

Project Consistency Guidance

Project Consistency Guidebook

Maintaining Project Consistency
throughout the Project Development Process

Project 0-6758

Project Title: Maintaining Project
Consistency with Transportation Plans
throughout the Project Life Cycle
with an Emphasis on Maintaining
Air Quality Conformity

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CE	Categorical Exclusion
DCIS	Design and Construction Information System
ENV	Environmental Affairs
EA	Environmental Assessment
ECOS	Environmental Compliance Oversight System
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Authority
FIN	Finance
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPA	Federal Project Agreement Authorization
L RTP	Long-Range Transportation Plan
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NA	Nonattainment
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
OPRs	Offices of Primary Responsibility
PE	Preliminary Engineering
PM	Project Manager
PS&E	Plans, Specifications, and Estimates
PCM	Project Consistency Management
PD	Project Development
P6	Primavera Version 6
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	Right-of-Way
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
SPA	Supplemental Program Authority
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TP&D	Transportation Planning and Development
TPP	Transportation Planning and Programming

USC United States Code
UTP Unified Transportation Program

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

Streamlined project delivery is a federally mandated goal that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) leadership supports. Federal and state transportation planning statutory and regulatory laws require transportation projects to be consistent with transportation plans and improvement programs before the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) can take federal action on a project¹ requiring one. Consequently, significant delays in project delivery can potentially occur, as the federal funding will be withheld for such projects and FHWA/FTA will not authorize their construction until the inconsistencies are fully addressed. Project consistency is required based on federal code 23 CFR 450 and Texas code 43 TAC 16.

This issue is especially critical for projects in nonattainment (NA) and maintenance areas because an individual project's project-level conformity is directly linked to the consistency of the project with appropriate transportation plans and improvement programs, and a nonconforming project might trigger a conformity failure or delayed determination for the entire plan and/or program and required by conformity regulation 40 CFR 93, subchapter A.

This document was developed for transportation professionals responsible for project development and has three basic goals:

1. Define project consistency and identify the causes of project inconsistencies and the critical junctures in the project development process where project consistency should be reviewed.
2. Identify resources and best practices that minimize project delays and financial risk, including the Project Consistency Checklist.
3. Provide contact information for external entities and TxDOT offices of primary responsibility (OPRs) as well as communication guidelines for resolving project inconsistencies.

To meet these goals, this guidebook is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2 will define project consistency and provide an overview of its elements.
- Chapter 3 will identify the causes of inconsistencies and outline the critical junctures in the planning and project development processes where project consistency should be reviewed.
- Chapter 4 will discuss project consistency management throughout the project development process to minimize delay and financial risk. In addition, this chapter will identify the tools helpful in this process.

¹ Including signing a Record of Decision (ROD), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or approval of a categorical exclusion (CE) for a project.

CHAPTER 2: PROJECT CONSISTENCY

Transportation plans and improvement programs developed at the statewide and local levels of government to address transportation and air quality goals and objectives must be consistent, as stipulated in both federal and state regulations. Federal action may only be taken on projects that are listed in an approved, fiscally constrained, and conforming (if applicable) plan and program.

This chapter will specifically address project-specific consistency requirements in the plans and programs that are reviewed in the course of a federal action to approve the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), determine transportation conformity, approve project-specific environmental documentation, or approve a Federal Project Authorization Agreement (FPAA) for the reimbursement of federal funds on a project.

Projects are listed in the following plans, programs, and environmental documents:

- Metropolitan/Regional Transportation Plan (MTP/RTP).
- Unified Transportation Program (UTP).
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.
- Conformity documentation (nonattainment and maintenance areas only).
- Categorical Exclusion (CE), Environmental assessment (EA), or environmental impact statement (EIS).

For the purposes of this document, the focus will be on consistency of project information for the projects that are listed individually in the documents listed above.

2.1. DEFINITION OF PROJECT CONSISTENCY

Project consistency refers to the federal and state requirement that transportation projects must be described consistently in all applicable plans, programs, conformity documentation, and environmental documents with regard to the following elements:

- Design concept: project limits, location, facility type.
- Design scope: project configuration (e.g., number of lanes, length, signalization).
- Project cost.
- Estimated letting date.

