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# 2015-2020 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (RTIP)

Adopted by the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization Policy Board on  
October XX, 2014

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 ABOUT SCOG AND SKAGIT-ISLAND RTPO

Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) is a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), consisting of Skagit County, all cities and towns within Skagit County, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Samish Indian Nation, Skagit Transit, Skagit PUD, the Port of Anacortes, the Port of Skagit, and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). SCOG leads the development of the region's long-range (20-year) transportation plan and short-range (6-year) Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) in cooperation with local agencies. These efforts are coordinated with the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), WSDOT, local elected leadership, local transportation planners and engineers, the business community and citizens in the planning area.

Through Washington State legislation, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) were authorized as part of the 1990 Growth Management Act. Skagit-Island RTPO (SIRTPO) involves cities, counties, transit agencies, ports, private employers throughout Skagit and Island counties, and WSDOT to prepare a Regional Transportation Plan, certify that countywide planning policies and local transportation elements are consistent with Regional Transportation Plan and maintain a six-year Regional Transportation Improvement Program. SCOG is the lead planning agency for the Skagit Sub-RTPO and Island County is the lead planning agency for Island Sub-RTPO.



## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE RTIP

SCOG is required by federal and state regulations to develop a Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) for both SCOG and Skagit-Island RTPO which spans at least four years and is updated at least every two years. The RTIP is a compilation of projects from the various federal, state, and local funding programs for all transportation agencies in Skagit and Island counties. Projects included in the program will implement the long range transportation and transit plans for the region, help meet the short-range needs of the area, and provide for the maintenance of the existing transportation system.

The primary purpose of the RTIP is to identify and document federally funded and/or regionally significant projects to be included in the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Projects cannot obligate<sup>1</sup> federal funds—even though the funds have been awarded—unless they are included in the RTIP and the STIP. Once the project funds have been obligated, the obligated funds will not be included in the next update to the RTIP, even if all of the funds have not been spent. SCOG produces an [Annual Listing](#)

<sup>1</sup> Obligation occurs when the project sponsor has established a formal agreement with WSDOT and the funds have been designated, or "obligated," for that particular project.

[of Federal Obligations](#) that documents all of the federal fund obligations that have occurred within the SCOG planning area in the previous calendar year.

The RTIP also demonstrates the financial feasibility of the included projects. Essentially, the RTIP demonstrates that the projects that are programmed<sup>2</sup> in the next four years will not cost more than the amount of funding the region expects to receive. Section 3 includes detailed financial tables for the projects programmed in the fiscally constrained<sup>3</sup> portion of the RTIP.

The projects listed in the RTIP, along with the associated financial tables, are listed separately for SCOG and Island sub-RTPO.

## 2 RTIP DEVELOPMENT

Development of the RTIP is coordinated with the development of capital improvement plans and local TIPs of the member jurisdictions and operating agencies. When developing their local TIPs, agencies evaluate their transportation needs for the ensuing six-year period based on local priorities and the expected funding levels they will have available to meet those needs. Because the need for transportation improvements is generally greater than the amount of funding available, the local agencies prioritize their transportation needs to identify a six-year list of projects that they feel is most important to pursue. Drafts of these local TIPs are available for the public, other agencies, and internal departments to review. Based on this review, the local agency makes any revisions deemed necessary before adopting its local TIP, which includes both programmed and planned projects.

Local agencies, WSDOT Northwest Region, and WSDOT Marine then submit their programmed projects to SCOG or Island Sub-RTPO. The RTIP is a compilation of the projects with secured federal funding or regionally significant projects with other secured funding.

