

STIP Development Guidance and Project Priority Programming Process (4P)

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

Adopted by the Transportation Commission on June 18, 2026

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I. Introduction

This guidance document provides a framework for the development and change processes of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the programming of transportation projects allowed under Titles 23 and 49 of the US Code. All federally funded transportation projects in Colorado – regardless of who receives and/or manages the funds – must be included in any relevant MPO TIP and the STIP.

Additionally, the STIP must demonstrate fiscal constraint and be consistent with the CDOT Statewide Transportation Plan (SWP), for a period of at least four years. This guidance is consistent with Policy Directive (PD) 703.0 Annual Budget, Project Budgeting and Cash Management Principles, Part V., Section F, which outlines the general policy foundation for the STIP. This guidance reflects current regulations and policies and supersedes the 4P and STIP Development Guidelines adopted in May 2022.

II. Regulatory Guidance

The statutory and regulatory framework for the STIP and STIP development processes includes:

- 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) 134 and 135, and its implementing regulations;
- 49 United States Code (U.S.C.) 53 and its implementing regulations;
- 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 450
- 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 613
- § 43-1-106(8)(a), Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) Transportation Commission;
- § 43-1-1101-1104, C.R.S. Transportation planning.

III. Planning and Programming Process

The Planning and Programming Process includes the development of a SWP, a 10-Year Plan detailing CDOT priorities, and a four-year STIP. A new STIP is developed annually; however, it implements the SWP and RTPs, and the 10 Year Plan for Colorado’s Transportation System. Another internal CDOT plan, the Four-Year Work Program, tracks expenditures and program progress through data analyses derived from the SWP, the STIP and the 10 Year Plan.

The development of these plans/programs requires extensive coordination with each MPO and TPR. The process begins with the identification of projected transportation conditions and needs, forecast revenues, performance objectives, and policies. Corridor needs, visions, strategies, priorities, and improvements are identified. The 10 Year Plan sets the vision for delivering priority projects for a better, safer transportation system for Colorado should additional revenue become available. The STIP lists projects to be implemented within fiscal constraint by year. The development of the STIP follows the Project Priority Programming Process (4P) described in section VII.

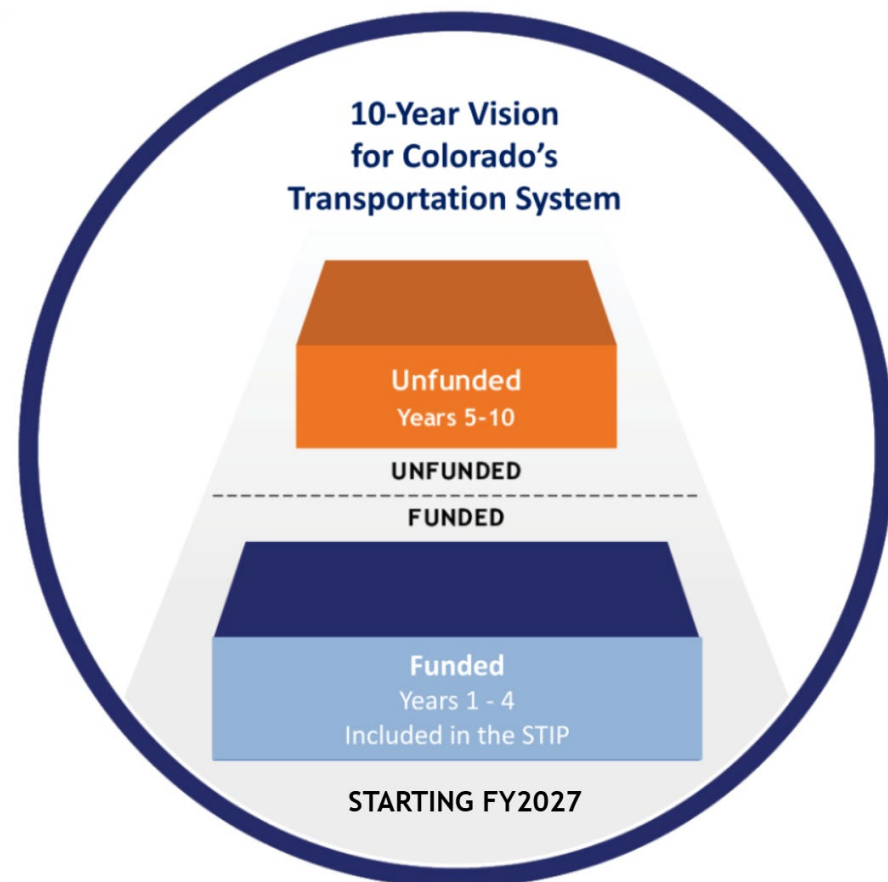
It should be noted that any transportation project in Colorado that is funded with federal transportation dollars must follow the planning process described herein. Those projects – regardless of who receives and/or manages the funding, be it state or local entity – must be included in any relevant TIP and the STIP.

