Transportation Programming Guidebook

TIP Policies and Procedures

April 2019

Southwest Washington
Regional Transportation Council

Agency Overview

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Clark County, Washington, a portion of the larger Portland-Vancouver urbanized area. RTC conducts the federally required transportation planning process that is a condition for the receipt of federal transportation funds.

RTC's website: www.rtc.wa.gov

Title VI Compliance

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. RTC further assures that every effort will be made to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its programs and activities, whether or not those programs and activities are federally funded.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

Materials can be provided in alternative formats by contacting the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) at 360-397-6067 or info@rtc.wa.gov.

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Introduction

The Transportation Program Guidebook is intended as a resource document for local agencies in Clark County, Washington.

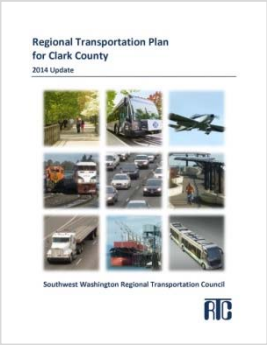
Guidebook Purpose

A Transportation Improvement Program must be developed for each metropolitan area by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in cooperation with the State and transit operators. The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) is the federally designated MPO for the Clark County, Washington region.

The Transportation Programming Guidebook is intended as a resource document for local agencies in Clark County, Washington. The Guidebook provides member agencies background information, policies, and procedures for the development of the region's Transportation Improvement Program. The Guidebook is intended to be a working document that can be updated as needed.

Transportation Programming Overview

At least once every five years, RTC prepares a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). It represents a coordinated planning process between local jurisdictions to develop regional solutions for long-term transportation needs. The RTP establishes the 20-year transportation vision and goals for the region, and identifies projects and strategies that will be needed to meet that vision.



RTC prepares an annual regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a four-year program of regionally significant transportation projects. The TIP implements the policies goals of the RTP. Projects programmed in the TIP are drawn either directly from specific project recommendations made in the Regional Transportation Plan or are developed from a more general series of recommendations such as safety and preservation. The TIP represents an agency's intent to implement a specific project and the anticipated flow of funds for that project.

The first two years of the TIP are considered selected and the project sponsor can begin implementation of those projects when ready. Federally funded projects programmed in the TIP can be obligated through FHWA and FTA. The obligation of a federal highway project occurs when FHWA and WSDOT execute a project agreement or when FTA awards a grant. Once obligated, the project sponsor can start work and receive reimbursement for work incurred.

Regional Transportation Plan Goals

The policy goals of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) focus on the Economy, Safety and Security, Accessibility and Mobility, Environment, Efficiencies, Management and Operations, Preservation, Finance, Vision and Values. The goals of the RTP include:

Economy: Support economic development and community vitality.

Safety and Security: Ensure safety and security of the transportation system.

Accessibility and Mobility: Provide reliable mobility for personal travel and freight movement by addressing congestion and transportation system bottlenecks. Also, provide access to locations throughout the region while protecting the integrity of neighborhoods by discouraging cut-through traffic. These policy goals should be accomplished through development of an efficient, balanced, multi-modal regional transportation system.

RTC is required by federal law to maintain a four-year TIP.

Management and Operations: Maximize efficient management and operation of the transportation system through transportation demand management and transportation system management strategies.

Environment: Protect environmental quality and natural resources and promote energy efficiency.

Vision and Values: Ensure the RTP reflects community values to help build and sustain a healthy, livable, and prosperous community.

Finance: Provide a financially-viable and sustainable transportation system.

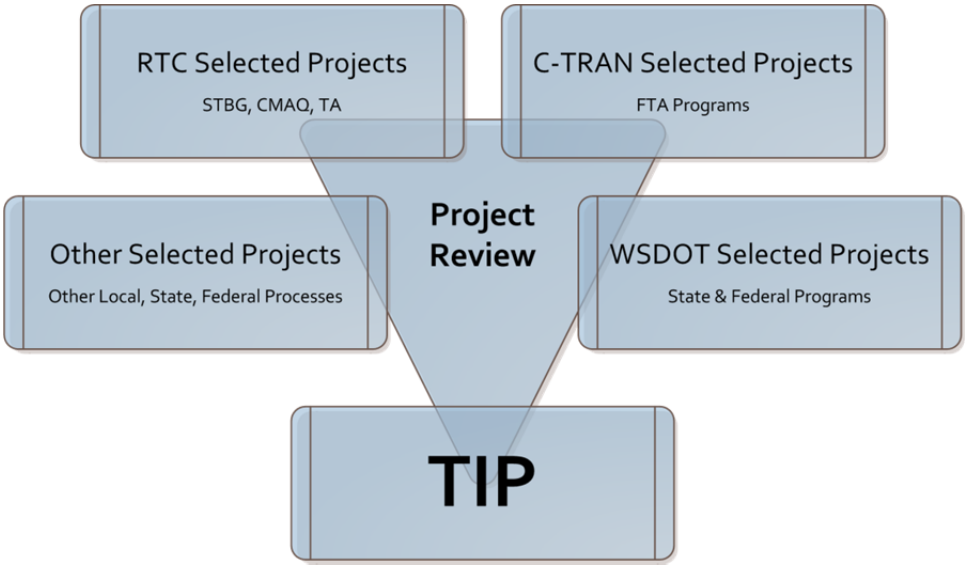
Preservation: Maintain and preserve the regional transportation system to ensure system investments are protected.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Overview