2.2. PROJECTS THAT ARE SUBJECT TO PROJECT CONSISTENCY

All non-exempt transportation projects listed individually in a TIP and STIP must be consistent with an MTP (where applicable) and UTP for the purposes of fiscal constraint. Some project types may be excluded from a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) TIP and the STIP by agreement between TxDOT and the MPO in accordance with requirements established in Title 43, Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 16.101(d). Those projects include:

- Safety projects funded under 23 USC 402 (highway safety programs and emergency relief projects, except those involving substantial functional, location, and capacity changes).
- Planning and research activities, except those activities funded with National Highway System or Surface Transportation Program funds other than those used for major investment studies.
- Projects under 23 USC 104(b)(1), (b)(4), and 144 that are for resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, or highway safety improvement, and which will not alter the functional traffic capacity or capability of the facility being improved.

The types of projects listed above are less likely to encounter delays due to project inconsistency because they are less likely to be included in an MTP/RTP, UTP, TIP, or the STIP, but there are notable exceptions as follows:

- An MPO may opt to include individual projects that would be exempt by federal definition under the agreement. If a project is listed individually for whatever reason, it will be treated as a non-exempt project during federal review.
- Projects that are considered of regional significance—even those that could be exempted by definition—must be listed individually.
- Any projects and project phases that will have an impact on air quality in nonattainment areas.

2.3. CONSISTENCY AND FEDERAL ACTION

A project funded with federal dollars that is, by definition, required to be listed in a fiscally constrained and conforming MTP/RTP and TIP must be consistently described in those documents in order to receive federal action. Though there is not a federal requirement stipulating consistency of plans and programs with the UTP, projects listed in an MTP/RTP and TIP must be consistent with the UTP because TxDOT demonstrates the fiscal constraint of the STIP, and all included TIPs, via the UTP. This document focuses specifically on project consistency to facilitate the following federal actions:

- Approval of the STIP.
- Conformity determinations (approval of modeled network consistent with a fiscally constrained MTP/RTP and TIP in a nonattainment or maintenance area).
- Approval of a CE, EA or EIS.
- Approval of an FPAA (required for the reimbursement of project costs with federal funds).

2.4. PROJECT CONSISTENCY AND TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY

Project consistency is one of the key criteria for project-level conformity determination and an important factor for the regional transportation conformity for the MTP and TIP. Federal project-level conformity requirements state that projects need to be from and consistent with a currently conforming MTP and TIP. A failure of project conformity as a result of project inconsistency can potentially result in a failure of regional transportation conformity and a need for a conformity redetermination.

2.5. CONSEQUENCES OF PROJECT INCONSISTENCY

In general, if a project does not meet the federal project consistency requirements, FHWA/FTA will not take an action on the project. When federal action cannot be taken due to project inconsistency, delays occur, and those delays put TxDOT at financial risk. More importantly, without these federal actions, TxDOT cannot be reimbursed with federal funds for eligible project costs. Figure 1 summarizes the potential consequences of a project inconsistency.

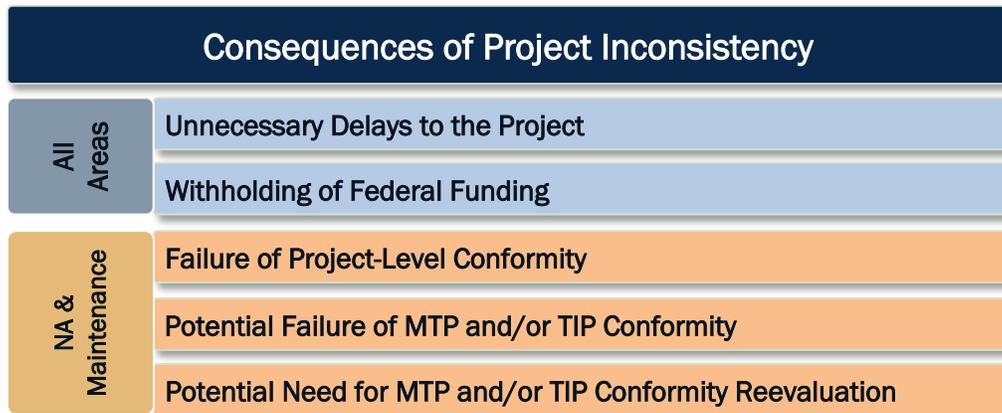


Figure 1. Consequences of Project Inconsistency.

This issue is especially critical for projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas since an inconsistency-induced failure of project-level conformity can affect the region's transportation conformity determination. According to the federal project-level conformity requirements, a project is no longer in conformity if its design concept and scope:

- Have changed from what was originally included in the regional emissions analysis.
- Were not adequate to determine the contribution of a project to regional emissions in the MTP and TIP.

