

APPENDIX



Regionally significant project criteria and revision procedures

Regionally significant project criteria

March 23, 2017

The Colorado Air Quality Control Commission's Regulation 10, in accordance with Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations), states that the Interagency Consultation Group shall determine which transportation projects should be considered Regionally significant projects for the purpose of regional emissions analysis. The descriptions below serve as DRCOG's definition of a Regionally Significant Project.

Regionally Significant Projects must be reflected on the roadway and transit system identified in the Fiscally Constrained Regional Transportation Plan and be depicted in the regional travel model networks. The system includes all principal arterial roadways, major regional arterial roadways and freeways/tollways on the DRCOG designated Regional Roadway System, as well as rapid transit facilities, such as light rail and commuter rail lines, Bus/Bus Rapid Transit/High Occupancy Vehicle facilities, managed lanes, and transit stations. The Regional Roadway System includes both state and non-state highways.

1. Regionally significant roadway projects (additions or deletions) include:

- A new Regional Roadway System roadway segment of at least one-centerline mile in length. A centerline mile is measured from the start of the project to the terminus of the project.
- A new Regional Roadway System roadway segment less than a mile that completes a missing connection to another roadway on the Regional Roadway System or provides access to major activity centers, planned developments, or transportation terminals. Intersection improvements (such as the addition of turn lanes or other auxiliary lanes at an intersection, or median improvements) are not regionally significant.
- A roadway-widening project (via construction or restriping) of one general purpose through lane-mile or more in length.
- A new or converted managed lane (e.g. High Occupancy Vehicle, toll-express, Bus Rapid Transit) of one lane-mile or more in length. Major operational changes (e.g. vehicle occupancy requirements for free use, or time period of operation changes of more than 5 hours).
- Freeway or tollway acceleration/deceleration/ climbing/auxiliary lanes that connect an on-ramp from one interchange to an on-ramp of a second interchange at least one mile away. Acceleration/ deceleration/turning lanes on arterial roadways are not regionally significant.
- Regional Roadway System roadway grade separated interchanges. Railroad grade separations are not regionally significant.
- Modification to an existing interchange that adds or deletes a ramp which permits a new directional travel movement between a freeway and roadway. Interchange operational improvements that widen ramps, provide cross-arterial turning lanes, reconfigure existing movements, or solve drainage problems are not regionally significant.

2. Regionally significant transit projects (additions or deletions) include:

- A rail rapid transit guideway corridor, or an extension of an existing rail line to a new station. Operational improvements (such as rail vehicle passing tracks, vehicle storage and maintenance tracks, and maintenance facilities) are not regionally significant.
- A rail rapid transit station.
- A bus rapid transit guideway corridor or guideway segment extension of at least one mile.

For unique situations not addressed in this document, new and emerging technologies, or where the interpretation is unclear, the Interagency Consultation Group will determine the course of action.

In making a regionally significant project determination, the overall project plan of the implementing agency will be considered. For example, a shorter roadway project segment than indicated in the entire project plan (if entire project will be constructed in the same Regional Transportation Plan staging period) may be declared regionally significant. The Interagency Consultation Group fulfills the responsibility of air quality interagency coordination between regional, state, and federal air quality and transportation agencies for the Denver Metropolitan Planning Organization planning area.

Regional Transportation Plan project revision procedures

Oct. 28, 2020

The purpose of this document is to establish an efficient process and set minimum thresholds for project changes that trigger a revision to the individually listed air quality regionally significant roadway and rapid transit capacity projects in the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan, outside of the regularly scheduled four-year update cycle. For more information on the definition of regionally significant projects, see the DRCOG Regionally Significant Project Criteria for Regional Air Quality Conformity dated March 23, 2017 in the previous section.

As the amendment procedures for changes that trigger air quality conformity are clear, this document is intended to establish a framework for revisions that do not otherwise involve an air quality conformity amendment.

Consultation process

This document was jointly prepared by DRCOG, the Regional Transportation District, Colorado Department of Transportation Regions 1 and 4, the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration Region 8 and Environmental Protection Agency Region 8. In situations not addressed in this document or where the interpretation is unclear, DRCOG will consult with the sponsoring agency, Colorado Department of Transportation, the Agency Coordination Team or Air Quality Interagency Consultation Group, and the appropriate approving federal agency on the suitable category of action.