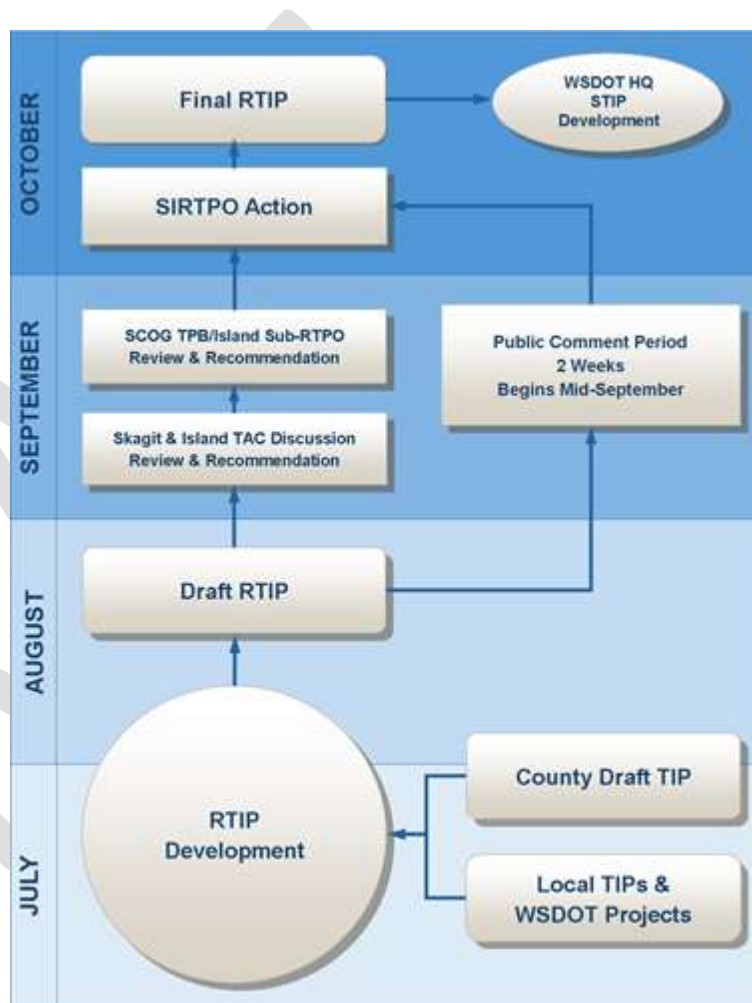


FIGURE 1: RTIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

<sup>2</sup> “Programmed” means that the funding for the project is scheduled to be obligated (see footnote 1) in a particular Federal Fiscal Year (October 1 through September 30) identified in the RTIP.

<sup>3</sup> The fiscally constrained portion of the RTIP includes the first four years of the RTIP that are also included in the STIP. The RTIP may include projects programmed to receive regionally managed funding in years five and six—such as Surface Transportation Program or Transportation Alternatives Program funds—but may not be fiscally constrained.



The project lists for SCOG and Island Sub-RTPO are included in section 5. From these projects, an assessment of region-wide financial feasibility is estimated in section 3.

## 2.1 RTIP REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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The Draft RTIP is presented to both the Skagit and Island Technical Advisory Committees (TACs)<sup>4</sup>, the SCOG Transportation Policy Board (TPB) and the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board for their review and comment in September. The TACs make a recommendation that the SCOG TPB and Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board consider the Draft RTIP. The SCOG TPB and Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board then make a recommendation on the adoption of the Draft RTIP to the SIRTPO Policy Board. Based upon its review of the draft document, any public comments received, and the recommendations of the SCOG TPB and the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board, the SIRTPO Policy Board makes a decision on adoption at its meeting in October. The adopted RTIP is then submitted to WSDOT, which will include the projects identified in section 5.1 into the STIP as appropriate.

## 2.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

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The RTIP is developed from the local TIPs compiled and adopted annually by each agency. As required by law, each local agency conducts a public involvement process in the development and review of their local TIP. These processes vary by jurisdiction, but all culminate in a formal public hearing prior to adoption by the local governing boards.

While the individual local TIPs have been reviewed prior to their adoption, a public review of the RTIP is conducted because it is the only document that contains programmed projects from every agency throughout the region. This allows the public to review and comment on the short

range transportation projects intended to implement the long range transportation goals identified in the [Regional Transportation Plan](#).

