

Overview of the North Central RPO

The North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission serves as the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) and is the policy board of an organization created and designed to carry out the rural (non-metropolitan) transportation planning process for rural areas in the Commonwealth. The North Central RPO is responsible for comprehensive, cooperative, and continuous planning for highways, roads, bridges, and public transportation. The RPO coordinates with PennDOT and our six counties (Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Potter) in planning for the transportation needs of the Region.

North Central has established the Rural Transportation Planning Committee to act as the authority on all regional transportation planning activities. The Committee consists of the county planners from the six-county region; representatives from PennDOT Districts 2-0, 10-0 and central office; public transit; aviation; and rail; as well as local community groups with an interest in transportation and economic development throughout the region.

Overall, the committee is charged with establishing policy and prioritizing all major capital projects throughout the region in accordance with the guiding principles for planning and programming, as well as developing the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Region's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and conducting proactive public participation and environmental justice activities to meet or surpass the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

MPO/RPOs are mandated to implement the transportation planning process outlined in the federal transportation regulations (23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303). Federal law and regulations establish five (5) core functions of an MPO/RPO that include the following objectives:

1. Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision making in the transportation planning area.
2. Identify and evaluate alternative transportation improvement options by using data and planning methods to generate and evaluate alternatives.
3. Prepare and maintain a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The RPO is responsible for developing and updating LRTPs for the planning area for a period of at least twenty (20) years that fosters mobility and access for people and goods; efficient system performance and preservation; and good quality of life.
4. Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The RPO is responsible for developing a short-range (four-year) program of transportation improvements consistent with the LRTP. The TIP should be designed to achieve the area's goals using spending, regulating, operating, management, and financial tools.
5. Involve the public residing in the six-county region.



Purpose of the TIP

The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (IIJA/BIL) legislation and the federal Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Final Rule (Title 23 U.S.C. Section 34 and Title 49 U.S.C. Section 1607) require that local and state officials work cooperatively to maintain a continuous and comprehensive long-range transportation planning program in all urbanized areas with a population of over 50,000 persons in the United States. This Federal mandate is carried out by a formal group called a "Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)." The FAST Act also recognizes the designation of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RPOs) to carry out these processes outside of urbanized areas. The FAST Act and the federal rule specify the primary roles and responsibilities of MPOs and RPOs. The North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission is responsible for fulfilling these federal requirements in the six rural counties of Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Potter.

The North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, serving as a Rural Planning Organization (RPO), is a planning body composed of elected and appointed officials representing local, state and federal governments or other agencies having an interest or responsibility in the local transportation system. The RPO is responsible for creating a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The role of the North Central RPO is to develop transportation policies, programs, and projects, which move people and goods in a safe, efficient manner, promote community and economic development, protect the environment, and preserve the region's outstanding quality of life.

The purpose of this document is to meet federal and state requirements for the development and documentation of regional Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and Twelve-Year Programs (TYPs) by defining the "roles and responsibilities" for the Pennsylvania 2023-2026 State-wide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the regional Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). This includes, but is not limited to, 23 USC Section 134, 23 USC Section 135, 23 CFR 450.200, 23 CFR 450.300, and 23 CFR 490, as well as PA Consolidated Statute (CS) Title 74 and PA Code Title 67. As referenced in the Pennsylvania FFY 2021-2024 STIP Federal Planning Finding, these regulations guide the development process of the 2023 Transportation Program within the context of multiple interrelated, intergovernmental planning functions. This program is carried out as part of a cooperative, continuing, and comprehensive (3C) planning process designed to ensure that transportation investment decisions align with established targets and goals. The process results in the production of a variety of plans and documents at the regional and state level including:

- State-wide and Regional Long-Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs)
- 12-Year Transportation Program (TYP)
- State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs)
- Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP)
- Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plans
- Pennsylvania Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)
- Regional and Comprehensive Freight Movement Plan (CFMP)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Performance Plan(s)
- Congestion Management Process (CMP)
- Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation

Although the formal TYP update state-wide is on a biannual basis, the PennDOT District(s) 2 & 10 and the North Central RPO have continuous engagement throughout the year on asset management and thus the TIPs; and the projects are constantly evolving based on scopes, estimates and estimated milestones. Every two years Pennsylvania’s MPO and RPO Planning Partners, including North Central, work in partnership with PennDOT, local transit providers and area local officials to identify priority transportation needs and develop a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to address these needs over the next four-year period.

The TIP details the planned expenditure of federal funds and state capital funds for specific programs and projects within specified limits of fiscal constraint. To be included on the TIP, programs and projects must be included on the Planning Partner’s adopted Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or addressed through reserve line items included on the LRTP. The TIP years are based on the federal fiscal year, which extends from October 1 to September 30.

