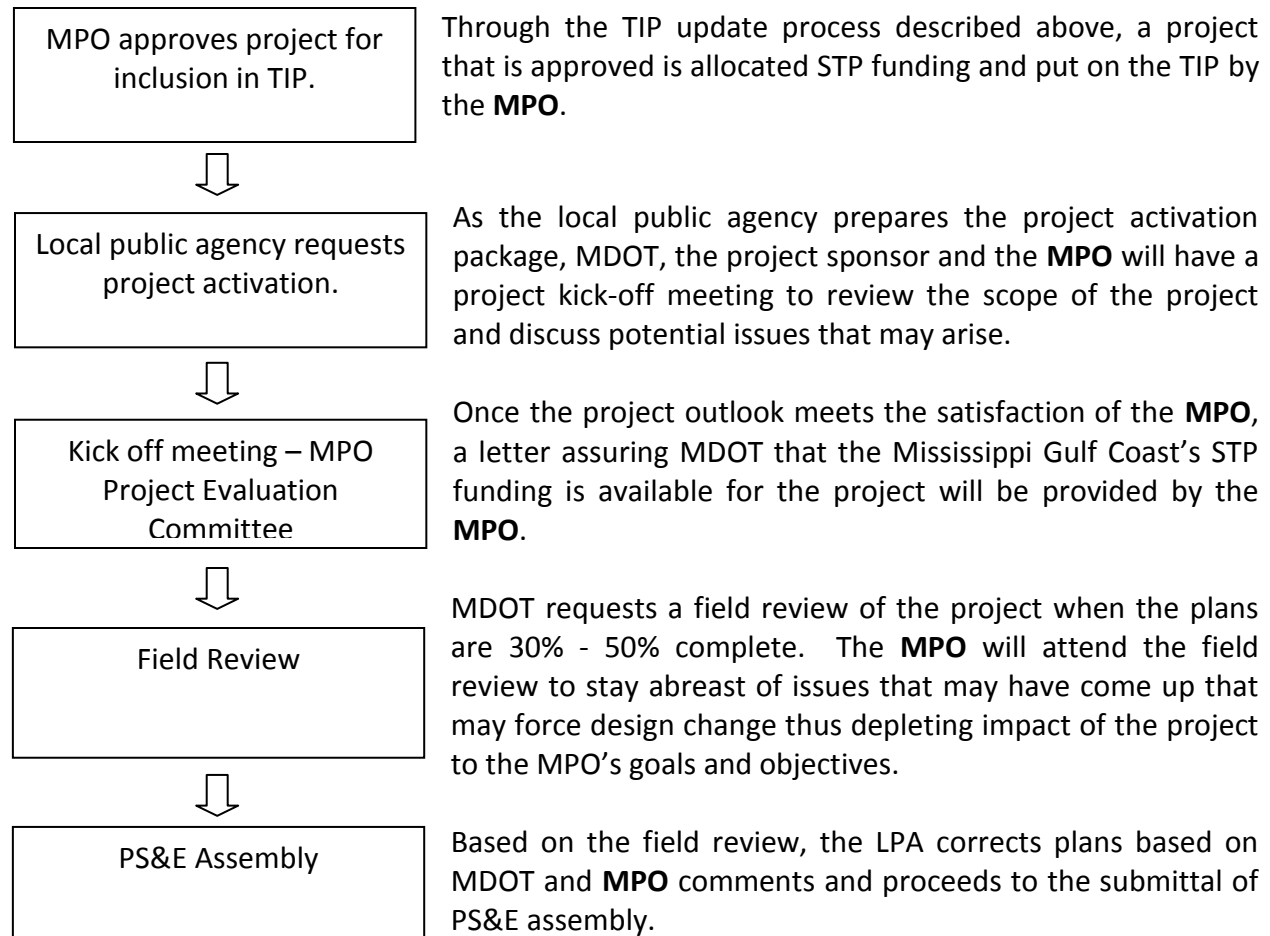
Public Review - None

Administrative Modification for Funding - Sliding Scale	Federal Allocated Funds	Percent Allowed Change
	\$500,000 or less	50 %
	\$500,001- \$1,500,000	25%
	\$1,500,001-\$2,500,000	20%
	\$2,500,001 or more	15%

Table 3.0

MPO Surface Transportation Program (STP) Project Development

MDOT's Project Development Manual (PDM) provides detailed information regarding the path for the development of STP projects. Below is a description of when the MPO will be involved in the process. The MPO's involvement in the process is to assure that the goals and objectives set by the MPO are advanced.