In unique circumstances and in agreement with all interested parties, DRCOG reserves the right to perform revisions to the Regional Transportation Plan that do not follow the procedures outlined in this document. In these instances, professional judgment shall be recognized as an option of consideration where all interested parties may reach full agreement on the significance of the changes (or lack thereof) to help determine whether or not a revision is required to the Regional Transportation Plan. Each of the instances will be recorded for further evaluation to determine potential future changes to the procedures.

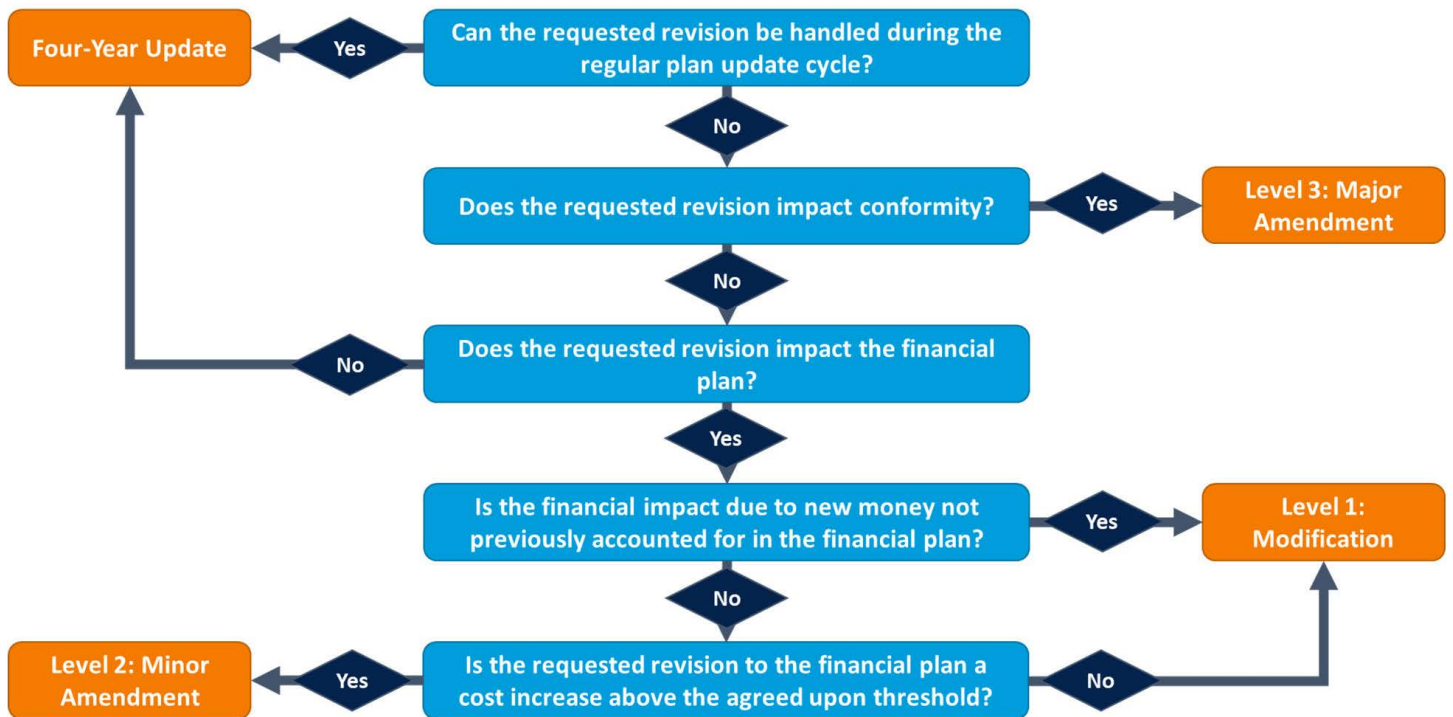
Revision types

In an effort to ensure that projects continue to move forward and the most appropriate actions are being taken, key decision points in the revision process are outlined (see **Figure A**) and three levels of revisions are established for the Regional Transportation Plan. Additional information, details and examples are provided on the following pages.

