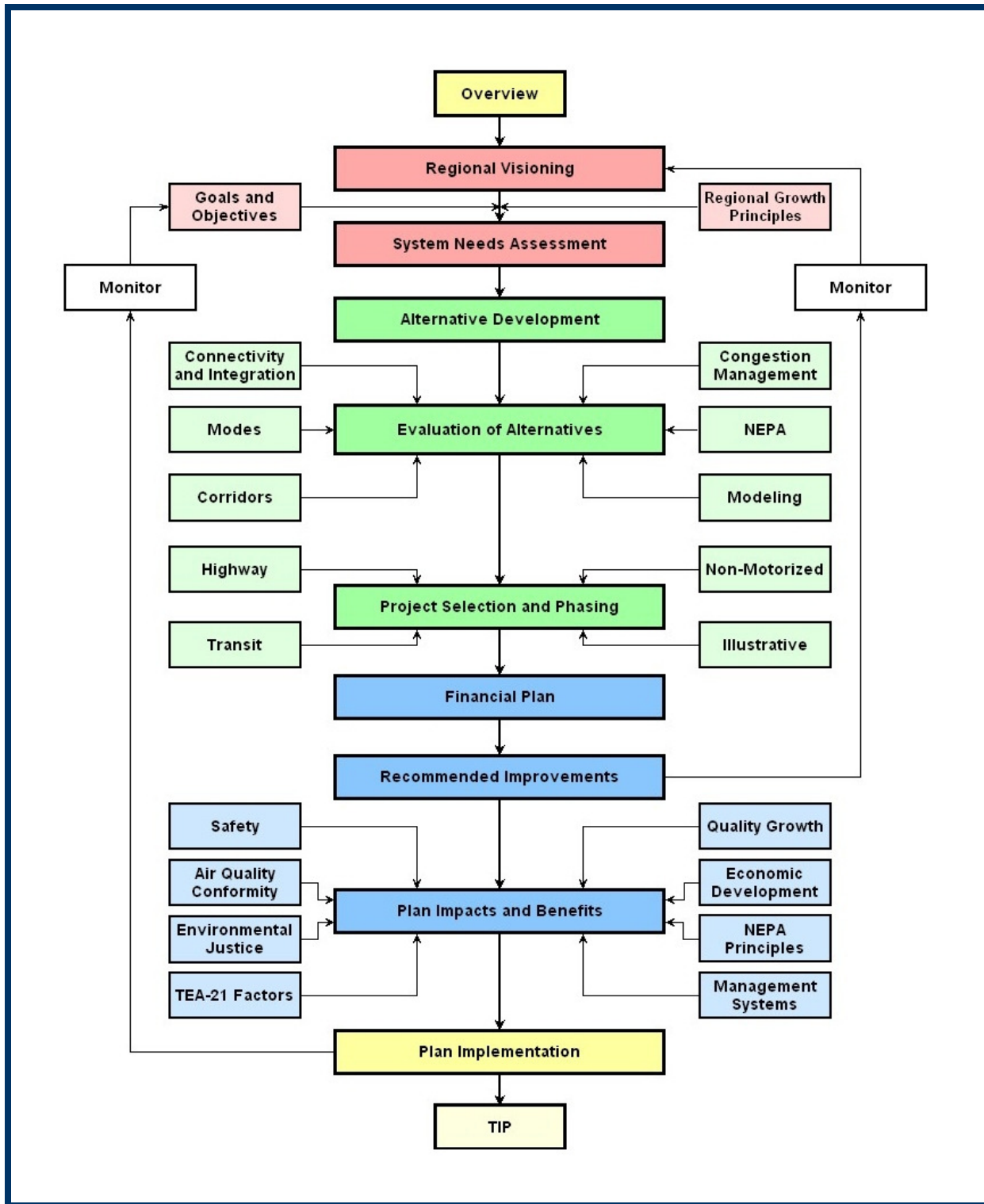


SECTION II

FEDERAL-AID TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND THE PROGRAMMING PROCESS



The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) like its predecessors the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) includes requirements for transportation planning in urbanized areas. This section summarizes the planning process in the Salt Lake and Ogden/ Layton Urban Areas.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

The Wasatch Front Regional Council has been designated by the Governor as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Salt Lake and Ogden/ Layton Urbanized Areas. As the MPO, the Regional Council is responsible for conducting a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3-C) transportation planning process for both areas. This responsibility encompasses the development of a Transportation Plan, which includes a Long Range Element to meet the future 20+ year transportation needs and congestion and pavement management systems to meet the more immediate needs. Highway, transit, and other transportation improvements are considered to meet these needs. A second area of responsibility is the programming of Federal-Aid Highway and Transit funds. This is done through the Transportation Improvement Program.