V. TIP STRUCTURE

The TIP must be financially constrained, meaning that the amount of funds programmed cannot exceed the anticipated amount of funding available. During each TIP update, MDOT notifies the MPO of the amount of new STP funds that will be available for the next fiscal year. GRPC will structure the new 4 year TIP by assigning each of the 4 years with the amount of funds as indicated by MDOT. In accordance with CFR 450.324(f), “projects that are not considered to be of appropriate scale for individual identification in a given program year may be grouped by function, work type, and/or geographic area,” the TIP structure will include listings of “Grouped Projects.” All projects that are considered as Categorical Exclusions (CEs), as described in 23 CFR 771.117, will be arranged into these groups using the applicable classifications under 23 CFR 771.117(c) and (d) and/or 40 CFR part 93. Projects that are not considered CEs (usually projects that increase capacity by adding through lanes or new roadways) will be listed specifically in the TIP outside of the grouped listings. The TIP is set up as described below:

MDOT Project Listing

This listing includes projects initiated and advanced by the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT). These projects do not affect the MPO’s apportionment of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds.

MPO Project Listing

This listing includes projects proposed by public agencies and approved by the Mississippi MPO for use of the MPO’s apportionment of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds. This listing includes projects not considered to be Categorical Exclusions (CEs), therefore will require Environmental Assessments (EA) or Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) during project development. Examples are presented in Table 1.0 under: “Add Base Capacity and New Construction”

Independent Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects Group

The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO will set aside 10% of the gulf coast’s Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian accessibility and mobility in the region. These projects will help the MPO advance its objective to “enhance bicycle, pedestrian and transit mobility and accessibility.” An independent walkway project must be constructed on highway right-of-way or easement. Independent walkway projects are constructed separately from a Federal-aid highway construction project. Examples are presented in Table 1.0 under: “Bike/Pedestrian Improvements”

MPO Project/Studies Group

The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO will set aside \$400,000 in STP funds annually for the purpose of developing and implementing projects that directly support the MPO goals and objectives. Each year a project (or projects) will be selected by GRPC for funding through this program. Project(s) are based on needs identified through the agency’s transportation planning process toward the provision of an efficient, safe and accessible transportation system for all modes.

Projects considered for funding through this program include: various intersection improvement projects that enhance traffic flow and/or safety; projects that enhance transportation modal options (bike/pedestrian, transit, etc.); projects that improve roadway safety; intersection analyses; corridor studies; safety audits; and others.

Independent Safety Project Group

In response to the MPO's objective to "enhance the safety of motorists and users of non-motorized modes" concentrated efforts through a "safety group" are made to enhance the safety of the traveling public. This group will be funded with 10% of the Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds apportioned to gulf coast urbanized areas. The STP funds in this group will be available for use at 100% federal share for certain projects. Examples are presented in Table 1.0 under: "Safety Improvements or Bike/Pedestrian Improvements"

Operation/Maintenance/Minor Reconstruction

Example projects considered as Categorical Exclusions (CEs) are presented in Table 1.0 under:

"Minor Intersection Improvements, Intersection Improvements, Corridor Reconstruction, and Minor Bridge Reconstruction"

FTA Projects

Includes projects using Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds for the support of public transit for the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Other

This listing includes federal earmarks, Intelligent Transportation Systems projects and other projects that don't fit into the categories described above.

