

Executive Summary

NDOT's Program Development Process Advances Departmental Goals of Safety, Congestion Relief, Preservation, and Equity

Every year, the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) is responsible for the programming of over \$250 million in federal and state funding for a wide range of transportation improvement projects across the state. Allocating this tremendous resource in an equitable, efficient, and responsible manner requires a multifaceted approach. The Program Development Division has adopted flexible but accountable procedures serving to meet the needs of the traveling public, advances the Department's goals and priorities, and addresses the needs of myriad constituencies across the state. This Program Development Manual seeks to explain the process, policy and procedures used by the Department of Transportation to achieve these objectives.

NDOT's Program Development Division was created in 1995 to improve relations with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) in Clark and Washoe Counties and to manage development of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Since the creation of the Program Development Division, the Lake Tahoe Basin and Carson City have also established MPO's, thus, broadening the scope of the division's activities. The division manages the department's governmental and tribal consultation process. Another key responsibility for the division is to cooperate in the development and ensure adoption of Regional Transportation Plans (RTP) and Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIP) in Nevada's Transportation Management Areas (TMA's).

NDOT's program development process addresses four core departmental goals:

- To place a paramount value on the **safety** of Nevada motorists;
- To continue the state's award winning **preservation** program, maximizing the value of the state's transportation infrastructure;
- To adopt **congestion relief** strategies and maintain a highly efficient network to enhance economic development goals; and
- To recognize the importance of **equity** as a goal of the department, providing services and investments to local jurisdictions throughout the state.

The Program Development Division evaluates the capacity project budget by focusing on that portion of the NDOT budget that is both available to apply

towards capacity projects and under the direct control of the Department. This “Potential Capacity Budget” is calculated by adding federal and state components that meet the above criteria.

The Nevada Department of Transportation requires that all projects included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) be evaluated by a standardized criterion, which determines the projects’ feasibility and user benefits.

As of 2005, areas not under MPO authority are requested to submit a *Project Submittal Application* for proposed transportation improvement projects. Applications are due to the Program Development Division by January 1. Those projects submitted for consideration are evaluated by a project evaluation team utilizing a criteria based on current conditions, project impact, and project complexity. Using this criterion, proposed Transportation Improvement Projects are ranked as either high, medium, or low. Those projects ranked in the high category are submitted to the Director, Deputy and Deputy Director’s for consideration. The Director ultimately makes the final selection of projects advancing into the Annual Work Program (AWP).

The Department has also developed a project selection process for enhancement, bridge, safety, and preservation projects. All proposed projects are rigorously screened through a detailed evaluation process, as outlined in the STIP literature, and within this manual.

The Nevada Department of Transportation utilizes bond financing to fund major projects, which are the most visible component of the Department’s work. Bond financing is utilized for:

- Projects that exceed the Department’s annual budget
- Projects that have regional significance
- Projects that provide long-term benefit to Interstate Highways and/or U.S. Highways
- Projects, which are necessary and could not possibly be constructed without bonding, such as the *US 95 Freeway Expansion*.

All bonds are issued in accordance with NRS 408.273. The recommendation to let bonds begins with the Director of the Department of Transportation. The Transportation Board must then approve and adopt a resolution requesting the State Board of Finance to issue the Bonds. Upon the Legislative budget authority, bonding is secured.

The Nevada State Transportation Board comprised primarily of elected officials, provides a valuable check on the project selection process. The State Transportation Board accepts the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and approves the Annual Work Program inclusive of the short and long-range elements in the fall of every year. Upon approval the STIP is forward to the Federal Highway Administration for final approval and funding.