The list of projects on the TIP coincides with the First Four Year segment of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Twelve-Year Program (TYP), which is developed by PennDOT and adopted by the State Transportation Commission (STC) every two years, at the same time as the TIP.

12-Year Program Cycle for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023-2034

FFY	FFY	FFY	FFY	FFY	FFY	FFY	FFY	FFY	FFY	FFY	FFY
2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
1 st Four Years (STIP/TIPs)				2 nd Four Years				3 rd Four Years			

Transportation Improvement Program & Project Selection

The North Central RPO Transportation Improvement Program, (TIP), is a document identifying all highway, bridge, and public transit projects containing Federal, State and local funds being programmed within the counties of Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Potter during the next four Federal Fiscal Years.

The TIP is developed cooperatively between PennDOT, North Central and ATA for review and approval by the North Central RPO every two years. These types of projects cannot proceed until they are included on the TIP. An extensive RPO public involvement process is employed during development of the TIP.



Upon approval by the North Central RPO, the TIP is forwarded to PennDOT, FHWA, and FTA for final approval. Modifications or formal amendments to the TIP can be considered by the RPO at any time. The RPO has adopted TIP Administrative Procedures to process TIP modifications and formal amendments as further defined later in this document.

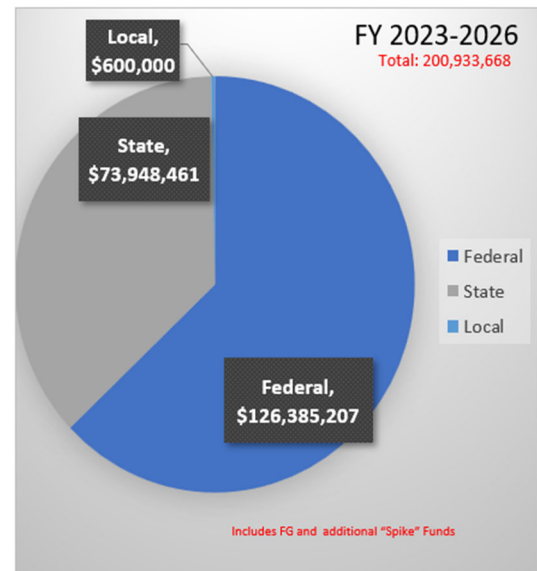
Financial Guidance:

Original financial guidance for this 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program was released on June 29, 2021 and included \$129,853,000 (over 4 years) to be programmed with in the 6-county region. This was an approximate 10% reduction in funding from the current FY21-24 TIP.

Special Considerations for the 2023-2026 TIP Update

On November 15, 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Public Law 117-58, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), was signed into law. The IIJA/BIL committed \$550 billion in transportation funding over fiscal years 2022 through 2026. This increased the federal funds available to the North Central RPO region for the FY 2023-2026 TIP update by slightly more than \$50 million as well as introduced a new program called the Bridge Investment Program.

The introduction of this additional funding late in the TIP development process basically made the up for the lost revenue in Financial Guidance but required reconsideration of the projects and funding strategies developed for the 2023-2026 TIP update. For the North Central RPO region, particular attention was applied to the ability to program and advance projects that could be delivered within the funding horizon of the bill, and within the limitations of available matching funds and other program requirements.



New Base Funding Allocations by Funding Program – 2023- 2026: (does not include spike)

Fund Type	FFY 2023	FFY 2024	FFY 2025	FFY 2026	Total FFY 2023-2026	Total FFY 2027 - FFY 2030	Total FFY 2031 - 2034
NHPP (Federal)	\$9,017,000	\$8,514,000	\$8,060,000	\$7,614,000	\$33,205,000	\$25,023,000	\$24,374,000
STP (Federal)	\$7,911,000	\$8,080,000	\$8,318,000	\$8,560,000	\$32,869,000	\$34,241,000	\$34,241,000
BOF (Federal)	\$6,302,000	\$6,302,000	\$6,302,000	\$6,302,000	\$25,208,000	\$25,209,000	\$25,209,000
HSIP (Federal)	\$1,611,000	\$1,651,000	\$1,692,000	\$1,733,000	\$6,687,000	\$6,934,000	\$6,934,000
581 (State Highway)	\$9,333,000	\$10,165,000	\$10,366,000	\$11,465,000	\$41,329,000	\$45,822,000	\$45,754,000
185/183 (State Bridge)	\$5,808,000	\$5,679,000	\$5,677,000	\$5,647,000	\$22,811,000	\$22,550,000	\$22,482,000
Bridge Investment Program	\$6,191,000	\$6,191,000	\$6,191,000	\$6,191,000	\$24,764,000	\$24,764,000	\$24,764,000
TOTAL BASE FUNDING	\$46,173,000	\$46,582,000	46,606,000	\$47,512,000	\$186,873,000	\$184,544,000	\$183,759,000