The Cities and Counties of the region, the Utah Department of Transportation, the Utah Transit Authority, and other local, state, and federal agencies responsible for providing transportation facilities for the public work with the Regional Council in preparing these plans and programs. The Regional Council also receives input from its advisory committees and the public. The basic elements of the planning process are shown on the chart on the preceding page. The Regional Council's advisory committees and its public information program and the products of the planning process are discussed below.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Transportation Coordinating Committee (Trans Com) is a policy advisory committee of the Regional Council. This committee is composed of elected officials and major transportation agency representatives and serves as the forum for discussion of short range transportation issues and policies. All programs and any amendments to them are reviewed by Trans Com before being recommended to the Regional Council for approval.

The Regional Council has also established a Regional Growth Committee (RGC) as another policy advisory committee of the Regional Council. The committee is comprised of members and representatives from the Regional Council, County Councils of Governments, and various cities, county, state, federal and other agencies and interest groups concerned with regional transportation and growth-related planning. The Committee serves as the policy advisory body to the Regional Council on long-range transportation planning, land use and other growth issues. The RGC is responsible for the Regional Long-Range transportation Plan, corridor preservation, and developing regional growth planning strategies in cooperation and coordination with local governments, Utah Department of Transportation, Utah Transit Authority, and other organizations and stakeholders. The WFRC can appoint Sub-Committees under the RGC as needed and appropriate.

Each of the two urbanized areas, Salt Lake and Ogden/ Layton, is represented at the technical level by the Long-Range Planning Technical Advisory Committees and the Short-Range Planning Technical Advisory Committees. These committees are composed of engineers and planners working for the various jurisdictions within the respective study areas. Their responsibility is to advise the RGC (Long-Range Planning Advisory Committees) and Trans Com (Short-Range Planning Technical Advisory Committees) and the Regional Council on technical matters related to their respective transportation planning processes. Each committee also serves as a forum for discussion of inter-jurisdictional transportation problems and is used to provide technical information to the various agencies. The development of transportation plans and programs is begun at these Technical Advisory Committees.

Each of the three urban counties within the Region has a County Council of Governments (COG). These committees generally consist of elected officials representing the county and each of the cities within the county. The three COGs are given an opportunity to review and comment on all transportation plans and programs for the Region.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Citizen input is an important step in the development of plans and programs that meet the area's transportation needs while minimizing any negative environmental or social impact. The WFRC's transportation planning process provides for citizen review of their transportation plans and programs through a 30-day comment period for both the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) along with other public information programs. These programs include the publication of newsletters, public meetings held each year to

discuss the development of plans and programs, the dissemination of information to the news media, including television, radio, and newspapers, and discussions with individuals and groups as requested. The Wasatch Front Regional Council also participates in numerous public meetings. In the fall of 2007, the Wasatch Front Regional Council updated their policy on public involvement and review for plans and programs. This enabled the Regional Council to comply with the current federal highway and transit authorization bill SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users). This policy continues to actively seek comment from organizations and individuals about the proposed projects in the TIP.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Regional Transportation Plan consists of highway, transit, and other transportation improvements to meet the 20-year needs of the area. Traffic forecasting models are used to project future traffic based on forecasted land use characteristics. These travel forecasts are used to identify the needed improvements to the transportation system. Next, alternative plans to meet these needs are evaluated for their impacts on the system and the environment. Costs of improvements are compared with potential revenues and phasing plans developed. Finally, a recommended Long Range Plan is approved.

