

# TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM HANDBOOK



Prepared by:  
GULF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

For:  
THE MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

2018

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Transportation Policy Committee  
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# 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 Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to explain the policies and procedures of the TIP. All federally funded projects carried out within the boundaries of a metropolitan planning area shall be selected for implementation from the approved TIP in consultation with the State and any affected public transportation operator.

## Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO

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, MS and Pascagoula, MS urbanized areas. The Gulfport, MS urbanized area consists of the cities of Waveland, Bay St. Louis, Diamondhead, 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. The MPO is charged with developing criteria for project selection that meets the goals of the region and addresses federal planning requirements. The MPO is governed by two committees: The Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) and the Technical Coordination Committee (TCC). The Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC) serves as staff for the Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO providing administration and a planning process in accordance with federal regulations.

## What is the 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 for each MPO in the state is incorporated into MDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which addresses all the transportation needs of the State of Mississippi. The TIP must be financially constrained, meaning that the amount of funds programmed cannot exceed the anticipated amount of funding available.

## II. TIP Investment Strategy

The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program is a federal-aid transportation program, administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which provides funding used by States and localities for transportation improvement projects. STP funds are apportioned to the State and a portion is made available to metropolitan planning areas to advance local priorities. The matching ratios generally reimburse at 80% of the total project cost and the applicant is responsible for at least 20%.

### Multimodal Program Projects

Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO's Local Public Agencies may apply for any project that meets the federal requirements of the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program including system preservation, system expansion, system operations, multi-modal options, etc. The MPO allocates the funds to local public agencies within the planning area based on the region's highest priority transportation projects.

### Safety Project Group

The *Safety Group* is used to fund projects in the MPO's *Get2B Safety Program*. Gulf Regional Planning Commission serving as staff for the MPO provides planning work described in its Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) that is used to identify projects to be developed and funded with the *Safety Group*. The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO will set aside \$500,000 or 10% (whichever is less) of its annual allocation of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for projects to enhance the safe mobility of all modes of transportation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. MPO staff works with FHWA to develop projects that will be eligible for the Federal share payable to amount to 100 percent of the cost of construction of such projects as described in 23 U.S.C. 120 (c) and 23 CFR 652.9. Projects will be selected by GRPC for funding through this program and initiated as needed without the requirement of a TIP amendment.

The MPO uses "Groups" to influence how federal transportation funds are spent through earmarking a portion of these funds to support specific regional priorities. This strategy enables the MPO to:

- Encourage the use of STP funds for smaller, quicker-implementation projects
- Encourage investment in priority focus areas
- Control amount of funding in an area
- Expedite project delivery and being more responsive to needs by not requiring a TIP amendment for each project

### Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Project Group

The primary focus of this group is to provide for "independent" projects which provide bicycle, pedestrian and transit access and safety improvements within the right-of-way or easements along functionally classified roadways. These

“independent” projects will usually be stand-alone in nature, not associated with other federally funded roadway improvements such as reconstruction or widening. The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO will set aside \$500,000 or 10% (whichever is less) of its annual allocation of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for projects to improve bicycle, pedestrian and transit accessibility and mobility in the region. The MPO initiates a *Call for Projects* during the TIP Update and TIP Amendment periods for the funding in the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Project Group. The project evaluation process is described in Section VI. An application is required to be completed for consideration.

## MPO Studies/Projects Group

The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO will set aside \$500,000 in STP funds annually for the purpose of developing and implementing studies/projects that directly support the MPO goals. The MPO funded studies are used to prepare a project for funding and implementation. Projects will be selected by GRPC are based on needs identified through the agency’s transportation planning process, Long Range Transportation Plan or a need expressed by an LPA. Studies or projects will be selected by GRPC for funding through this program. Studies or projects under \$50,000 can be initiated as needed without an MPO vote. Studies or projects over \$50,000 will require MPO action. This group enables to MPO to be more responsive to needs as they arise between amendment and update periods.

## TAP Projects

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is eligible for funding under the Surface Transportation Program (STP). The TAP was established under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) of 2012 and replaces the Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP), Safe Routes to School Program (SRSP), as well as the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The applicant is reimbursed 80% of the total project cost up to the Federal fund award amount. The applicant is responsible for at least 20% of the total project cost. The MPO initiates a *Call for Projects* during the TIP Update and TIP Amendments periods for TAP projects. The project evaluation process is described in Section VII. An application is required to be completed for consideration.

## Bridge Projects

The focus of this group is to provide for the building of a new bridge, repair, restoration or replacement of the components of the existing structure, including asphaltic surfacing or concrete overlays, as well as work to correct safety defects along functionally classified roadways. The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO will set aside \$300,000 in STP funds annually for this purpose. GRPC serving as MPO staff will work with LPAs to identify one bridge per year based on inspection results and criteria identified in a bridge program evaluation and prioritization process. The MPO will approve the final recommendation.

