



Transportation Improvement Program Policy Quick Reference Guide

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This document is meant to be a quick reference accompaniment to the adopted [Policies for Transportation Improvement Program Development](#) (commonly called the TIP Policy), primarily to assist project sponsors when applying in TIP calls for projects, and to assist those selected for inclusion in a TIP.

Please reference the full document for additional information and details related to the information in this document, as well as the full set of policies applicable to the development and management of the TIP. For further context, page links are provided in parentheses for each section linking to the relevant section in the full document.

Application process and eligibility requirements

Dual model overview ([III.A.1.](#)), ([IV.B.1.](#)), ([IV.C.1.](#))

- Regional Share - 20% of available funds are allocated to projects having a regional benefit and implementing elements of the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan, also known as the RTP. Projects compete regionally.
- Subregional Share - 80% of available funds are allocated to the Subregional Share process, then proportionally targeted at the subregion (county) level. Projects compete at the subregion level and subregions review, discuss, prioritize, and recommend projects to the Denver Regional Council of Governments, or DRCOG, Board.

Funding assessment ([III.A.2.](#))

DRCOG, through its calls for projects, allocates the following federal and state funding sources. DRCOG staff will assign specific funding sources **after** project selection.

Funding Type	Source	Program Purpose	Track
Surface Transportation Block Grant	Federal	Flexible funding for roadways, bridges, active transportation infrastructure, and transit.	Surface Transportation Block Grant
Transportation Alternatives	Federal	Primarily for active transportation infrastructure.	Air Quality/Multimodal
Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality	Federal	Projects and programs that reduce emissions and congestion. Ineligible: roadway capacity and reconstruction.	Air Quality/Multimodal
Carbon Reduction Program	Federal	Projects that support a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Ineligible: roadway capacity and reconstruction.	Air Quality/Multimodal



Funding Type	Source	Program Purpose	Track
Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Fund	State	Transit, transportation demand management programs, multimodal projects enabled by new technology, studies, modeling tools, projects that decrease vehicle miles traveled or increase multimodal travel, and active transportation projects.	Air Quality/Multimodal

Eligible applicants ([IV.A.4.](#))

- County and municipal governments.
- Regional agencies; specifically, the Regional Transportation District or RTD, Regional Air Quality Council, DRCOG, and transportation management organizations/associations (non-infrastructure projects only).
- The State of Colorado, including the Colorado Department of Transportation or CDOT, public colleges, and universities.

Training requirement ([IV.A.9.](#))

All project sponsors must have attended one of the required trainings at the beginning of the solicitation process to be eligible to submit an application.

Project eligibility ([II.B.2.](#))

All projects to be awarded funds through the TIP must:

- Be consistent with [Metro Vision](#) and the [Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan](#).
- Abide by federal, state, and local laws.
- Be consistent with locally-adopted plans.
- Have any required matching funds available or reasonably expected to be available.
- Be eligible for one of the funding types available during the call(s) (also see [Appendix B](#)),
- Be located in and/or provide benefits to the [metropolitan planning organization geographical area](#).
- Be consistent with the eligibility requirements for the Regional ([IV.B.3.](#)) and/or Subregional Shares ([IV.C.4.](#)).

Eligibility of air quality regionally significant capacity projects ([II.B.4.](#))

Air quality regionally significant capacity projects are defined in [Appendix I](#) of the RTP. These projects must be individually identified in the currently adopted/amended RTP to be eligible for funding through the TIP. The RTP identifies projects in particular air quality staging periods, and eligibility for TIP funding is dependent upon these staging



periods. [Appendix C](#) of the TIP Policy lists the current eligible and ineligible projects and elements for any particular call.

Eligibility requirements of transportation technology projects ([II.B.5.](#))

All projects selected by DRCOG that contain transportation technology (such as., traffic cameras, signals, fiber, etc.) shall:

- Help achieve the goals and objectives in an adopted DRCOG regional operations plan.
- Be based on a systems engineering analysis [[23 CFR § 940.11 \(a\)](#)].
- Identify the portions of the [DRCOG regional Intelligent Transportation Systems architecture](#) being implemented.

