

## **Surface Transportation Projects** **From *Concept* to *Planned* to *Programmed* for Design and Construction**

### **Step 1: Inclusion in the MPO Long-Range Transportation Plan**

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a federally-mandated transportation policy-making body comprised of representatives from local, state, and federal governments; transit agencies; and other stakeholders. Any highway or transit project or program to be constructed or conducted within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) and to be paid for with federal funds must receive approval by the MPO before any federal funds can be expended. In addition, any highway or transit project deemed to be regionally-significant, regardless of the source(s) of funding, must receive MPO approval to proceed. The Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) is the MPO for the Hampton Roads MPA.

The **Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** serves as the blueprint for the development of the region's transportation system. The LRTP, developed pursuant to Title 23 CFR 450.322, must cover a period of no less than 20 years and be updated at least every four years. The HRTPO adopted the current (2034) LRTP on January 19, 2012.

According to Federal regulations, an LRTP shall be fiscally-constrained and include a financial plan that demonstrates how the LRTP can be implemented. Fiscal constraint means that the LRTP must include sufficient financial information to demonstrate that projects in the LRTP can be implemented using committed, available, or reasonably expected to be available revenue resources, with reasonable assurance that the federally supported transportation system is being adequately operated and maintained. In other words, the LRTP cannot include projects or project phases for which reasonably expected future revenues sufficient to cover the associated costs cannot be identified.

The fiscal constraint requirement makes it necessary for the HRTPO Board to evaluate and prioritize proposed projects (concepts) to determine which candidate projects or project phases will ultimately be included in the LRTP.

### **Step 2: Inclusion in the MPO Transportation Improvement Program**

The **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** is a multi-year program for the implementation of surface transportation projects within the MPA. The TIP, developed pursuant to Title 23 CFR 450.324, must cover a period of no less than four years and be updated at least every four years. The TIP contains all federally-funded and/or regionally significant projects that require an action by the Federal Highway Administration or the Federal Transit Administration. Before any federally-funded and/or regionally significant surface transportation project can be built in the Hampton Roads MPA, it must be included in a current TIP that has been approved by the HRTPO Board and the Governor. The HRTPO Board adopted

the current (FY 2012-2015) TIP on June 16, 2011, however, the TIP should be considered a “live” document, as it is updated regularly (almost monthly).

The TIP must be consistent with the LRTP and, like the LRTP, the TIP must be fiscally-constrained and include a financial plan that demonstrates how it can be implemented. Given available funding and drawing from the current LRTP, the HRTPO, state agencies localities, and transit operators develop a draft list of projects, or project phases, and studies on which activity is expected to occur during the four-year period of the TIP. This draft TIP project list undergoes technical and public review before being approved by the HRTPO Board.

### **Step 3: Design and Construction**

Once a project is included in the TIP, work on the project can begin. Work on highway projects is typically divided into three phases: Preliminary Engineering, Right-of-Way acquisition, and Construction.

Preliminary Engineering includes determining the size, type, and location of a roadway; producing a preliminary design for review by all stakeholders in the project; conducting public hearings; and addressing environmental issues and requirements.

Right-of-Way acquisition may begin once the Commonwealth Transportation Board approves the final design for the project. This phase includes contacting utility companies about relocating water, sewer, gas, electric, and phone lines. All necessary permits and authorizations are obtained before work begins.

During the Construction phase, the Virginia Department of Transportation oversees every step of the work, inspecting for quality, conformity to project requirements, and environmental protection.