

Project Selection Process

The SVATS MPO uses the following process for its project selection:

Initially, information is shared between the MPO and District PennDOT office as to what projects have been completed or let. These early discussions take place prior to the State Transportation Commission (STC) hearings and information from those discussions is shared with members of the MPO and public who have expressed an interest in speaking on behalf of a project or issue at the STC hearings. Information concerning the time and place of the STC Hearings is shared with MPO members and others from the general public who attend the MPO meetings. The MCRPC also shares this information with its members at their monthly meetings.

Once the STC hearings have been held and it is determined how much money will be available, the MPO works with officials from PennDOT as well as Mercer County's Bridge Engineer to prepare a draft TIP comprised of projects listed on the Long-range-Transportation-Plan (LRTP) that will then be disseminated to the members of the MPO. Projects are a result of this collaboration, to be implemented on a priority basis. Members of the MPO, as well as those who attend the MPO meetings are given the opportunity to comment how projects should be prioritized and if any new or different projects might be proposed. During this TIP cycle, a draft TIP was presented during the February MPO meeting and a finalized draft of the TIP was approved at the May MPO meeting. Between the two meetings, we encouraged the Coordinating Committee members to comment on any projects, though no comments were received. Members, however, did ask questions about the TIP to PennDOT District 1-0 officials and MPO staff during the Coordinating Committee meetings.

At this time, the TIP is ready for public comment and the general public and MPO members have opportunity to comment on what projects they believe should occur. This comment period lasts 30 days. All TIP documentation is posted on our website and is available for viewing at our office.

Traditionally, when budgets have been larger, MPO members have been able to rank and vote on projects based on several criteria. In addition, project comments and suggestions from the general public and MPO members are received on an ongoing basis. However, due to funding shortfalls and the emphasis on replacing/restoring structurally deficient bridges, all highway projects on the current TIP are continuations of projects on prior TIPs and the LRTP. Because there are a handful of major (i.e. greater than \$10m) projects on the TIP that will be completed during the current TIP cycle, it is anticipated that future TIP updates may allow for more deliberations on project priorities.