In addition to unnecessary delays for the project and withholding of federal funding, a failure of project conformity can potentially result in a failure of regional air quality conformity and a need for a conformity reevaluation. A regional conformity reevaluation can cause an excessive delay for the project. In some cases, FHWA/FTA can authorize only limited types of projects until the conformity redetermination for the MTP and/or TIP is complete.

CHAPTER 3: ORIGINS OF PROJECT CONSISTENCY

This chapter provides an overview of the causes of project inconsistency and the junctures at which project consistency becomes a critical factor in the project development process.

3.1. CAUSES OF PROJECT INCONSISTENCY

Projects that are listed individually will likely be listed in an MTP, the UTP, a TIP, and the STIP at various junctures during the project development process. Then these projects may be described in detail in an environmental document should one be required. Projects in nonattainment areas will likely have all project phases (preliminary engineering [PE], right-of-way [ROW], and construction) listed individually.

Some projects are developed over long periods of time, so it is quite natural that the design, scope, estimated cost, or letting date will change over time as the project development process is carried out. As the number of times a project and its phases are listed in various documents increases, so does the risk of project inconsistency.

The causes of project inconsistency can be numerous, but the following is a summary of the most common causes:

- Evolution of projects—The long periods of time that elapse between stages in the planning, project development, and environmental processes increase the chances that a project’s design, scope, estimated cost, or estimated letting date will change. When changes are not communicated, it is difficult to maintain project consistency in every document in which the project has been listed—from project initiation to construction.
- Inconsistency in regulatory processes—Though inadvertent, some of the regulatory requirements for planning, transportation conformity, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) evaluations are inconsistent in terms of the timing and criteria under which the federal actions related to each process can occur. In addition, a project of significant scope may be subject to changes in established regulations and administrative rules over time without the benefit of being grandfathered.
- Communication—More to the point, there can be a lack of communication between the numerous local, state, and federal entities responsible for the completion of the plans, programs, and processes to advance a project from inception to construction. For example, if the project description is changed during the preliminary design phase, TxDOT will need to notify the MPO to update the project description in the MTP before that project is carried into the TIP with an inconsistent (or rather, incorrect) project description.
- Complexity of funding scenarios—Programming transportation projects is a dynamic process. The following is a list of factors that can result in changes to one or more aspects of a project’s scope, design, or description that would have to be revised in the appropriate planning and environmental documents (*I*).
 - Funding levels.
 - Funding sources.
 - Agency operations.

- Economic conditions.
- Current laws.
- Timing of project schedules.
- Changes in the estimated cost of a project over the time it takes to develop a project.

Examples of possible inconsistencies are listed below:

- The project design concept and scope are not consistent with those provided in the MTP, TIP, and/or STIP, and/or the scopes do not match the funding amounts that the Finance (FIN) Division projected.
- The project is not fiscally constrained because:
 - It is not included in the fiscally constrained portion of the MTP.
 - The project funding type is not consistent with that in the MTP, TIP, and/or STIP.
 - The total project cost significantly exceeds that provided in the MTP, UTP, TIP, and/or STIP (by more than 50 percent).
- A project is not included in the STIP or TIP but is found earlier in the planning documents, such as the MTP and UTP.
- In areas subject to transportation conformity (i.e., nonattainment and maintenance areas), the project completion year is not consistent with the MTP and/or TIP regional emissions analysis years for conformity determination.

3.2. CONSISTENCY AND FEDERAL ACTION IN THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

For some projects, inconsistency is unavoidable, given the complexity of the various processes to which projects are subject. The successful delivery of projects requires time and effort on the part of many professionals at local, state, and federal transportation planning and regulatory agencies. While no one can control the outcomes of all the various phases and steps in the planning, project development, and environmental processes, one can attempt to better understand the relationships between the various processes.

Projects are generally designed to conform to federal planning and environmental regulations under the assumption that federal funding may be required to complete some or all of the project development activities or actual construction. The planning, environmental, and project development processes are interdependent and somewhat sequential in nature. Some processes have phases or steps that are underway concurrently at any given time when federal action may be requested (see Figure 2).

Table 1. Project Development Process-Plan/Program Alignment.