IV. Statewide Transportation Plan

The SWP outlines transportation needs, and goals and objectives over a minimum 20-year planning horizon and provides a roadmap for transportation investments. It incorporates other long range plans including the RTPs, modal plans (i.e. Transit, Bicycle/Pedestrian, Aviation, etc.), topical plans (Freight, Operations, Safety, etc.) as well as the TC planning policies, performance goals and objectives, revenue projections, system and demographic data analysis, the results of the coordination with TPRs and MPOs, corridor visions, strategies, priorities, and improvements, and the results of public involvement and comments.

V. 10 Year Plan for Colorado’s Transportation System

The 10 Year Plan represents CDOT’s 10-year outlook for delivering an effective and efficient transportation system that works for Colorado today and in the future. The first four years of projects are funded projects and are included in the fiscally constrained STIP. This first set of funded projects provide the initial steps toward delivering a better, safer transportation system for Colorado. Years 5-10 of the 10 Year Plan are unfunded and represent achievable projects that are ready to move into the STIP during the annual STIP update or should additional revenue become available. The 10 Year Plan aligns with what we heard from Coloradans as documented in the public outreach activities for the SWP.



VI. Four-year STIP

A. STIP Format and Official Record

CDOT administers the STIP using the eSTIP as 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 versions do not supersede the eSTIP and may not capture subsequent approved changes.

B. Framework

The STIP is a rolling four-year plan which meets federal guidelines and regulations per 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135, and 23 CFR, Part 450, plus the corresponding transit regulations 49 U.S.C. 50 and 49 C.F.R. Part 613. The STIP identifies all Regionally Significant projects. Non-Regionally Significant projects are grouped under STIP Pools. Both Regionally Significant and non-Regionally Significant projects can be identified outside of the STIP on Program Lists corresponding with specific legislative or CDOT program initiatives. The STIP is developed annually, to include the addition of a year to maintain a full four-year STIP period.

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.

STIP Amendments are processed on an as-needed basis and include a public involvement process and TC approval. CDOT has written agreements with each MPO to utilize the MPO amendment and modification process for CDOT projects located within the MPO. Once the MPO has completed their process, changes are then made administratively in the STIP. STIP Administrative Modifications are processed on an as needed basis. See Chapter 3 for details.

C. Four-Year Work Program

The four-year work program is an internal CDOT project management tool that includes detailed, current schedules and projected expenditures for the projects included in the STIP. The Work Program is used by the CDOT Office of Program Management to conduct risk assessment, to track progress on all of the projects or programs, and to support cash management efforts.

D. Regionally Significant Projects

For STIP purposes, Regionally Significant projects shall be defined as those projects serving regional transportation needs and of sufficiently significant scale to be typically included in transportation demand modeling for air quality emissions analysis.

MPOs may have their own definition of Regionally Significant projects for the development of their TIP. Each TIP is included within the STIP directly or by reference without change according to federal regulations.

Regionally Significant projects are identified individually in the STIP showing expected costs laid out by year on an expenditure basis. The Region or division of CDOT administering the project is responsible for identifying Regionally Significant projects for STIP purposes. Questions on regional significance may be directed to the CDOT Multimodal Planning Branch.

E. Non-Regionally Significant Projects

Per Federal regulations, non-Regionally Significant projects are 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 under a STIP Pool. These types of projects are typically included in STIP pools, which provides more flexibility to move projects between fiscal years or to adjust funding. Common STIP pools include Surface Treatment, Bridge, asset management projects, and many of the projects funded through suballocated programs such as Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Block Grant funded projects.

F. STIP Amendments and STIP Administrative Modifications

There are two types of changes that apply to the STIP: STIP Amendments and STIP Administrative Modifications. STIP Amendments and Administrative Modifications are processed on an as needed basis. Most amendment level modifications to CDOT projects are processed by MPOs as the bulk of CDOT's Regionally Significant projects are located within an MPO area. For details on processing amendments and modifications, please see the STIP Amendment Guidelines in Chapter 3 of the adopted STIP document.

G. Roll-Forwards of Unauthorized and Unobligated Funds

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.