RTC is required by federal law to maintain a four-year TIP. As the MPO for the region, RTC selects and prioritizes projects programmed in the TIP. The TIP is developed by RTC through a cooperative and coordinated process involving local jurisdictions, WSDOT, and C-TRAN. The TIP development process includes the programming of projects that were selected for funding through multiple grant selection processes. These processes include the selection of projects by RTC, WSDOT, C-TRAN, and other grant funding processes.

The TIP must include all projects that are federally funded through the Federal Highway Administration (U.S. Code Title 23) and Federal Transit Administration (U.S. code Title 49). The TIP also includes all projects that are considered regionally significant, regardless of the funding source.

Figure 1: TIP Development



RTC Selected Projects

RTC, in consultation with member agencies, is responsible for selecting projects for the regional allocation of federal highway funds. This includes the regional allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), and Transportation Alternative (TA) programs.

RTC, in consultation with member agencies, is responsible for selecting projects for the regional allocation of federal highway funds

C-TRAN Selected Projects

C-TRAN is the local public transit provider and is the designated recipient of regionally allocated federal transit funds. C-TRAN receives Federal Transit Administration (FTA) urban area funds and selects projects for Section 5307 (Urbanized Area Formula Program), Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities), Section 5337(State of Good Repair Grant), and Section 5339 (Bus and Bus Facilities Program).

WSDOT Selected Projects

WSDOT is responsible for selection of projects for allocated state and federal highway funds. This includes state allocation of federal National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Transportation Alternatives Program (TA), and state highway programs funded through state revenues. In addition, WSDOT selects projects to be implemented by local agencies through a statewide

competitive grant processes including Safety, Bridge, and Safe Routes to School programs.

Other Selected Projects

Regionally significant projects are also selected through other local, state and federal processes. This could include the use of local funds, legislative selected projects, and statewide or nationwide competitive grant programs.

Project Review

No matter the source of funding, RTC reviews all projects… before programming the project in the TIP

While some of the projects programmed in the TIP are selected for funding by RTC, many of the projects programmed in the TIP are selected for funding through other processes. No matter the source of funding, RTC reviews all projects to ensure the following before programming the project in the TIP:

- Consistency with Regional Transportation Plan
- Air Quality conformity
- Consistency with local comprehensive plans
- Consistency with other federal and state requirements
- Funds are reasonably expected to be available
- Reasonable timeline for project implementation

TIP Development Schedule

RTC generally develops a new regional Transportation Improvement Program each year. The TIP is adopted at the October RTC Board meeting and becomes effective the following January.

Regional Federal Funding Programs

Background

Through Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), federal funds are allocated to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) such as RTC for selecting projects that implement the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). In addition, WSDOT sets annual delivery targets for each region. RTC receives funds for the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), and Transportation Alternatives Program (TA). Funds are eligible to designated urban, rural, air quality maintenance area as indicated on the map at the back of this document. This section provides a general overview of each of the regional federal funding programs and WSDOT Delivery Targets.

Surface Transportation Block Grant

The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) is the most flexible of all the Federal Highway Administration programs and can be used for a wide range of transportation improvements including auto, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and planning projects.

The STBG funds are allocated to RTC for the Clark County region based on population; with varying amounts being allocated to U.S. Census defined urban and rural areas. The amount varies based on annual apportionments, but RTC generally receives over $6 million per year.

The call for Urban STBG projects usually occurs in April or May of each year, while the call for Rural STBG projects occurs in May of even years (2020, 2022, etc.). Project applications are due to RTC in July. Projects are selected for funding by the RTC Board in October and programmed for funding. The call for projects is usually for funding of the fourth year of the new TIP.

Additional STBG project information can be found on the RTC website at http://rtc.wa.gov/programs/tip.

The following table outlines the STBG and CMAQ project selection and programming schedule:

Project Development Schedule (STBG & CMAQ)

Date	Action
April/May	Call for Projects
Mid-July	Project Application Due to RTC
Mid-August	RTAC Recommends Prioritization
Early-October	RTC Board Selects Projects

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality

The CMAQ program is used for projects and programs that improve air quality and reduce congestion. CMAQ projects must demonstrate an air quality improvement within the Vancouver Air Quality Maintenance Area.

The CMAQ funds are allocated to RTC within Clark County for air quality improvements within the designated Vancouver Air Quality Maintenance area. The amount varies based on annual apportionments, but RTC generally receives approximately $3 million per year.

The call for CMAQ projects runs concurrently with the STBG call for projects. The call for projects occurs in April or May, with project applications due in July. Projects are selected for funding by the RTC Board in October and programmed for funding. The call for projects is usually for the fourth year of the new TIP.