# III. TIP Development

## 2-year TIP Update

A new TIP is developed every two years through a cooperative effort of local leadership, state officials, transit operators, federal agencies, including participation by the general public. GRPC will initiate a “Call for Projects” to allocate 2 years of STP funding. Participation of the general public is encouraged throughout the development process which includes a 45 day public review period before the MPO Policy Committee considers adoption of the revised TIP.

## Annual TIP Amendments

On years that a TIP Update does not occur, GRPC will initiate a “Call for Projects” to consider the addition of “new” projects to the TIP or changes to existing projects in the TIP. All project additions will be considered based on the availability of funds in the financially constrained TIP. This process 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. Similar to the full update, new projects proposed for allocation in opposite years, will also be made available for public comment for 45 days.

## Quarterly TIP Maintenance

Every quarter changes to the TIP may be required to maintain existing project schedules. TIP project sponsors meet to discuss project progress. At this time, requests for general amendments and modifications within the existing program are made. This provides an opportunity to regularly evaluate project implementation schedules to ensure federal monies are obligated as programmed and assists the MPO in avoiding any lapse in funding. Modifications do not require a public review period, but any amendments proposed will be made available for a 10 day public review period.

## Poll Vote

Occasionally changes to a TIP project are urgent and necessary to allow it to move forward. If the amendment is time sensitive the MPO may choose to perform a “poll vote” of the TPC to pass an amendment to the TIP. This process includes a 10 day public review period prior to MPO adoption of the proposed change.

## Call for Projects

Gulf Regional Planning Commission serving as staff for the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization will use a “Call for Projects” process to ask Local Public Agencies in the MPO to submit projects to be considered for funding

allocation. The following are the procedures for the MPO *Call for Projects* and requirements for developing the TIP.

1. GRPC will notify local public agencies within the MPO planning area to initiate a “Call for Projects”.
2. The project application must be completed with the required information on the proposed project and returned to GRPC before the stated submission deadline.
3. The application package must include a letter signed by the mayor of the city or the member of the board of supervisors. The letter must demonstrate the jurisdiction has allocated the required funds to complete the project and the project meets the goals of the MPO.
4. The application package must also include a resolution from the governing board committing to the local match.
5. After receiving the project applications, GRPC will rank the projects based on the TIP project evaluation process. GRPC will assemble a draft TIP based on the project rankings and available funding.
6. For the *2-year TIP Update* and *1-year TIP Amendment* periods, GRPC will kick off a 45-day public review period and will host public meetings during the review period concerning the proposed projects for the TIP. For other amendments that occur outside of these two periods, GRPC will provide the public a period of 10 days to review and provide comment. GRPC will advertise in primary newspapers within the urbanized area for public input on the draft TIP. The advertisement will include a listing of the proposed TIP changes and directions to where the draft TIP may be reviewed. Ad language for TIP amendments should state the following:

**TIP Project Application Package:**

- Project application
- Letter of request
- Resolution from the Board or Council

*“In compliance with federal regulations 23 CFR 450, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is seeking the public’s input on proposed amendments to the FY \_\_ Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This document includes all projects to be funded using the Gulf Coast’s allocation of Surface Transportation Program (STPJ funds, which are allocated by the Federal Highway Administration through the Mississippi Department of Transportation. The projects are based on local short term priorities set by the jurisdictions within the urbanized areas of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties.”*



For amendments that include *Federal Transit Administration* (FTA) projects attach the following language,

*“Also listed in this document is Coast Transit Authority's Program of Projects that are funded by the Federal Transit Administration. The public meetings/comment period will satisfy the public participation requirements for the FTA Section 5307 and 5309 POP notice. The proposed CTA Program of projects will be final unless revised as a result of public comment.”*

7. 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.
8. The cities and counties will then submit any additional or alternate projects resulting from public input.
9. 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 next scheduled TIP amendment or update period.
10. The draft TIP will be presented to the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for recommendation and Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) for approval.
11. The approved TIP will be submitted to the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
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 CHANGES				
	<i>2-year TIP Update</i>	<i>1-year TIP Amendments</i>	<i>Quarterly TIP Maintenance</i>	<i>Poll Vote</i>
Addition of an MPO STP project	X	X		
Deletion of an MPO STP project	X	X	X	X
Addition of a MPO TAP project	X	X		
Deletion of a MPO TAP project	X	X	X	X
Addition or deletion of an MDOT project	X	X	X	X
Addition or deletion of an FTA project	X	X	X	X
Addition or deletion of a project from a source of funding other than MPO funds	X	X	X	X
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.) for projects currently on the TIP	X	X	X	X
Termini changes for projects currently on the TIP	X	X	X	X
Modifications (described in Section IV)	X	X	X	X
Financial changes in a project's programmed amount of federal funds greater than 20% of the original cost	X	X	X	X

## Transit Projects

If the change to the TIP includes transit projects, then the amendment or modification will need to be approved by both the Mississippi Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division Office and the Region 4 Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

## MDOT Projects

MDOT must provide written request to the MPO for changes to the MPO TIP. MODT should advise the MPO if the change should be processed as a modification or amendment. In the event the change is to be processed as an amendment, an MDOT representative should provide a presentation to the MPO TCC and TPC regarding the amendment.

