1.1 | MPO Congestion Management Program/Project Selection Process

The Mountainland MPO is the Metropolitan Planning Organization over the Provo/Orem Urban Area with a planning area that includes all the municipalities within Utah County. The MPO is appropriated federal transportation funds based off the urban populations of the cities from Lehi to Mapleton and Spanish Fork to Payson. This funding is programmed by the MPO to eligible applicants including member jurisdictions, UDOT, UTA, state agencies, and private organizations. The MPO selects projects through its committees based off congestion relief strategies, mode choice, air quality improvement, and safety.

1.2 | Kick Off Meeting - January

Biennially (every two years) MPO staff will review with the TAC Committee the process for selecting projects to be funded with MPO federal funds. MPO staff will also compile a draft listing of projects derived from the MPO transportation plan, transportation studies, traffic model, public involvement, and past projects discussed by the TAC Committee. This list can be used by the MPO TAC Committee members or others in compiling their Project Ideas submittals listed in 1.3 below.

1.3 | MPO TAC Project Ideas Meeting (Municipal, Agency, Private) - February

Suggestions from MPO member jurisdictions, state agencies, the transit district, and private organizations are collected and compiled prior to the TAC Committee reviewing of all proposals. Any projects presented by MPO staff in 1.2 above must have a sponsor by this stage. Individual projects should focus on improving the efficiency of the regional transportation system, be associated with corridors or programs identified in the MPO transportation plan, and emphasize the following four areas of concern:

1. Congestion Relief – Spot improvement projects intended to improve Levels of Service and/or reduce average delay along those corridors identified in the Regional Transportation Plan as high congestion areas.
2. Mode Choice – projects improving the diversity and/or usefulness of travel mode other than single occupant vehicles.
3. Air Quality Improvements – projects showing demonstrable air quality benefits.
4. Safety – improvements to vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety.

The TAC Committee will review the proposals and vote which projects should move forward to complete a Concept Report. Each member jurisdiction and agency shall have one vote. All advancing projects must have a sponsor, private sponsored projects should partner with a government agency.

1.4 | Transportation Studies

Transportation studies proposed by MPO member jurisdictions, state agencies, the transit district, private organizations, or the MPO shall be submitted and reviewed as part of the Project Idea process mentioned in section 1.3. Transportation studies must be regional in nature including; transportation area plans (not a city master transportation plan); trail, pedestrian, and bike plans; congestion relief studies; interchange or freeway studies; major corridor studies; regional ITS plans; regional traffic model development; transit network development; air quality planning. Due to the lower cost of most transportation studies, projects could be proposed annually if funding is available through the TIP modification.
process. Once approved by the MPO TAC Committee at the Project Idea stage, each study will be forwarded to the MPO Regional Planning Committee for their review and approval/denial. No Concept Report will be required for studies. Most studies will be managed by UDOT, UTA, or the MPO. If the study is to be managed by the MPO, the study will be placed in the Unified Planning Work Program; otherwise it will be placed on the TIP/STIP.

1.5 | Project Concept Reports - April
The sponsor of projects advancing from the Project Ideas Meeting shall complete a Concept Report. MPO staff will determine whether projects meet the minimum requirements of the report including:
1. Preliminary Design
2. Right of Way needs
3. Cost Estimates
4. Cost effectiveness (safety improvements, LOS changes over time, average travel time reductions over time, projected air quality benefits.)
5. Project is consistent with the MPO TAC approved projects list.
6. Road project is on a facility identified on the Utah State Functional Class Map.
7. The project is regional in nature.
8. Project scope (total or phase) is an appropriate size to be funded with limited MPO federal funds.
9. Project is consistent with sponsor general or transportation plan
10. Officially supported by political leadership – approved by legislative body
11. Other transportation agencies or municipalities that are affected by the project are in agreement.
12. Local matching funds are approved.
13. Funding is adequate to clear design and completes the project.
14. Phased projects are proposed in logical increments.
15. Sponsor commitment to completion of project within 5 years from date of award.