Additional CMAQ project information can be found on the RTC website at http://rtc.wa.gov/programs/tip.

Transportation Alternatives Program

The TA program is used for community improvements such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, viewing areas, and safe routes to schools.

The TA funds are allocated to RTC for the Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat County region based on population; with varying amounts being allocated to U.S. Census defined urban and rural areas. The amount varies based on annual apportionments, but RTC generally receives approximately $0.6 million per year.

The call for TA projects usually occurs in March of each odd year (2019, 2021, etc.), with project applications due to RTC in April. Projects are selected for funding by the RTC Board by July and amended into the TIP. The call for projects is for funding for the third and fourth year of the TIP.

Project Development Schedule (TA)

Date	Action
Early-March	Call for Projects
Late-April	Project Application Due to RTC
Mid-May	RTAC Recommends Prioritization
By July	RTC Board Selects Projects

Additional TA project information can be found on the RTC website at http://rtc.wa.gov/programs/tap.

WSDOT Delivery Targets

WSDOT has placed additional responsibility on MPO's to ensure annual obligation of the local share of the Federal Highway Administration funds. This includes the STBG, CMAQ, and TA funds administered by RTC. This policy requires that by August 1st of each year the MPO region must obligate 100% of their regional federal obligation target or funds could be lost. WSDOT policy also allows a region to advance up to two years of their annual obligation target, if there is capacity within the statewide obligation limits.

NW 38th Avenue, Camas

Regional Project Development Process

Background

Since the need for transportation improvements exceed the available revenue and federal regulations require, a competitive project selection process is conducted for the distribution of RTC's regional federal funds. Regional federal funds include STBG, CMAQ, and TA funds.

The overall goal of the TIP is to implement the goals and policies of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP goals focus on the Economy, Safety and Security, Accessibility and Mobility, Environment, Efficiencies, Management and Operations, Preservation, Finance, Vision and Values.

To meet these overall goals, the following strategies were developed to guide the regional STBG and CMAQ project development process:

- **Leverage other grant sources**. One of the successes of the regional project development process lies in its flexibility. Allowing local governments to create projects that fit their local needs and use regional federal funds to leverage other grants to complete priority projects.

- **Implement Transportation Management and Operations improvements**. Transportation System Management and Operations strategies provide money-saving, multimodal solutions that relieve congestion and optimize existing infrastructure investments.

- **Build multimodal urban arterials**. The urban areas of Clark County have grown rapidly, resulting in many urban areas being served by a rural transportation system. Arterials built to urban standards provide an efficient, balanced, multi-modal regional transportation system that improve safety, reduce congestion, and support economic development.

- **Preservation of Transportation System**. Local agencies have the primary responsibility for maintaining the transportation system and regional federal funds will not be used for maintenance or preservation projects.

The following guideline is to further clarify preservation of the transportation system as it applies to bus purchase. Within the RTC grant process, transit buses that substantially improve air quality or increase ridership capacity are eligible for federal FHWA funds (STBG and CMAQ). A transit bus purchase will be considered a replacement bus (Preservation) and not eligible for federal FHWA funds, unless it meets one of the following:

1. The bus purchase is for a new route that is currently not served by transit.

2. There is a demonstrated need for addition transit seat capacity, and the bus purchase will increase seat capacity by 25% through either larger buses or additional service hours.

3. Replacement of old diesel buses that emit significant pollutants, with cleaner technology such as hybrid or electric buses.

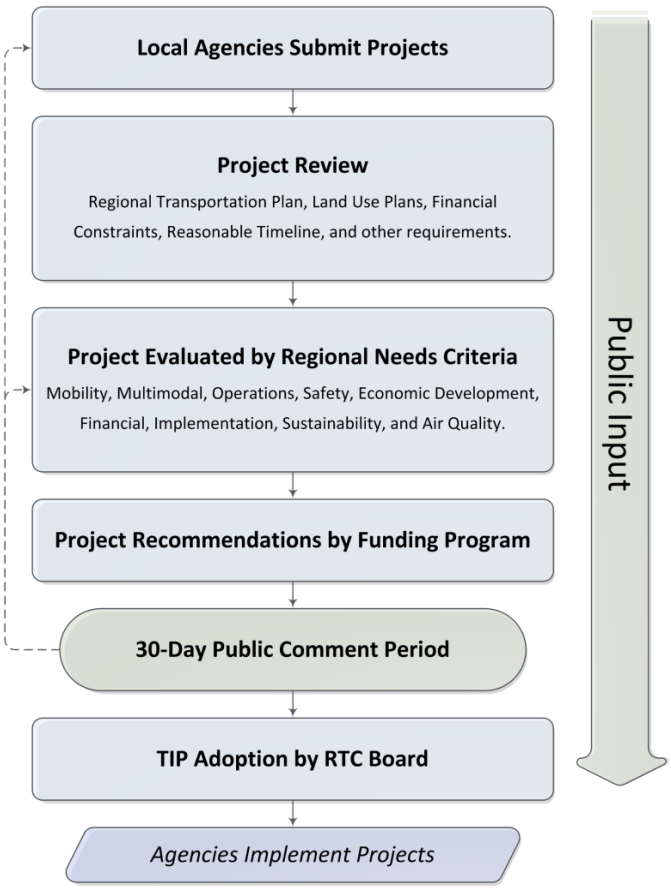
To meet the RTP goals, the following strategies were developed to guide the regional Transportation Alternative project development process:

- **Build bicycle and pedestrian projects**. There is a strong need for stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian projects that improve the public travel experience and benefit local communities.