## Grouped Projects

The MPO sets aside funding for three grouped project categories including: Safety group, Bike/pedestrian/transit and MPO studies. Project additions and changes to projects within these groups will be processed as modifications because the funding in each group is already approved by the MPO for use.

# IV. TIP Project Guidelines

This section outlines the procedures and policies for TIP projects in the Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO planning area. This TIP process ensures these functions are achieved with regard to federal funds managed by the MPO.

## Project Application

Each municipality must fill out a project application for STP or TAP funding. The application provides the project description and other information needed to properly evaluate the project. GRPC staff will provide any assistance the municipality may need with the completion of the application.

## 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.

## Project Update Meetings

Project sponsors will be required to participate in project meetings with FHWA, MDOT and GRPC to discuss the development and schedule of the project. 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. Projects with over 50% drainage costs will be prioritized low.

## 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.

## Complete Streets Policy

On September 24, 2015 the Transportation Policy Committee of the Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO adopted a Complete Streets policy for the region. This policy requires that projects utilizing federal transportation funds on the Mississippi Gulf Coast shall include measures to accommodate bicycles, pedestrians and transit. Project sponsors should review the Complete Streets Policy to determine of which bicycle amenities should be included in a roadway's cross-section. If the project area has planned or currently includes fixed transit routes, applicant must request comments from Coast Transit Authority (CTA).

## Obligation Authority

Obligation authority or spending authority or obligation limitation is the ceiling or total amount of commitments of federal apportionment that can be made within a year. The MPO can only spend apportionment up to the amount of obligation authority it receives in any year.

## Special Match Credit

The Special Match Credit Program is available for LPA projects and is to be requested only by those LPA's who advance fund those projects at their own cost. If requested in the Project Initiation Process, the LPA may qualify to use actual incurred costs for Preliminary Engineering (PE), Right-of-Way (ROW), and other eligible costs as part, or all, of the required share for the construction project by obtaining Special Match Credit.

## Project Cost

The Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO receives an annual distribution of Surface Transportation Program to be used by 15 or more Local Public Agencies. On March 1, 2018 the MPO voted to control project cost increases by allowing a maximum of 20% increase. If an LPA needs more funding for a project, MPO staff can approve additional funds up to 20% of the original project funding allocation. If more than 20% is needed for the project, the sponsoring local public agency (LPA) will have to cover the increased cost. Projects that were on the TIP at the time of the policy adoption are eligible for 20% cost increases based on the funding amount as of March 1, 2018. If more than 20% is required, an exception can be made by MPO vote. The exception is only for the existing projects.

## Amendments and Modifications

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. Changes to the TIP or changes to an existing project that are considered a major revision to the TIP will be processed as amendments.

Amendments are processed at the quarterly MPO meetings. 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 MPO staff and no public review is required.

### Amendments include:

- Addition or deletion of a project
- 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.)
- Termini changes

### Modifications include:

- Correcting obvious minor data entry errors
- Splitting or combining projects without modifying the original project design, concept and scope or creating project segmentation
- Changing or clarifying elements of a project description. This change would not alter the original project design, concept and scope. It also must be consistent with the approved environmental document.
- Moving a project from one federal funding category to another federal funding category
- Moving a project from federal funding to state funding
- Shifting the schedule of a project or phase within the years covered by the TIP (only the first 2 years for nonattainment and maintenance areas)
- Updating project cost estimates (within the original project scope and intent) not to exceed greater than 20% of the original cost estimate
- Moving any identified project phase programmed for previous year into a new TIP (rollover provision)
- Adding an additional agency to a group
- Adding projects with grouped projects within the TIP, provided fiscal constrain is maintained
- Removing a project reported as obligated or completed
- Re-demonstration of fiscal constrain is not required

MPO staff will submit a letter from the MPO to MDOT showing the modifications made to the TIP and request that it be included on in the STIP. All amendments and modifications will be included in action summaries in the appendix of the TIP. The MPO TCC and TPC will be advised of the change at the next meeting.

# V. Project Evaluation

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 the Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO's allocation of Surface Transportation Program (STP) transportation funds should not be taken lightly. To ensure that the most beneficial projects are implemented, a project prioritization process is used.

## Economic Vitality

Projects that have a major effect on the relative attractiveness of an area to live or locate a business. A transportation project can affect an area's ability to attract new businesses and encourage them to stay and grow and in the process property values may rise. Some projects have obvious impacts on economic development that would be beneficial to the community's tax base and quality of life such as access to a shopping center, major employer or casino.

