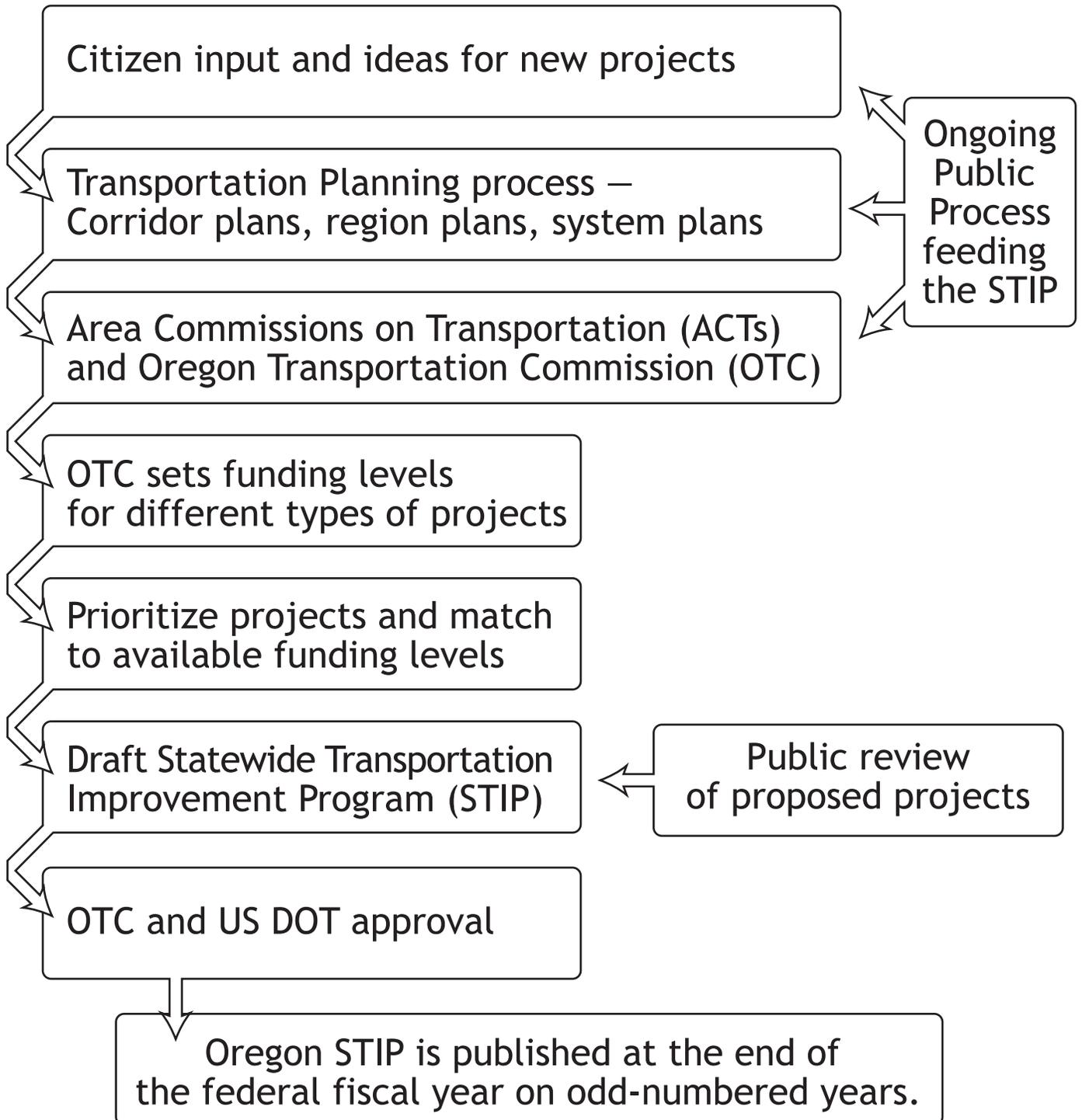


How a project gets into the STIP

*NOTE: The top three items are ongoing public processes that feed into the STIP process.
This diagram is not a time line.*



HOW DOES A PROJECT GET INTO THE STIP?

