

CDOT Guidance for Processing Amendments and Modifications to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

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Table of Contents

- Introduction** 2
- STIP Format and Official Record** 2
- STIP Amendment Process** 2
 - STIP Amendments 2
 - STIP Administrative Modifications 3
 - Public Involvement and Approval Procedures for STIP Amendments and STIP Administrative Modifications for Rural, non-TIP Areas..... 4
- TIP Processes in MPO Areas**..... 5
 - Public Involvement and Approval Procedures for TIP Amendments and Administrative Modifications 5
 - TIP/STIP Reconciliation 6
 - TIP Adoption and Approval Process..... 6
- Transit Projects in the STIP and TIPs** 7
- Roll Forwards for Unauthorized and Unobligated Funds**..... 8
- Appendix A** -Links to MPO TIP Amendment & Administrative Modification Guidelines 9
- Appendix B** – Key Terms and Definitions 10



Introduction

This guidance document provides information on how the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) amends and modifies the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and how to incorporate changes made to its planning adjacent documents, such as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This guidance also includes the process for submitting newly adopted TIPs to the Governor for approval.

Any transportation project utilizing federal transportation funding must be included in the STIP and any relevant MPO TIP per 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135, and 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 5304. This guidance is intended to assist CDOT staff, its planning partners, and local agency recipients in adhering to federal guidelines when initiating and completing federally funded transportation projects.

STIP Format and Official Record

The STIP can be updated due to changes in available funding, project cost, scope or schedule, or the addition or deletion of projects. The process for amending, modifying, and approving all highway and transit projects in the eSTIP is described below.

CDOT administers the STIP using Project Tracker as its eSTIP software. The eSTIP is the authoritative source for all project programming, funding, and approval actions. Amendments, administrative modifications, and annual updates are processed and reflected in the eSTIP. When required for federal approval or public communication, CDOT may generate PDF or other static versions derived from the eSTIP. However, these static versions are superseded by the eSTIP if changes are made subsequent to the publication of said pdf.

STIP Amendment Process

I. STIP Amendments

STIP Amendments require approval by the Transportation Commission (TC), as well as FHWA and FTA, and follow the process outlined below as needed when Amendments are submitted to CDOT. Below is a description of what constitutes an Amendment and the timeline for approval.

A. Regionally Significant Projects

A revision to the eSTIP is considered a STIP Amendment when:

1. A regionally significant project is added to or deleted from the STIP.
2. There is a major scope change to a project. A major scope change may be described as:
 - a) Adding a travel lane at least one centerline mile in length;
 - b) Adding a new intersection or a major improvement to existing intersections (excluding turn lanes, auxiliary lanes or median improvements);
 - c) Adding new interchanges and grade separated intersections;
 - d) Major improvements to existing interchanges excluding drainage improvements and ramp widening;
 - e) A modification to a project that results in a re-evaluation of a NEPA document
(NOTE: STIP amendments *documented* during NEPA re-evaluation public

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- involvement do not require further public involvement during STIP process);
 - f) A modification to a project that requires air quality conformity determination, if applicable;
 - 3. Adding or deleting federal or state funding for any project by more than \$5 million (cumulative) over the four years of the STIP.
 - B. Non-Regionally Significant Projects and Funding Program Pools
 - Adding a new funding program pool or implementing substantial changes to funding program pool totals due to action by the Transportation Commission or the US DOT.
 - 1. Adding funds to a funding program pool resulting in a change of the funding program pool balance of 15% or more than was originally pushed via Program Distribution or the Annual Budget funding adjustment, based on updated revenue projections.
 - C. Timeline for Processing STIP Amendments
 - Amendments are processed for approval by the TC as needed. This includes the public involvement process as detailed in III A, below. When an amendment becomes necessary, the Region Planner must submit relevant project and amendment details to the STIP Management Team by the first Friday of the month. The CDOT Headquarters STIP Manager then coordinates the 30-day public process and inclusion on the next month's TC agenda for approval. Overall, this process takes 45 – 60 days to complete.
 - D. Emergency or Expedited Process for STIP Amendments
 - If there is an expedited action or special circumstance required, this must be agreed upon by CDOT Executive Director and FHWA Colorado Division Administrator or the FTA Regional Administrator. This action may be given conditional approval in order to move the project forward, but still requires a public involvement process concluding with TC action.