*Project generates new economic development such as retail spending, business activity, tax revenues, jobs, and property values. (Score: 5)*

## Safety and Security

Transportation improvements and roadway modernization reduce the likelihood of fatalities, injuries that result from crashes on the roadway, both by reducing the number of such crashes and also their severity. If a proposed project is on an intersection or roadway with a high accident rate it will be elevated in priority. This criteria also supports national performance safety goals.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Corridor Crash Rate} = \frac{N * 1,000,000}{365 * \text{AADT} * L} \quad N = \text{average annual crashes} \\ \text{Intersection Crash Rate} = \frac{N * 1,000,000}{365 * \text{AADT}} \quad L = \text{length of the roadway segment in miles} \end{array}$$

*Comparison of crash rate in this project area to the region?*

*Below average crash rate. (Score: 0)*

*Average crash rate. (Score: 5)*

*Above average crash rate. (Score: 10)*

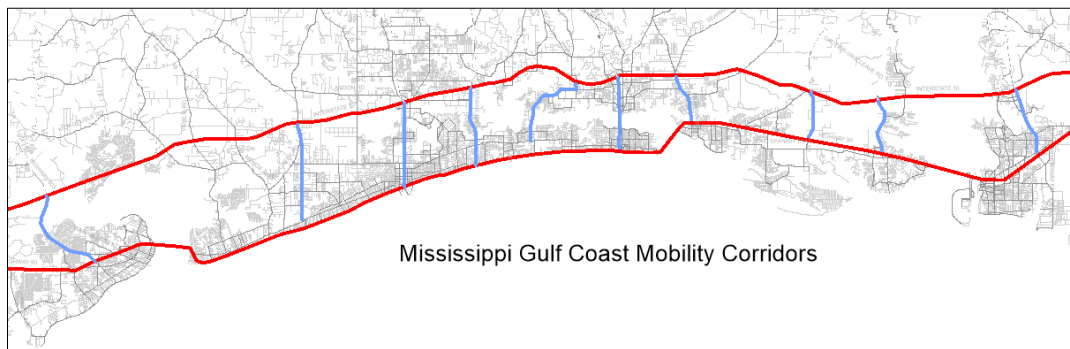
## Regional Mobility

Connectivity benefits play an important part in maintain and expanding the functionality of the transportation system, providing or supporting alternative travel choices, including both diverging paths and multiple travel routes. MS Gulf Coast mobility corridors are important routes that carry most of the region's longer distance trips from city to city that access major employment, regional shopping and large medical facilities.

*The project is intended to service a specific land use. (Score: 0)*

*The project is on a localized corridor (not on a mobility corridor). (Score: 5)*

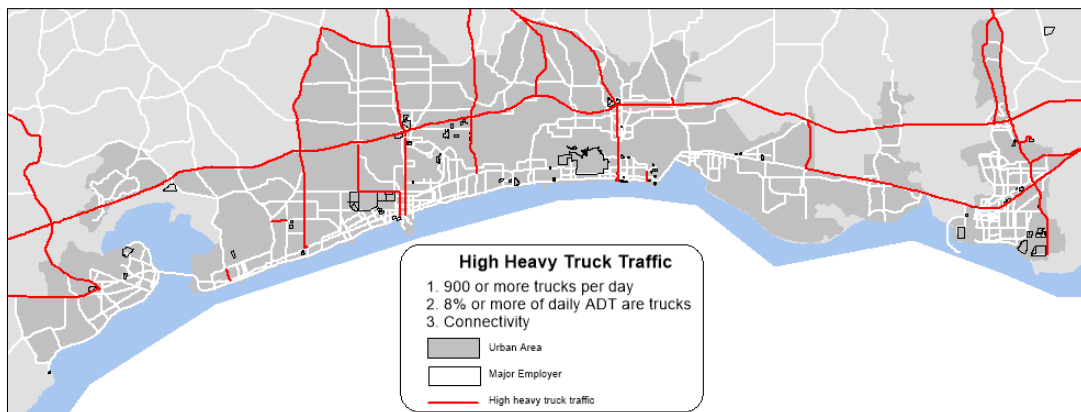
*The project improves a mobility corridor. (Score: 10)*



## Truck Traffic

Travel-time savings by trucks generate benefit to the region. The value of travel time for trucks considers average wages for truck drivers as well as other factors. The value of on-time deliveries are considered as the shipper or recipient will bear excess cost of late pickup or delivery.

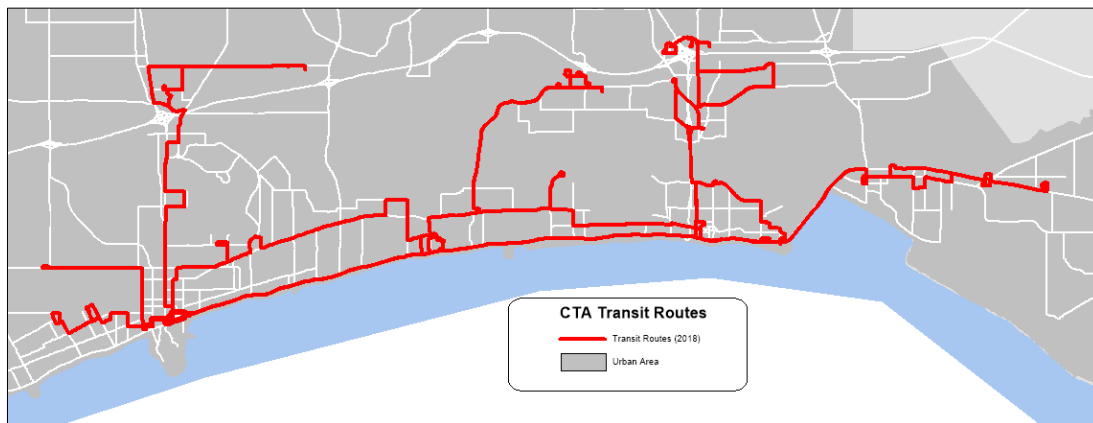
*Is this project located on corridor with high truck traffic? (Score: 5)*



