

2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Selection Process

Erie County Metropolitan Planning Organization (ERIE MPO)

The federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act legislation and the federal *Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Final Rule* (Title 23 U.S.C. Section 34 and Title 49 U.S.C. Section 1607) require that local and state officials work cooperatively to maintain a continuous and comprehensive long-range transportation planning program in all urbanized areas with a population of over 50,000 persons in the United States. This Federal mandate is carried out by a formal group called a "Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)" or a Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)". The FAST Act and the federal rule specify the primary roles and responsibilities of MPOs and RTPOs. The Erie MPO is the responsible body for fulfilling these federal requirements within Erie County Metropolitan area.

Every two years, Pennsylvania's MPO and RTPO Planning Partners, including the Erie MPO, work in partnership with PennDOT, local intermodal transit (EMTA, Erie International Airport, Port Authority) providers and area local officials to identify priority transportation needs and develop a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to address these needs over the next four year period.

The TIP details the planned expenditure of federal funds and state capital funds for specific programs and projects, within specified limits of fiscal constraint. In order to be included on the TIP, programs and projects must be included on the Planning Partner's adopted Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or addressed through reserve line items included on the LRTP. The TIP years are based on the federal fiscal year, which extends from October 1 to September 30.

The list of projects on the TIP coincides with the First Four Year segment of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Twelve Year Program (TYP), which is developed by PennDOT and adopted by the State Transportation Commission (STC) every two years, at the same time as the TIP.

In addition to the FAST Act, the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990 specifies planning activities for areas exhibiting air quality that is not in attainment with acceptable standards. Prior to 2004, air quality within the Erie MPO area was in attainment with the standards in the CAAA, and there were no special planning activities or processes required of the partners. Air quality standards that became effective in June 2004 designated Erie County as attainment areas for ozone.

In 2013, legal proceedings at the federal level resulted in a change of standards, allowing for Erie County to be redetermined as an "attainment" area. Thus, special planning activities and air quality conformity analysis are no longer required as part of preparation of the LRTP and TIP. The last air quality conformity analysis was completed in 2011 for the previous 2013-2016 TIP.

The three Planning Partners work to educate the general public on transportation programs and encourage interested citizens to participate in the STC public involvement process. The public is notified of the opportunity to provide input via the STC Twelve Year Program update outreach processes, and the Planning Partners review public feedback compiled by the STC. Partners also regularly solicit public input on transportation priorities through public meetings, press releases, surveys, comment forms on websites, etc.

Meetings are also held with PennDOT staff to review candidate lists of projects for possible inclusion in the TIP, considering previous public involvement and undertaking a consistency check with LRTPs and with local/county priorities. The project priorities and essential project

information are compiled in the Draft TIP documentation made available to the public as part of a 30-day public comment period before adoption by each Planning Partner.

Projects in the TIP address a variety of transportation modes, including improvements to roadways, bridges, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, rail freight facilities and airports. In recent years, system maintenance has required a growing share of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's limited resources. Consequently, the TIP places high priority on projects that rehabilitate, reconstruct, and renew the existing and aging transportation infrastructure. Fiscal constraints also mean that very few new projects are typically added to the TIP during each update.

The projects selected for inclusion on the 2017-2020 TIP, which were not carryovers from the previous TIP, are consistent with PennDOT's new "Transportation Investment Plan." The purpose of the Transportation Investment Plan is to make ongoing assessments and to reevaluate the data associated with the transportation decision-making process by ensuring that each dollar invested is being directed in a fashion that meets a "strategic direction" and that enhances the overall "performance" of the Commonwealth's transportation system. The Investment Plan focuses on the following four priority areas:

- Bridges on the National Highway System (NHS)
- Roadway conditions on the NHS
- Bridges on the remainder of the roadway system
- Roadway conditions on the remainder of the system

In addition, projects are also programmed from the following sources:

- Project priorities and line items specified in each region's LRTP
- Recommendations in each region's adopted Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plans
- Priorities of key project sponsors such as PennDOT Engineering District staff, local fixed route and shared ride transit providers
- Project priorities committed to as part of the Decade of Investment (DOI) list generated during consideration of Pennsylvania transportation legislation known as Act 89
- Safety needs identified through statewide Intersection Safety Implementation and Roadway Departure Implementation Plans and regional safety plans

For each of the three Planning Partners, an effort was made to select the suite of projects that would provide the greatest possible improvement in asset conditions and improve the overall "performance" of the system.

Each of the Planning Partners' TIPs may include funds for several projects that received funding from programs allocated on a statewide basis, including the following:

- Transportation Alternatives Program
- Automated Red Light Enforcement and Green Light–Go Programs
- Multimodal Transportation Fund
- Congested Corridor Improvement Program
- Rapid Bridge Replacement Program (P3)
- Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Program (RRX)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Statewide Set-aside

As new projects are successful in obtaining funding through these programs, each Planning Partner will consider adding the projects to the approved TIP.

Public Transportation Projects

The TIP includes public transportation projects and line items being carried forward from the previous 2015-2018 TIP. The transit projects reflect the priorities established by:

1. The project prioritization process for the LRTP
2. The recommendations in each Planning Partner's adopted Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan
3. The priorities expressed by fixed route and shared ride transit providers