Regional Project Development Process

The regional project selection process approach as adopted by the RTC Board of Directors is displayed in Figure 2 and described in greater detail after the graphic.

Figure 2: Regional Project Development Process



Call for Projects

RTC will issue a call for projects for each of the regionally allocated federal transportation programs. The call for projects will be conducted within the regional transportation planning process which includes technical review and recommendation by the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) and final RTC Board project selection. Formal notice about the process will be posted on RTC's web site. The call for projects will include information on submittal requirements and deadlines. Applications will only be accepted for projects that will have a Certification Acceptance agency. Certification Acceptance is necessary for an agency to have authority to develop, advertise, award, and manage federal transportation projects.

The screening criteria, needs criteria, and project applications will be developed for each regional federal program and clearly identified in each call for projects and on RTC's website.

Project Submittal

The regional project development process begins with local agencies identifying and submitting projects for consideration. These projects should be identified based on information from the Regional Transportation Plan, Congestion Management Process, Transportation System Management and Operations implementation plan, local plans, and other plans and studies that identify regional transportation needs.

Step 1: Project Review

Proposed projects are screened to determine each project's basic eligibility. This review is used to determine whether to move a project forward in the programming process. This step includes a review that the project is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan, local comprehensive plans, air quality and other federal and state requirements. Projects are also reviewed for financial feasibility and timeline for implementation.

Screening criteria for each of the programs administered by RTC can be found in the final chapter of this document (Evaluation Criteria).

Step 2: Project Evaluation

The general approach for evaluating projects for regional federal funds involves assessing each candidate project against a set of regionally adopted needs criteria. Following evaluation, projects are placed in ranked order to inform the project selection step.

A summary of needs criteria for each of the programs administered by RTC can be found in the final chapter of this document (Evaluation Criteria).

Step 3: Project Selection and Programming

The final step in the regional project development process is project selection. The Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) recommends projects for funding utilizing the project information generated in the project evaluation. The RTC Board makes final selection based on the technical recommendation from RTAC and public input.

Generally, all newly regionally awarded funds will be programmed in the fourth year of the next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Public Involvement

Public involvement is a key component of the transportation planning process and one of the core functions of all metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). Meaningful public involvement improves decision making by generating ideas for how the transportation system may be improved and by bringing a diverse set of views to planning discussions. The purpose of public involvement is to make better decisions that will reflect the community's transportation needs.

Public input is invited throughout the TIP development process, in accordance with the RTC adopted Public Participation Plan. The TIP development process concludes with a 30-day public comment period, prior to RTC Board approval of the Transportation Improvement Program.

Grant Award Letters

A grant award letter will be provided to recipient agencies for each project selected by the RTC Board to receive a regional federal grant (STBG, CMAQ, and STP). The grant award letter will specify project name, federal grant program, grant award amount, year programmed, and key conditions of the grant award.

Project Implementation

Once a project is programmed in the first two years of the TIP, the project sponsor can begin implementation of the project by obligating funds. Federal transportation programs are reimbursement grant programs. Only after a Local Agency Agreement has been approved through WSDOT or a grant is approved by FTA can project costs become eligible for reimbursement. Agencies may receive approval to proceed using local funds, with the understanding that federal reimbursement will be delayed until obligation authority becomes available. Due to statewide management of funds, obligation of a project in the current year cannot be guaranteed.

The first two years of the TIP are selected and are considered to be the regionally agreed to list of projects. This means that once a project is programmed (listed) in the first two years of the TIP; the project sponsor can proceed with obligation.

RTC Project Database

The RTC Project Database can be found on RTC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) webpage at https://rtc.wa.gov/programs/projects/. The RTC Projects Database shows those projects which have been awarded regionally selected federal transportation grants by the RTC Board since year 2010 and the current status of each project. The database provides project information, location maps, pictures, and documents associated with each project.

Project Showcase

All projects using STBG, CMAQ, or TA funds will be required to complete a one-page Project Showcase within 45 days of the project being functionally complete. The purpose is to report on the use of regional federal funds to the RTC Board.

Before and After Analysis

All projects using STBG, CMAQ, or TA funds will be required to complete a Before and After Analysis within 12 months of grant closure. The purpose is to monitor the development of a project towards meeting goals or performance measures and ensure the efficient use of regional federal funds.