## Transit

The overall performance of the transportation system is enhanced by measures that promote the availability and efficient interaction of different modes linked in ways that facilitate the safe and efficient movement of goods and people. Projects that improve the efficiency of transit are considered very beneficial to the region. As transit options become more attractive to commuters, less vehicles will be on the road resulting in lower vehicle emissions and traffic congestion.

*This project is on a roadway with fixed route transit service. (Score: 5)*



## Quality of life

While increasing traffic volumes are usually a good thing for business, neighborhoods can be very vulnerable to traffic volumes and vehicle speeds. Negative impacts from noise, safety, air quality and disruption of community cohesion all impact a community as traffic volumes and travel speeds increase. Accommodations for people with disabilities is also a quality of life concern for many. Projects that are meaningful to improving access for people with disabilities will receive priority.

*This project slows traffic on roads with excessive average speeds. (Score: 5)*

## System Management & Preservation

Traffic operational improvements are inexpensive improvements to existing streets and highways, including intersection improvements, turn lanes, signage and signalization and similar measures that are designed to allow more effective management of existing roadways. These improvements are intended to increase traffic flow without the addition of general-purpose lanes. Projects that may be categorized as minor intersection improvements, intersection improvements, corridor reconstruction-operations and channelization, or traffic management as shown on the project types table in the appendix will be given added priority.

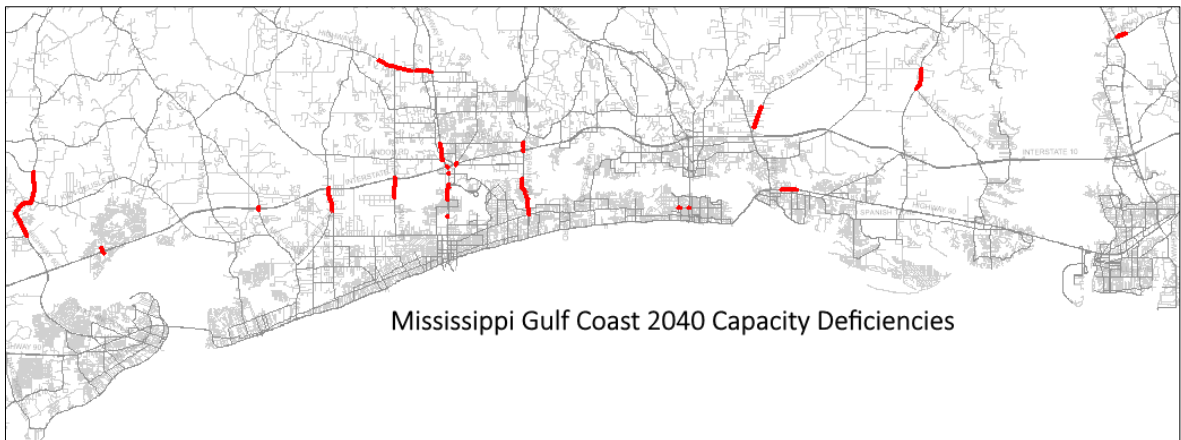
*This is a traffic operations project. (Score 5)*



## Reliability & Congestion

National performance goals for congestion and reliability seek to achieve a significant reduction in congestion and to improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the MPO's Congestion Management Program (CMP) to help planners quantify and identify areas of existing and future congestion. The CMP uses travel time data and roadway capacity data to identify areas of concern for congestion and the MTP uses the travel demand model to forecast congestion. Roadways experiencing traffic flow problems due to being over capacity or having operational problems may benefit from expansion or operational improvements. Projects mitigating these concerns will receive points in the MPO prioritization process.