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, known as the STIP, is a list that shows prioritization, funding, and scheduling of transportation projects and programs over four years. It includes projects on Oregon's interstate, federal, state, city, and county transportation systems. The STIP covers highway, passenger rail, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects, and includes projects in the National Parks, National Forests, and Indian tribal lands in Oregon. While this introduction gives you an overview of how projects get into the STIP, more information is available online at <http://www.odot.state.or.us/STIP>.

Oregon's transportation project selection process

The US Department of Transportation (USDOT) specifies how states should identify and prioritize STIP projects. The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) sets priorities and identifies projects according to transportation system conditions and needs.

- The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) intensively monitors Oregon's transportation system, using technical, objective methods. ODOT then ranks conditions and needs across the state.
- The OTC considers needs expressed by citizens, cities, counties, councils of governments, and the Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs).
- The commissions and ODOT also consider environmental issues, quality of life, and economic issues in selecting projects.

The OTC uses information, recommendations, and advice from all of these sources to decide on the projects and priorities listed in the STIP:

- Advisory commissions
- Advocacy groups
- Area Commissions on Transportation
- Citizen input and project suggestions
- Councils of government
- Local government partners
- Localized "in-the-field" knowledge from ODOT regions and planning staff
- Metropolitan planning organizations
- Planning documents
- Regional partnerships
- System data from local governments
- Technical data from ODOT
- Tribal governments

Fiscal constraint

The STIP is a four-year program that must be updated every two years. By federal law, the first three years of the STIP must be **fiscally constrained**. This means the STIP can only include projects for which the state can reasonably expect adequate funding. No projects will be listed unless the funding source is identified.

Steps a project must go through to get into the STIP

Here are the steps, as outlined in the example chart at the front of this document, which a project must go through to become part of the STIP:

Citizen input and ideas for new projects

Federal regulations and state policies guide public and local government involvement in the STIP process.

- By law, ODOT must reach out to citizens and communities, and must provide continued opportunities for them to participate in project selection.
- ODOT must also make a special effort to reach out to those who may not be adequately served by the current transportation system.
- ODOT publicizes local meetings to discuss transportation needs and priorities in specific areas and highway corridors. The best way to get started affecting project selection is to make contact with officials from state and local government in the subject area, and come to these meetings.
- Early opportunities are the best opportunities. Citizens who want to advocate for a project, or who are interested in helping to prioritize projects, should also participate in Highway Corridor Planning, Transportation System Planning (which is part of local comprehensive planning), and the Metropolitan Planning Organization regional planning processes.
- Citizens and local governments in most parts of Oregon have a nearby ACT. These committees are able to help folks in their part of the state get project suggestions and needs to ODOT and to the OTC.
- Projects recommended by ACTs and regional advisory groups for funding need to satisfy any project criteria adopted by the OTC.
- Most citizens in Oregon have an ACT nearby, but some do not. For those who have no ACT, the best course of action is to attend the local and regional planning sessions mentioned above, and contact members of your city or county planning organization as well as the closest ODOT Area Manager's office.

- **Following these steps does not guarantee that a project will be built.** It must still have technical merit, compete for scarce funding, meet environmental and air quality standards, and be consistent with a community's priorities. But there is a greater chance of success if you begin work with your local government and ACT.
- **It must also be pointed out that the level of public involvement is not the same for different types of projects.** Some project types require more objective data that must be supplied by engineering and research.

The transportation planning process – corridor plans, region plans, system plans

- Oregon has many different transportation plans. Some of these are long-term plans that go as far as 20 years into the future. Others are for much shorter time periods and cover specific areas of the state.
- The *Oregon Transportation Plan* is the long-range plan that sets goals, policies, and actions for state transportation.
- Corridor plans consider projects along a specific stretch of state highway and its surrounding road and street system. A corridor plan is not limited to highways. It may also include transportation facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, rail, transit, water, and air travel.
- Transportation system plans consider projects in communities.
- Region transportation plans each cover one of six metropolitan areas within Oregon: Medford; Eugene/Springfield; Salem/Keizer; Bend, Corvallis, and Portland.
- All of the various planning processes have opportunities for citizens and local governments to make their wishes and needs known. ODOT encourages active participation in transportation planning.