RTC has not prescribed a format or content, but has provided a template which is available on the RTC TIP web page (http://rtc.wa.gov/programs/tip). Generally, the Analysis will be between 2 and 4 pages in length. Although an agency has flexibility to develop their own Analysis report, the report should consider including the following elements: Project title, location, description, goals, outcomes, funding, map, photos, and agency name.

TIP Administration: Updates, Modifications and Amendments

Background

Occasionally, changes need to be made to the TIP following its adoption. Changes can include project cost adjustment, scope changes, addition or deletion of a project, etc. When a change is requested it will be identified as an Update, Administrative Modification, or TIP Amendment. The process for incorporating the change into the TIP differs by the type of change and the regional action that is required.

TIP Updates do not substantially change a project and do not require the TIP to be changed. TIP Administrative Modification is a moderate change that requires approval from the RTC Executive Director and typically takes 4-6 weeks. TIP Amendments are substantial changes to a project that require action from the RTC Board of Directors and typically take 8-10 weeks.

Changes to the TIP can be submitted monthly between December and September. Requests for changes to the TIP are due to RTC eight days prior to the third Friday of each month; which is usually the second Thursday.

TIP Administration Process

The TIP Administrative Modification and Amendment process includes the following steps:

1) Project sponsor submits written request to RTC for change, including submitting a modified State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) record within the online STIP database. The written request should provide sufficient detail to understand the requested change and reason for change.

2) RTC staff reviews request to ensure that all needed information is provided and determines the type of action that is required. The request is also reviewed for financial feasibility, air quality conformity, consistency with the RTP and state and federal requirements, etc.

3) Administrative Modifications and Amendments are posted on the RTC website: (http://rtc.wa.gov/programs/tip/amendments).

4) If request is an Administrative Modification, the RTC Executive Director takes action. If approved, staff will change the regional TIP and submit the change to WSDOT for inclusion in the STIP. RTAC is notified of the Administrative Modification.

5) If request is an Amendment, RTAC reviews the change and makes a recommendation for approval to the RTC Board. If the RTC Board approves the change, staff will change the regional TIP and submit the change to WSDOT for inclusion in the STIP

6) Once Administrative Modifications and Amendments are submitted to WSDOT, they are reviewed by WSDOT staff, approved by the Governor's representative, and receive final approval by FHWA and FTA.

Updates

Updates do not substantially change a project and do not require the TIP to be changed. This could include the following:

- Moving a project within the four years of the TIP
- Change in federal funding source(s)
- Adjustment in project's funding following bid process to allow for award of contract
- Moving dollars to the next project phase (preliminary engineering to right-of-way or right-of-way to construction)

Administrative Modifications

Projects that meet the following conditions can be administratively modified into the TIP at the discretion of the RTC Executive Director:

- Revision to lead agency
- Adding a prior phase of project not previously authorized
- Changes or errors in project information
- Change in federal funding amounts of less than $3 million (STIP Amendment required if change to total program amount is greater than 30%)

- Addition of federal aid project or project phase that has approval from granting agency and does not exceed $3 million in federal funding (STIP Amendment required)
- Deletion of project (STIP Amendment required)
- Restoration of project to the TIP that was included in a previous version of the TIP (STIP Amendment required)

Amendments

Projects that meet the following condition will require a TIP amendment and approval from the RTC Board of Directors:

- Adding a new project or future project phase greater than $3 million
- Adding a regionally selected project or adding regionally selected funds to a project.
- Major Scope Changes
- Changes to a project that affects air quality conformity
- Changes to a project's total programming amount that exceeds $3 million

Rail Trench, Port of Vancouver

Policies and Procedures

TIP Policies and Procedures

General Policies and Procedures

Policy 1.1 – All projects in the TIP must be consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). To be consistent with the RTP, projects must be identified as an RTP Capital Project Solution or be consistent from a more general series of recommendations such as safety and preservation.

> **Policy 1.1.1 – RTC staff shall determine consistency with the RTP**. RTC staff will work with local agency staff to make RTP consistency determination.

Policy 1.2 – All projects in the TIP must be consistent with the transportation element of the local comprehensive plan.

Policy 1.3 – All TSMO project elements must be consistent with the strategies contained in the Regional Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) Plan for Clark County. TMSO elements of projects shall be coordinated with agency transportation operations staff.

> **Policy 1.3.1 – At a minimum all projects that open the road for utilities must include conduit.**

Policy 1.4 – If a project will add single occupant vehicle capacity, sponsoring agency must complete a CMP Toolbox Checklist. A CMP Toolbox Checklist must be received by RTC prior to obligation of right-of-way and/or construction funds.

Policy 1.5 – All regionally significant projects must be programmed in the TIP. All projects receiving Federal Highway Administration funds (U.S. Code Title 23), Federal Transit Administration funds (U.S. code Title 49), or determined to be regionally significant must be programmed in the TIP.

> **Policy 1.5.1 – RTC staff shall determine if a project is regionally significant**. Based on information provided to RTC, RTC staff will make a regionally significant determination.