II. STIP Administrative Modifications

- A. STIP Administrative Modifications include revisions which:
 - 1. Do not meet the STIP amendment criteria as listed in Section I A or I B; or
 - 2. Result from voter initiatives; or
 - 3. Are declared an emergency as defined by the Emergency Relief Program 23 CFR 668.105, the Governor, the TC, or the CDOT Executive Director (based on an emergency event)
- B. Unobligated and unauthorized funds from prior STIPs
 - 1. Includes both highway and transit projects or any active projects listed in the first year of the current STIP that are not yet authorized or obligated, or are only partially authorized/obligated, but are expected to be obligated or authorized in the first year of the new STIP.
 - 2. These projects are added to the current STIP as follows:
 - a) The Region or Headquarter Business Office undo any relevant budget actions so that the funds may be rolled into the current fiscal year and re-programmed with the original funds in the current fiscal year.

III. Public Involvement and Approval Procedures for STIP Amendments and STIP Administrative Modifications for Rural, non-TIP Areas

A. STIP Amendments:

1. Prior to STIP amendment approval for rural non-TIP areas:
 - a) CDOT Region Planner notifies the STIP Management Team of STIP amendment
 - (1) STIP Management Team verifies if project modification requires an amendment.
 - (2) STIP Management Team verifies financial constraint.
 - (3) Region Planner verifies the amendment for consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Statewide Plan (SWP). If a Plan amendment is needed, the Region Planner initiates it and works with the Division of Transportation Development (DTD) to complete.

B. STIP Management Team prepares amendment packet for public comment, TC Approval and incorporation into the STIP. This process can take up to 60 days to complete.

1. Details for the STIP amendment are posted on the external CDOT [website](#). This opens the public comment period, which lasts a minimum of 30 days.
2. The STIP Management Team distributes an electronic notice of the proposed STIP amendment using the appropriate TPR distribution list, and includes FHWA, and FTA. This mailing list is derived from the DTD Statewide Planning Mailing List and is updated periodically with the electronic list managed by the STIP Management Team.
3. Comments Received
 - a) CDOT Region Planner contacts TPR representative and requests that a TPR meeting be conducted to discuss any pending STIP Amendments no later than the end of the written comment period, identified in the notice. If the TPR already has a meeting scheduled during the public involvement period, they should discuss any pending STIP Amendments for their area.
 - b) All comments are submitted to CDOT Headquarters STIP Manager who forwards copies to the appropriate CDOT Region Planner within 3 business days after receiving comments.
 - c) CDOT Region Planner responds to the HQ STIP Manager within 5 business days.
 - d) The STIP Manager forwards the response to the commenter upon receipt from the CDOT Region Planner.
4. Transportation Commission Approval
 - a) OFMB coordinates with the TC office on the required agenda item and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), or designee, leads the TC discussion with the CDOT Region Planner or appropriate region staff in attendance, if necessary.
 - b) TC takes action on the STIP Amendments.
 - c) If the TC approves the STIP Amendment(s), OFMB submits the approved STIP Amendment(s) with signature from the TC Secretary to FHWA/FTA for their approval.
 - d) FHWA/FTA signs the STIP Amendment(s) approval letter and sends its to the STIP Management Team.

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- e) If the TC or FHWA/FTA **does not** approve the STIP Amendment(s), the process may start over with updated information.
 - C. Administrative Modifications - Administrative Modifications to the STIP do not require a public comment period or approval by the TC, FHWA, or FTA.
 1. Region Planners submit administrative modifications as needed through the eSTIP software.
 2. The STIP Management Team verifies and approves the revision(s) as administrative modification(s) in the STIP. All approved administrative modifications are reflected in the eSTIP.
 - D. Documentation for all changes made to STIP projects are reflected in the eSTIP and may be found [here](#).

