

Transportation Planning and Project Selection Process

A blend of state and federal processes provide the transportation planning structure for New Hampshire. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must adopt project specific **Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs)** and short-range **Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs)** as required by Federal regulations. The MPO also has a legislatively mandated role in establishing priority projects for the **State Ten Year Plan**, which weaves between the TIP and LRTP processes. These three documents provide the path for projects to move from idea (LRTP), through project development and planning (State Ten Year Plan), to implementation (TIP).

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) [20+ year Horizon]

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) establishes goals, objectives and anticipated future conditions for surface transportation in the MPO region over twenty or more years. Transportation improvement needs are identified and prioritized for implementation. The highest priority projects are recommended to be included in the State Ten Year Plan (as per NH RSA 240:3). The LRTP is fully updated every four to five years and is available on the RPC website at therpc.org/LRTP.

State Ten Year Plan [10 Year Horizon]

The State Ten Year Plan is the list of funded transportation projects developed by NHDOT and Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) as recommended by the Governor's Advisory Council on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT). The 9 RPCs provide NHDOT with priorities projects from their LRTPs, and NHDOT supplies identified operational, maintenance, and improvement needs to form the program of projects. The Ten Year Plan is updated on a two-year cycle and must be approved by the Legislature and the Governor prior to being enacted into law. Projects listed in the first four years of the Ten Year Plan that utilize federal funding become the basis of the TIP and State TIP (STIP).

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) [4 Year Horizon]

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a four-year, short-range program of regional transportation projects scheduled for implementation in the region using federal funds. It is prepared by the MPO in cooperation with local governments, regional transit agencies, and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). The TIP is the enactment of the LRTP vision, goals, and objectives, and the implementation of projects contained in the first four years of the State Ten Year Plan. The MPO TIP is available on the RPC website at therpc.org/TIP.

RPC Project Selection Process

The project selection process to establish priorities for the State Ten Year Plan is guided by a set of statewide project selection criteria and guidance from NHDOT. Each Planning Commission customizes the process within that guidance to suit regional needs and priorities. The RPC process begins with a request for project proposals from communities and regional planning partners in the summer of even numbered years and concludes with submitting priority projects to NHDOT in the Spring of odd numbered years. The graphics on the reverse of this handout provide an overview of that process. Full details are available on the RPC website at therpc.org/LRTP.

1 MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

2 State Ten Year Plan

3 MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

4 Year Short-Range Project List

- Near-term implementation
- Federally funded or Regionally Significant projects
- Fiscally constrained
- Regional TIPs combine to form State TIP (STIP)
- Updated every two years at conclusion of Ten Year Plan process

10 Year Statewide Queue of Projects

- State Commitment to build listed projects
- Fiscally constrained
- Regions provided funding targets
- New projects added to outer years & move to TIP when they reach year 4
- Updated every two years
- Federal and State funded projects

20+ Year Identified Project Needs

- Regional Policies and Goals
- Federally funded and Regionally Significant projects
- Short and long-term recommendations
- Fiscally constrained
- Projects prioritized for State Ten Year Plan
- Major updates every 4-5 years

RPC Project Solicitation and Selection Process

In the Summer of even numbered years the MPO solicits surface transportation projects from communities and agencies as possible additions to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). These new needs are combined with those already in the LRTP to form the project list that is the starting point for determining regional priorities for the State Ten Year Plan.

1 Project Solicitation

2 Project Evaluation

The Statewide Project Evaluation Criteria are given weights and the RPC utilizes these weights in early Fall of even numbered years to score each remaining project against the criteria and establish relative priority. The current criteria assess project needs and impacts regarding:

- Economic Development & Goods Movement
- Equity, Accessibility, and Environmental Justice
- Mobility & Congestion
- Natural Hazards Resiliency
- Transportation Network Significance
- Safety for all users
- Infrastructure State of Repair
- Local and Regional Support

3 Project Selection Criteria

4 Project Short List

Late Fall of even numbered years, the TAC recommends, and the RPC Commissioners select, a sub-set of the short-listed projects as the RPC Candidate Projects for the Ten Year Plan. This list is financially constrained to the regional budget target (\$6.7 million) plus two additional projects, and information is assembled for each project to support the NHDOT review.

5 Ten Year Candidate Projects

6 Scope and Cost Review

In spring of odd numbered years, the RPC utilizes the feedback from NHDOT to constrain regional priorities to the budget target. NHDOT includes RPC final project recommendations in the draft Ten Year Plan to start the State approval process.

7 Ten Year Plan Priorities

In the late Summer of even numbered years all projects are assessed for eligibility for federal funding, general feasibility and are classified into one of three categories based on the scale of benefits (**local**, **regional**, **inter-regional**). Projects that are eligible for federal funding, generally feasible, have a defined scope and cost estimate move to step 3 while those that do not meet those basic thresholds are set aside for future consideration.

- Local** Safety, accessibility, and multi-modal connections within communities.
- Regional** Multi-modal connections between communities & regional activity centers.
- Inter-Regional** Mobility & intermodal improvements to ensure that the region is well connected to the rest of New Hampshire and the northeast.

Based on the scoring assessed in Step 3, the five top projects from each of the three categories are compiled by staff into a "short-list" that is presented to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) for review and consideration mid-Fall of even numbered years.

During the Winter of odd numbered years NHDOT reviews the RPC Candidate Projects and provides recommendations for revised cost estimates. The NHDOT review also addresses any design, scope, or other issues noted.



Go to therpc.org/transportation for more details.