Policy 1.6 – All agencies shall submit local TIPs and Transit Development Plans (TDPs) to RTC. Agencies can submit TIPs/TDPs to RTC in any format that provides sufficient information for understanding of project needs.

Policy 1.7 – All federally funded and regionally significant projects to be included in the annual STIP must be entered into the State's STIP system and submitted to the MPO by August 15th of each year. The STIP system can be found at www.secureaccess.wa.org.

Policy 1.8 – RTC will follow the public involvement process, as outlined in RTC's Public Participation Plan, when developing the regional TIP.

> **Policy 1.8.1 – RTC staff shall provide the required 30-day public comment period for the draft TIP.** RTC will make available a draft TIP for public comment the first week of September through the October RTC Board meeting.

TIP Administration Policies and Procedures

Policy 2.1 – RTC will follow the process outlined in the TIP Administration chapter.

Policy 2.2 – Project sponsors shall submit a written request to RTC to initiate the project administrative process. The written request should provide sufficient detail to understand the requested change and reason for change, including submittal of a modified STIP record.

Policy 2.3 – RTC is responsible for determining the type of TIP administration action that is required. RTC staff will review the request to ensure that all needed information is provided and determine the type of action that is required.

STBG, CMAQ, TA Programming Policies and Procedures

General Policies

Policy 3.1 – Projects must be completed. By receiving regional federal funds for a project, the respective applicant is making the commitment to complete the project, even if only partial funding is received. If the project fails to proceed to the next phase within 10 years, the agency may be required to repay federal funds (23 U.S.C. 102(b)).

Policy 3.2 – Projects Scope. Agencies are required to deliver the project scope as outlined in the RTC grant application or must be granted a scope modification.

> **Policy 3.2.1 – Scope Modification**. Minor scope changes can be granted by the RTC Executive Director after notifying RTAC. Major scope changes must be approved by RTAC and RTC Board after the following steps are completed: 1) Grant agency must demonstrate that the requested change is consistent with adopted long-range plans; 2) The public must be provided an opportunity to be

informed of the change in scope; 3) Technical documentation of the change must be provided to RTAC.

Policy 3.2.2 – If a project is built, but does not match the grant application scope, the agency will need to rectify at agency's own cost.

Policy 3.3 – Recognition of grant award through RTC.

Policy 3.3.1 – Written local Council/Board Staff Reports shall cite the federal program (STBG, CMAQ, TA), grant award, and Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) as the granting agency.

Policy 3.3.2– All broad public project communication shall cite the federal program (STBG, CMAQ, TA), grant award, and Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) as the granting agency. Broad project communication includes website, newsletter, etc.

Policy 3.4 – All projects that receive regional federal funds must prepare a one-page project showcase within 45 days of the project being functionally complete. A Project Showcase template is available from RTC's website.

Policy 3.5 – All projects that receive regional federal funds will be required to complete a *Before and After Analysis* within 12 months of grant closure. When an FHWA grant is closed, RTC will notify the agency that they have 12 months to produce a Before and After Analysis. By January of each year, RTC staff will notify agencies of all projects that must complete a Before and After Analysis in that calendar year. A Before and After Analysis template is available from RTC's website.

Policy 3.6 – After the regional project selection process, all newly selected STBG, CMAQ, and TA projects will generally be programmed in the fourth year of TIP. After the first year in the TIP, projects can be moved within the first three-years of the TIP and proceed towards implementation.

Cost

Policy 4.1 - Projects are limited to $4 million in regional federal funds, regardless of length or size, with an annual maximum award of $2.5 million. The project can reach the cap based on one of the following sub-policies:

Policy 4.1.1 – Maximum of $4 million per mile. The maximum per phase is $750,000 for preliminary engineering, $1.25 million for right-of-way, and remaining federal funds, up to the total maximum for construction. If a project is less than a mile, the maximum per phase is factored by the percentage of mile.

Policy 4.1.2 – Intersection improvements are limited to $1 million per intersection or $2 million for high volume intersections. High volume intersections are intersections with 20,000 or more entering vehicles per day. The maximum per phase is 15% for preliminary engineering, 20% for right-of-way, and remaining funds for construction.

Policy 4.1.3 – Shorter high cost projects are limited to $4 million. Projects such as a bridge, interchange, and park-and-ride are limited to $4 million even if the length is less than one mile. Project will follow funding limits per phase as found in Policy 4.1.1, as if the project was considered to be one mile in length.

Policy 4.2 – Funding increases are not allowed for preliminary engineering. An agency cannot move regional federal funds from a later phase to preliminary engineering or request additional regional funds for preliminary engineering.

Policy 4.3 – If a project is divided into multiple segments after it has been selected for regional funding, the following policies will occur:

Policy 4.3.1 - All obligated funds will be proportioned between segments, based on mileage of each segments.

Policy 4.3.1 - None of the project segments are eligible for additional preliminary engineering funds.

Policy 4.3.2 – The cost limit will be recalculated for each segment. If necessary, programmed funds will be reduced to match cost limits.