Phase	Step	Plan/Program* Checked for Consistency
Planning	Need and Purpose Determination	MTP
	Project Authorization (Must have PLAN authority)	MTP/UTP
	Compliance with Planning/Study Requirements	MTP/UTP
	Construction Funding Identified	MTP/UTP
Design	Design Concept	MTP/UTP
	Data Collection	MTP/UTP
	Public Meetings	MTP/UTP
	Preliminary Geometric Schematics	MTP/UTP
	Value Engineering	MTP/UTP
	Schematic Approval	MTP/UTP
	Public Hearing	MTP/UTP
Environmental	Preliminary Environmental Issues	MTP/UTP/TIP
	Interagency Coordination	MTP/UTP/TIP
	Environmental Documentation	MTP/UTP/TIP
	Public Hearing	MTP/UTP/TIP
	Environmental Clearance**	MTP/UTP/TIP/STIP
ROW Acquisition	ROW/Utility Data Collection	MTP/UTP/TIP/STIP
	Mapping and Property Description	MTP/UTP/TIP/STIP
	Appraisal and Acquisition	MTP/UTP/TIP/STIP
	Utility Adjustment	MTP/UTP/TIP/STIP
Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E)		MTP/UTP/TIP/STIP
Letting		MTP/UTP/TIP/STIP

*As a general rule, a project would be present in the listed plan/program

**Conformity documentation if project is in a nonattainment area

Note: Federal regulations do not require consistency with the UTP; however, the UTP is how TxDOT chooses to show fiscal constraint. Therefore, the UTP needs to be checked for consistency as well.

CHAPTER 4: MAINTAINING PROJECT CONSISTENCY

This chapter covers the elements of project consistency management including:

- Project consistency responsibility.
- Project consistency maintenance.
- Project inconsistency prevention.
- Project inconsistency detection.
- Best practices.
- Tools and resources used to maintain project consistency.

4.1. PROJECT CONSISTENCY RESPONSIBILITY

TxDOT and MPOs are the major partners responsible for keeping projects consistent with planning documents. TxDOT District project managers (PMs) and the director of Transportation Planning and Development (TP&D) play a central role in maintaining project consistency.

It is important for Districts and MPOs to identify the staff responsible for key consistency-related steps/activities during the project development (PD) process, both inside their own agency and their partner agency. Figure 3 and Figure 4 show a list of the most common steps/activities that can be used for this purpose along with the most appropriate TxDOT staff member. Responsibilities should be clearly explained and assigned to staff members, and an effort should be made to ensure that they know the responsible party for the other activities.

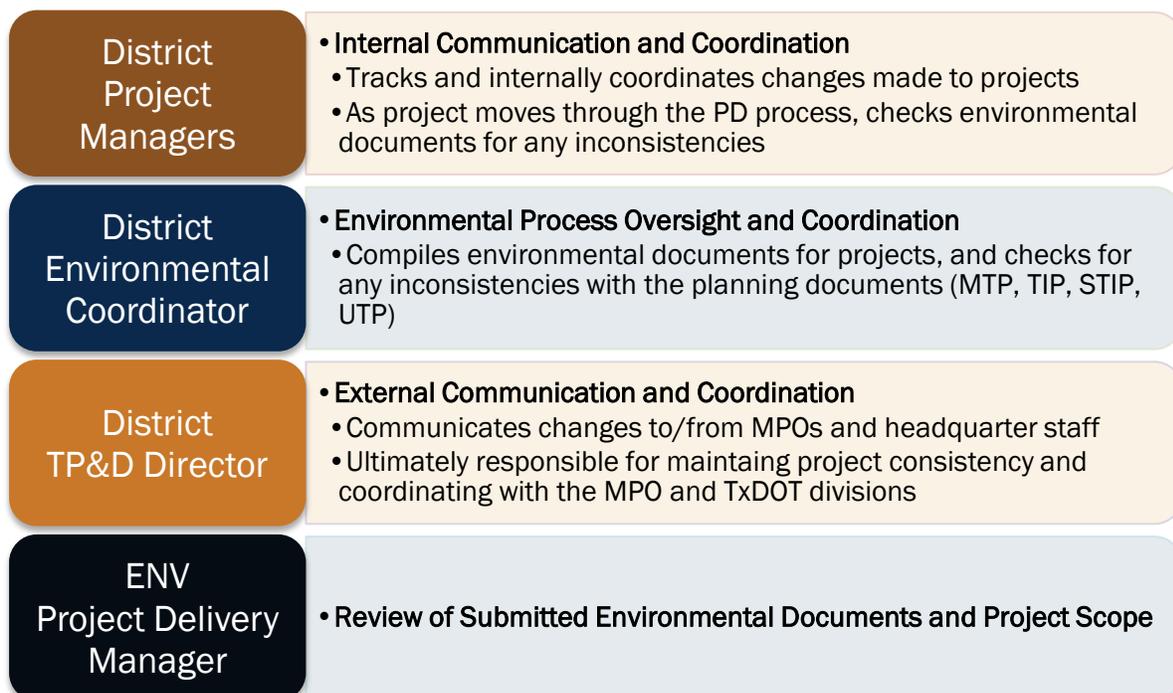


Figure 3. Helpful District Activities for Maintaining Project Consistency.