TIP Amendment and Modification Processes in MPO Areas

For any Amendment or Administrative Modification for CDOT projects located in an MPO area, CDOT relies on the MPO's TIP public involvement process as structured in the signed Memorandum of Agreement with each MPO. TIP projects are included in the STIP without modification. For specifics on how each MPO processes Amendments and Administrative Modifications for their area, please refer to the respective MPO, whose contact information can be found in Appendix A.

The Governor is required to approval all TIP amendments; however, the Governor has delegated approval authority for amendments to the CDOT Executive Director. Below is the process CDOT follows for completing the approval process once the MPO Board or governing body takes action.

I. Approval Procedures for TIP Amendments and Administrative Modifications

- A. MPO TIP Amendments
 1. Once an MPO Board takes action to approve a TIP amendment, the following steps must be taken by CDOT.
 - a) The TIP approval information is received by the STIP Management Team who then completes a packet for the CDOT Executive Director to review and approve. The packet includes:
 - The Board resolution or letter acknowledging the MPO's approval of the TIP amendment.
 - A project list detailing the changes approved by the MPO.
 - Any new conformity finding as a result of the amendment.
 - b) The STIP Management Team drafts a letter for signature from the CDOT Executive Director, approving the MPO amendment.
 - Amendment packets are submitted monthly to the CDOT Executive Director.
 - The approval process may take 4-6 weeks from the time the MPO Board takes action.
 2. The STIP Management Team sends the signed approval letter and supporting documentation to FHWA/FTA for their records. Supporting documentation includes:
 - a) Resolution or Board action from MPO
 - b) the project list detailing the changes approved in the amendment.
 3. The STIP Management Team informs the MPO and CDOT's Region Planner of the TIP

approval.

4. CDOT Region Planner enters the approved amended project information into the eSTIP.

B. MPO Administrative Modifications

1. TIP Modifications approved by the MPO are forwarded to the CDOT STIP Management Team and the CDOT Region Planners for incorporation into the STIP.
2. Once modified in the STIP, CDOT Region Planners communicate this back to their respective MPO.

II. TIP/STIP Reconciliation

In order to maintain consistency between the TIPs and the STIP, CDOT conducts a reconciliation process with each MPO and any relevant stakeholder agencies, such as Transit Direct Recipients, FHWA, and FTA. These reconciliations must be completed, at minimum, on a semi-annual basis.

A. Purpose

The first reconciliation is completed by the end of January each year for the FHWA funding programs, as well as Transit. The second reconciliation occurs by the end of September. The reconciliation may include all programs and projects included in the TIP and STIP.

1. Participants should include CDOT Region staff, DTD liaisons, DTR liaisons, and the STIP Management Team, as well as MPO staff.
2. Representatives from any stakeholder agencies (e.g., Transit agencies) and FHWA and FTA shall be included as well.

B. Process

1. Compare the TIP with the STIP dollar by dollar, and project by project
2. Complete a TIP to STIP Comparison sheet, or equivalent, to reflect any corrections needed.
3. The corresponding liaison (listed below) takes the lead to communicate to their respective Business Office to follow the natural process for TIP amendments and modifications.
 - a) CDOT Region Planner: FHWA funding programs
 - b) DTR STIP Coordinator: FTA and State Transit funding programs
 - c) MPO Representative

TIP Adoption and Approval Process

CDOT is the facilitator that takes an adopted TIP from an MPO and gives it to the Governor, who must approve all newly adopted TIPs. The CDOT Headquarters STIP Manager oversees this process by putting together the packet that goes first to the CDOT Executive Director, then to the Governor, and lastly back to the MPO for final signatures. This process should occur within 30 days of MPO Board action.