1.6 | Field Review - May
The MPO TAC Committee can attend a field review of the projects. The field review should last one day at the most with each project being hosted by the project sponsors to explain the proposal and allow the participants to get a better understanding of the project. Projects not visible in the field will be presented in the TAC Review of Concept Reports Meeting listed in 1.7 below.

1.7 | TAC Review of Concept Reports Meeting - May
MPO staff will submit for TAC review those projects that meet the minimum requirements listed under Project Concept Reports. TAC shall consider each project on its merits, and in relation to the other proposed projects and use the following to aid in their decision of a final project selection list:
1. Field Review
2. TAC Committee members rankings (submitted at meeting)
3. MPO staff ranking
4. Funding available

During a regularly scheduled MPO TAC Committee meeting, the body, under the direction of the Chair or Vice Chair shall negotiate and vote on a fully funded projects list. Once this list is complete and acceptable to the body, the MPO TAC Committee shall determine by vote whether or not to recommend the list to the MPO Regional Planning Committee for approval and funding. Each member jurisdiction and agency shall have one vote.
2.1 | Policies
The following outlines the policies and requirements regarding MPO federally funded projects:

2.2 | Project Eligibility
The types of projects that can be funded include spot improvements that mitigate congestion or safety issues, ITS projects, pedestrian/trail projects, transit and park and ride projects, air quality equipment, transportation studies, and other transportation related projects. Capacity increasing highway projects and general shoulder improvement projects can be funded, but due to limited funds must be either small in scope, phased, or have additional matching funds. All roadway type projects must be identified on the Utah State Functional Class Map. They also should correspond with the projects and/or programs of the MPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

2.3 | Funding
Funding can come from various sources including the MPO federal funds, state funds, UTA funds, local funds supplied by the municipalities or the county and private funds. MPO staff will recommend to the MPO TAC Committee which funds should be used with each proposed project based on available MPO federal funding types and other non-MPO funds pledged by each sponsor. MPO federal funds require a match be paid. The required match is normally 6.77% of the total cost, but the committee can require a higher match. The match shall be paid by the sponsor.

2.4 | Contingency Fund / Cost Overruns
The MPO will hold back 10% of each MPO federal funding category each year as a contingency fund for project cost overruns and other needs. At the end of each federal fiscal year, any leftover contingency funds shall be placed into the general fund of each federal funding category and made available for new projects in the biennial selection process or used for planning studies proposed by the MPO as part of the Unified Planning Work Program. If a project cost escalates above what was awarded by the MPO, the sponsor is required to cover the cost overrun. A project sponsor can request to MPO staff to help cover small cost overruns up to 10% of the approved cost of the project. There is no guarantee the project will receive the additional funds. Any cost overrun over 10% must be recommended by the TAC Committee to the Regional Planning Committee for their approval.

2.5 | Project Cost Savings
If a project does not require all MPO federal funding that was programmed to it, any remaining funds shall be returned to the general MPO account to be reallocated in the next biennial selection process. If the sponsor has additional MPO funded projects that require additional funds, MPO staff can transfer remaining funds between these projects. New projects or projects that are not funded with MPO funds must go through the normal biennial selection process to receive funding.

2.6 | Project Tracking and Progress
MPO staff will track all projects quarterly to ensure the project is progressing and to help with any problems. Regular updates will be given to the TAC and Regional Planning committees of all projects and programs to show what progress has been made. It is hoped that through project tracking, the MPO and the project sponsor will be able to better coordinate and avoid potential conflicts. This coordination will also help to determine the best years to program the project within the TIP. If a project is found to not be making progress, MPO staff will work with the sponsor to move the project forward. If staff cannot resolve the problem, then the project sponsor will report to the MPO TAC Committee their plan to more forward the project. The committee can recommend to the MPO Regional Planning Committee that a project that is not moving forward be removed from the TIP. Any federal funds expended toward the project shall be required to be reimbursed by the sponsor.
2.7 | Scope Change
Minor scope changes to a project are allowed and should be handled through the project tracking process. A major scope change needs to be approved by the MPO TAC Committee. A major change can include changing project limits to a point that a logical terminus is excluded, reducing or expanding capacity, adding components to the projects that were not approved or subtracting components that were approved.