Policy 4.4 - Regional federal funds cannot be moved forward to an earlier phase. For example, funds cannot be moved from construction to right of way.

Policy 4.5 – Regional federal funds can be moved back to future phases without amending the TIP. For example, funds can be moved from preliminary engineering back to right of way or construction. The WSDOT Local Agency Agreement will need to be modified.

Policy 4.6 – Project cost overruns are the responsibility of the applicant. An increase in regional federal funds is not allowed to cover cost increases. Applicants are responsible to cover any cost overruns.

Policy 4.6.1 – An applicant can return selected regional funds back to RTC and make a new request for funding. An applicant can return unobligated regional funds by following the TIP administration process and requesting the funds be removed from a project. By doing so, the applicant has no guarantee of future regional federal funds, but can reapply for funding in a future call for projects up to the cost limits.

Policy 4.6.2 – If applicant is awarded partial phase funding, the project applicant can apply for the remaining funds in future call for projects. This new request cannot exceed the original total request, unless cost limitations have been raised.

Policy 4.7 – Regional federal funds cannot be moved to a different project or beyond the approved scope.

Policy 4.8 – An applicant may request cost policies exception. The request must be written and explain the circumstances for the cost exception and why the cost

exception should be considered. The approval of a cost exception must be financially feasible and requires approval of both RTAC and the RTC Board.

Policy 4.9 – Increase in available federal funds. If additional regional federal funds become available during the year, funding can be allocated to projects based on the most recent regional project evaluation and ranking process.

Project Delivery/Obligation

Policy 5.1 – The first two-years of the TIP are selected and are considered to be the regionally agreed to list of projects. Only projects programmed in the first two years of the TIP can proceed with obligation.

Policy 5.2 – Local agencies are required to notify RTC staff within 30 days of project obligation or obligation modification of all STBG, CMAQ, and TA funds. The preferred method would be forwarding, via e-mail, a copy of the executed Local Agency Agreement or Local Agency Agreement Supplement.

Policy 5.3 –Project phase obligation date will be tied to the calendar year of project funding award. This will generally be the fourth year of the new TIP after project selection.

Policy 5.4 – Project obligation must be made by August in the year obligation is required. Due to the time involved in processing an obligation request, the obligation request must be made by August to meet regional obligation targets.

Policy 5.5 – Preliminary engineering funds must be obligated by August of the year the project phase is programmed.

Policy 5.6 – Right-of-way and construction funds can be delayed one year. For example, if right-of-way or construction funds are programmed in year 2020, funds must be obligation by August 2021.

Policy 5.7 – By January of each year, RTC staff will notify agencies of all projects that must be submitted for obligation by August of that year.

Policy 5.8 - If a project cannot make the August obligation deadline, the sponsoring agency must contact RTC in writing by March 1st of that year. If a project does not meet the required obligation deadline, including allowable one-year delay, one of the following actions will be taken:

> **Policy 5.8.1 – If delay is likely to impact regional obligation authority all future funds will be removed from the project.** RTC staff will develop a strategy to meet the obligation target which will be approved by RTC Board. The delayed project can seek funding in future call for projects without an increase in regional federal funds.
>
> **Policy 5.8.2 – If delay is not likely to impact regional obligation authority, a project delay exception can be sought.** The request must be in writing and explain the circumstances for the project delay and why the delay should be

considered. Delays of less than one additional year can be approved by RTAC. Delays of greater than a year, requires RTAC and RTC Board approval.

Policy 5.9 – If a project delay is granted by RTC, the TIP can be modified to allow the next available priority project to be programmed within the first two years. The next highest priority project, based on grant evaluation process that can proceed with available funds can be programmed in the first two years of TIP.

Programming

Policy 6.1 – Generally, all newly regionally awarded funds will be programmed in the fourth year of the next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Policy 6.2 – Generally, a project cannot receive STBG, CMAQ, or TA funds for construction until design is 50% complete. Projects that require right of way or have significant environmental issues cannot seek construction funds until an agency is at the 50% design completion.

Program Criteria

Background

This section provides an overview of project screening criteria and summary of evaluation criteria. The detailed criteria for each program will be adopted by the RTC Board and posted on RTC's website.

Urban STBG/CMAQ Programs

Project Screening Criteria

1. Consistent with Regional Transportation Plan, Local Comprehensive Plans, and Congestion Management Process. (Projects that add capacity must be listed in the RTP)
2. Road projects must be on a facility that is federally classified as an urban collector or above.
3. Preservation and maintenance projects are not eligible.
4. Consistent with the regional cost limits.
5. Ready to proceed and have a reasonable timeline for implementation.
6. Operational improvement must be consistent with the regional TSMO Plan.

Summary of Needs Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Mobility	20
Multimodal/Operations	15
Safety	20
Economic Development	20
Financial/Implementation	15
Sustainability/Air Quality*	10
Total	**100**

**Air Quality points are tripled for CMAQ projects*

STBG Rural Program

Project Screening Criteria

1. Consistent with Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Local Comprehensive Plans? (Projects that add capacity must be listed in the RTP)
2. Road projects must be on a facility that is federally classified as a rural major collector or above?
3. Preservation and maintenance projects are not eligible.
4. Must have a reasonable cost and timeline?