- A.** The MPO board adopts their TIP and sends all of the corresponding information to the CDOT Headquarters STIP Manager, which may include the following:

1. Air quality conformity letter from the Air Pollution Control Division - Department of Public Health and Environment (APCD) for air quality (where applicable)
2. transmittal letter from the MPO,
3. MPO Board resolution,

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4. signed self-certification document from the MPO,
- B. CDOT gathers the following documents:
1. fiscal constraint confirmation from the CDOT CFO,
 2. region concurrence letter from relevant CDOT region(s),
 3. CDOT signature on the MPO self-certification letter,
 4. cover letter signed by the CDOT Executive Director to the Governor,
 5. draft approval letter for the Governor to sign and return to CDOT
- C. Submitting entire packet to the Governor
1. The CDOT Executive Director's Chief of Staff takes the packet, including all of the information listed above, and transmits it to the Governor's office.
 2. The Governor's office sends the signed approval letter back to the CDOT Executive Director's Chief of Staff.
- D. The CDOT STIP Manager transmits the signed approval letter back to the MPO and copies the CDOT regions.

Transit Projects in the STIP and TIPs

CDOT has set forth the following procedures to ensure that all transit projects are included in both the STIP and TIPs, where relevant. The same STIP and TIP amendment and modification processes from above apply to transit projects; however, this section outlines the steps that CDOT's Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) must take to ensure that all amendments and modifications are included in the STIP once changes have been approved.

A. Urban Transit Projects

1. Region Planners review TIP modifications and amendments as they are received from the MPOs and flag anything labeled as a transit project to send to the DTR contact to review.
2. DTR contact reviews the modification or amendment and tracks these projects. [See DTR Award and STIP Process Flowcharts]
3. DTR requests any necessary pool revisions including reductions or additions via a Funding Allocation Request (FAR) form. NOTE: The FAR form is an internal CDOT form used to track transfer requests between funding programs, Regions, etc.
4. OFMB completes any necessary pool transfers.
5. DTR prepares the STIP amendment form and submits it to the planner in the HQ Business Office, who enters the modification into the eSTIP.
6. Once approved into the eSTIP, the STIP Management Team communicates back to the respective MPO that the action is completed.

B. Rural Transit Projects

1. DTR contact maintains a list of the rural transit projects.
2. DTR contact cooperates with the rural transit agencies to ensure the correct project documentation and details are provided to the HQ Business Office.
3. DTR contact works with the HQ Business Office to ensure that any TIP amendments or modifications are reflected in the STIP.

Roll-forwards for Unauthorized and Unobligated Funds

All federally funded transportation projects must be authorized prior to starting the project or a specific phase of a project. Once authorization has been given, obligation may be requested once financial expenditures have occurred.

- A. Any active projects listed in the first year of the current STIP that are not yet authorized or obligated, or are only partially authorized/obligated, should be rolled into the first year of the new STIP.
- B. During STIP Development
 1. The State Fiscal Year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. The Federal Fiscal Year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. This creates a 3 month gap where CDOT has already commenced a new fiscal year while the Federal Fiscal Year is coming to completion. All federal projects that are awaiting authorization and obligation during this gap period or later must be included in the new STIP in the Roll-Forward column in order to be recognized as valid for federal authorization and obligation.
 2. Region Planners/DTR should work with urban transit agency liaisons and the MPO contacts to ensure that urban transit projects are added to the Draft STIP during the STIP's annual update cycle.
 - The DTR contact should work with rural transit agency liaison contacts and the Headquarter Business Office to ensure that rural transit projects are added to the Draft STIP during the STIP's annual update cycle.
 - Region Planners should work with their respective Region Business Office to determine which projects will need to move into the next fiscal year.
 3. All roll-forwards must be incorporated into the upcoming STIP prior to final adoption by the TC, or be subject to compliance with the established amendment processes laid out above

Appendix A - Links to MPO TIP Amendment & Administrative Modification Guidelines

The guidance for each respective MPO's TIP Amendments and Administrative Modifications can be found at the links listed below.