Commitment to implement project and revisions ([II.B.7.](#)), ([V.C.2.](#))

DRCOG allocated funds are awarded to project sponsors to deliver a specific scope of work within a specific timeframe. Therefore, as a condition of award, project sponsors must:

- Commit to completing the project consistent with the years of funding identified in the TIP.
- Implement the full project scope as awarded.
- Identify and secure all necessary non-DRCOG funds for the committed match and to fully deliver the project scope, including if there are any unanticipated cost overruns.
- Implement all project components (within each funded TIP phase) contained within any National Environmental Policy Act decision documents.
- Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations associated with the project and the funding sources for the project.

If there is a need to change scope elements on a project, within the same budget, DRCOG staff will process the change as an administrative modification, provided that:

- If a Regional Share project, the change is agreed to by the Regional Share project review panel.
- If a Subregional Share project, the change is agreed to by the subregional forum that recommended the project.
- DRCOG reserves the right to process any scope changes as policy amendments if the changes are deemed significant.

Public involvement ([II.B.8.](#))

Project sponsors are expected to conduct public involvement early in their project development process and continue appropriate engagement efforts throughout project development and delivery.



Concurrence by CDOT or RTD ([IV.A.2.](#))

- Any project submittal on a state highway or within state right-of-way must have CDOT concurrence.
- Any project in need of RTD involvement (capital projects, service operations, or to property access) must have RTD concurrence.

Financial requirements ([IV.A.6.](#))

Match requirements:

- Surface Transportation Block Grant, Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality, Carbon Reduction Program, and Transportation Alternatives funds - minimum of 20% match from non-federal financial resources.
- Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Fund funds - 50% non-Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Fund minimum match. CDOT Transportation Commission may reduce match requirements in certain jurisdictions.
- DRCOG may use federal Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality, Transportation Alternatives, or Carbon Reduction Program funds to meet the Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Fund match requirement in some circumstances in the Air Quality/Multimodal track.

Funding requests:

- Minimum: \$100,000 in DRCOG allocated funds required (year of expenditure dollars, 3% inflation factor minimum recommended).
- Maximum: \$20 million in DRCOG allocated funds in the Regional Share; no maximum in the Subregional Share.

Next meaningful phase ([IV.A.8.](#))

Sponsors may apply for the “next meaningful phase” of costly projects. A “meaningful phase” must create something usable (such as, a roadway segment between intersecting roadways, bike/pedestrian facility between connecting facilities and/or trailheads, etc.).

Application track ([IV.B.5.](#)), ([IV.C.5.](#)), ([IV.C.6.](#))

Applications will be accepted through one of two tracks: Air Quality/Multimodal and Surface Transportation Block Grant.

- Air Quality/Multimodal applications must enhance air quality and/or multimodal options and be consistent with the eligibility requirements of the federal and state funding sources used. Major ineligible project types include new roadway capacity, reconstruction, new interchanges, and bridge rehabilitation or replacement. Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Fund, Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality, Carbon Reduction Program, and



Transportation Alternatives funding sources will be combined to create a minimum 10% match.

- Surface Transportation Block Grant applications must be consistent with the eligibility requirements of federal Surface Transportation Block Grant funds. They have more flexible eligibility to include some project types ineligible under Air Quality/Multimodal. These projects must have a minimum of 20% match.

For the Subregional Share only, each subregional forum may use one of the two approaches below:

- Use the Regional Share application as is.
- Adjust the scoring/weighting system and/or add supplemental criteria to reflect local subregional values. Adjusted criteria must be submitted to DRCOG staff for review.

Call for projects and application submittals ([IV.B.7.](#)), ([IV.C.8.](#))

- Each Call for Projects will generally be open for approximately 8 weeks.
- Regional Share project applications must be submitted to DRCOG on behalf of and in concurrence of the subregional forums (3 max per forum), and CDOT and RTD (2 max each), as warranted.
- Subregional Share project applications must be submitted to DRCOG for eligibility screening before being returned to the subregional forums for evaluation.
- Requests for assistance with data on the application must be made at least three weeks prior to the application deadline.
- Incomplete applications will **not** be accepted.
- The application must be affirmed by the applicant's City/County Manager, Chief Elected Official, or agency director or equivalent.