During STIP Development the Region Planners should work with their respective Region Business Office to determine which projects will need to move into the next fiscal year. All roll-forwards must be incorporated into the upcoming STIP prior to final STIP adoption by the TC or be subject to compliance with the established amendment processes laid out in Chapter 3, STIP Amendment Guidelines.

VIII. STIP Development - 4P

The TC, in cooperation with Colorado Counties Incorporated (CCI), the Colorado Municipal League (CML) and the MPOs established the "Project Priority Programming Process" (4P) in 1994. This latest iteration of the guidance was adopted by the TC on June 18, 2026. Currently, the STIP is updated on an annual basis in order to always have four active STIP years that are recognized by FHWA and FTA. What follows are the various activities that need to take place during STIP development.

A. TPR Coordination

As part of the STIP development cycle, each CDOT Region shall offer the opportunity for county meetings to review transportation needs and fund availability developed as part of the regional plans. These countywide meetings may include county and municipal officials and Transportation Planning Region (TPR) representatives, as well as Transportation Commissioner(s). After the county meetings, if held, the CDOT Region shall hold at least one meeting, open to the public, with each of its TPRs to discuss project prioritization for the STIP within that TPR. In CDOT Regions that include an MPO, these TPR meetings are coordinated with the MPO Planning Process to ensure consistency and avoid duplication of effort (see MPO coordination).

The purpose of the TPR meeting is to review the projects in the SWP, the 10 Year Plan and current STIP and consider project priorities for the new four-year STIP period. All projects included in the STIP must be consistent with the goals and strategies laid out in the fiscally constrained portion of the SWP. If projects are identified that are not consistent with the SWP, an amendment to the SWP must be processed and approved before they can be included in the STIP.

After meeting with each of their TPRs, the CDOT Region shall hold a joint meeting with all of their TPRs to select and prioritize projects for the entire CDOT Region (in applicable programs when funding is available). During the prioritization process, some TPRs/MPOs not wholly contained in one CDOT Region may choose to plan and conduct a TPR/MPO wide prioritization meeting with representation from both CDOT Regions. Following these meetings, each CDOT Region shall submit their list of prioritized projects for the Draft STIP into the eSTIP software.

Note that per 24-6-402 C.R.S., all meetings held per the above guidelines are considered public meetings and must be open to the public. Also, reasonable accommodations must be made for all individuals in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.).

B. MPO Coordination

Federal statute and regulation established MPOs for urbanized areas with populations of more than 50,000. The five MPOs in Colorado are the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), the North Front Range MPO (NFRMPO), the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) and the Grand Valley MPO (GVMPO). MPOs are responsible for the development of the RTP and TIP for the urban areas of the state. Anyone interested in participating in TIP development may contact their MPO directly. Projects identified for funding by CDOT are forwarded to the appropriate MPO for review and consideration for inclusion in the TIP.

Federal regulations require the Governor to approve all TIPs and TIP amendments. When an MPO has a TIP that is ready for the Governor's approval, it submits the approved TIP to CDOT for review of fiscal constraint and adherence to planning regulations. Once fiscal constraint and adherence to planning regulations are verified, CDOT prepares a packet for the Governor's review and signature to approve the TIP and transmit approval to FHWA and FTA. The submittal

of the TIP to CDOT should include a resolution of the MPO Board adopting the TIP, an Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) conformity determination finding (if applicable), and a signed statement certifying the planning process was followed in the development of the TIP.

Once TIPs are approved by the MPO and the Governor, they are incorporated into the STIP without change, either directly or by reference. Exceptions include projects that are funded exclusively with local or private funds with no CDOT involvement in the project. Details may vary from TIPs to the STIP with regard to programs and project descriptions.

Likewise, Federal regulations require the Governor to approve TIP amendments. In Colorado, the Governor has chosen to exercise their authority to delegate the approval of TIP amendments to the CDOT Executive Director. TIP amendments should be forwarded to the CDOT Region and CDOT Headquarters STIP Manager where a packet is prepared for the Executive Director's signature. Once the signature is obtained, a copy of the approval and packet is forwarded to FHWA/FTA for their concurrence.

C. Tribal Coordination

Two tribal governments are responsible for transportation planning within Colorado: Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute. Tribal governments develop a Tribal TIP (TTIP). Once the Tribal Council approves the TTIP, it is included in the Draft STIP either directly or by reference in order to meet requirements for those projects requiring action by FHWA or FTA.

D. Air Quality Requirements

In areas designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as air quality non-attainment or maintenance areas, Regionally Significant (S)TIP projects must be modeled to demonstrate that their construction does not degrade air quality below the standards set forth in the Clean Air Act (CAA) Amendment of 1990 (et sub). The modeling results and other analyses are reviewed to ensure that the (S)TIP is in conformance with the relevant State Implementation Plan (SIP); this process is referred to as demonstrating conformity.

