

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**2027–2030 Transportation Improvement Program Revision Procedures**  
**Shenango Valley Area Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
**(SVATS MPO)**

**Background**

Periodically, as projects move through design, contracting, and construction, it becomes necessary to revise the initially programmed funding amounts in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes procedures for the SVATS MPO to process revisions to the 2027–2030 TIP. This document generally follows the template developed cooperatively by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to establish procedures for revisions to the 2027–2030 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The STIP aggregates all MPO and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) TIPs, including the Interstate Management (IM) Program and other statewide programs. It is the official transportation improvement program document mandated by federal statute (23 U.S.C. § 134, 23 U.S.C. § 135; 23 CFR 450.218) and recognized by FHWA and FTA. The STIP includes a list of projects for a four-year period and supporting documentation as required by federal law.

Regional TIPs (such as SVATS MPO’s TIP) contain designated projects with dedicated funding sources for the region. Statewide Programs are managed by PennDOT’s Central Office. Examples include Spike, MBP3, Rapid Bridge Replacement (RBR), HSIP, Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety (RRX), TAP, GLG, ARLE, MTF, Recreational Trails, TIF, Statewide Transit, and Keystone Corridor projects. The IM Program remains a separate statewide program. Pennsylvania’s Twelve-Year Program (TYP), required under Act 120 of 1970, includes the STIP/TIPs in the first four-year period.

For guidance, see Pennsylvania’s 2027 Transportation Program General and Procedural Guidance and Financial Guidance, available on the STIP page of the STC Website under 2027 Guidance Documents.

**STIP/TIP Administration**

FHWA and FTA will only authorize projects and approve grants for projects that are programmed in the current approved STIP. If an MPO (e.g., SVATS MPO), transit agency, or PennDOT wishes to proceed with a federally funded project not programmed on the STIP/TIP, an Amendment must be made (see definition of Amendment below).

Federal statewide and metropolitan planning regulations contained in 23 CFR 450 govern the provisions for revisions of the STIP and individual MPO TIPs. These regulations acknowledge the relative significance, importance, and complexity of individual programming actions. 23 CFR 450.328 permits the use of alternative procedures by cooperating parties to effectively manage actions encountered during a TIP cycle.

Cooperating parties include PennDOT, MPOs, RPOs, FHWA, FTA, and transit agencies. Any alternative procedures must be agreed upon and documented in the TIP.

STIP/TIP revisions must be consistent with Pennsylvania's Transportation Performance Management (TPM) requirements, Pennsylvania's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and SVATS MPO's LRTP. Revisions must also support Pennsylvania's Transportation Performance Measures, the Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP), the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan, the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), the Congestion Management Plan (CMP), and the PennDOT Connects policy.

Over the years, Pennsylvania has utilized a comprehensive planning and programming process that focuses on collaboration between PennDOT, FHWA, FTA, and MPOs/RPOs at county and regional levels. This approach will be applied to begin implementation of PBPP (Performance-Based Planning and Programming), ensuring that each dollar invested aligns with strategic decisions and enhances overall transportation system performance.

### **Public Participation and Air Quality**

STIP/TIP revisions must correspond to the adopted provisions of the MPO's/RPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP). SVATS MPO's PPP is a documented broad-based public involvement process describing how the MPO will involve the public to ensure comments, concerns, or issues are identified and addressed. A reasonable opportunity for public review and comment shall be provided for all significant revisions to the STIP/TIP, including transit projects.

All projects within a designated National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) maintenance area, such as Mercer County, will be screened for air quality significance. PennDOT will coordinate with the SVATS MPO to screen statewide and regional projects, including SVSS projects, for air quality significance. If a revision adds, deletes, or changes the scope/schedule of an air quality significant project in a nonattainment or maintenance area, a new air quality conformity determination will be required if deemed appropriate by the PennDOT Air Quality Interagency Consultation Group (ICG).