SAFETY PROJECTS

Safety measures described in 23 U.S.C. 120 (c):

- Traffic control signalization*
- Pavement marking*
- Commuter carpooling and vanpooling*
- Rail-highway crossing closure*
- Traffic signs*
- Traffic lights*
- Guardrails*
- Impact attenuators*
- Concrete barrier end treatments*
- Breakaway utility poles*
- Priority control systems for emergency vehicles or transit vehicles at signalized intersections*

Pedestrian and bicycle projects described in 23 CFR 652.9:

- Independent walkway projects,*
- Independent bicycle projects,*
- Non-construction bicycle projects.*

FHWA Office of Safety countermeasures:

- Road safety audits*
- Rumble strips*
- Safety edge*
- Left and right turn lanes at stop-controlled intersections*
- Yellow change intervals*
- Medians and pedestrian refuge areas*
- Walkways, including roadway shoulders and shared use paths*

VI. TIP PROJECT GUIDELINES

This section outlines the procedures and policies for TIP projects in the Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO planning area. The policies and guidelines are set up to support and coordinate with the MPO's goals and objectives. The MPO ensures that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs are based on a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) planning process. Additionally, the MPO serves to evaluate transportation alternatives, scaled to the size and complexity of the region, to the nature of its transportation issues, and to the realistically available options and develop a program based on the long-range transportation plan and designed to serve the area's goals. This TIP process ensures these functions are achieved with regard to federal funds managed by the MPO.

Long Range Transportation Plan Consistency

The MPO maintains a 25-year long range transportation plan (LRTP) for the two urbanized areas on the gulf coast. The LRTP is approved by the MPO's Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), FHWA, FTA and the Governor. This plan ensures that the urbanized areas are eligible for federal transportation funding such as Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds administered by the MPO. In order for a transportation project to be funded and included on the TIP, it must be included in the approved LRTP.

Project Application

Each municipality must fill out the "Application for Federal Surface Transportation Program Funds" for a roadway project to be considered for STP funding. The application provides the project description and other information needed to properly evaluate the project. MPO staff will provide any assistance the municipality may need with the completion of the application. Applicant must provide a timeline for the completion of preliminary engineering (PE), environmental (ENV), right-of-way (ROW) and construction (CON) stages of the proposed project.

City Council or Board Resolution

To be considered for STP funding, jurisdictions must demonstrate a commitment to the requested project. The city must include a resolution by city council or board to provide the needed local match for the project whether it is from general funds, a bond issue, or other. This is to ensure compliance with federal requirements that each project be fully funded before being placed in the TIP. A project will be required to follow the approved timeline submitted on the project application. If a TIP project is not implemented in a timely manner, the jurisdiction will be requested to give explanation of the delay. If project requirements are not met, and delays unjustified, the recommendation will be made to the TCC and TPC for removal of the project from the TIP. If it is found the jurisdiction no longer has the required match for the project, the recommendation will be made to the TCC and TPC for removal of the project from the TIP.

Drainage

In order to maximize the impact of projects to enhance the transportation system mobility, accessibility, and quality for all roadway users and modes, the MPO requires that STP funding for drainage work that is incidental to the project is minimal. These costs should be paid for by other funds.

Street Overlays

The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO does not generally provide STP funding for overlay projects. However, if an overlay project results in improved access, mobility and safety for bicycle, pedestrian or transit using improved channelization from pavement striping, then the project would be eligible. For instance, a roadway currently designed with four lanes that are twelve feet wide could be reconfigured through restriping to reduce the lane width in order to add a shoulder on each side of the roadway. This shoulder would provide for improved bicycle mobility on the roadway. These projects may be approved as funding is available.

Complete Streets Guidelines

Every principal arterial, minor arterial and urban collector should be designed to be suitable for pedestrian and bicycle mobility. Project sponsors will be required to demonstrate the consideration of pedestrian and bicycle improvement measures in all TIP projects. The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO outlines the following guidelines for bike and pedestrian improvement measures for all STP funded projects:

