

NCHRP 20-68A – “US Domestic Scan Program”

Scan 08-01 Best Practices in Managing STIPs, TIPS, and Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTPs) in Response to Fiscal Constraints

Description of Scan

Nationally, fiscal constraint has proved problematic for many Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and State DOTs. Since this is an emerging practice, all participants need to feel comfortable and need to be able to explain to the public the process and calculations necessary to provide a true financial picture of long-range transportation plans and short-range Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs). This includes the new requirement for using “Year of Expenditure” dollars for TIPS, STIPs, and MTPs and the option of using “Cost Bands and Ranges” for the out years of the MTP, as well as the requirement to demonstrate that the existing transportation system can be adequately operated and maintained.

This scan will consider how state and metropolitan agencies address institutional and technical issues when identifying and applying fiscal constraints to modify their highways system plans.

A specific subject area of great interest that is to be examined by this scan is the inflationary affects on the implementation of transportation projects and the acceptable methodologies of predicting reasonable numbers for available revenues, both in traditional and innovative funding. A cross section of small to large MPOs and State DOTs need to be studied.

Identification of best practices and an understanding of the economic forecasting process necessary to develop accurate financial forecasts will be key to this scan. Innovative and improved methods of demonstrating the effects of fiscal constraints in developing TIPS, STIPs and MTPs will be sought. It is anticipated that findings of this scan will provide valuable ideas for all transportation professionals involved in the estimating of project costs, revenue forecasting, developing financial plans, TIPS, STIPs, and MTPs. It should also prove invaluable for demonstrating statutorily required financial constraint.

Specific benefits expected as a result of this scan are increased accuracy and a public understanding of fiscal constraint and the financial aspects of project development. These benefits will be realized by:

- Ensuring that the cost of transportation projects does not greatly exceed the initial estimate of the implementation costs as identified in the Transportation Plan (TP) or STIP.
- Improving the linkage between revenue forecasting and TP implementation to insure that time consuming major modifications to TPs are needed substantially less often.
- Improving financial constraint analyses through better identification of the affect of inflation on long-term project costs.

Original Scan Proposal Title: Best Management Practices in Developing Fiscal Constraint For STIPS, TIPS, And Metropolitan Transportation Plans

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Execution Schedule

Milestone	Anticipated Date
Chairs and Team Members Identified	December, 2008
Desk Scan Completed	March, 2009
Prescan Meeting Held	March, 2009
Scan Conducted	June, 2009
Draft PowerPoint submitted by SME	August, 2009
Draft Report Delivered to NCHRP and Panel	September, 2009
Final Report Delivered to NCHRP	April, 2010

Estimated Scan Cost and Funding

Actual cost and duration: \$ 155,900; 2 week
Anticipated fund from FHWA: \$25,000

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