Project evaluation and selection

DRCOG review/scoring of applications ([IV.B.8.](#)), ([IV.C.9.](#)), ([IV.C.10.](#))

- DRCOG will review all submittals for eligibility and post them to a webpage.
- For the Regional Share, DRCOG will score applications, before turning them over to a project review panel.
- For the Subregional Share, DRCOG will return eligible applications and the scoring sheets to subregional forums for scoring. Subregions will rank order their submittals and identify recommended projects. Forums can request DRCOG score a limited number of applications instead of the forum itself.

Project recommendation ([IV.B.9.](#)), ([IV.C.10.](#)), ([V.A.2.](#))

- For Regional Share applications, a project review panel will recommend a project list and wait list to the metropolitan planning organization committees.
- For Subregional Share applications, each subregion will recommend a project list and wait list to the metropolitan planning organization committees.

Appeals ([V.B.2.](#))

Applicants can appeal the draft recommendations, at:

- The Transportation Advisory Committee meeting when each share's draft recommendation is to be considered.
- The public hearing of the draft TIP.
- Any public comment opportunities in which the recommended projects are being discussed.



Post-award requirements

Intergovernmental agreement ([IV.A.3.](#))

Projects are required to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with CDOT or RTD. It is recommended that sponsors begin their intergovernmental agreement process as early as possible.

Advance construction ([II.B.9.](#))

Projects may accelerate construction, with CDOT and Federal Highway Administration permission, by utilizing non-federal funds to pay for the project. Federal reimbursement may then occur at a later date consistent with the funding breakdown in the TIP.

DRCOG-selected project phase initiation delays ([IV.A.10.](#))

Projects must initiate each phase of a project in the fiscal year (by September 30) identified in the TIP, or else the project is considered delayed. The milestones to be met by this date are:

- Design: Intergovernmental agreement executed and, if consultant, consultant contract executed and Notice to Proceed issued; if no consultant, design scoping meeting held with CDOT project staff.
- Environmental: Intergovernmental agreement executed and, if consultant, consultant contract executed and Notice to Proceed issued; if no consultant, environmental scoping meeting held with CDOT project staff.
- Right-of-Way: Intergovernmental agreement executed and right-of-way plans turned into CDOT for initial review.
- Construction: Project publicly advertised.
- Study: Intergovernmental agreement executed and kick-off meeting has been held.
- Bus Service: Intergovernmental agreement executed and service has begun.
- Equipment Purchase (Procurement): Intergovernmental agreement executed and Request for Proposals/Qualifications/Bids issued.
- Other: Intergovernmental agreement executed and at least one invoice submitted to CDOT or RTD for work completed.

If a delay occurs, the following actions will be taken:

- First Year Delay: If a delay occurs, DRCOG, along with CDOT or RTD, will discuss the project and the reasons for its delay with the sponsor. Delay details are presented to the DRCOG committees for recommendation and action.
- Second Year Delay: On the following July 1 (9 months after the first year delay), if the project is still delayed:



- If the project sponsor is the cause of the delay, the project's unreimbursed DRCOG-selected funding for the delayed phase will be returned to DRCOG for reprogramming.
- If another agency or an outside factor beyond the control of the project sponsor is the cause of the delay, the future course of action and penalty will be at the discretion of the DRCOG Board of Directors.

Funding Increase (V.D.1.)

If additional revenues become available:

- First, existing funds will be advanced for projects already awarded funds in the TIP.
- Next, new projects will be selected from the established wait lists:
- All new revenues will be split according to the established funding split; 20% to the Regional Share and 80% to the Subregional Share processes. Subregional funds will be further targeted to the individual subregions.
- Finally, if there are significant remaining revenues, the DRCOG Board may authorize a new call for projects.

Funding Decrease (V.D.2.)

If revenues decrease:

- First, sponsors will be asked if they will voluntarily defer current projects.
- Second, if additional deferrals are needed, the Regional Share project review panel and subregional forums will be asked to submit projects that were the lowest priority/scored lowest to be deferred.
- Deferrals will not count as project delays.