1. Adding travel lanes to arterial only when volume-to-capacity ratio is greater than 1.0
2. Transit vehicles should be given precedence on roadways with traffic signal priority and special use lanes.
3. Sidewalks shall be located along both sides of all urban collectors and arterials.
4. Sidewalk width shall be a minimum of 5 feet with 6 feet minimum preferred.
5. Sidewalk paths, including sidewalk material, shall be continued across the entire length of all driveway aprons and should match the adjacent sidewalk materials.
6. Pedestrian refuges should be provided within intersections that require pedestrians to cross over more than 8 lanes of traffic.
7. Travel lane width reductions or road diets should be considered in order to provide expanded paved shoulders, wide outside lanes or bike lanes.
8. Paved shoulders or wide outside lanes for use by bicyclists should be included along roadways without designated bike lanes. Shared roadways are appropriate for low speed, low traffic streets. Paved shoulders should be between 3 and 5 feet. Wide outside lanes should be at least 14 feet.
9. Bike lanes shall be a minimum of 4 feet wide when typical section has bicycle lanes located next to a curb and gutter.
10. If right turn lanes for vehicles are provided on a corridor with bike lanes, locate bike lanes to the left of the right turn lane.
11. Consider the use of round-a-bouts where appropriate.

Bicycle Mobility

The MPO refers to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Official’s “Guide for the development of Bicycle Facilities” to support the goals of the MPO and this TIP Handbook. The guidelines below will be used and promoted by the MPO in the development of federal-aid projects to better accommodate bicycles on gulf coast roadways:

	Standard lane	Standard-width travel lane that both bicycles and motor vehicles share. Cyclists would either operate in the margins or take the lane. No special provisions are provided for the cyclist (Share the road).
	Wide curb lane	An outside travel lane with a width of at least 14 ft (15ft is preferred) to accommodate both bicyclists and motorized vehicles. Cyclists generally can operate alongside vehicles without the motorist having to change lanes to pass a bicyclist. A wide curb lane also provides more room when drivers are exiting from driveways into the travel lane. In situations where more than 15 feet of pavement width exists, consideration should be given to striping bike lanes or shoulders
	Bike lane or shoulder	A shoulder for bicycle use should be a minimum 3 foot wide paved portion of the roadway. However, any shoulder width is better than none at all. Facility is adjacent to travel lane with no separation.
		A bike lane is a portion of the roadway designated by striping, signing, and/or pavement markings for preferential or exclusive use by bicycles. For roadways with no curb and gutter the minimum width should be 4 feet. Facility is adjacent to travel lane with no separation.
	Wide bike lane separated path	Bike lanes over 5 foot wide or path that is physically separated from the roadway and intended for use by bicyclists, pedestrians, and others.

Average Daily Traffic

18000				
16000			17000	
				15250
14000				
12000				
	10500			
10000				
		9000		
8000				
			7500	
6000	6500			6000
		5250		
4000			4250	
				3250
2000				
	25mph	30mph	35mph	40mph

Posted Speed Limit

Table 4.0

Mid-block Pedestrian Crossings

For roadways with 3 or more lanes carrying 12,000 or more cars per day, a raised median should be provided to accommodate areas with high mid-block pedestrian crossing. The raised median creates a safer refuge for pedestrians and breaks a long, complex crossing into two shorter ones. For all multi-lane streets carrying 15,000 or more cars per day, recent research indicates that it may be safer to leave the mid-block crossing unmarked, thereby encouraging the pedestrian to use a heightened level of caution when crossing.

For roadways with 3 or more lanes with speeds less than 40 mph

AADT	Crosswalk Marking	Refuge median
Less than 12,000	YES	Optional
12,000 15,000	YES	Required
Greater than 15,000	NO	Required

Table 5.0

Transit

Often transit is overlooked during the roadway development process. Any TIP project sponsor that is proposing work on a roadway in which fixed transit service is on, will be required to coordinate with Coast Transit Authority (CTA) to discuss opportunities to accommodate facilities that will provide for improved safety, accessibility and comfort to transit users.

VII. TIP PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

Given the fiscal realities of today and tomorrow with demands for budget reductions at all levels of national, state, and local government, decisions on where and how to spend limited transportation funds should not be taken lightly. To ensure that the most beneficial projects are implemented, a project prioritization process is used. When a municipality submits project applications to the MPO for consideration during each TIP development or amendment process, it is presented to a review committee for ranking based on the MPO's adopted goals and objectives reflected in the TIP project evaluation worksheet.