2.8 | Regional Project
All projects funded by the MPO must be regional in nature. This include road projects being listed on the Utah State Functional Class System map, and projects being listed on the MPO transportation plan or supporting the goals and programs of the plan (functionally classified collector roads are not individually listed in the plan, but the collector system as a whole is, therefore improvements on these corridors are eligible for MPO funds). If a road project is proposed that is not on the functional class map, the MPO TAC Committee can review and determine that the corridor is regional and recommend to the state that it be included on the functional class map.

2.9 | New Projects Outside Biennial Process
The MPO supports funding all new projects through the biennial selection process, but there are instances where a project or timing might require approval of funding outside the normal process. A sponsor can request that a project be reviewed by the MPO TAC Committee to seek its approval and to be amended into the program. Generally the same processes required for all projects will be followed (review by MPO staff for available funding, Project Idea Form, MPO TAC Committee approval to fill out a Concept Report, a Field Review, and final approval).

2.10 | Selection Process Time Line – Biennial
Every two years the MPO facilitates the selection process on the following schedule:
- Jan = Kick Off Meeting, regular January MPO TAC Committee Meeting - MPO staff present the TIP selection process and make project recommendations based on traffic model and MPO transportation plan projects and programs.
- Feb = Project Idea Form Submittals, due mid-February - TAC Committee members and others submit projects ideas to MPO staff to compile.
- Feb = TAC Committee Project Ideas Meeting at regular February MPO TAC Committee Meeting – MPO TAC Committee finalizes draft list and votes on which projects move forward to Concept Report level.
- Apr = Concept Reports, due end of April - MPO staff starts review and ranking projects.
- May = Field Review, end of May – A field review of projects is done. The review is usually held the morning of the May MPO TAC Committee Meeting.
- May = TIP Selection Meeting, regular May MPO TAC Committee Meeting – MPO TAC Committee uses Field Review findings, MPO staff ranking, cost effectiveness of solution, geographic distribution of projects, available funding, and phasing to make final project list recommendation to the MPO Regional Planning Committee.
- June = MPO Regional Planning Committee reviews MPO TAC Committee recommendations and approves a funded projects list.

3.1 | CM/AQ Exempt Projects
Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CM/AQ) funds have federal regulations that require funding only go to projects that show a reduction to air pollution. A quantitative or qualitative analysis showing the amount of pollution reduction benefit will occur with the project is required. This process can be quite technical. The MPO has staff that can help with this portion of the Concept Report. All projects except for additional capacity highway projects (widen lanes, shoulders) must fill out the CM/AQ portion of the Concept Report. Listed below are the types of projects that can qualify for CM/AQ funds.
The project sponsor must be able to show that a project is an eligible activity from one of the items listed under Safety, Mass Transit, Air Quality, or Other.

3.2 | Safety
1. Railroad/highway crossing.
2. Hazard elimination program.
4. Shoulder improvements.
5. Increasing sight distance.
6. Safety improvement program.
7. Railroad/highway crossing warning devices.
8. Guardrails, median barriers, crash cushions.
9. Pavement resurfacing and/or rehabilitation.
12. Fencing
13. Skid treatments.
14. Safety roadside rest areas.
15. Adding medians.
16. Truck climbing lanes outside the urbanized area.
17. Lighting improvements.
18. Emergency truck pullovers.
19. Traffic control devices and operating assistance other than signalization projects.
20. Widening narrow pavements or reconstructing bridges (no additional travel lanes)

3.3 | Mass Transit
1. Operating assistance to transit agencies.
2. Purchase of support vehicles.
3. Rehabilitation of transit vehicles.
4. Purchase of office, shop, and operating equipment for existing facilities.
5. Purchase of operating equipment for vehicles (e.g., radios, fareboxes, lifts, etc.).
6. Construction or renovation of power, signal, and communications systems.
7. Construction of small passenger shelters and information kiosks.
8. Reconstruction or renovation of transit buildings and structures (e.g., rail or bus buildings, storage and maintenance facilities, stations, terminals, and ancillary structures).
9. Rehabilitation or reconstruction of track structures, track, and trackbed in existing rights-of-way.
10. Purchase of new buses and rail cars to replace existing vehicles or for minor expansions of the fleet.