SCOG and Island Sub-RTPO post notifications in the local newspapers when the Draft RTIP is available for public review. Notice is also posted on the SCOG and Island County websites where the document is available to view or download. Printed copies of the entire Draft RTIP are available from SCOG on request.

Submit comments on the Draft 2015-2020 RTIP to:

Gabe Philips  
Skagit Council of Governments  
204 W. Montgomery St.  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
[gabep@scog.net](mailto:gabep@scog.net)

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<sup>4</sup> The TACs are committees consisting of transportation professionals who provide technical advice and recommendations to the SCOG Transportation Policy Board and Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board.

The deadline for submitted comments is the close of business on Friday, October 10, 2014. The final draft of the RTIP includes a compilation of submitted public comments below and will be presented to the SIRTPO Policy Board prior to any action taken regarding the adoption of the RTIP.

- [Public Comments on the 2015-2020 Regional RTIP](#)

The public involvement activities and time established for review and comments on the RTIP development process satisfy the FTA's Program of Projects that Skagit Transit is required to adhere to.

## 2.3 PROGRAMMING POLICIES

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SIRTPO has developed policies to aid in the development and maintenance of the RTIP and to assist in the effective administration of regionally managed federal grant funds.

- [SIRTPO RTIP Policies](#)

## 2.4 PROJECT SELECTION & PRIORITIZATION

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SCOG is responsible for selecting projects for the federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) in Skagit County. Island Sub-RTPO is responsible for selecting projects to receive STP funds in Island County. SIRTPO is responsible for selecting projects to utilize Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds in Skagit and Island counties. These project selections are incorporated into the RTIP along with other federally funded or regionally significant projects (see section 5).



### **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM**

Surface Transportation Program funds are distributed at the county level. SCOG and Island Sub-RTPO receive grants that are awarded and tracked separately. STP projects are selected by the SCOG Transportation Policy Board and Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board using a competitive process guided by evaluation criteria designed to ensure that projects are prioritized consistently with the Regional Transportation Plan.

#### **SCOG**

Consistent with federal and state guidelines, SCOG intends to program six years' worth of STP projects. Years five and six of the project selection serve as an illustrative list of projects that can be included in the fiscally constrained portion of the RTIP if funding becomes available (see section 5.2). SCOG is committed to ensuring that STP projects are competitively selected to receive funding based on their ability to address priorities identified in the Regional Transportation Plan. A formal STP selection process has been developed to provide clarity on how projects will be regionally prioritized for funding.

- [SCOG Surface Transportation Program Selection Process](#)

#### **ISLAND SUB-RTPO**

Similar to SCOG, the Island Sub-RTPO aims to program six years' worth of STP projects, the last two serving as an illustrative list of potential future projects. The Island Sub-RTPO will make a call for projects to award STP funds as needed. The submissions will be screened to ensure eligibility

and then scored by the Island Sub-RTPO TAC using the [project selection criteria](#). The projects will be ranked according to their scores, timelines, and funding requirements, with the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board ultimately making the final determination of the STP awards. The projects selected in this process will be added to the RTIP at its next scheduled update or through a formal amendment.

#### TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM

TAP funds are distributed at the RTPO level. Funding decisions regarding TAP funds are made by the SIRTPO Policy Board. The projects are selected using a competitive process developed jointly by SCOG and Island Sub-RTPO. The criteria are designed to ensure that projects are prioritized consistently with the Regional Transportation Plan.

- [SIRTPO Transportation Alternatives Program Selection Process](#)

## 3 FINANCIAL PLAN

### 3.1 FISCAL CONSTRAINT

The RTIP is required to include a financial plan that demonstrates how the program of projects can be implemented. The detailed financial tables located in section 3.2 include the estimated amount of available funds, programmed funds, and the remaining funds by fund type for each program year. WSDOT, local jurisdictions, transit operators, and other agencies with projects in the RTIP have indicated that they have the financial resources available to provide the necessary matching funds to complete their projects. The tables show that programmed expenditures are within reasonable balance of expected fund allocations. In accordance with the requirements of MAP-21, the RTIP is “fiscally constrained.”