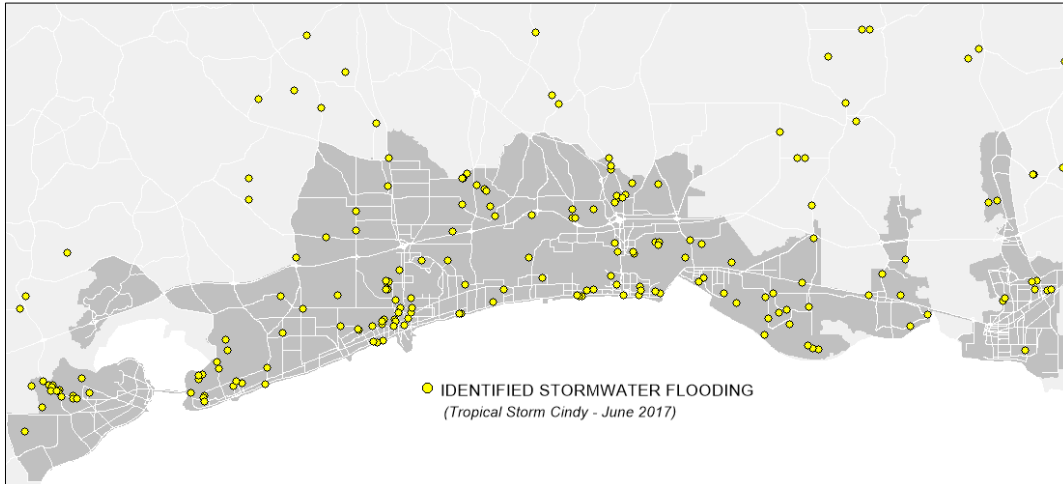
*Project addresses congestion identified in the CMP or the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan? (Score: 10)*



## Storm water

Transportation infrastructure is vulnerable to predicted changes in sea levels and increases in severe weather and extreme high temperatures. Corridors that have low-lying areas are subject to flooding and are more likely to suffer the damaging effects of inundation and affect mobility in times of flooding. Therefore, transportation project planning will need to respond to these threats.

*Project mitigates reoccurring storm water impacts to a roadway. (Score: 5)*



## Project Readiness

Project readiness will help ensure that the project be completed as quickly as possible to satisfy federal project delivery performance goals. The amount of right of way needed affects the timely progress of a project. Therefore, the MPO will give 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.

*No right-of-way required. (Score: 5), Preliminary engineering completed. (Score: 5)*

*Project is not considered a Categorical Exclusion (CE). (Score: -5)*

## Plan Consistency

This criterion measures the importance/need for a project based on whether the project is listed as a priority in an adopted plan. Projects that have been reviewed and approved under the guidance of regional planning processes are assumed to have merit by virtue of their inclusion in locally adopted plans. The MPO's adopted long-range transportation plan. The project would also receive extra points if an MPO funded study was done on the project.

*Project is included in the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan. (Score: 5)*

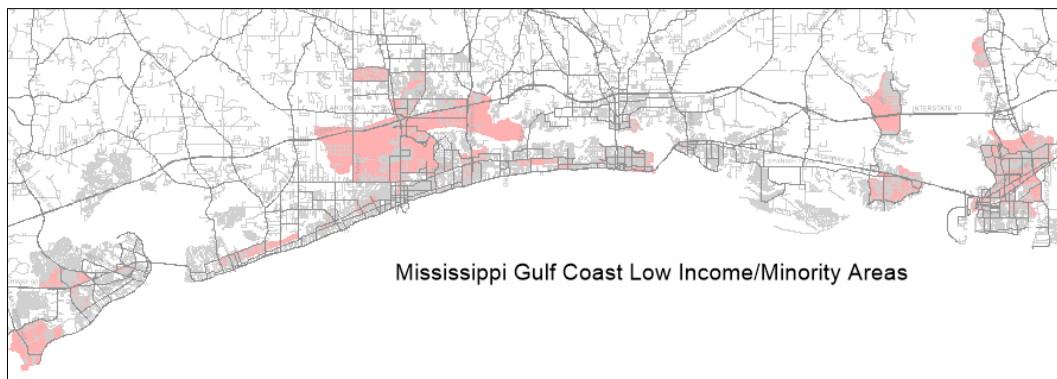
*A technical study was done that included this project. (Score: 5)*

## Traditionally Underserved Community Impacts

To ensure that environmental concerns, Title VI compliance and environmental justice principles are understood and implemented in the planning process, MPO planners identify residential patterns of low-income and minority populations so that the benefits and burdens of transportation investments can be fairly distributed. Negative impacts may include new construction and widening projects in environmentally sensitive areas or near traditionally underserved areas add more traffic or enable higher traffic speeds by adding lanes or building a new roadway through a target area. Projects such as this may provide positive benefits to the region but also have the negative impacts to small communities by causing disruption of community cohesion and the displacement of people and businesses. Positive impacts may include but are not limited to improvements traffic operational improvements, reconstruction projects and or sidewalks that improve safety and access in the community.

*Project negatively impacts traditionally underserved communities? (Score: - 5)*

*Project positively impact traditionally underserved communities? (Score: 5)*



## Cost Sharing

This criterion is included to determine whether newly funded projects can attract or complement other funding, thereby leveraging new money. The impact to the available funding is an important consideration of a project proposed for inclusion on the TIP. In some cases, a municipality may have secured funding from other federal or 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.

*This project utilizes significantly less than 80% federal funding of the total project cost. (Score: 5)*

## 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 facilitates and public involvement process to collect comment about proposed projects.

*Significant negative comments about this project were received. (Score -5)*

## 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 15 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.

*Federal funding requested under \$1,500,000. (Score 5)*

*Federal funding between \$1,500,000 and \$3,000,000. (Score 0)*

*Federal funding greater than \$3,000,000. (Score -20)*

## Pedestrian and Bike Mobility

The MPO gives additional points to projects that incorporate 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 will be given added priority.