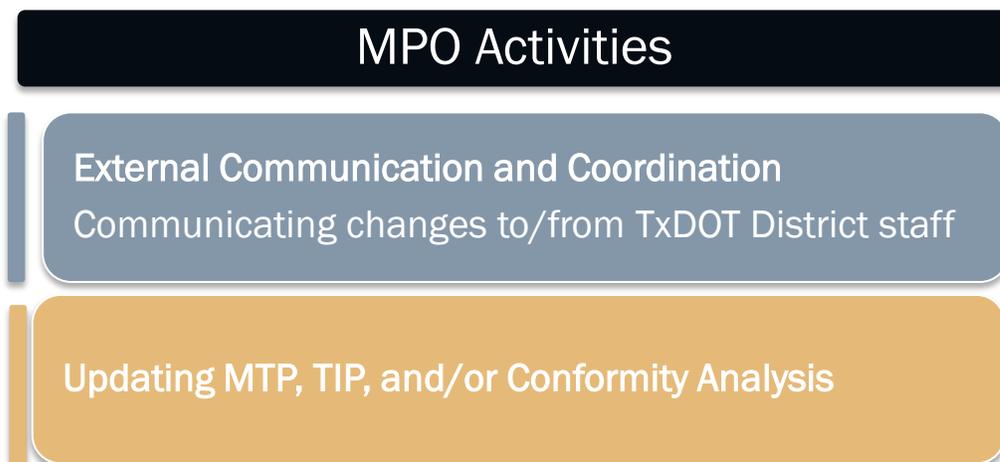


Figure 4. Helpful MPO Activities for Maintaining Project Consistency.

TxDOT project managers are usually the individuals overseeing project development and are in a position to coordinate and track all changes to a project during this process. In some Districts, a separate project manager (i.e., environmental project manager) oversees the environmental process activities for a project. Project managers report to the TP&D director on any issues or challenges regarding project development at internal meetings. The TP&D director communicates these issues to outside stakeholders including the MPO at the technical advisory meetings. The District environmental coordinator coordinates the District’s activities regarding the preparation of environmental documents for projects.

Because TxDOT project managers are the closest persons to projects and subsequent changes made to these, they are the responsible party to maintain consistency by ensuring that all changes are coordinated and communicated internally in an effective and timely manner. The District TP&D director is usually the responsible person to ensure that all the changes are communicated effectively and quickly with external partners, specifically MPO staff.

4.2. PROJECT CONSISTENCY MAINTENANCE

Maintaining project consistency, or project consistency management (PCM), is an ongoing process and covers all phases of project development. It becomes critical during the last four years of the project development process (i.e., when projects are listed in the TIP and STIP).

The scoping document is a collection of the first set of information on a project. It is often used as the foundation for setting up the project in different documents and database systems within and outside TxDOT. A robust scoping effort coupled with early coordination ensures that various stakeholders set up the project in a consistent and timely manner. This early consistency has been indicated to greatly help the stakeholders maintain the consistency of information in the later stages of project development.

The project should be consistent with all applicable planning documents throughout the project development process and into the preparation of the environmental review document. The main mechanism through which Environmental Affairs (ENV) and FHWA/FTA check for project consistency is the environmental review document and applicable planning documents (i.e., MTP, UTP, TIP, and STIP). If the project design concept or scope changes significantly after the project is environmentally cleared, a reevaluation will be required, and planning documents will likely need to be updated. Figure 5 shows the minimum level of communication for successful project consistency management.

