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300.01 Introduction

Part 3 covers the evolution of transportation projects from their conceptual stage after Transportation Planning, through Project Scoping and Programming, when they become better defined and are prioritized for funding.

300.02 Process Overview

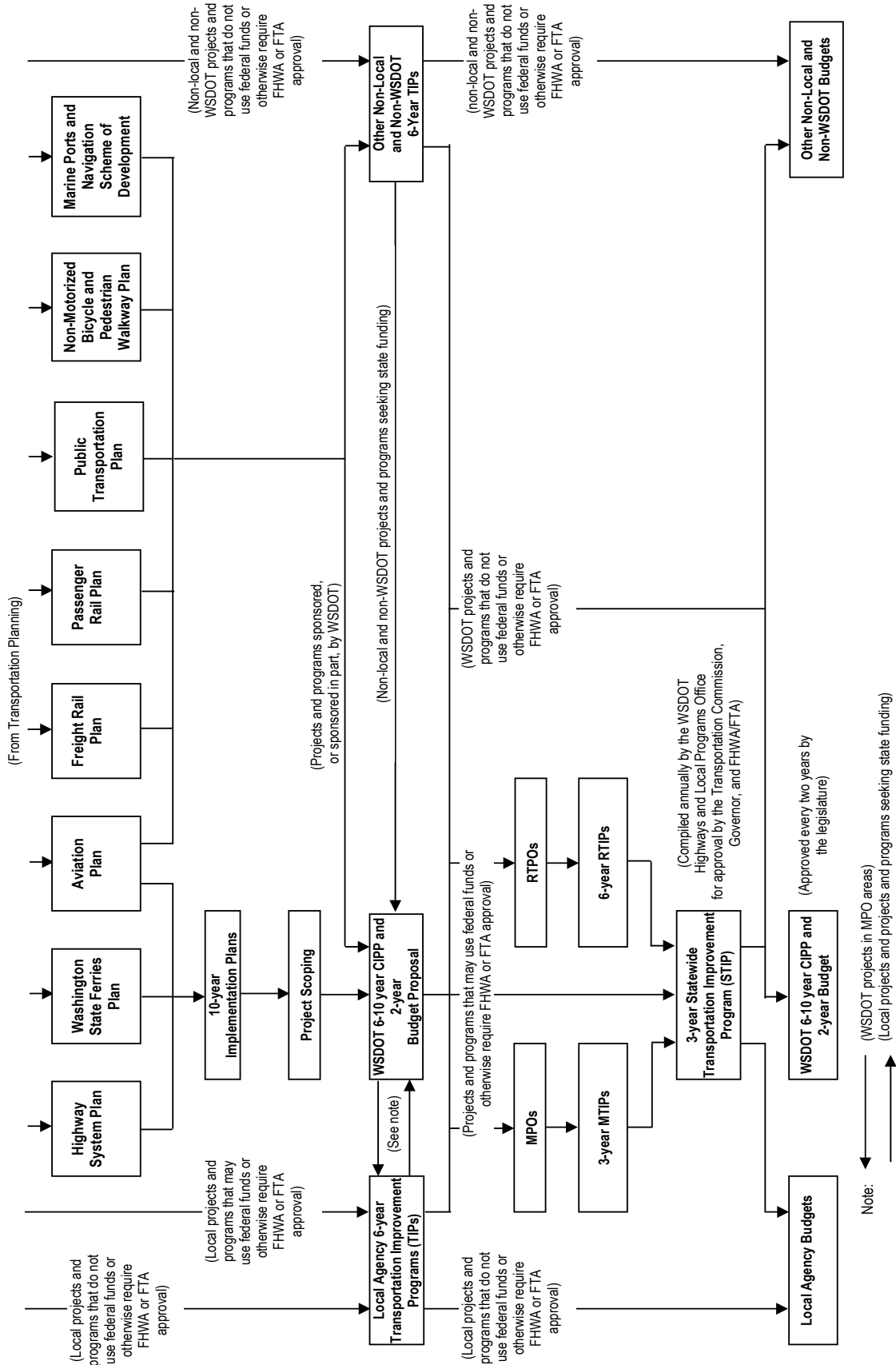
Figure 300-1 shows how Project Scoping and Programming relates to preceding and succeeding phases in the WSDOT Transportation Decision-Making Process, and **Figure 300-2** shows the Project Scoping and Programming process itself. During this phase, WSDOT develops a medium-range implementation plan for each of the primary transportation system components, highways, ferries, and the statewide airport system. It engages in Project Scoping and some additional programming to develop a six to ten year Capital Improvements and Preservation Program (CIPP) and a two-year budget proposal for each state-owned component (and some state-interest components as well) for consideration by the Legislature.

Figure 300-1: Project Scoping and Programming Phase

EPM Part 2	EPM Part 3				EPM Part 4
Transportation Planning Phase	Project Scoping and Programming Phase				Design and Environmental Review Phase
	Medium Range Implementation Plans	Project Scoping	MPO / RTPO and WSDOT Transportation Improvement Programming	WSDOT 6-10 Year CIPP and 2-Year Budget	

*Web sites and navigation referenced in this chapter are subject to change. For the most current links, please refer to the online version of the EPM, available through the WSDOT Environmental Services Office (ESO) home page: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/>

Figure 300-2: Project Scoping and Programming



An overview of the process is described here in more detail for highways.