- **Level 1 (administrative modification):** A minor change to an air quality regionally significant project that does not require public review or comment, re-determination of fiscal constraint or transportation conformity.
- **Level 2 (minor amendment):** A major change to the total estimated project cost of an air quality regionally significant project that requires an abbreviated public review and comment period and re-determination of fiscal constraint. Redetermination of transportation conformity is not required.
- **Level 3 (major amendment):** A major change to an air quality regionally significant project that requires public review and comment, redetermination of fiscal constraint and transportation conformity.

DRCOG staff will work with the sponsoring agency to determine whether a requested revision is required or can be handled at the next regular four-year update cycle for the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan.

Figure A: Regional Transportation Plan revision decision tree



Level 1 (administrative modification)

A Level 1 administrative modification is a revision to the Regional Transportation Plan that includes a minor change to the total estimated project cost (see discussion on project cost change thresholds in **Tables A and B**). Level 1 revisions do not require public review or comment, redetermination of fiscal constraint or transportation conformity.

Assuming a Level 1 administrative modification has been triggered, the following updates can also be completed during the process as they are minor in nature and do not affect air quality conformity:

- A minor change in project description, termini or scope that is for clarification, does not change the intent and does not trigger air quality conformity.
- Changing air quality conformity-exempt elements of the project design or scope.
- Splitting or combining projects as long as the overall termini don't change.

Level 1 document and approval procedures

Level 1 revisions can be made administratively by DRCOG staff and do not require DRCOG Board or federal approval.

If staff determines that a change is warranted, the revisions are implemented using the process listed below.

- 1) Formal request submitted by sponsoring agency.
- 2) DRCOG staff review and coordination with sponsoring agency representatives.
- 3) DRCOG staff recommendation.
- 4) DRCOG executive director approval.
- 5) Complete documentation of the change.
- 6) Inform the Transportation Advisory Committee, the Regional Transportation Committee and the Board as a memo item.
- 7) Monthly update of the DRCOG website.

Level 2 (minor amendment)

A level 2 minor amendment is a revision to the Regional Transportation Plan that includes a major change to the total estimated project cost, excluding new funding not previously accounted for in the financial plan (see discussion on project cost change thresholds in **Tables A and B**). The revisions must meet requirements for an abbreviated public review and comment period and redetermination of fiscal constraint. Redetermination of transportation conformity is not required.

Level 2 document and approval procedures

Level 2 revisions require DRCOG Board approval and federal approval. As such, an opportunity for an abbreviated public review and comment period will be provided.

Level 2 minor amendments are implemented using the process listed below.

- 1) Formal request submitted by sponsoring agency.
- 2) DRCOG staff review and coordination with sponsoring agency representatives.
- 3) DRCOG staff financial constraint analysis in coordination with sponsoring agency.
- 4) Minimum seven-calendar-day public review and comment period (include in meeting packet).
- 5) Review and recommendation made by the Transportation Advisory Committee and the Regional Transportation Committee.
- 6) DRCOG Board approval.
- 7) Complete documentation of the change.
- 8) Forward documentation to Colorado Department of Transportation and the appropriate federal approving agency.
- 9) Only those entities affected by a level 2 amendment would be notified of the change.
- 10) Update and notification of amendment changes on the DRCOG website.

Level 3 (major amendment)

A level 3 major amendment is a revision to the Regional Transportation Plan that includes a major change to the project, and will follow the existing process for amending the Regional Transportation Plan. Level 3 revisions will meet requirements for public review and comment, re-determination of fiscal constraint and transportation conformity. As already established, a level 3 major amendment is required when changes to a regionally significant project include:

- Adding or deleting a new project (see discussion on capacity projects in the regionally significant project criteria).
- A major change of project scope; examples include but are not limited to: changing the number of through lanes, changing mode or changing termini.
- Moving a project across air quality horizon years or staging periods.
- Any change requiring a new regional air quality conformity finding.

Level 3 document and approval procedures

Level 3 revisions require the greatest level of review and approval. As such, level 3 major amendments follow the existing process for amending the Regional Transportation Plan, including a full public review and comment period, DRCOG Board and federal approval and re-determination of fiscal constraint and air quality conformity.

Level 3 amendments are implemented using the established process listed below.