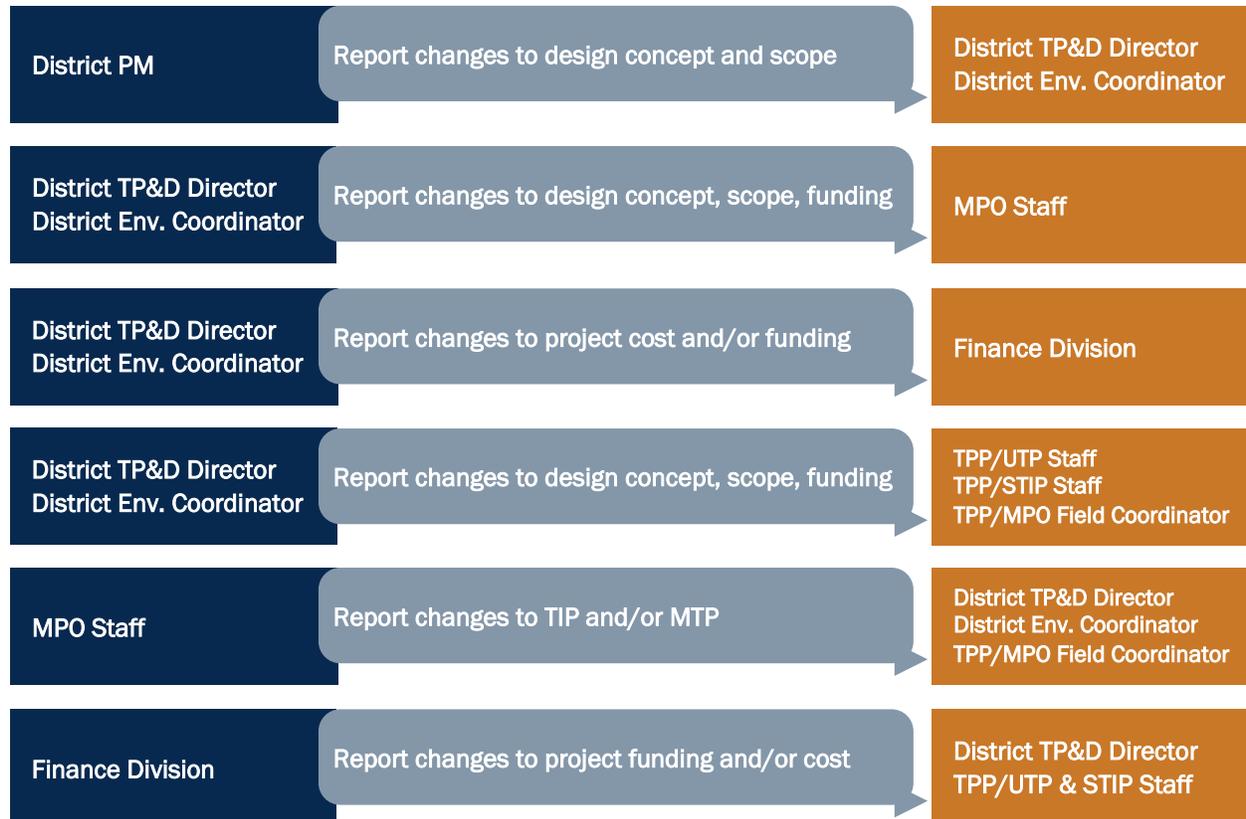


Figure 5. The Expected Minimum Level of Communication for PCM.

