

STIP-RMS Project Current State Narrative

Overview

Figure 1 depicts the process by which projects enter into the Department's project database (Projfinl: a Microsoft Access) and the derivative processes associated with this data store and system. Through the Department's project development process, individual projects transform through different states of being. The project development process includes development of the Ten Year Plan (TYP) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the mechanism that all federally funded projects get advanced. The TYP and the STIP are inextricably tied to Projfinl, with the STIP diverging on a separate path. This document describes the elements and processes that are involved in the project genesis. This document is organized into sections corresponding to the sections detailed on Figure 1 and explains the input, output, external, and internal processes that constitute the Departments project programming process.

Input

There are several sources of data that finds its way into Projfinl. Referring to the box labeled "Input", there are distinct avenues by which projects enter into Projfinl.

Project Authorization:

To initiate a project, a project manager or project leader fills out an electronic form, prints to hardcopy, and delivers the request form in person or through the Department's mail routing system to Project Programming staff (Project Programming is a section contained the Bureau of Finance and Contracts. The paper "project slip" is typically routed through various positions in Project Development to receive the necessary approvals. Once approved, the project slip is forwarded to Project Programming to be manually entered. Project Programming staff uses the PRJ Project Database to assign a project number for the project request and enters the project information – scope, location, cost, etc. – into Projfinl. The approved project authorization slip is emailed to the Project Manager/Lead for their files. As part of the project creation and data entry, project programming flags the new project for a STIP/TIP revision if necessary.

Project Manager/Leaders Revisions:

Project Managers and Project Leaders are responsible for maintaining the status of their projects regarding funding, timing, and scope. Projects features and status change as municipalities schedules change, Department priorities change, and project constraints change. As depicted in the "Input" box, when revisions must be made, project lead personnel enter the "Estimate Database" to create an original estimate or change an existing estimate. The database provides an electronic excel form for data input. After

these changes are made, the project lead prints the estimate from the database and delivers the request form in person or through the Department's mail routing system to Project Programming staff. Depending on the scale of these changes, the project manager must consult the Chief Project Manager and/or the Director / Assistant Director of Project Development. After those necessary consultations, Project Programming Staff makes the appropriate changes in Projfinl, keeps a copy of the estimate for their paper files, and initials the estimate and returns it, manually, to the initiator. Project programming must also tag the project if the changes made require any revisions to the STIP/TIPs.

NHDOT/MPO Project Data Selection:

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), as well as, Regional Planning Commissions submit projects to the NHDOT through their Public Involvement Procedures, Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) development process. Federal regulations mandate that MPOs provide the Department with a TIP and MTP, which includes projects from their geographic region of the State. Although not mandated by federal regulation, the RPCs also submit projects to the Department through a transportation improvement development process. The Department also submits its own projects. These projects, if viable, are entered into Projfinl prioritized by Department decision makers. These new projects, as well as existing projects in Projfinl, are reviewed every two years through the Department's Ten Year Plan process. The solicitation of projects by the MPOs and RPCs and submission of projects by the NHDOT begins the Ten Year Plan Development process.

Ten Year Plan Process & Projfinl:

In the upper right hand of Figure 1 is the depiction of the relationship between Projfinl, the Ten Year Plan (TYP) process, and the Ten Year Plan database. As previously mentioned, projects come in from the MPOs, the RPCs, and the NHDOT. Any new projects and existing project with the timeframe of the proposed TYP (e.g. 2011-2020), are exported to a Microsoft Access database. This database is a snapshot from Projfinl and is frozen at the time of the export. The TYP database is subject first to Department scrutiny and is from this database a draft TYP document is produced. The draft document is then cycled through the public involvement and approval process. The document is presented to the public via informational meetings to gather input and comments. After all comments are considered, any changes from the Department's executive office are submitted, via pen and ink changes, to planning staff to update the TYP database. The revised database produces a revised draft, which is submitted, via sneaker mail, to the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT). If GACIT makes any revisions they are made to the database from additional pen and ink changes made to the draft document. This version of the draft document is then approved by GACIT, when satisfied, and GACIT forwards the document on to the Governor. Similarly, any changes are made and the Governor forwards onto the Legislature, which approves the document by June 15 of the following year. Along the journey from Governor to Legislature any approved changes are made to the draft

document by manual revision. Once the TYP document passed through the legislature the Governor signs this document into law. In the intervening 12 months that the document has been through the public involvement and approval process, real-time changes have occurred in Projfinl that may not be reflected in the approved TYP document. Also, there may be changes to project as a result of the TYP process. Projfinl is reconciled with any changes from the TYP and the TYP database for the 10 year period is created via a data snapshot from Projfinl. The TYP does not change until the end of the next two-year process.