3.4 | Air Quality
1. Continuation of ride-sharing and van-pooling promotion activities at current levels.
2. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

3.5 | Other
1. Planning and technical studies.
2. Grants for training and research programs.
3. Federal-aid systems revisions.
5. Acquisition of scenic easements.
6. Plantings, landscaping, etc.
7. Sign removal.
8. Directional and informational signs.
9. Intersection channelization projects.
10. Intersection signalization projects at individual intersections.
11. Interchange reconfiguration projects.
13. Truck size and weight inspection stations.
15. Traffic signal synchronization projects.
16. Transportation enhancement activities (except rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities).
17. Repair of damage caused by natural disasters, civil unrest, or terrorist acts, except projects involving substantial functional, locational or capacity changes.
18. Planning activities conducted pursuant to titles 23 and 49 U.S.C.
19. Engineering to assess social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed action or alternatives to that action.
20. Emergency or hardship advance land acquisitions (23 CFR 712.204(d))

4.1 | Ranking Matrix for Project Selection Process
General procedure: For each of the 4 categories listed in section 1.3, MPO staff assigns an overall score representing their judgment of the project’s relative merit based on the Concept Report. The maximum score for each category reflects its relative significance in the ranking process. Rankings are coupled with the following guidelines when selecting projects to fund:

1. The process should be simple.
2. It should recognize the special characteristics of our region.
3. The process should include geographical balance.
4. The process should consider transit, ITS, pedestrian/bike, as well as congestion relief for roads.
6. High priority should be given to projects that SAFETEA-LU requires to be funded.
5. The outcome should not be completely dependent on scoring, but should also allow for each jurisdiction’s own priorities.
6. MPO staff review the ranking questions with the MPO TAC Committee prior to the start of a selection cycle and make changes as deemed necessary by the committee.

4.2 | MPO Staff Project Ranking
The following categories are addressed in the Concept Report. MPO staff will score the responses in each concept report and give a ranking for each project. MPO staff’s recommendations will be made available to the MPO TAC Committee for their use in making final project selection recommendations. MPO staff ranking is a tool to aid the MPO TAC Committee in their final selection. The committee is not required to pick projects solely on MPO staff ranks.

4.3 | Congestion Relief (25 Points)
   a) Provides alternate transportation facility that corrects identified congested problem.
   b) Reduces congestion by reducing the number of vehicles.
c) Reduces need for additional highway lanes for peak hour capacity.
d) Increases efficiency of transportation system through traffic management measures.
e) Adds turning movements to relieve congested intersection.

4.4 | Mode Choice (25 points)
a) Benefits multiple transportation systems (transit and highway, pedestrian and transit).
b) Promotes alternative transportation solution to SOV use.
c) Creates or improves linkages between transportation modes.
d) Reduces physical, psychological, or economic barriers to carpool, bike, walk, or transit use.
e) Provides incentives to carpool, bike, walk, or transit use.

4.5 | Environmental Quality (15 points)
a) Provides cost effective emission reductions (amount of reduction justifies cost).
b) Helps efforts to attain and maintain national air quality standards.
c) Minimizes environmental impacts or reduces existing impacts (e.g. air/water/noise pollution).
d) Enhances the natural, cultural, or historic environment.
e) Mitigates invasive impacts to existing neighborhoods/commercial areas (minimal relocations).

4.6 | Safety (20 points)
a) Corrects/improves a verified or potential safety or accident problem.
b) Improves information/communications for traffic operations and emergency responders.
c) Reduces severity of crashes.
d) Enhances safe movement of pedestrian, bicycle traffic.
e) Provides an intermodal safety improvement (e.g. separation of vehicles-trains, vehicles-pedestrian).

4.7 | Other Considerations (15 points)
a) Effectively distributes funding throughout the MPO area.
b) Phases project in a manner that the MPO can use limited funds efficiently.
c) Cost effectiveness is appropriate for the amount of improvement made.
d) Benefits transportation users from adjacent municipalities.
e) Is supported by elected officials.