Project Readiness

The amount of right of way needed affects the timely progress of a project because of the potential problems that come up with the purchase of right-of-way. Therefore, the MPO will give extra priority in the scoring of the project which requires no right-of-way. If a jurisdiction has preliminary engineering done on a project, extra priority will be given as well. Project readiness will help ensure that the project be completed as quickly as possible because of the need to obligate federal funds within 3 years to prevent a lapse in funding.

Project Match

The impact to the available funding is also an important consideration of a project proposed for inclusion on the TIP. In some cases, a municipality may have secured funding from other non-federal sources that may be applied to a project, which enables the project sponsor to ask for less than 80% funding from the TIP for the project. If additional federal funds from other sources are to be used on the project, an additional priority will be given to the project.

Safety

An improvement that corrects or improves hazardous roadways is considered a safety project. Safety improvement projects are a primary focus of the MPO. As such, safety projects will receive a higher priority. The MPO uses the TIP to accomplish the goal of "*Enhance public safety and security*". To accomplish this, the MPO will give priority to projects that mitigate safety deficiencies by identifying the most dangerous intersections and roadways as well as the identification of unsafe roadways for pedestrians and bicyclists through transportation management systems. Points will be assigned to the project based on the degree of the safety problem. The number of accidents on the roadway measures safety deficiencies as well as perception surveys from the public. Through the MPO transportation management systems, roadways and intersection will be evaluated for safety problems. If a proposed project is on an intersection or roadway with a safety problem it will be elevated in priority.

Traffic Flow (Congestion)

One way the MPO utilizes the TIP to achieve the objective of *“Relieving traffic congestion and decreasing travel time”*. Points will be given to a project based on the amount of congestion the specific roadway or intersection may experience on a reoccurring basis. The MPO’s Congestion Management Process (CMP) provides data that measures this condition on each roadway and intersection in the region. Priority will be given to roadways identified in the CMP Reports.

Public Concerns

The MPO promotes public involvement throughout the TIP development process in order to assure that local values and community sustainability is accounted for. To accomplish this, the Gulf Coast MPO will facilitate a regional transportation survey that enables the public to identify roadways of concern to them that result in the recognition of roadways that the public feels are inadequate or unsafe. Priority will be given to projects on roadways that have above average public concern.

Functional Classification

A goal of the Gulf Coast MPO is to *“Enhance regional connectivity and economic vitality”*. Functional classification gives a good indication of the roadway’s role in the connectivity of the system. The principal arterials will receive the highest points because they generally serve the major centers of activity of the area and are the highest traffic volume corridors. Principal arterials carry the major portion of trips entering and leaving the area, as well as the majority of through movements desiring to bypass the city. The minor arterial street system connects the principal arterial system to distribute travel to geographic areas smaller than those identified with the higher system.

Federal Participation Cost

The federal participation cost of a project is a very important factor to consider when prioritizing projects. The MS Gulf Coast region receives a limited amount of funds to be distributed between 14 jurisdictions; therefore it is beneficial to the MPO to keep a TIP project’s cost as low as possible. For this reason, the MPO promotes low-cost improvements such as, traffic operational improvements including upgraded signals and intersection geometry improvements, rather than projects that build new roads. In many cases it may be wise to consider phasing larger projects.

Environmental Justice

The MPO provides various measures to meet the needs of those who are considered traditionally underserved in the region. The TIP is utilized to achieve the Environmental Justice objective: *“Prevent the denial of, reduction in or significant delay in the receipt of transportation benefits by traditionally underserved populations”*. This is accomplished by giving priority to projects that directly benefit low-income and minority areas. Therefore, points will be given to any project that improves transportation facilities or a service to an MPO identified

environmental justice target area and does not impose any additional burden on the identified community. Positive impacts may include but are not limited to improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, traffic operational improvements, reconstruction roadways. Negative impacts may include projects that add more traffic or enable higher traffic speeds by adding lanes or building a new roadway through a target area.