STIP:

The Statewide Transportation and Improvement Program process is also tied to Projfinl. Once the TYP process is complete, Planning staff create a data snapshot of Projfinl and this data is copied to another Microsoft Access database named the STIP Database. The STIP database and the derived report, the Department's STIP, is a list of projects that are funded with federal aid, significant Turnpike projects, and any other projects that have regional significance. From the STIP database the STIP report is produced and goes through a distinct approval process that involves the MPOs, FHWA, FHWA, FTA, and NHDES. Projects put forth in the STIP are prioritized by the Department's executive office. The STIP project prioritization process is a manual process as is the TYP project prioritization process. Once the projects are clearly identified, all the required analyses are performed, and concurrence is forwarded from EPA and NHDES, the STIP is sent to FHWA and FTA for approval. This request is via hardcopy. The database is frozen after approval and forms the basis for a performance target and also is the basis, which STIP revisions are added. Since Projfinl is real-time and is accepting changes to project from project managers etc., the approved STIP is not consistent with Projfinl. For funding to be authorized on any federal-aid project, the project must first be in an approved STIP. If a project's scope, funding, or completion date have changed, the STIP must be revised to reflect changes and to proceed with any modifications. These modifications, and any new projects that may have surfaced, are added to the base STIP database to be included in the STIP amendment process. Records in Projfinl are manually flagged for revision by Project Programming staff, but Planning staff are responsible for compiling STIP amendments and getting amendments approved. In addition to projects being flagged for the formal STIP revision process, other background project changes, that are not required to go through the process, are included in the STIP database from ProjFinl. This background updates allows the STIP database to stay more current for financial constraint purposes. There is no provision in ProjFinl to know the status of any pending STIP revisions. In addition, there is no way for project managers or teams to know if a revision has been approved because once the changes are entered by project programming they immediately appear in several essential reports. STIP/TIP revisions are reviewed on a monthly basis through Interagency Consultation who may request additional information or change the type of revision required. STIP revisions in areas covered by MPOs must first be approved by the MPO and their TIP revised. This process adds an additional approval layer and time to the revision process. In the case of Amendments, the MPO process typically takes 2 months, after which a paper approval is

forwarded to DOT. The paper approvals from all affected MPOs are forwarded to FHWA/FTA with the proposed STIP Amendment.

OUTPUT 1

The section of Figure 1 labeled “Output 1” depicts information that is reported on demand. The reports contained in the “Output 1” box contain data that is live as of the report generation time. These reports, and other ad hoc reports, are generated from Projfinl. Planning staff generate these reports for various DOT personnel including project leaders, project managers, directors, and commissioners. The advertising schedule is produced every two weeks and lists projects expected to advertise for construction during particular fiscal years. Project managers and leaders use the project review report to review the status of project milestone dates. The Greer report contains specific project information not contained in Projfinl. This data includes date of ROW plans, soils investigation, dates etc. Information show on the Greer report is from a separate database: DJB_RMS (a Microsoft Access database).

OUTPUT 2

The reports contained in “Output 2” are essentially the same reports that are depicted in “Output 1”. The data feed to these reports is from the data warehouse, however, and these reports

External Systems:

There are several external systems that Projfinl interacts with. Figure 1 reflects the known systems interacting with Projfinl. *Budget & Finance Current Billing* is a process for which the Department’s Bureau of Finance is responsible. Current billing occurs once every week and is the process by which the Department receives reimbursement from the Federal Highway Administration. Projfinl supplies project information to the current billing system. The *Financial Management Information System (FMIS)* is the FHWA information system that the NH FHWA Division Office personnel uses to approve project authorization and funding requests from the Department. FHWA personnel view the information entered by Project Programming staff (information is manually entered into the FMIS interface made available to NHDOT). FMIS financial billing information is compared the current bill system and payments are reconcile upon final voucher or closing of the project. *Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)* is a new financial and administrative system that is being developed and will come on line in the summer of 2010. Projectfinl project information will feed into the system in a format specified by the ERP system.