



Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

I. INTRODUCTION

The need for an effective local, regional and national highway network touches every citizen of West Virginia and the United States. Virtually every aspect of daily life depends on adequate roadways being in place. Whether it be for transporting our children to school, getting us to work, or bringing goods to our stores from across the country, an adequate highway network enables individuals to experience a higher quality of life by improving access to social, economic, educational and recreational opportunities. Since the need and desire for safe and efficient roadways is so universal, citizens, businesses, and elected representatives alike are concerned with the details of highway maintenance, improvement, and construction activities. Furthermore, because government has been charged with providing this infrastructure with funds derived principally from its citizens, it is appropriate that the details regarding planned expenditures are clearly relayed to all interested parties.

In West Virginia, unlike the majority of states, state government rather than county or local government has ownership and responsibility for virtually all highway mileage. The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) has statutory authority for the construction, improvement and maintenance of nearly all public highway miles (approximately 36,000) in the state. It is imperative that WVDOH clearly outlines the tasks and improvements that it expects to implement in the near future with the resources available to it. The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) currently has a Statewide Transportation Policy Plan for 2002 - 2022, which discusses in broad terms the long-range goals and objectives of its member agencies of which WVDOH is a part. The WVDOT is preparing to update its long-range Statewide Transportation Policy Plan to not only meet new federal requirements, but make the plan more project specific. In addition to the State's long-range transportation plan, the Agency has for several years been producing two short-range (3-6 years) documents, which are the Six-Year Program and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The STIP, which is federally required, is a fiscally constrained program of planned federal-aid expenditures covering a four-year period. The federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) required a number of modifications to the format of the STIP, which include, but are not limited to: increasing the coverage period from three to four years, presentation of costs in year of expenditure dollars, incorporation of operation and maintenance strategies and use of visualization techniques.

The Six-Year Program was an informational document, which was first developed in July 2005. The document was intended to serve as a bridge between the imminent projects contained in the STIP, which previously only covered three years, and the far-reaching goals contained in the State's long-range transportation plan. Although the Six-Year Program provided citizens with a lot of information, differing update schedules often caused confusion between it and the STIP. In order to eliminate the confusion caused by the existence of two separate documents, the Agency merged the

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West Virginia Department of Transportation
IN COOPERATION WITH THE
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AND THE
Federal Transit Administration

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two documents in January 2008 when it issued the STIP for West Virginia covering federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2008 -2013.

As an initial step in merging the Six-Year Program and STIP, the January 2008 STIP document presented the State's federal-aid highway and transit program over a six-year period in a SAFETEA-LU compliant manner. The first four years of the program serve as the State's official STIP and the remaining two years are provided for informational purposes only. The current document still has not incorporated a listing of projects to be funded solely with State funds. At the present time, it is anticipated that the State portion of the STIP will be implemented in October 2008. When both aspects of the STIP (i.e. federal and State) are available, the Agency's highway program will be able to be reviewed as a whole by the citizens of West Virginia.