

Chapter I: How to Use This Guide

Note: this *STIP Users' Guide* is available online at: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/STIP>.

A. Document Overview and Terminology

This Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Users' Guide includes information about the processes and procedures for developing the STIP document. The STIP is used to identify major local, state and federal transportation system investments that rely in whole or in part on federal funding, or that are deemed to be of regional or statewide significance regardless of funding source. The STIP includes lists of projects that are approved to be carried out during a four-year time period. The STIP document lists hundreds of projects that are organized according to their location, when they are expected to be delivered, and how they are being funded.

There are three important words that are used throughout the STIP document: *program*, *project* and *bucket*.

The word "*program*" has several meanings:

- *Program* refers to the rules, regulations and funding authorizations that guide the obligation of money for a particular use. These *programs* are the building blocks for the STIP and all STIP projects are paid for under specific *programs*. For example, the Modernization *program* funds projects that increase highway system capacity.
- *Programming* is the process of deciding which projects to fund and when to build them. For example, Region 3 begins *programming* Modernization projects in the early spring of odd numbered years. A *program* is also the end product of the programming process and refers to the collection of projects that are approved for a particular period of time or for a geographic area, as in the following statement: "the 2006-2009 STIP *program* for Benton County is under development."

There are many types of *projects* funded through the STIP:

- *Project* can refer to a plan, an engineering design, an environmental document, a "bucket", and various types of construction, from a bridge to a bike path.
- A *project* also can be a capital purchase, such as buying a bus for a transit district, or an operating grant for a transit district's dial-a-ride program. In the STIP, *projects* are the activities for which money is programmed.

A *bucket* is a pot of money that has not yet been programmed to individual projects. Most competitive programs that fund projects in the STIP select projects for two years at a time. However the STIP involves a four year cycle, so the money that will be spent in the third and fourth year of the STIP cycle is identified and reserved in a *bucket*. This money is obligated to projects either through the amendment process or in the next STIP.

Definitions for other terms and acronyms can be found in the glossary in [Appendix A](#).

B. Where to Find Things

This Users' Guide does not include information about specific STIP projects. It describes the procedures, systems, and decision sequences for developing the STIP. The final STIP document includes information about how to find projects in the STIP and a brief description of the major programs. For specific project information, see the current adopted STIP, which may be accessed online at: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/STIP/>.

When preparing the STIP, ODOT staff uses a very detailed step-by-step STIP Development Manual that guides the compilation of the STIP for each region and/or individual funding program. This Users' Guide is intended to complement that Manual. The Users' Guide offers descriptions of programs and decision processes to assist interested staff and stakeholders in better understanding the STIP development process, leading to more accurate and effective participation. It does not replace or repeat the very specific instructions and technical requirements explained in the Manual.

C. General Information

Chapter II – Background of the Users' Guide contains general information about the STIP process. Figure II-1 in Chapter II shows the major process steps for the STIP. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) also publishes a brochure that includes a brief overview of what the STIP is and how it is developed. The brochure may be viewed online at: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/0811stip.shtml> or it may be obtained at any ODOT region office and many other government offices around the state. There is contact information for ODOT region offices on the ODOT web site at: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HighwayRegions.shtml>.

There are basically three ways that projects can become eligible for inclusion in the STIP. First, some projects come from needs lists (e.g. Oregon Transportation Management System data) that identify problems and possible solutions. These projects are usually for system maintenance and replacement. Second, projects come from direct applications for funding to fulfill a specific need such as improvements to transportation assets and services. This includes

many transit projects, enhancement projects, and bicycle/pedestrian improvements.

Finally, there are projects that make significant changes to the system by adding capacity. Before these projects get into the STIP, they have been defined in an adopted local transportation system plan, state facility plan or refinement plan, metropolitan or regional area transportation plan, or in a long-range transportation plan for a national forest, national park, or tribal government area. These planning actions precede the STIP and it is during the planning process that many issues affecting a project are decided. For example, a long-range plan typically identifies the general location for a new road and the number of lanes on that road, and it may identify the need to establish or expand transit service or to improve bike and pedestrian facilities in a roadway corridor.

There is a part of the STIP that funds later-stage planning and project development work. It is called the Development STIP (D-STIP) and it is used to obligate a small portion of the state's transportation resources to pay for studies of future transportation projects where the need has been identified in an earlier planning process. Such studies can include development of environmental reports required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or designs for final construction.

D-STIP projects take more than the four years to develop and construct. For example, when ODOT Region 1 planned how to redesign the I-5/OR 217 interchange, the funding to develop concept designs, discuss them with area residents and business, and select a final alternative was funded through the D-STIP. Other recent examples include the Newberg-Dundee Bypass in Region 2, the I-5/OR 201 interchange near Ontario in Region 5, and the US 97 Wickiup Junction interchange in Region 4. Funding a project through the D-STIP labels that project for possible construction, but it still must go through a competitive funding process to move forward in the construction section of the STIP.

Most projects in the STIP are construction projects for which the planning is complete. The Construction STIP (C-STIP) includes a wide range of projects - highway and bridge repairs, safety improvements, and transit projects such as purchasing busses for transit districts. The C-STIP can also include all phases of a project, from right-of-way and engineering to construction. About 95% of all projects in the STIP are listed in the C-STIP.

Both the C-STIP and D-STIP are organized by state highway region. To find the region in which you are located, a map of ODOT highway regions is available on the internet at:

http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TDATA/gis/odotmaps.shtml#ODOT_Region_Maps.

D. In-Depth Information

The Users' Guide Chapters III through VIII contain detailed information about the STIP process.

Chapter III: STIP Regulatory Framework reviews the state and federal regulations concerning the STIP. It includes references to the federal rules that require states to prepare a STIP and laws and regulations that affect its contents.

Chapter IV: STIP Program Development Process outlines the process that is followed for projects funded by state administered programs and projects on state highways. It includes:

- An overview of the statewide process
- Detailed information for how the STIP program is developed in each highway region
- An explanation of how state resources are allocated to specific programs for the upcoming STIP cycle
- A review of the processes that state-administered programs use to decide which projects to fund in the STIP.
- A summary of how other agencies that program transportation improvements through the STIP select their projects. Other agencies, including federal land management agencies like the national forests and tribal governments, receive direct federal funding and have their own process for selecting and scheduling transportation projects. Because those agencies use federal dollars in their transportation program, by law their projects must be included in the STIP.
- General information about how metropolitan areas develop their transportation improvement programs. There are links to web sites that provide more detailed information about these metropolitan area programs in Chapter II and in Chapter IV.

Chapter V: ODOT Highway Regions STIP Procedures reviews the process that each ODOT region follows to develop their STIP program. The process follows a similar pattern in all regions, but there are important differences that affect how and when decisions are made, and by whom. The chapter is organized by highway region.

Chapter VI: Program Descriptions includes detailed information about the state programs that are used to finance the projects that are programmed through the STIP. Many of the programs described in this chapter are also used in metropolitan areas and by other organizations that program projects in the STIP.

The final three chapters in the Users' Guide are: *Chapter VII: STIP Approval and Adoption Process*; *Chapter VIII: STIP Amendment Process*; and *Chapter IX: STIP Development Roles and Responsibilities*. These chapters describe the administrative procedures for adopting, amending, and administering the STIP development process, such as the steps used to obligate or reallocate funding for projects, or adjust the schedule for particular projects. They also contain information about who is responsible for managing the various steps in the STIP development process within ODOT.