#### FINANCIAL PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

##### ACCOUNTING FOR INFLATION

The project costs reported in the RTIP include an adjustment to account for the annual inflation of prices. The Skagit-Island RTP accounts for the effect of inflation scheduled in the mid and long-range horizons. However, the process used to account for inflation on RTIP projects was left to the judgment of the sponsoring agency, as they have a better grasp on the short-term inflationary pressures.

##### REVENUE PROJECTIONS

Revenue projections for WSDOT-managed federal funds (e.g. NHS, HSIP, etc.) generally equal the amount programmed in the RTIP. MPO/RTPO-managed federal funds, such as STP and TAP, are generally assumed to be the same as the 2014 appropriations.

### 3.2 FINANCIAL TABLES

- [2015-2018 SCOG RTIP Financial Summary & Feasibility](#)
- [2015-2018 Island Sub-RTPO RTIP Financial Summary & Feasibility](#)

## 4 AMENDMENT & MODIFICATION PROCESS

Transportation priorities and funding strategies change over time. It is likely that the project list identified in the RTIP will need to be altered at some point prior to the development of the 2016-2021 RTIP. Federal requirements stipulate that a jurisdiction cannot utilize federal funds on a project until it is programmed in the STIP, even though the jurisdiction has been *awarded* money for that project.

SCOG has developed RTIP amendment and modification procedures to ensure that new projects and changes to existing projects can be included in the RTIP efficiently.

- [SCOG RTIP Amendment and Modification Procedures](#)

The Island sub-RTPO uses the formal amendment and modification process developed by WSDOT, as specified in [WSDOT's 2013-2016 Statewide TIP Document](#).

#### 4.1 RTIP AMENDMENT CYCLE

Local agencies are generally anxious to obligate federal funds soon after they are awarded. In order to ensure that sufficient time is available for decision makers and the public to review the proposed amendment prior to policy board action being taken, project sponsors should adhere to the deadlines listed in Table 1 or Table 2.

SUBMIT REQUEST TO SCOG*	SKAGIT TAC REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION	SCOG TPB ACTION	WSDOT REVIEW	FHWA/FTA REVIEW**	AMENDMENT INCLUDED IN STIP
12/29/2014	1/8/2015	1/21/2015	1/16/2015†	1/30/2015	2/13/2015
1/26/2015	2/5/2015	2/18/2015	2/20/2015	3/6/2015	3/20/2015
2/23/2015	3/5/2015	3/18/2015	3/20/2015	4/3/2015	4/17/2015
3/23/2015	4/2/2015	4/15/2015	4/17/2015	5/1/2015	5/15/2015
4/27/2015	5/7/2015	5/20/2015	5/22/2015	6/5/2015	6/19/2015
5/25/2015	6/4/2015	6/17/2015	6/19/2015	7/3/2015	7/17/2015
6/22/2015	7/2/2015	7/15/2015	7/17/2015	7/31/2015	8/14/2015
7/27/2015	8/6/2015	8/19/2015	8/21/2015	9/4/2015	9/18/2015
8/24/2015	9/3/2015	9/16/2015	9/18/2015	10/2/2015	10/16/2015
9/21/2015	10/1/2015	10/21/2015	10/16/2015†	10/30/2015	11/13/2015

Note: Meeting dates and request deadlines are subject to change  
 \*Request must include documentation of funding award and proof that project is included in local TIP.  
 \*\*Administrative modifications do not require FHWA/FTA approval. Administrative modifications will be included in STIP at this date.  
 †If WSDOT review deadline occurs before SCOG TPB action, SCOG will verify to WSDOT that action occurred after request is submitted.