Currently, two of the MPOs are in non-attainment/maintenance for one or more pollutants (DRCOG and NFRMPO), as is a portion of Upper Front Range (UFR) TPR. A multi-party intergovernmental agreement addresses air quality and conformity responsibilities in the DRCOG, NFRMPO, and UFR ozone non-attainment area. If the EPA re-designates an MPO as an attainment area, CDOT works with the MPOs, FHWA, and FTA to incorporate any changes necessary per planning requirements.

E. Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Program

1. [2 CCR 601-22](#) *Rules Governing Statewide Transportation Planning Process and Transportation Planning Regions*

On December 16, 2021, the TC adopted the updated planning rules to include a section on GHG Reductions. The new rules, detailed in Section 8 of 2 CCR 601-22, apply to all MPOs and rural Colorado. Section 8 of these Rules establishes GHG pollution reduction planning

levels for transportation that improves air quality, reduces smog, and provides more sustainable options for travelers across Colorado. The purpose of these requirements is to limit the GHG pollution and provide more transportation mobility options. This is accomplished by requiring CDOT and MPOs to establish plans that meet GHG reduction levels through a mix of projects that limit and mitigate air pollution and improve quality of life and multimodal options.

For further information, you can find the [Rules here](#).

F. STIP Approval Process

1. Draft STIP

The result of the STIP and MPO TIP development processes is a completed Draft STIP. CDOT staff verifies that the Draft STIP is fiscally constrained by year. CDOT staff verifies that it is consistent with the SWP.

2. Public Notice and Comment Period

When the Draft STIP is released for public comment, CDOT posts an electronic copy of the draft on its external website. An e-mail notification is sent to recipients statewide explaining the purpose of the STIP, where to view a copy of the draft, how to submit comments on the STIP, and the length of the comment period. The Draft STIP is available for public review and comment for a minimum of 30 days.

During the public comment period, a public hearing is held in conjunction with a monthly TC meeting where members of the public can provide input on the Draft STIP. Notification for the Public Hearing is posted on CDOT's external website, as well as sent via e-mail to a statewide distribution list. CDOT recommends that the public hearing notices are also posted at all CDOT Region Headquarters offices, and TPR offices.

Comments on the Draft STIP can be submitted on the CDOT website, or to the CDOT Headquarters STIP Manager via mail, phone or e-mail. A hard copy of the Draft STIP can also be requested by contacting the CDOT Headquarters STIP Manager via mail, phone, or e-mail. Contact information is posted with the STIP documentation on the [website](#).

3. Review of Draft STIP by FHWA and FTA

FHWA and FTA also review the draft STIP during the public comment period. Any comments and recommended changes are submitted to the STIP Manager at CDOT headquarters. The STIP Manager then incorporates the comments where applicable and the responds to FHWA and FTA

4. Adoption of the STIP

Following the public comment period and any revisions needed due to those comments, the Draft STIP is submitted to the TC for adoption. CDOT staff prepares a self-certification that

the required planning process and opportunities for public involvement have been adequately followed. Once the STIP has been adopted by the TC, the signed resolution and self-certification are forwarded to the FHWA and FTA for their approval. The new STIP goes into effect at the beginning of the State fiscal year on July 1.

Once the STIP is adopted by the TC and approved by FHWA and FTA, the STIP documentation is posted on CDOT’s public [website](#). All projects included in the STIP are reflected in the eSTIP as the official record. All project updates are also reflected through the eSTIP and supersede any static or printed reports.

G. Schedule for the STIP Update Cycle

The table below details the annual schedule for STIP development. While this is the expected schedule, it is subject to change if circumstances require adjustments.

STIP Update Cycle

MONTH	ACTIVITY
<i>September through January</i>	CDOT Regions meet with their TPRs and local officials
<i>January</i>	CDOT Regions enter STIP updates for inclusion in the Draft STIP
<i>February through May</i>	CDOT distributes Draft STIP for public review and comment. FHWA and FTA conduct their review of the Draft STIP. All comments received are documented and responses are sent out prior to STIP adoption.
<i>April</i>	TC holds a statewide public hearing on the Draft STIP
<i>May</i>	TC adopts the STIP. Once adopted, the STIP is forwarded to FHWA/FTA for their approval
<i>June</i>	FHWA and FTA approve STIP
<i>July</i>	STIP goes into effect

Appendix A – 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.

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

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.

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.

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*