Project Selection Process:

Projects in the TIP address a variety of transportation modes including improvements to roadways, bridges, transit, bicycle and pedestrian or active transportation facilities, rail freight facilities and airports. In recent years, system maintenance has required a growing share of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's limited

resources. Consequently, the TIP places high priority on projects that rehabilitate, reconstruct, and renew the existing and aging transportation infrastructure. Fiscal constraints also mean that very few new projects are typically added to the TIP during each update.

In keeping with this priority, many of the projects selected for inclusion on the 2023-2026 TIP, which were not carryovers from the prior TIP, are developed through PennDOT's continuing asset management process. The implementation of this process varies across PennDOT Districts. For the 2023-2026 TIP, PennDOT Districts 2-0 and 10-0 updated this process to incorporate techniques and information available using PennDOT's Bridge Asset Management System (BAMS) and Pavement Asset Management System (PAMS). The implementation of this information was customized to staff experience, information needs and level of acclimation to and participation in development of the BAMS and PAMS systems. In addition, many other District asset condition systems and reports are used in making candidate selections in addition to engineering knowledge, judgement, and expertise.

The RPO will continue to focus on a "trunk of the tree" approach utilizing the following four priority areas:

- Bridges on the National Highway System (NHS)
- Roadway conditions on the NHS
- Bridges on the remainder of the roadway system
- Roadway conditions on the remainder of the system

Projects will also still be reviewed using the "lowest lifecycle cost (LLCC)" approach to transportation system maintenance. LLCC maximizes the life of transportation infrastructure by prioritizing early intervention and preservation activities rather than prioritizing large projects to replace severely deteriorated assets.

The asset management process varies slightly from District to District, but some key aspects and commonalities are highlighted below:

Roadway Projects:

- Roadway conditions are updated annually
- Pavement age/history/lifecycle data, condition data, County Maintenance Staff input, traffic volume/usage and available resources are all considered in the consideration of asset conditions and the development of potential treatments
- While emphasis in the federal legislation is placed on the National Highway System (NHS), the asset management process considers condition and target setting for all levels of the highway network. This broad-based consideration leads to the development of projects to be funded through the TIP, Interstate Management Program, and maintenance programs. Changes in project needs and/or available funding may dictate the need to move projects or phases between funding programs
- Projects developed are compared against PAMS data for the region. The expertise of district staff and their familiarity with the assets in question is such that they tend to have direct knowledge of pavements that fall out of cycle or do not meet established targets. While thoughtful consideration is always given to correcting these conditions, implementation of the Transportation Asset Management Plan and the development of PAMS has increased the consideration given to preservation treatments compared to rehabilitation and reconstruction treatments, and that careful consideration is given to the concept of lowest life cycle cost in the development of treatments and projects.

Bridge Projects:

- Bridge conditions are updated continually as inspections are completed
- Structure type/history, condition data, posting status, traffic volume/usage, known resiliency issues and available resources are all considered in the consideration of asset conditions and the development of potential treatments
- As with roadway projects, emphasis in the federal legislation is placed on the National Highway System (NHS), and the asset management process considers condition and target setting for all levels of the highway network
- The development of treatments carefully considers the mix of work types and the balance of preservation, rehabilitation, and replacement work in delivering a cost-effective mix of projects and practices to provide the greatest possible benefit to the condition of the regional bridge population with the resources available
- Consideration is also given to local bridge priorities identified through the regional prioritization process. Treatment and funding strategies are developed that consider the relative strengths and abilities of the local project sponsors to administer the project, and to maximize the use of innovative strategies and alternative funding sources where applicable
- Projects developed are compared with the BridgeCare results from BAMS. Potential reasons for differences in recommended treatments are examined, and appropriate changes to the proposed projects are considered

The asset management process will continue to evolve at the statewide and regional levels over future TIP updates, reflecting the increasing expertise of regional personnel in the application of the information available, and the increasing sophistication and applicability of the information and tools expected to be made available through the process.

The projects developed through this process and selected for inclusion on the 2023-2026 TIP, which were not carryovers from the prior TIP, are consistent with PennDOT's Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP).