The Regional Growth Technical Advisory Committees begin the process of developing and evaluating the Regional Transportation Plan. The Regional Growth Committee, the County Council of Governments, and the public all have an opportunity to review the recommendations before the Regional Council gives its final approval. ISTEA and TEA-21 require the Long Range Plan be reviewed and updated at least every three years. The plan must also be found to conform to State Air Quality plans.

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Beginning with ISTEA, federal legislation has required a Congestion Management System (CMS) in all Transportation Management Areas (TMAs). In October 1997 the Regional Council adopted fully operational CMSs for the Salt Lake and Ogden/ Layton Areas. The purpose of a CMS is to recommend actions to maximize the efficiency of the existing and future transportation system. Congestion Management Subcommittees of the Salt Lake and Ogden/ Layton Area Technical Advisory Committees work with WFRC staff to refine and implement the CMSs. The subcommittees monitor and provide input to implementation of congestion mitigation strategies on both a regional and a site-specific basis.

For all projects in the TIP that increase single occupant vehicle (SOV) capacity, the WFRC and the CMS subcommittees develop site-specific system management and demand management strategies that should be incorporated into each project. For all widening and new construction projects, the CMS also demonstrates that system management and demand management strategies by themselves will not meet the travel demand on a particular facility, or in other words, that additional SOV capacity is needed.

UDOT uses a Pavement Management System and a Bridge Management System to develop its recommendations for pavement and bridge projects to include in the TIP. WFRC has worked with UDOT to develop a pavement management system for city and county streets in the Salt Lake and Ogden/ Layton Areas that recommends cost-effective and timely treatments. These recommendations have begun to be considered in the development of the TIP. UDOT also has established procedures for identifying high hazard locations and selecting cost-effective projects for the use of federal safety funds.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Projects on the Transportation Plan are implemented through the programming of federal, state, local, and other highway and transit funds in the Transportation Improvement Program.

During the TIP development process, projects from the Regional Transportation Plan are evaluated along with projects from the management systems. During this process, the State Air Quality Implementation Plan (SIP) is reviewed for recommended Traffic Control Measures which need to be implemented. These measures are given priority in selecting projects for the TIP. Eligible projects are identified for each of the highway and transit funding categories. Projects are evaluated and priorities set within each funding source. The projects receiving the highest priority are included in each program. These separate programs are then combined to form the TIP. The Wasatch Front Regional Council, in consultation with UDOT and UTA, is responsible for developing the Salt Lake and Ogden/ Layton Area Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Once the TIP is compiled, the WFRC conducts an analysis to determine if the TIP conforms to the state air quality plans. This conformity analysis is made available to the State Division of Air Quality and the public for review and comment. The Federal Highway and Transit Administrations must concur in this finding.

A Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), containing the recommended programs along with the conformity determination is submitted to Trans Com annually for their review. The Councils of Governments also have an opportunity to review and comment on the TIP. Appropriate adjustments are made and a final TIP is developed. The final conforming TIP is then recommended to the Wasatch Front Regional Council for its approval.

Following Regional Council approval, the Executive Director of UDOT (as the Governor's designee) must review and approve the TIP and the Utah State Transportation Commission must include the TIP without modification in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

FUND AUTHORIZATION AND OBLIGATION FOR FEDERAL-AID PROJECTS

For federally-funded projects, all project development must follow the procedures as outlined in the federal guidelines. The steps include the completion of environmental studies, preliminary engineering, the purchase of the necessary right-of-way, and the preparation of final plans, specifications, and estimates. The federal guidelines say that each of these steps is eligible to receive federal funds, although it is the policy of the WFRC that sponsors of Urban Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation / Air Quality Program (CMAQ) projects, in most cases, use their own funds for project concept development, some preliminary engineering, and environmental studies. Upon completion and approval of the environmental document, the project sponsors request authorization to obligate funds for the design study report (DSR), purchasing of right-of-way (ROW), final design (PS&E), and construction from the Federal Highway Administration. For Federal-Aid Transit projects, UTA and UDOT apply directly to Federal Transit Administration for fund approval. The priorities set in developing the program will determine which projects will be able to receive funding. The priorities can be amended at any time by policy action of the WFRC.