### **L RTP Compliance**

The federal planning regulations (23 CFR 450.324(c)) define update cycles for MPO/RPO LRTPs. SVATS MPO is on a five-year update cycle, with the current LRTP valid through November 2026. If an MPO/RPO LRTP expires, all STIP/TIP revisions involving federally funded projects will be treated as an Amendment and require federal approval. No administrative modifications to federally funded projects can occur until the LRTP complies with federal planning regulations.

### **STIP/TIP Revisions**

#### **Amendment**

An Amendment is a revision that:

- Affects air quality conformity regardless of cost or funding source.
- Adds a new federally funded project, or federalizes a project previously 100% state/local funded (including SVSS projects via PennDOT-administered FTA funding).
- Deletes a project that utilizes federal funds (except fully obligated projects no longer requiring funding, which may be an administrative modification).
- Adds, deletes, or changes a project phase exceeding the following thresholds:
  - \$10 million for IM Program
  - \$1.5 million for SVATS MPO TIP projects
  - \$1 million for other federally funded statewide programs
- Changes project scope significantly enough to constitute a new project.

Approval by SVATS MPO is required for regional TIP Amendments. The MPO must initiate PennDOT Central Office approval via the e-STIP process. Submissions must include a Fiscal Constraint Chart (FCC) showing before/after funding, detailed justification, and supporting documentation, including PennDOT PMC and CPDM materials if available.

### **Administrative Modification**

An Administrative Modification is a minor revision that:

- Adds, deletes, or adjusts project phases within thresholds.
- Adds 100% state or non-federal funded projects (including SVSS state-funded projects).
- Adds emergency relief (ER) projects or immediate repairs where delay would threaten public safety.
- Adjusts federal/state capital funds from low-bid savings, de-obligations, or reserve line items.
- Splits projects to facilitate delivery.
- Adjusts federal funding based on FHWA redistribution.

Administrative modifications do not affect air quality conformity, do not exceed thresholds, and do not constitute a new project. Federal approval is not required, but FHWA and FTA may review.

### **Transit – SVSS (Shenango Valley Shuttle Service)**

SVSS provides public and human service transportation in Mercer County. Projects and services are funded through PennDOT-administered federal transit funds (FTA Sections 5307, 5310, 5311) and state transit funds.

All SVSS projects included in the TIP must be programmed in the urban or rural TIP corresponding to the service area. Revisions to SVSS projects will follow the Amendment or Administrative Modification procedures outlined in this MOU, in coordination with PennDOT. Public involvement for SVSS project revisions will follow SVATS MPO's PPP.

State-only funded projects for SVSS are considered administrative modifications, while any project receiving federal funds via PennDOT requires an Amendment if thresholds or scope changes apply.

## **Fiscal Constraint and Financial Reporting**

All TIP/STIP revisions must:

- Maintain fiscal constraint (23 CFR 450.218(l), 450.326(g-j))
- Account for year of expenditure (YOE)
- Ensure total project costs are consistent with the TIP period

PennDOT will provide quarterly and annual reports of federal obligations and state encumbrances. SVATS MPO will publish an Annual Listing of Federally Obligated Projects within 90 days of the program year's end. Reports must include highway, bridge, and transit projects, including SVSS.

## **STIP/TIP Transportation Performance Management**

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.326(c), PennDOT and SVATS MPO will ensure that STIP/TIP revisions promote progress toward achievement of performance targets, including transit performance measures applicable to SVSS.

## **MPO/RPO TIP Revision Procedures**

This MOU, adopted with the 2027–2030 TIP, clarifies how the SVATS MPO will address TIP revisions. If SVATS MPO elects more restrictive procedures, FHWA and FTA will adhere to them. This document also serves as guidance for PennDOT-administered Statewide Program TIP revisions.

## **Effective Dates**

This MOU will begin October 1, 2026 and remain in effect until September 30, 2030, unless revised or terminated. It will be reaffirmed every two years.

We, the undersigned hereby agree to the above procedures and principles:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. Kristin Mulkerin  
Deputy Secretary for Planning  
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Jeremy P. Coxe  
Chairman  
Shenango Valley Area Transportation Study MPO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. Doniele Russell  
Secretary/Executive Director  
Shenango Valley Area Transportation Study MPO/  
Mercer County Regional Planning Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date