TABLE 1: SCOG RTIP AMENDMENT DEADLINES

SUBMIT REQUEST TO ISLAND SUB-RTPO*	ISLAND TAC REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION	ISLAND SUB-RTPO POLICY BOARD ACTION	WSDOT REVIEW	FHWA/FTA REVIEW**	AMENDMENT INCLUDED IN STIP
12/29/2014	1/8/2015	1/28/2015	1/16/2015†	1/30/2015	2/13/2015
2/2/2015	2/12/2015	2/25/2015	2/20/2015†	3/6/2015	3/20/2015
3/2/2015	3/12/2015	3/25/2015	3/20/2015†	4/3/2015	4/17/2015
3/30/2015	4/9/2015	4/22/2015	4/17/2015†	5/1/2015	5/15/2015
4/4/2015	5/14/2015	5/27/2015	5/22/2015†	6/5/2015	6/19/2015
6/1/2015	6/11/2015	6/24/2015	6/19/2015†	7/3/2015	7/17/2015
6/29/2015	7/9/2015	7/22/2015	7/17/2015†	7/31/2015	8/14/2015
8/3/2015	8/13/2015	8/26/2015	8/21/2015†	9/4/2015	9/18/2015
8/31/2015	9/10/2015	9/23/2015	9/18/2015†	10/2/2015	10/16/2015
9/28/2015	10/8/2015	10/28/2015	10/16/2015†	10/30/2015	11/13/2015

Note: Meeting dates and request deadlines are subject to change  
 \*Request must include documentation of funding award and proof that project is included in local TIP.  
 \*\*Administrative modifications do not require FHWA/FTA approval. Administrative modifications will be included in STIP at this date.  
 †If WSDOT review deadline occurs before Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board action, Island Sub-RTPO will verify to WSDOT that action occurred after request is submitted.