[Denver Regional COG Guidance for TIP Amendments - DRCOG TIP](#)

[Grand Valley MPO Guidance for TIP Amendments - GVMPO TIP](#)

[North Front Range MPO Guidance for TIP Amendments - NFRMPO TIP](#)

[Pueblo Area Council Of Governments Guidance for TIP Amendments - PACOG TIP](#)

[Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments Guidance for TIP Amendments - PPACG TIP](#)

Appendix B – Key Terms and Definitions

10-Year Plan - A list of priority projects that will improve system performance, advance transportation safety, and sustainably increase transportation choice. Projects were identified based on extensive public and stakeholder engagement. Projects are included in the STIP as available funding is identified.

Annual STIP Adoption – Each year, CDOT updates the STIP to drop the initial fiscal year and add a new fiscal year for the end of the cycle. CDOT follows specific federal guidelines (23 USC 135) for developing the STIP. Conducting this annual update allows CDOT to always have four federally recognized years of projects in the STIP. This process allows CDOT to better manage available funding and project scheduling. The officially approved STIP is maintained in the eSTIP.

Business Office – Can refer to a CDOT Region office or Headquarters (HQ) Business Office. These are the financial hubs for CDOT where projects are budgeted and purchases are made. Each Region budgets the projects in their respective area. The HQ handles budget actions for those projects and studies that are managed on a statewide basis.

CDOT Region Planner –Region Planners are staffed in each of the five CDOT Engineering Regions, plus Headquarters. These staff work with the rural Transportation Planning Regions (TPRs) and MPOs to determine transportation planning needs across the state. The Region Planners also work with their respective Region Business Office or the Headquarters Business Office to coordinate appropriate STIP actions for transportation projects.

Colorado Transportation Commission (TC) - CDOT’s governing policy body comprised of 11 representatives from around the state. Each Commissioner is appointed by the Governor and approved by the Colorado Senate.

Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) STIP Coordinator - This person coordinates all amendments and modifications in the STIP for transit projects. This includes liaising with the MPOs and direct recipient transit providers to ensure that those transit projects that are also included in the STIP.

Electronic Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (eSTIP) – CDOT’s web-based system of record for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The eSTIP is the TC approved STIP document and is now the repository for approved projects, including amendments and modifications made thereto.

Fiscal Constraint - A statement providing sufficient financial information for demonstrating that projects in the STIP can be implemented using committed, available or reasonably expected revenue sources, with reasonable assurance that the federally supported transportation system is being adequately operated and maintained. Fiscal constraint applies to each State fiscal year.

Funding Program - A division of Program Distribution that is allocated to the CDOT Regions and Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) for planning and budgeting purposes. NOTE: the only funding programs that the TMAs receive direct allocations for are Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), and Transportation Alternatives program (TAP).

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) – This is comprised of pollutants that are anthropogenic (man-made) emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, nitrogen trifluoride, and sulfur hexafluoride. Colorado has developed a program to reduce GHG emissions for transportation projects. Details of the program may be found in [2 CCR 601-22](#).

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - A geographic area with a population of 50,000 or more. In Colorado there are five MPOs: Grand Valley MPO (GVMPO), the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG), the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), and the North Front Range MPO (NFRMPO).

Non-Regionally Significant Project - Projects that are not considered to be of appropriate scale for individual identification in the STIP in a given program year, and which are grouped in the STIP within a STIP Pool or Regional Sub-Program. For example, Surface Treatment, Bridge, or Hazard Elimination projects are grouped in pools within the STIP, based on the Region the projects are located in.

Project Priority Programming Process (4P) - The guidance document that lays out the elements to be included in the development of the Statewide Transportation Plan and the STIP.

Program Distribution - The Transportation Commission (TC) approved document assigning dollars to specific funding programs for the same time period as the current long-range Statewide Transportation Plan.

Program List - A list of Regionally Significant and Non-Regionally Significant projects corresponding with specific initiatives or CDOT programs for funding transportation. For example, a list of projects has been identified to utilize funding legislated through Senate Bills 18-001 and 19-267. This program list is called the SB1/SB267 List.

Project Authorization - All federally funded transportation projects must be authorized by FHWA or FTA prior to initiating work on the project or a specific phase of a project.