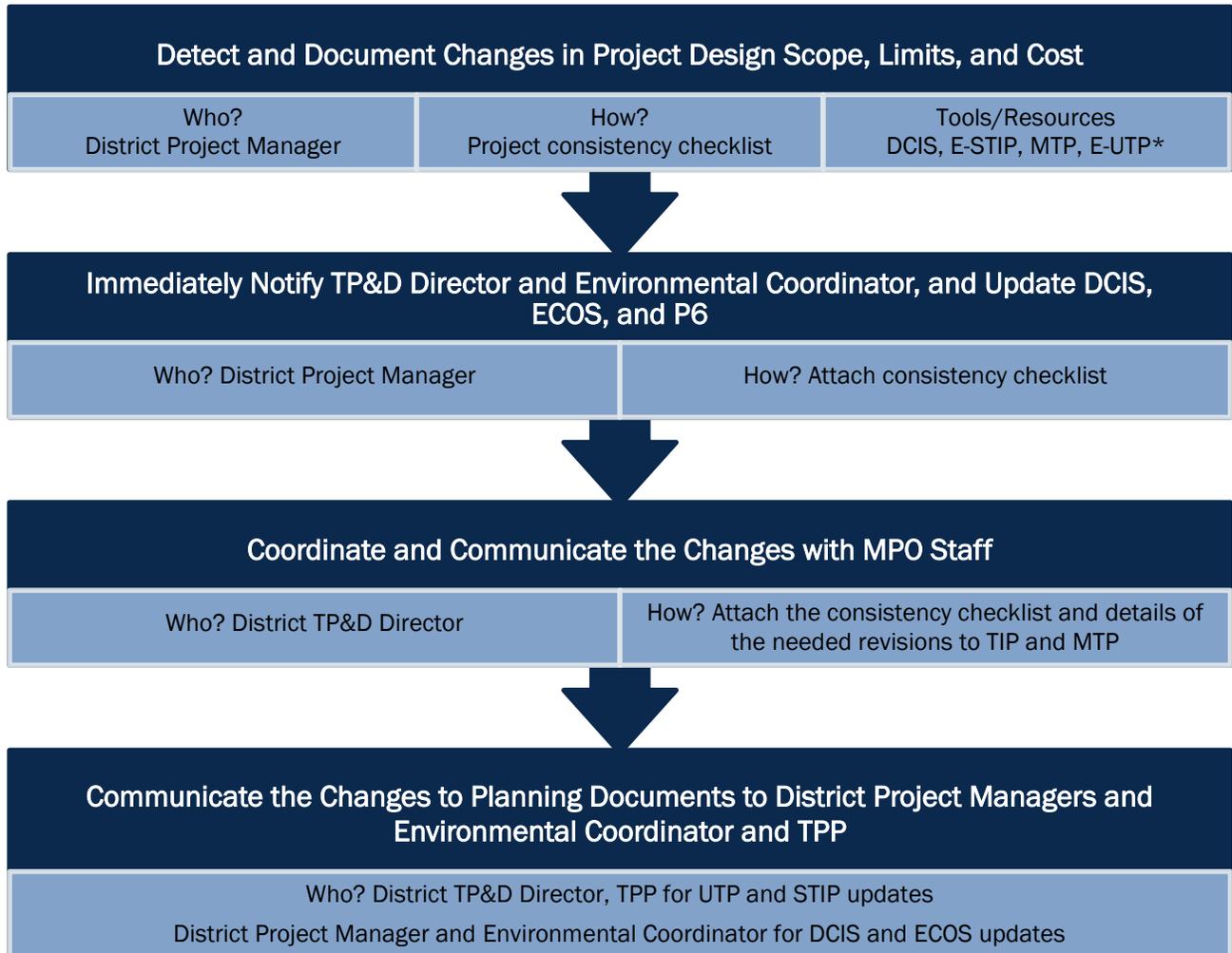
4.3. PROJECT INCONSISTENCY PREVENTION THROUGH EFFECTIVE PROJECT DATA MANAGEMENT

The basic principle of PCM is a seemingly simple task that becomes a challenge in practice because at any given time, there are multiple teams working on different aspects of a project, and each uses different tools and data resources. That is why project inconsistencies are strongly associated with a breakdown of communication and poor coordination. Establishing a systematic process for this task can greatly help Districts simplify the coordination of efforts between different parties and achieve the goal of advancing a project to construction with minimal delays.

The goal of the following steps is to establish a PCM process to manage project data and information to minimize delays due to project inconsistency during the project development process.

- *Step 1: Training*—Ensure that all TxDOT District and Division planning, design, and environmental staffers (especially project managers in those disciplinary areas) have a general understanding of the planning, project development, and environmental processes as they relate to project delivery, including:
 - Planning and programming documents.
 - Transportation conformity.
 - Design documentation.
 - Environmental documentation.
 - Federal actions.
 - Elements and importance of project consistency.
- *Step 2: Assign Roles and Responsibilities*—Clearly define roles and the assignment of responsibilities in order to establish an effective management process. Management must clearly articulate and communicate the roles and responsibilities of District and Division staff. Staff members should have a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities and be empowered to communicate problems and inconsistencies with project data as they arise.
- *Step 3: Provide Authority and Tools*—Grant project managers the authority and equip them with the necessary resources and tools to meet their responsibilities. The next section, 4.3, provides an overview of the tools and data sources that TxDOT District staff can use to maintain project consistency. The consistency checklist in Appendix A can be used as a guide to keep track of the changes to a project.
- *Step 4: Establish a PCM Workflow*—Establish a workflow, which helps to clarify the steps necessary for maintaining project consistency. A workflow is a depiction of a sequence of operations and connected steps that demonstrate the elements and flow of work in a simple form. A basic workflow communicates and identifies the following three major points and establishes simple and effective interactions between them.
 - How should the project changes be identified and communicated through different project development process stages (action steps and time)?
 - Who is held accountable for each step?
 - Where are the supporting tools and resources located?Figure 6 shows a simple project inconsistency prevention workflow. Each District can modify this diagram to fit its needs and current practice.
- *Step 5: Establish Systematic Coordination and Communication*—Develop a set of effective intra- and interagency communication and coordination procedures, which are fundamental to achieve a successful PCM process. At many TxDOT Districts and divisions, communication and coordination occur on a personal level. While personal-level communication and coordination is necessary and works in many instances, it has a few major flaws that can cause a breakdown of communication:
 - Risk of discontinuity: Staff turnovers can cause a major breakdown of communication until the new persons establish working or personal relationships with their colleagues.