To begin the process, the Headquarters Systems Analysis and Program Development Office develops a Ten-Year Implementation Plan for highway preservation and improvement program projects listed in the Highway Systems Plan.

For all projects in the Ten-Year Implementation Plan that are expected to begin design or construction in the next six years, Headquarters Program Development, an office within the Systems Analysis and Program Development Office, directs WSDOT divisions and regional offices to prepare a scope, schedule, projected performance outcome, and budget. Project scoping involves:

- Identifying the highway problem or need.
- Defining a project purpose.
- Identifying and evaluating alternative solutions to find the most cost-effective and environmentally acceptable solution.
- Defining the scope of the proposed solution, with a cost estimate and benefit/cost analysis.
- Preparing a draft Project Summary to document the results of the process. A Project Summary includes three documents: Project Definition, Design Decisions Summary, and Environmental Review Summary.

Upon completion of the project scoping process, Headquarters Program Development creates lists of prioritized projects for each objective (project type) in the Highway System Plan based on each project's benefit/cost, constructability issues, and performance change. Program Development uses the constructability analysis to combine high priority projects into a single contract during the development of budget scenarios for department executives and the Governor.

The Governor submits the proposed budget, including a list of proposed projects in the Highway Construction Program, to the Legislature for consideration of funding authorization. Because the Highway Construction Program includes state and federal dollars, many projects are funded with federal aid, and they must be dealt with in accordance with the Federal-Aid Highway Program Stewardship and Oversight Agreement between WSDOT and FHWA, which is available at:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Environment/Compliance/agreements.htm>

During recent years, available state funding has decreased for several reasons, and high priority state-funded projects were converted to federal aid in order to be built.

Projects that are designated for federal funding and high priority state funded projects that are eligible for federal funds, or will otherwise require FHWA or FTA approval, are included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for approval by the FHWA and FTA.

300.03 Organization of Part 3

Chapter 310 describes the Project Scoping process, during which the need and purpose for a project is defined, alternatives are evaluated, and a Project Summary is prepared for consideration in biennial budget meetings. The environmental analysis conducted during this process includes classifying the project to determine what documentation will be needed for NEPA/SEPA compliance. The chapter includes detailed instructions for determining this classification, and references data resources and other tools available to help with the analysis. **Chapter 320** describes how WSDOT projects are programmed or prioritized for funding, which involves developing a ten-year Implementation Plan, a biennial budget proposal, and a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for federally funded projects of various types, including highways, ferries, and airports.

300.04 Environmental Issues in Project Scoping and Programming

Decision makers have the option to place a higher priority on certain types of investments with less environmental impact when they identify the kinds of projects that should be included in the ten-year Implementation Plan and the smaller list of projects selected for scoping. Project Managers also have this option during project scoping, when they identify alternative solutions for addressing a project purpose and need and identify a proposed solution after evaluating the alternatives to find the most cost-effective and environmentally acceptable solution.

Once a proposed solution is selected, the Environmental Review Summary is prepared, identifying potential environmental impacts, any proposed mitigation, environmental documentation requirements, and any environmental permits. This helps ensure that the full scope, schedule, and budget for any environmental work, including mitigation, is determined and included in the project duration, estimated project cost, and benefit/cost ratio recorded in the Project Definition. Also, if a Cost Risk Assessment is conducted for the project, the full range of costs or cost savings associated with any environmental risks or opportunities can be identified.

These procedures are described in **Chapter 310** and **Chapter 320**, and a link to copies of the Project Definition, Design Decision Summary, and Environmental Review Summary forms is available online at:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Environment/Compliance/ComplianceGuidance.htm#scoping>

300.05 Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations and acronyms used in **Part 3** are listed below. Others are found in the general list in **Appendix A**.

CE	Categorical Exclusion (NEPA) or Categorical Exemption (SEPA)
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIPP	Capital Improvement and Preservation Program
CRA	Cost Risk Assessment
DCE	Documented Categorical Exclusion (NEPA)
EA	Environmental Assessment
EBASE	Estimate and Bid Analysis System
ECS	Environmental Classification Summary
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ERS	Environmental Review Summary
ESO	Environmental Services Office
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GIS	Geographic Information System
HOV	High Occupancy Vehicles
LAG	Local Agency Guidelines
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PATS	Priority Array Tracking System
PS&E	Plans, Specifications, and Estimates
RTPO	Regional Transportation Planning Organization
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SIP	State Implementation Plan
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA	Transportation Management Agency

300.06 Glossary

A glossary of terms used in **Part 3** are listed below. See **Appendix B** for a general glossary of terms used in the EPM.

Federal Nexus – A determination that at least one federal agency is involved as a proponent of a specified proposal and/or as an agency that needs to act on a federal permit, license, or other entitlement (such as a request to use federal funds or federal land) needed to implement the proposal. A federal nexus (even on an otherwise non-federal proposal) typically triggers the need for the federal agency or agencies to comply with various federal statutes including but not limited to NEPA, Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. A project has a federal nexus when there is a connection with the federal government; i.e., when any of the following occur: federal land is within the project area, federal money is used in the project, or federal permits or approvals are required as part of the undertaking.

Project Scoping – A phase of the WSDOT Transportation Decision-Making Process when a Project Summary (consisting of a Project Definition, Design Decisions Summary, and Environmental Review Summary) is prepared for a project.

300.07 Exhibits

None.