*Minimum use of bike/pedestrian measures (Score 0)*

*Above average use of bike/pedestrian measures (Score 5)*

## Demand Management

STP funding can be used for the development projects that change travel behavior such as park and ride lots or bus lanes. 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.

*This is a travel demand management project. (Score 5)*

## Essential Services

Proximity to essential services including schools, health care or recreation. Projects within  $\frac{1}{4}$  of these areas will enhance connectivity that may preclude access of the public, including traditionally underserved populations, to essential services.

*Project within a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of an essential service. (Score 5)*

## Drainage

This category will give priority to projects that maximize the use of resources. Use of the following scoring thresholds will help take into account costs associated with drainage costs.

*Is the drainage cost associated with this project more than 50% of the total project cost? (Score -10)*

## Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

The CAC provides a mechanism to solicit and integrate community feedback into the transportation planning process. The CAC will be directly involved in TIP project prioritization through an application ranking process that reflects citizen and stakeholder views and interests. MPO staff will make targeted effort to engage representatives of protected populations to ensure their thoughts and ideas are incorporated in the decision-making process. The CAC will develop a ranked list of all projects under consideration and the top projects will receive additional points in the MPO prioritization process.

*This project is a priority of the CAC. (Score: 5)*

MS Gulf Coast MPO Project Evaluation and Prioritization		
Category	Criteria	Score
Economic Vitality	Project generates new economic development such as retail spending, business activity, tax revenues, jobs, and property values	5
Safety and Security	Below average crash rate.	0
	Average crash rate.	5
	Above average crash rate.	10
Regional Mobility	Project is intended to service a specific land use.	0
	Project is on a localized corridor (not on a mobility corridor).	5
	Project improves a mobility corridor.	10
Truck Traffic	Project is located on corridor with high truck traffic.	5
Transit	Project is on a roadway with fixed route transit service.	5
Quality of life	Project slows traffic on roads with excessive average speeds.	5
System Management	This a traffic operations project.	5
Reliability & Congestion	Project addresses congestion identified in the CMP or the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan.	10
Storm water	Project mitigates reoccurring storm water impacts to a roadway.	5
Project Readiness	No right-of-way required.	5
	Project is not considered a Categorical Exclusion (CE).	-5
	Preliminary engineering completed.	5
Plan Consistency	Project is included in the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan.	5
	A technical study was done that included this project.	5
Traditionally Underserved Community Impacts	Project negatively impacts traditionally underserved communities.	-5
	Project positively impact traditionally underserved communities.	5
Cost Sharing	Project utilizes significantly less than 80% federal funding of the total project cost.	5
Public Concerns	Significant negative comments about this project were received.	-5
	Federal funding requested is under \$1,500,000.	5
Federal Participation Cost	Federal funding requested is between \$1,500,000 and \$3,000,000.	0
	Federal funding requested is greater than \$3,000,000.	-20
	Minimum use of bike/pedestrian measures.	0
Pedestrian and Bike Mobility	Above average use of bike/pedestrian measures.	5
	This is a travel demand management project.	5
Demand Management	This is a travel demand management project.	5
Essential Services	Project is within a ¼ mile of an essential service.	5
Drainage	Drainage cost associated with this project more than 50% of the total project cost.	-10
Community Advisory Committee (CAC)	Project is a priority of the CAC.	5

# VII. TAP & Bike-Pedestrian

Listed below are the scoring categories for both Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and for independent bicycle and pedestrian projects. The TAP replaced the funding from pre-MAP-21 programs including the Transportation Enhancement Activities, Recreational Trails Program, and Safe Routes to School Program. An independent bicycle or pedestrian project is a facility constructed independently and is not included as an incidental part of a highway construction project. TAP projects and general bicycle pedestrian have most of the same scoring categories except for three additional categories for TAP.

## Regional Significance

Connectivity benefits play an important part in maintain and expanding the functionality of the transportation system, providing or supporting alternative travel choices, including both diverging paths and multiple travel routes. Projects are given points based on the scale of the transportation project's service area. MS Gulf Coast mobility corridors are important routes that carry most of the region's longer distance trips from city to city that access major employment, regional shopping and large medical facilities. Localized corridors support shorter trips from one end of a city to the other such as Pass Road in Gulfport and Biloxi or Old Spanish Trail in Gautier.

*The project is intended to service a specific land use. (Score: 0)*

*The project is on a localized corridor (not on a mobility corridor). (Score: 5)*

*The project improves a mobility corridor. (Score: 10)*

## Project Readiness

This criterion rewards projects that are production ready. 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.

*No right-of-way required. (Score 5)*

*Preliminary engineering completed. (Score 5)*

## Plan Consistency

This criterion measures the importance/need for a project based on whether the project is listed as a priority in an adopted plan. The MPO's adopted long range transportation plan, bicycle and pedestrian plan or comprehensive plans.

