

Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG)

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) & Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

TIP Amendment Process

Federal requirements stipulate that changes to the TIP require an amendment to the original document, which then triggers an amendment to the State of Washington Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). This is important because a jurisdiction cannot proceed with a project for which it has been awarded federal money until the STIP is formally amended and approved by the federal agencies, even though the jurisdiction has been awarded money for the project. Most local agencies are anxious to proceed with these projects as soon as possible after selection for funding. That is why the TIP and STIP amendment procedures need to be efficient.

Depending upon the kind of change required of the TIP, this amendment may be a "formal amendment" process or a streamlined "administrative modification." A third class of project changes do not require the STIP to be changed. WCOG's amendment and correction processes for the TIP incorporates guidance provided by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) on amending and correcting the STIP.

1. Formal Amendment

A formal amendment is triggered by one of the following conditions:

- Adding a New Project
- Deleting a Project
- Changes to a project's total programmed amount* greater than 30% (or any amount greater than \$3 million). This includes adding or subtracting funds from currently programmed phases. * Total programmed amount = A project's current 4-year STIP total of programmed funds
- Major Scope Changes
- Changes to a project that affects Air Quality Conformity
- Adding a future phase of a project
- Adding Federal dollars to a project currently in the TIP/STIP that does not have federal funds (federalizing a project).

The formal amendment process takes three to four months to complete. Following are steps of the amendment process.

- Submittal of an TIP amendment request from the local agency or WSDOT to WCOG;
- Public notice and comment opportunity for the proposed TIP amendment;
- Review of the proposed amendment by the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board and adoption of a resolution amending the current TIP;
- Submittal of the TIP amendment and reports to WSDOT with a request to amend the STIP to reflect the recently amended TIP;
- Review of the requested STIP amendment by WSDOT and "batching" of the request with those from other regions into one monthly STIP amendment request;
- Submittal to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and/or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the proposed STIP amendment;
- Review of the proposed STIP amendment by FHWA and/or FTA, and approval;
- Authorization by the federal agencies for the local jurisdiction to proceed with spending the money awarded to its project.

2. Administrative Modification

The second type of process, the administrative modification, is reserved for those projects that have already been reviewed and approved by the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board (WTPB) for inclusion in the TIP. An administrative modification is used in one of the following conditions:

- Revisions to lead agency
- Adding a prior phase of a project not previously authorized
- Changes to a project's total programmed amount* less than 30% (or any amount less than \$3 million). This includes adding or subtracting funds from currently programmed phases. Note: In order to reprogram funds decreased from a project or phase (i.e. adjust to award), the STIP will need to be updated prior to or at the same time funds are being reprogrammed.
 - * Total programmed amount equals a project's current 4-year STIP total of programmed funds.
- Minor changes or errors in project information such as: environmental type, right of way required, improvement type, project limits, functional classification, typographical errors, transposed numbers, etc.

In these cases, the projects were selected, reviewed, and approved through the local TIP development process. Planned projects are also reviewed during the TIP development process.

The administrative process is still triggered by a request from a local agency or WSDOT to WCOG. However, the amendment moves directly from WCOG staff to WSDOT staff, with time of approval reduced to under two months.

The administrative modification process reflects the efforts of state and regional agencies to develop a more streamlined process that better serves the needs of local communities while maintaining the integrity of the TIP development process. Administrative modifications are available for review on the WCOG website.

3. Updates Not Requiring STIP Change

The following do not require the STIP to be changed, as they will be reflected in the annual obligation report or subsequent STIP as applicable:

- Moving a project within the four years of the STIP.
- Changes in a project's federal fund source(s)
 - (Any change from IM to NHS or STP etc., is an update only as this is a funds management action)
- Any and/or all federal funds currently programmed in the STIP for a particular project without consideration of the phase split.
 - For example: Programmed amounts are:
 - PE – \$1,000,000
 - CN – \$4,000,000
 - Authorization for PE of \$1,750,000 is allowed without a change to the STIP since the funds are programmed, or
 - Authorization for CN of \$5,000,000 if the funds were not utilized for PE.
- All adjustments in a project's funding authorization for award of a contract.

To initiate a technical correction, the local agency or WSDOT will contact WCOG staff with the request. WCOG staff will verify the change does not require STIP action and then make the requested change to the TIP. Depending on the timing of the request, the process typically takes a week to complete.