Traffic Operational Improvement

Traffic operational improvements are essentially short-range, inexpensive improvements to existing streets and highways, including intersection improvements, turn lanes, signage and signalization and similar measures. Improvements in traffic operations are designed to allow more effective management of existing roadways. These improvements are intended to increase capacity without the addition of general-purpose lanes. Operational strategies are low-cost, require minimal right-of-way, and can be implemented quickly. The use traffic operational improvements are promoted by the MPO as it *preserves existing facilities by promoting efficient system management as well as, alternative and technologically advanced mitigation measures*. Additionally, operational improvements support the MPO goal of protecting the environment in that operational improvements are proven measures for decreasing vehicle miles traveled and mobile emissions. Projects that may be categorized as Minor Intersection Improvements, Intersection Improvements, Corridor Reconstruction-Operations and Channelization, or Traffic Management and Control as shown in Table 1.0 will be given added priority.

Pedestrian and Bike Mobility

To achieve to objective of “Enhance bicycle, pedestrian and transit mobility and accessibility” the MPO gives additional points to projects that incorporate sidewalks and pedestrian facilities as well as measures used to provide for the safety and accessibility of pedestrians and bicyclists. The extent that projects address identified pedestrian or bicycle needs will be measured by the number and type of pedestrian or bicycle strategies used. Each proposed project that include pedestrian and bicycle strategies listed under Bike/Pedestrian Improvements in Table 1.0 will be given added priority.

Multimodal

To accomplish the goal “*Enhance Transportation System Mobility, Accessibility, and Quality for All Roadway Users and Modes*” the MPO will give priority to projects that support the efficient movement of freight or facilitate transit. This is achieved by the identification of inter-modal connectors and transit routes in the region and the assignment of priority to the projects requested on those roadways. In addition, projects that incorporate measures to support the efficient movement of transit that are listed under the project type Transit System Improvements in Table 1.0 will be given added priority.

Economic Development

This category is used because of the need to promote projects that enhance economic development in the region. The scoring methodology addresses the goal “*Enhance regional connectivity and economic viability*”. The MPO will assess the impact of each project by determining the existing employment in the area of the project. This measure will provide an indication of the number of or size of the businesses that the project will benefit. This will be determined through the use of a GIS and the MPO employment database by compiling the number of employees within a half-mile of the project location.

Demand Management

The TIP can be used for the development projects that may or may not be considered “construction” projects, but programs that change travel behavior. It is the practice of the MPO to promote the development of such innovative measures, such as those listed under Travel Demand Management on Table 1.0.

Surface Transportation Program (STP) Funded Project Evaluation Worksheet

Project Name:	
Termini:	
Scope of work:	
Federal/total cost:	

Project Readiness	Little right-of-way required	(1)
	No right-of-way	(2)
	Preliminary engineering completed	(2)
Project Match	80% federal funding requested	(0)
	Less than 80% federal funding requested	(1)
Safety	Identified safety concern	(3)
	Project is determined to be improving a safety issue	(2)
Traffic Flow (Congestion)	CMP Level-of-Service E or F	(2)
	CMP Level-of-Service D	(1)
Public Concerns	Public identified concern	(1)
Functional Classification	Principal arterial	(2)
	Secondary arterial	(1)
	Collector	(0)
Federal Participation Cost	Below 500,000	(3)
	\$500,000 - \$1,500,000	(1)
	Greater than \$1,500,000	(0)
Environmental Justice	No impact to target area	(0)
	Positive impact to target area	(1)
	Negative impact to target area	(-2)
Traffic Operational Improvement	Include measures listed under "minor intersection improvements", "intersection Improvements", corridor reconstruction-operations and channelization, or "traffic management and control"	(1-4)
Pedestrian and Bike Mobility	Include measures under "bike/pedestrian improvements"	(1-4)
Multimodal	Intermodal connector	(1)
	CTA fixed transit route	(1)
	Use of "transit system improvement" measures	(1-4)
Economic Development	Significant impact	(1)
	Minimal impact	(0)
Demand Management	Projects listed under "travel demand management"	(3)

TOTAL POINTS _____