*This project is currently included in a local, regional or state plan. (Score: 5)*

*A technical study was done that included this project. (Score: 5)*

## Ability to Expand or Extend Network

This criterion was developed to reward projects that extend the physical limits of previous projects, thereby providing system-wide continuity for the bike/ped network.

*Project connects to existing sidewalks, pathways, etc. (Score: 5)*

## Transit Access

As transit options become more attractive to commuters, less vehicles will be on the road resulting in lower vehicle emissions and traffic congestion. Therefore projects that are on fixed transit routes are given priority.

*Project on a roadway with fixed route transit service? (Score: 5)*

## Underserved Community Impacts

It is assumed that TAP projects and other bicycle and pedestrian projects provide positive impacts to the community that they are implemented without displacing its population. Therefore when a proposed project is in or near a traditionally underserved area, it will have major effect on the relative attractiveness of the area to live or locate a business. These types of improvements will increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety leading to better access to essential services and better community health.

*Project is in a traditionally underserved community. (Score: 5)*

## Project Match

This criterion is included to determine whether newly funded projects can attract or complement other funding, thereby leveraging new money. The impact to the available funding is an important consideration of a project proposed for inclusion on the TIP. In some cases, a municipality may have secured funding from other 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.

*Project utilizes significantly less than 80% federal funds of the overall project cost. (Score: 5)*

## Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

The CAC provides a mechanism to solicit and integrate community feedback into the transportation planning process. The CAC will be directly involved in TIP project prioritization through an application ranking process that reflects citizen and stakeholder views and interests. MPO staff will make targeted effort to engage



representatives of protected populations to ensure their thoughts and ideas are incorporated in the decision-making process. The CAC will develop a ranked list of all projects under consideration and the top projects will receive additional points in the MPO prioritization process.

*This project is a priority of the CAC. (Score: 5)*

## Cost Per Mile Efficiency

This category will give priority to projects that maximize the use of resources. Use of the following scoring thresholds will help take into account costs associated with drainage and other issues that increase project costs. The baseline project costs shown below maximize resources. Using the formula "*Proposed cost / project length = proposed cost per mile*", any amount over the baseline reduces the maximization of funding resources. Baseline cost per mile: 5 foot sidewalk - \$500,000 per mile, 10 foot pathway - \$1,000,000 per mile.

*>10 % under baseline cost per mile (Score: 5), 10 % under to 10% over baseline cost per mile (Score: 0), 10 %< over baseline cost per mile (Score: -5)*

## Essential Services

Proximity to essential services including schools, health care or recreation. Projects within ¼ of these areas will enhance connectivity that may preclude access of the public, including traditionally underserved populations, to essential services.

*Project is within a ¼ mile of an essential service? (Score 5)*

## Safety

Pedestrian and bicycle safety is very important to give people a secure feeling when they ride of bike. Safer roads for bicyclists and pedestrians will encourage more people to consider using these modes.

*Project is within an area that has experienced pedestrian or bike accidents. (Score: 5)*  
*Projects that provide for safe crossings and refuge on wide roadways (Score: 5)*

## Off Road Trails (TAP only)

Construction of off-road recreation trails, including the conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors, utility easements, drainage ways, and public lands for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.

*This is an off-road trails project. (Score: 10)*

## Local Road Needs & SRTS (TAP only)

TAP funds can be used on local roadways needs that are not eligible for the STP funding. This may be important to provide biking and walking opportunities on local roads to access major roads.

*This project supplements another project on the federal-aid system to include needs on connecting local roads? (Score: 5)*

*This is a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) education or awareness program? (Score: 10)*

MS Gulf Coast MPO TAP & Bike/Ped Project Evaluation and Prioritization		
Category	Criteria	Score
Regional Significance	The project is intended to service a specific land use.	0
	The project is on a localized corridor (not on a mobility corridor).	5
	The project improves a mobility corridor.	10
Project Readiness	No right-of-way required.	5
	Preliminary engineering completed.	5
Plan Consistency	Project is currently included in a local, regional or state plan.	5
	A technical study was done that included this project.	5
Ability to Expand or Extend Network	Project connects to existing sidewalks, pathways, etc.	5
Transit Access	Project on a roadway with fixed route transit service.	5
Underserved Community Impacts	Project is in a traditionally underserved community.	5
Project Match	Project utilizes significantly less than 80% federal funds of the overall project cost.	5
Community Advisory Committee (CAC)	This project is a priority of the CAC.	5
Cost Per Mile Efficiency	>10% under baseline cost per mile	5
	10% under to 10% over baseline cost per mile	0
	10% < over baseline cost per mile	-5
Essential Services	Project is within a ¼ mile of an essential service.	5
Safety	Project is within and area that has experienced pedestrian or bicycle accidents.	5
	Projects that provide for safe crossings and refuge on wide roadways	5
Off Road Trails (TAP only)	This is an off-road trails project.	10
Local Road Needs & SRTS (TAP only)	Project supplements another project on the federal-aid system to include needs on connecting local roads.	5
	This is a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) education or awareness program.	10

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