TABLE 2: ISLAND SUB-RTPO AMENDMENT DEADLINES



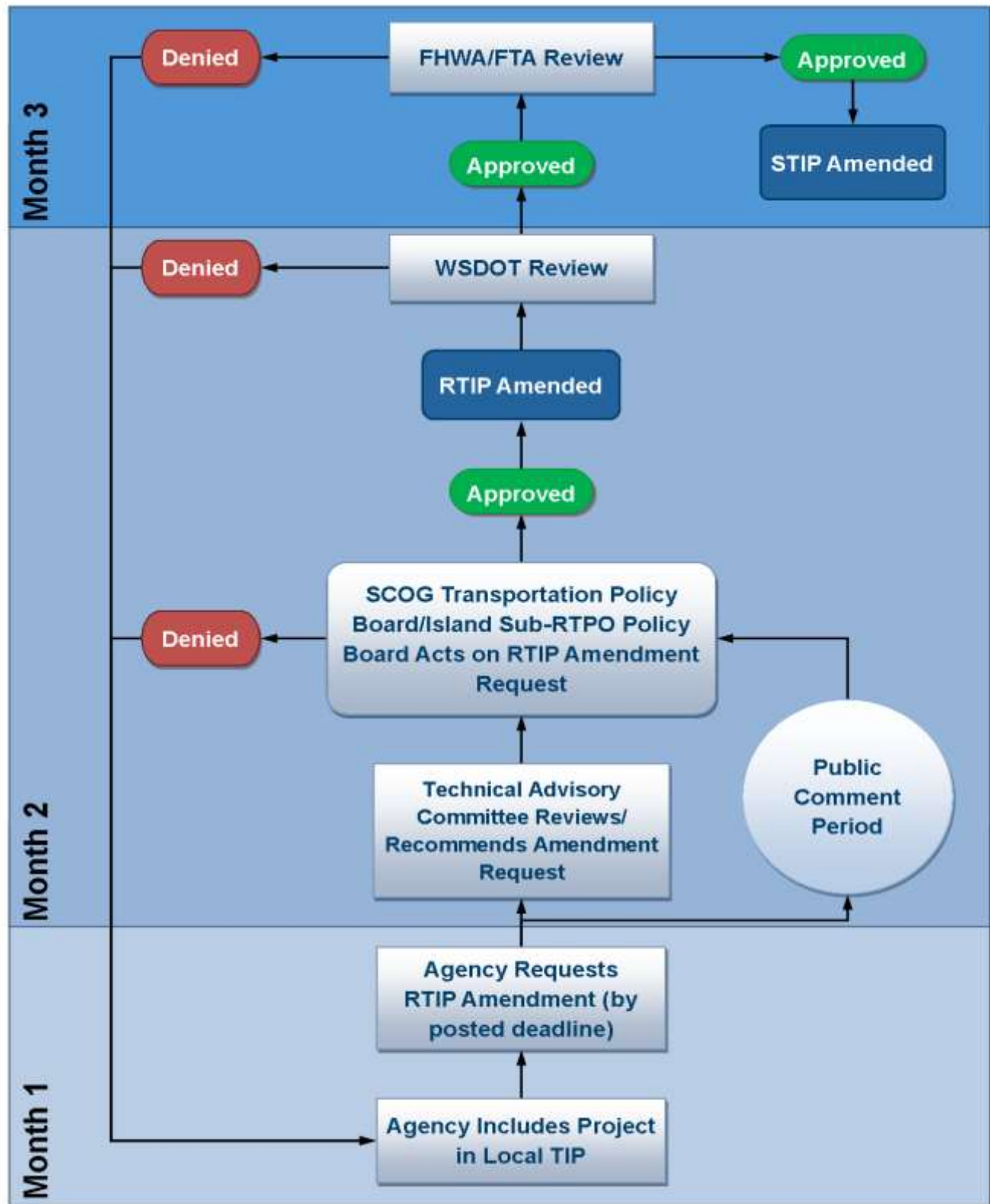


FIGURE 2: RTIP AMENDMENT CYCLE

## 5 RTIP PROJECTS

### 5.1 FISCALLY CONSTRAINED PROJECTS

The following lists include projects that have secured federal funding or have secured state or local funding and are regionally significant. These project lists will be kept current as amendments are made to the RTIP. Projects included in the fiscally constrained portion of the RTIP are also included in the STIP. Only four years' worth of projects can be included in the STIP. Section 5.2 includes projects that have been selected to receive regionally managed STP and TAP funds in years five and six of the RTIP.

- [2015-2018 Fiscally Constrained SCOG RTIP Projects](#)
- [2015-2018 Fiscally Constrained Island Sub-RTPO RTIP Projects](#)

### 5.2 ILLUSTRATIVE PRIORITIES

To ensure that SCOG has a fully-programmed four-year RTIP, when a call for projects is issued SCOG and Island Sub-RTPO will generally select enough projects to ensure that six years' worth of STP and TAP funding is programmed. The first four years in the RTIP are fiscally constrained and included in the STIP. The additional two years will function as an illustrative list of projects that can move into the fiscally-constrained portion of the RTIP if additional funding becomes available. Examples of ways that funds can become available include:

- A project currently in the fiscally constrained portion of the RTIP is unable to proceed and the agency returns the funds to SCOG or Island Sub-RTPO
- A project which previously obligated STP or TAP funds deobligates its funds
- A project closes out using fewer funds than what was awarded. The excess is returned to SCOG or Island Sub-RTPO
- Allocations of STP or TAP funds are higher than anticipated at the time of RTIP adoption

If additional funds are obtained by SCOG or Island Sub-RTPO, the projects can be moved to the fiscally-constrained portion of the RTIP in the next RTIP update or through the amendment process. Additional considerations (e.g. lower costs, project readiness, etc.) may be used in the determination of projects that will be added to the fiscally-constrained portion of the RTIP from the illustrative list.

- [2018-2019 SCOG Illustrative Projects](#)
- [2018-2019 Island sub-RTPO Illustrative Projects](#)