- 1) Formal request submitted by sponsoring agency.
- 2) DRCOG staff review and coordination with sponsoring agency representatives.
- 3) DRCOG staff financial constraint analysis in coordination with sponsoring agency.
- 4) DRCOG staff data collection, travel demand modeling, and technical considerations (including any level 1 and level 2 revisions to date since the last level 3 revision).
- 5) A new air quality conformity determination as per current modeling procedures.
- 6) Minimum 30-calendar-day public review and comment period.
- 7) Review and recommendation made by the Transportation Advisory Committee and the Regional Transportation Committee.
- 8) DRCOG Board approval.
- 9) Complete documentation of the change.
- 10) Forward documentation to Colorado Department of Transportation requesting Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration conformity determination in coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency.
- 11) Only those entities affected by level 3 amendments would be notified of the change.
- 12) Update and notification of amendment changes on the DRCOG website.

Estimated project cost change thresholds

For changes to the estimated costs of projects, excluding new funding that was not previously accounted for in the financial plan, a two-step approach (see **Figure B**) will be used to determine which category of revision is required. All measurements for the cost changes will be made from the last approved Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan or Regional Transportation Plan amendment to account for incremental changes.

Figure B: Two-step test to determine cost significance

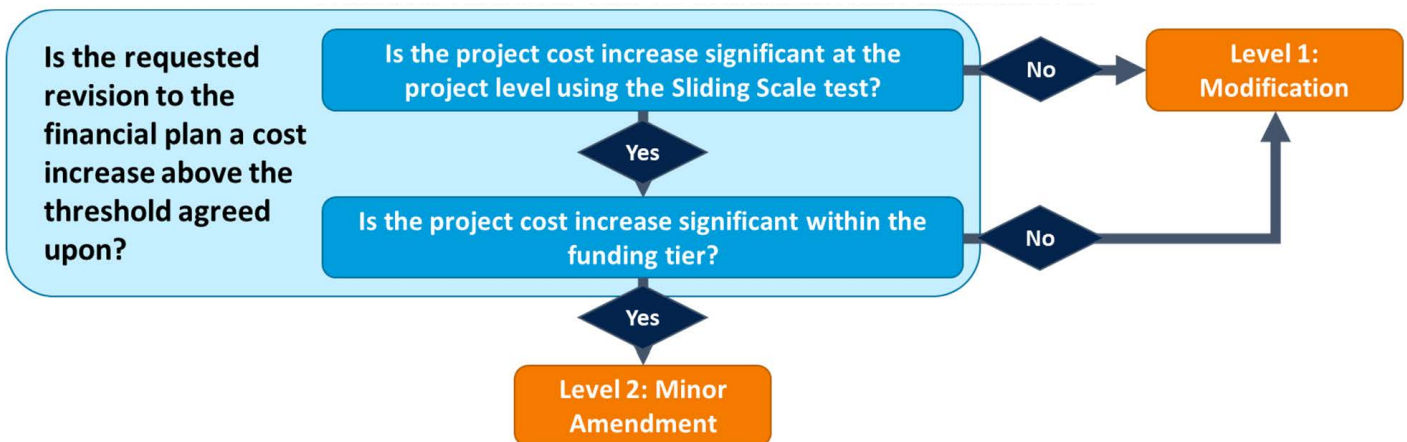


Table A: Sliding scale of project cost

| Project cost in the approved Regional Transportation Plan | Level 2 (minor amendment) | Level 1 (administrative modification) |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Up to \$25 million | Greater than 75% | Less than or equal to 75% |
| \$25 million to \$75 million | Greater than 50% | Less than or equal to 50% |
| \$75 million to \$150 million | Greater than 40% | Less than or equal to 40% |
| \$150 million and above | Greater than 30% | Less than or equal to 30% |

The first step is to use a sliding scale of total estimated project cost (**Table A**) to determine if the cost change is significant enough at the project level to warrant further discussion on a level 2 minor amendment, or if a level 1 administrative modification can be completed.

Once it has been determined that the individual project cost change is significant, the second step will be to determine whether the cost change is significant in relation to the fiscal constraint within each funding tier of the Regional Transportation Plan (**Table B**). If both thresholds are met, a level 2 minor amendment can be processed as described in this document.

Table B: Fiscal constraint within a funding tier

| Funding tier | Level 2 (minor amendment) | Level 1 (administrative modification) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| First funding tier | Greater than 2% | Less than or equal to 2% |
| Second funding tier | Greater than 5% | Less than or equal to 5% |
| Third and fourth funding tier | Greater than 10% | Less than or equal to 10% |