To the extent allowed by available fiscal resources, additional projects may be programmed from the following sources:

- Project priorities and line items specified in each region's LRTP
- Recommendations in each region's Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan
- Priorities of key project sponsors such as PennDOT Engineering District staff, local fixed route and shared ride transit providers
- Sample MPO-RPO Regional Project Priorities
- Safety needs identified through statewide Intersection Safety Implementation and Roadway Departure Implementation Plans, regional safety plans and the Safety Network Screening Tool
- Safety needs identified through review of key locations identified by PennDOT and other project sponsors
- Congestion and operational needs identified through the Regional Operations Plan

The following is a list of project criteria that are considered in the development of projects in the asset management and companion project identification processes for the TIP update:



- Asset Condition
- Longevity and magnitude of treatment impact on asset condition
- Impact of treatment on Performance Based Planning and Programming (PBPP) process
- Impact of treatment on Business Plan network
- Consistency with TAMP
- Usage and risk exposure related to asset
- Opportunities to impact congruent goals established in statewide and regional LRTPs
- Opportunities to address needs identified by local and regional stakeholders
- Opportunities to incorporate synergistic aspects of multiple funding programs
- Maximizing the utilization of existing funding and staff resources
- Coherence with specific requirements and purposes of state and federal funding program utilized
- Contribution to a cohesive package of projects that effectively addresses the asset management and/or transportation need of the region
- Consistency with fiscal requirements of funding programs and contribution to a package of projects that effectively manages cash flow and fiscal resources available over the life of the TIP

Meetings are also held with PennDOT staff to review and prioritize candidate lists of projects for possible inclusion in the TIP, considering previous public involvement and undertaking a consistency check with the LRTP and with local/county priorities. The project priorities and essential project information are compiled in the Draft TIP documentation made available to the public as part of a 30-day public comment period before adoption by the North Central RPO.

Other Projects

The North Central RPO TIP may also include funds for projects approved for funding from programs allocated on a statewide basis, including the following:

- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Local Access Road Program
- Automated Red-Light Enforcement (ARLE) and Green Light-Go Programs
- Multimodal Transportation Fund
- Congested Corridor Improvement Program
- Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Program (RRX)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Statewide Set-aside
- Transportation Infrastructure Investment Fund (TIIF)

TIP Development and Timeline

As new projects are successful in obtaining funding through these programs, the RPO will consider adding the projects to the approved TIP.

TIP Timeline:

Below provides the general timeline for the formal TIP update process:



<u>January/June:</u>	District Asset Management staff downloads and begins reviewing asset management documents (BAMS and PAMS), to outline potential project candidates and priorities to be used in developing the upcoming TIP candidate lists. District requests updated project phase estimates, delivery dates and scopes of work from project managers. District sets up a series of working meetings to develop the Twelve-Year Plan for all carryover projects. Planning and Programming unit requests candidate list of projects from District units (bridge, highway, and traffic) and meets with each unit to discuss/review existing projects and candidate lists during TIP/TYP development.
<u>July:</u>	Receive TIP General and Procedural Guidance and Financial Guidance. District shares with the Planning Region a list of potential TIP candidate projects developed from Asset Management tools and other District reports and systems. Potential candidate lists are reviewed by the Planning Region for concurrence and prioritization and so projects can be programmed on the TIP/TYP.
<u>July/August:</u>	District applies Financial Guidance allocations and analyses program capacity.
<u>September:</u>	TIP Update Kick-off Meeting with North Central RPO and County Planning Staff to discuss projects coming off the current program and what will be carried over on to the draft TIP.
<u>October:</u>	District will discuss carry-over projects and any candidate projects in preliminary meetings with North Central RPO and District staff.
<u>December:</u>	North Central RPO approves submission of Draft TIP to Central Office.
<u>January:</u>	Discuss with Central Office what the TIP might look like.
<u>February:</u>	Spike determinations are made by Central Office which includes carry-over spike and any new spike funding
<u>March:</u>	Follow-up meeting with the North Central RPO to discuss projects on the Draft TIP.
<u>April/May:</u>	Prepare Final Draft TIP and related documents to go out for public comment period.
<u>May/June:</u>	North Central RPO advertises and conducts 30-day public comment period consistent with Public Participation Plan.
<u>June/July:</u>	Present Final TIP, Air Quality Conformity, Environmental Justice, and other required reports at the North Central RPO meetings for approval/adoption.
<u>July:</u>	Prepare TIP submission package for transmission to PennDOT Central Office.
<u>August/September:</u>	Approval by State Transportation Commission (STC) and submission to FHWA/FTA.