Summary of Needs Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Project Need	15
Safety	25
Road Condition	25
Economic Development	10
Financial/Implementation	25
Total	**100**

Timmen Road

TA Program

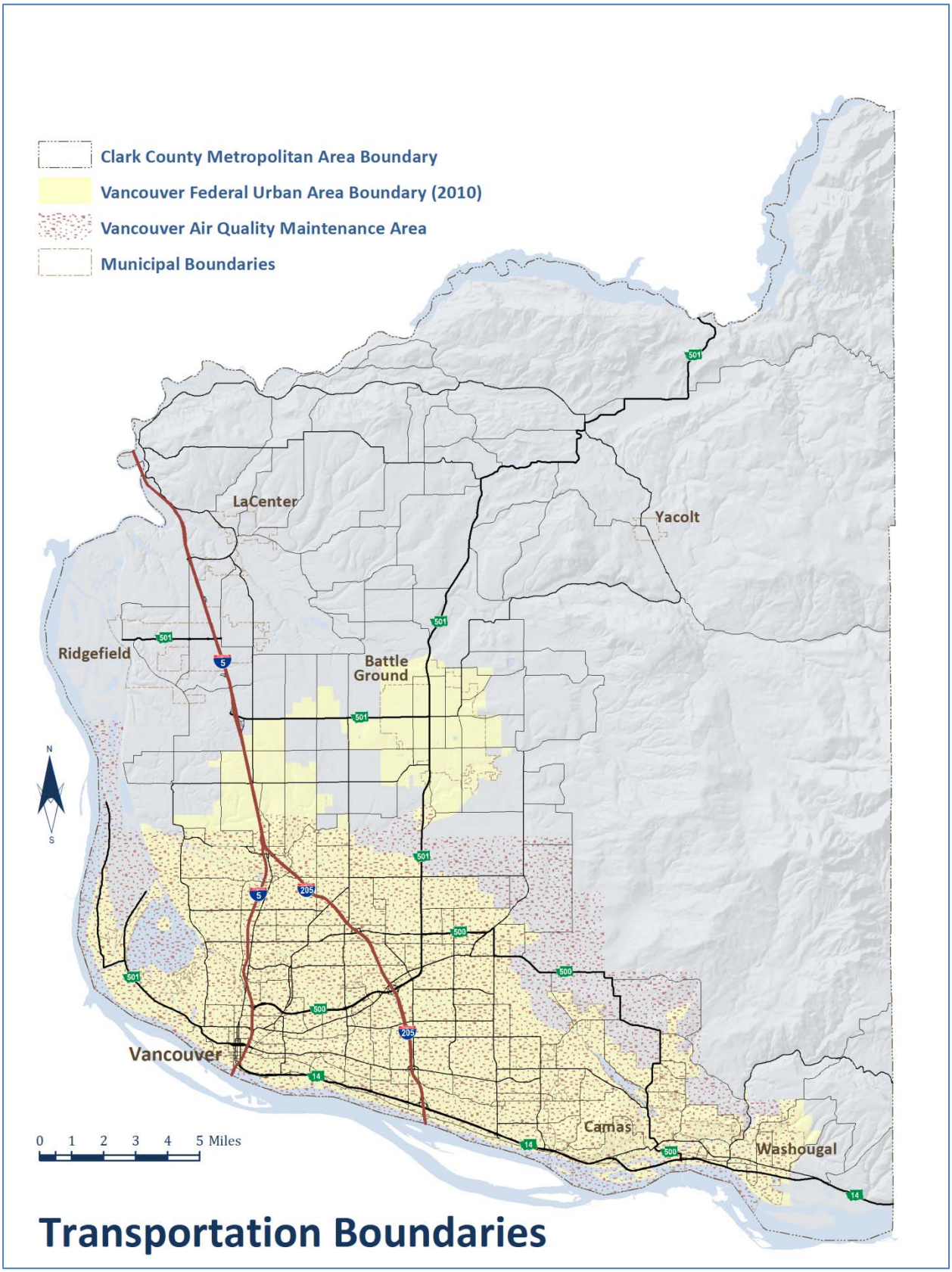
Project Screening Criteria

1. Consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan.
2. Contain at least one eligible Transportation Alternatives activity.
3. Direct relationship to the surface transportation system (except trails).
4. Funds cannot be used to supplement the construction of an existing road project. For example, TA funds cannot be used to pay for the sidewalk portion on an existing road project.
5. Project must have public access.

Summary of Needs Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Public Benefit	25
Connectivity	20
Accessibility/Equity	10
Safety	20
Financial/Readiness	15
Other	10
Total	**100**

Bicycle Lane & Sidewalk



The map shows Clark County urban and rural areas for federal transportation purposes. The Vancouver Air Quality Maintenance Area is where CMAQ funds can be spent.