

Follow a Transportation Project From Idea to Implementation

New Project Ideas and Local Review

MTC's Long-Term Regional Transportation Plan

MTC's Project Selection Process

Construction/Implementation

Idea

An idea for a project starts when a transportation need is identified and a new idea is put forward. The idea can surface in any number of ways — from you, a private business, a community group or a government agency.

Local Review

The project idea must be adopted by a formal sponsor — usually a public agency — that may refine the initial idea and develop details for the project. To move forward, the project must be approved by local authorities such as a city council, county board of supervisors or transit agency.

To be eligible for certain regional, state and federal funds, projects must be cleared through the county congestion management agency (CMA), and become part of the Regional Transportation Plan.

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/ Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)

Every four years MTC updates the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), looking forward 25 years. The plan identifies policies, programs and transportation investments to support the long-term vision for the Bay Area.

The RTP also must identify anticipated funding sources. The RTP can include only those projects and programs that can be funded with revenues reasonably expected to be available during the plan's timeframe. Projects identified in the RTP are generally drawn from the planning efforts of MTC, county congestion management agencies, transit agencies and local governments.

State legislation now requires that regional transportation plans incorporate a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) — provisions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks by integrating transportation, housing and land-use planning.

Once long-term goals, policies and funding initiatives have been set in the RTP, MTC develops program criteria and funds specific projects.

Project Selection Process

Funding Levels Established for RTP Programs/Initiatives: Guided by the RTP and short-term revenue estimates, MTC decides how much funding to apply to programs over a two-to-three-year period at a time.

Project Selection Criteria Developed: For competitive programs under its control, MTC is guided by the RTP and develops and adopts minimum project requirements and criteria to evaluate and prioritize projects.

Project Selection: Depending on the program, projects may be selected using MTC's criteria or by the county congestion management agency, the California Transportation Commission or a transit agency board. Some funding programs are non-competitive, meaning projects are funded according to a pre-determined formula or voter-enacted initiative.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The production of the Transportation Improvement Program or TIP is the culmination of MTC's transportation planning and project selection process. The TIP identifies specific near-term projects over a four-year period to move the region toward its transportation vision.

The TIP lists all surface transportation projects for which federal funds or actions by federal agencies are anticipated, along with some of the larger locally and state-funded projects. A project cannot receive federal funds or receive other critical federal project approvals unless it is in the TIP. MTC updates the TIP every two years, and it is revised several times a year to add, delete or modify projects.

Environmental Review and Project Development Activities

The project sponsor conducts an environmental review, as required by either the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Final approval of the project design and right-of-way is required by the sponsoring agency and appropriate federal agency (Federal Highway Administration or Federal Transit Administration) if federal funds and/or actions are involved.

Funding is fully committed by grant approval (once the project meets all requirements and moves forward to phases such as preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, or construction.

How You Can Make a Difference

Get involved in your community!

- ▶ Follow the work of your city council, county board of supervisors or local transit agency.
- ▶ Take notice of plans or improvement programs developed by your city, county or transit agency.
- ▶ Comment on projects proposed by your county CMA or on transportation improvements submitted to MTC for regional, state or federal funding.
- ▶ See page 18 for a list of transportation agencies.

The Regional Transportation Plan is the earliest and best opportunity within the MTC process to comment on and influence projects.

- ▶ A project cannot move forward or receive any federal funds unless it is included in the Regional Transportation Plan. Participate in the RTP/SCS public meetings, surveys, etc.
- ▶ MTC support of large projects occurs in the RTP and not as part of the TIP.

Get involved in planning for the whole Bay Area at MTC!

- ▶ Comment at MTC committee-level and Commission-level meetings, special public hearings and workshops.
- ▶ Follow the work of MTC's Policy Advisory Council which advises the Commission (www.mtc.ca.gov/get_involved).
- ▶ Check MTC's website for committee agendas and to keep current on activities (www.mtc.ca.gov).
- ▶ Get your name added to MTC's database to receive e-mail updates (info@mtc.ca.gov).

Comment on a project's impacts

- ▶ Comment on the environmental impacts of the project before the environmental document and project receive final approval by the board of the sponsoring agency, or in advance of federal approval, if required.