Project Obligation – Obligation is the process where state or local dollars are reimbursed by FHWA or FTA to cover expenditures on authorized projects or phases.

Region Planning Commission (RPC) – The voting Board for each Transportation Planning Region.

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) - Identifies regional needs, goals and strategies for each TPR and MPO. These plans subsequently inform the larger Statewide Plan.

Regionally Significant Project - A project serving regional transportation needs and of significant scale to be typically included in transportation demand modeling for air quality emissions analysis and identified individually in the STIP.

Rollover Funding - Moving unobligated and unbudgeted project funds for in-progress projects or delayed projects to the new fiscal year.

State Implementation Plan (SIP) - A Statewide Implementation Plan (SIP) is created if a state is found to be in violation of the NAAQS (National Ambient Air Quality Standards). It includes control measures, maintenance

plans, permitting programs, etc. in order to meet those standards. It is approved by the EPA. It also has an emissions budget where part of it is transportation related. So an MPO that is in a region of noncompliance with the NAAQS needs to model their RTP and TIP to demonstrate air quality conformity.

Statewide Transportation Plan (SWP) – A federally required long range transportation Plan that covers a minimum of 20 years and examines future transportation needs in Colorado, based on revenue projections, population changes, the impact of new technologies, etc. This plan sets the goals and strategies for Colorado’s transportation system and is the basis for the STIP.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) - This is a federally required, fiscally constrained, four-year program of transportation projects that Colorado, specifically CDOT, intends to initiate, continue work on, or complete over a four-year period.

STIP Administrative Modification - A minor revision that includes minor changes to a Regionally Significant project, including costs, funding sources, initiation dates, design concept or scope, or minor revision to a program amount. Does not require public review and comment.

STIP Amendment - A major revision to a Regionally Significant project, including addition or deletion, major change to cost, initiation dates, or design concept or scope; as well as a major change to a program fund amount; or the addition of a new Program List that has not yet been vetted through the planning process and discussed with CDOT’s planning partners and stakeholders. Requires public review and comment and approval by the TC.

STIP Management Team – The STIP is co-managed by staff from CDOT’s Division of Transportation Development and the Division of Accounting and Finance. This team verifies and maintains compliance with state and federal planning regulations and liaises with CDOT’s internal and external planning partners.

STIP Pool - A logical grouping of projects, typically based on a CDOT funding program, such as Surface Treatment, that may include Non-Regionally Significant projects grouped under that program and included in the STIP.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - This is a federally required four-year program of transportation projects that a MPO intends to initiate, construct or complete over a four-year period. TIPs include CDOT projects that fall within MPO boundaries. Each MPO is responsible for developing and maintaining a TIP to federal standards.

TIP Administrative Modification – The are done at the MPO level and are a minor revision to a Regionally Significant project, including costs, funding sources, initiation dates, design concept or scope, or minor revision to a program amount. Does not require public review and comment. Once these are approved by the MPO, they are incorporated into the STIP unchanged.

TIP Amendment – Amendments and Administrative Modifications done at the MPO level. Once a TIP has been adopted or modified, it is then included in the STIP unchanged, per federal guidance. Each MPO develops and follows its own policies for modifying their TIP. CDOT has standing agreements with each MPO to utilize the MPO public process for developing and amending their respective TIPs, and incorporating those adoptions into the STIP. This is done to eliminate duplication of process and

to mitigate project delays. Additionally, the Governor has delegated approval authority for TIP Amendments to the CDOT Executive Director.

Transportation Management Area (TMA) - An MPO that has a population of 200,000 or greater. Colorado has three TMAs: DRCOG, PPACG, and NFRMPO.

Transportation Planning Region (TPR) - a grouping of geographically contiguous counties. In Colorado there are 15 TPRs. There are 10 rural TPRs and 5 metropolitan areas, also known as MPOs. These planning regions are established in the Statewide Planning Rules: 2CCR 601-22 - *RULES GOVERNING STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REGIONS*