

Decisions Made at Each Phase in the Life of a Transportation Project

Phase #1 POLICY AND VISIONING
<p>Decisions Made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine requirements for transportation projects to receive federal or state funding • Determine apportionment of funding for specific project types (e.g. transit, roadways)
Phase #2: LONG-RANGE PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING
<p>Planning Decisions Made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine transportation deficiencies • Determine financial assumptions • Identify strategies to address deficiencies • Determine preferred planning scenario
<p>Programming Decisions Made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine evaluation criteria and methodology for evaluating transportation projects for the state department of transportation and metropolitan and rural planning (if present) organizations. The relationship between the DOT, FHWA district (state) office, and MPO is crucial to understanding how projects are selected from the TIP for inclusion in the STIP, and how they are advanced. Although there are specific rules about which agency (state or MPO) selects projects for the STIP in the case of Transportation Management Associations (TMAs), in reality the State DOT (as the designee of the Governor) has the final authority over nearly all of the programming dollars. • Identify funding sources for transportation projects. The policy direction is derived from long range plan development and national funding priorities.
Phase #3: ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES & PRELIMINARY DESIGN
<p>Decisions Made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHWA and state DOT decide which type of environmental study to pursue (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/citizen/) • NEPA includes several key steps in the decision-making process (http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/pd3tdm.asp): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final Purpose and Need 2. Selection of a Range of feasible and reasonable alternatives 3. Selection of a preferred alternative, which is based upon environmental effects of the proposed alternatives and evaluation criteria 4. Agreement on avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation options for the preferred alternative
Phase #4: FINAL DESIGN AND RIGHT-OF-WAY
<p>Final Design Decisions Made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the scope of the project • Establish design criteria (design speed, traffic volume, etc.) • Submit preliminary and final design plans • Respond to comments made during review process
<p>Right-of-way Decisions Made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine right-of-way limits • Coordinate with utilities on placement • Create agreements with railroads as necessary • Create agreements with local governments as necessary

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Phase #5: CONSTRUCTION
<p>Decisions Made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contract Specifications are finalized• Construction project is advertised for Contractors to bid• Best value is established (i.e. low bid, or technical capability+low price (A+Bx))• Project is awarded
Phase #6: OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE
<p>Operations Decisions Made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the transportation problems that can be addressed by operational changes (e.g. signal timing, lane reassignment, etc).• Utilize existing guidelines from FHWA and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to determine what type of remedy is appropriate. FHWA establishes national policies, recommendations, and research for operational procedures as part of their short and long term programs.
<p>Maintenance Decisions Made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State or local Boards of transportation establish an annual or biannual maintenance or (asset management) budget• State or local DOT management establishes a priority policy or level of service standard• Data on asset conditions are collected, to the extent allowable by budget• Specific items of work are programmed by the regional/district/county maintenance management• Maintenance manuals provide guidance on the performance of a task