Area Commissions on Transportation and Oregon Transportation Commission

- In 1996, the OTC decided to expand the opportunities for local government and citizen involvement in ODOT's decision making.
- The commission authorized regionally-based transportation advisory commissions known as Area Commissions on Transportation.
- ACTs cover all aspects of transportation (surface, marine, air, and transportation safety) with primary focus on the state transportation system.
- An ACT also considers regional and local transportation issues if they affect the state system.
- ACTs help prioritize transportation problems and solutions and recommend projects in their areas to be included in the STIP.

- The advisory groups also interact with other local organizations dealing with transportation-related issues.
- A map that shows coverage areas for the ACTs and ODOT area managers is available at <http://www.odot.state.or.us/otc/ACT.htm>.

OTC sets funding levels for different types of projects

- At the beginning of each STIP update (every two years) the OTC holds discussions to determine the level of funding that will go to different types of projects in the STIP:
 - Safety
 - Modernization
 - Preservation of pavement
 - Bridge replacement and repair
 - Operations (projects that improve system efficiency)
 - Public transit
 - Transportation enhancement program
 - Congestion mitigation and air quality
 - Bicycle and pedestrian
 - Railroad crossing safety improvements
 - Fish passage / culvert improvements
- The Draft 2006-2009 STIP contains over \$1.2 billion in projects and programs. Sources available for funding include approximately \$850 million in federal transportation funds, approximately \$265 million in state highway funds, and approximately \$4 million in other funds. These funding levels are estimates. They are based on the current federal funding act, TEA-21, which expired September 30, 2003. Actual federal funds coming to the state may vary considerably.
- According to federal regulation and state policy, safety and the preservation and management of existing transportation facilities and services get top priority.

Prioritize projects and match to available funding levels

- After the initial funding discussion and the discussion about individual projects with ACTs, regional advisory groups, and other stakeholders, projects are prioritized and matched to available funding.
- Most new projects are added to the STIP's third and fourth years. The first and second years are taken up with projects from the previous STIP. (Remember that the STIP is a four-year program with an update every two years.)

The draft STIP

- ODOT staff members compile the program and project information into a “Draft STIP” document.

Public review of proposed projects in the Draft STIP

- ODOT provides a 45-day public review of the Draft STIP, and a 45-day public review of any major revision of the approved STIP.
- ODOT also provides statewide opportunities for public comment on the Draft STIP by scheduling at least two public meetings in each of ODOT’s five regions.
- ODOT considers all public comments about the Draft STIP before the OTC adopts a final version.
- All projects in the STIP must meet the goals of the federal *Clean Air Act Amendments* (CAAA) and the related *State Implementation Plan for Air Quality*. All projects that may impact air quality must conform to the goals of the CAAA in order to be approved for funding.

OTC and USDOT approval

- Once the Draft STIP and all review material have been compiled into a final document, the OTC approves it.
- Once the OTC has approved the STIP, it goes to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration for final approval.
- Both agencies review the STIP for consistency with planning, financial constraint, appropriate grouping of smaller projects, and compliance with state plans for air quality.
- At the time of federal approval, all the projects in the STIP are approved for development and/or construction.
- Sometimes a project may be unavoidably delayed. This may be because actual revenue may not meet the expected revenue, or because certain projects may take longer to develop than expected.
- For this reason, projects in the STIP can be moved from one year to another within the first three years of the program.

The STIP is published at the end of the year in odd-numbered years

- Once the STIP is approved, it is published and made available on the STIP web site at <http://www.odot.state.or.us/STIP>.
- Any corrections, additions, or revisions to the approved STIP document must be made through a federally-approved amendment process.

Some common acronyms and terms

STIP – Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

ACT – Area Commission on Transportation

CAAA – Clean Air Act Amendments

COG – Council of Governments

Mod Projects – Mod projects are “modernization” projects, or those that add capacity – such as additional lanes – to the transportation system

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization

ODOT – Oregon Department of Transportation

OTC – Oregon Transportation Commission

OTP – Oregon Transportation Plan – the long range, statewide transportation plan

Pres Projects – Pres projects are “preservation” projects, or those that work to preserve the existing highway system through restoration, maintenance, or repair