- No guarantee of a minimum level of communication: Effective communication on the most minimal level requires a strong personal-level relationship of the staff. Communication can become unreliable if a strong working or personal relationship does not exist between the parties.



*E-UTP is currently in development

Figure 6. Example Workflow for Preventing Project Inconsistencies.

4.4. PROJECT INCONSISTENCY DETECTION

Project inconsistencies can occur despite all the precautions taken to prevent them. Early detection of these inconsistencies will help in minimizing unforeseen delays to the project. A project inconsistency detection process serves as a second line of defense in these situations. The goal is to detect and address the inconsistencies before they cause major delays as a result of a need for project and/or plan changes.

The focus of the PCM is to detect and address the inconsistencies at critical junctures along the project development process. Critical junctures are points during the project development process at which a project inconsistency can be detected and addressed. It is recommended that Districts select at least three critical junctures for the purpose of project inconsistency detection, each covering a different stage of the project development. Districts can also establish schedule-based critical juncture points (i.e., semi-annual or annual). The following is a recommended list of critical juncture points for this purpose:

- Design concept conference.
- 30 and 90 percent PS&E development.
- Environmental scoping.
- Annual scheduled checking for all projects listed on the TIP, STIP, UTP, and Supplemental Program Authority (SPA) list with an expected letting date within the next four years.

The consistency checklist in Appendix A is created to assist the District project manager in checking for potential inconsistencies. The best practices and tools available to District staff are discussed in the following sections.

Once a project inconsistency is detected, the project manager should immediately notify the District TP&D director on the details of the detected inconsistency. The TP&D director or the person assigned for external coordination will coordinate the effort with the partners to address the inconsistency (e.g., MTP, UTP, TIP, or STIP revision).

The TP&D director coordinates with the MPO staff on projects that need MTP and/or TIP revisions. The MPO will communicate with the District when revisions are made to the documents. The District will then need to make sure that the Design and Construction Information System (DCIS) reflects the changes accurately. The District will need to communicate with Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP) for STIP and UTP revisions and will also need to update the *revision date* field in DCIS.

4.5. BEST PRACTICES TO MAINTAIN PROJECT CONSISTENCY

The best practices for maintaining project consistency can be categorized as follows:

- **Education/Training**—A basic understanding of the planning, project development, and environmental processes (and how those processes are advanced through federal actions) will encourage teamwork and facilitate better communication between personnel at the various transportation entities.
- **Roles and Responsibilities**—Clearly defined roles and responsibilities will ensure that when project inconsistencies are discovered, the appropriate personnel can be alerted to take corrective action to avoid project delays.
- **Planning Tools**—The use of available planning tools to track the progress of project development will ensure that project inconsistencies can be detected, reported, and corrected in a consistent and timely manner.
- **Communication**—Communication of changes to a project’s design concept or scope, estimated project cost, or letting date to OPRs at the time of occurrence will facilitate

the timely revision of any plan, program, or document requiring federal action to advance the project.

The following are examples of best practices that TxDOT Districts have implemented with regard to establishing a system of communication and coordination:

- **Regular meetings with MPOs**—The TP&D director and/or environmental coordinators in some Districts have monthly or quarterly meetings with MPO staffers. The main purpose of these meetings is to keep MPOs aware of any changes to projects as well as amendments or updates needed in the planning documents. Items such as project scope, costs, and limits are discussed in the meetings. A popular and effective practice is to prepare a list of projects to be discussed and send it to all participants in advance.
- **Regular internal project meetings**—Some Districts have regular internal meetings between the various District departments working on projects, including design, environmental, and planning. These internal meetings help maintain communication as a project is developed at the District level. The involved parties are usually the District planners, environmental coordinators, and design engineers. These meetings are held on a regular basis or at critical junctures, such as 30 percent, 60 percent, and 90 percent design or environmental analysis completed.

The Districts that hold these meeting as their business routine have noted that the meetings have helped them ensure that the environmental coordinators and project managers are communicating on the environmental documents, and that the limits, scope, and project descriptions are kept consistent in all necessary documents.

4.6. TOOLS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR MAINTAINING PROJECT CONSISTENCY

TxDOT has various software systems that are used throughout the various stages of the PD process:

- **Design and Construction Information System** to check scope, limits, time period, project status—DCIS is a statewide computer network that allows all TxDOT Districts and TxDOT divisions to maintain project data in a common format. The information is used to prepare the MTP, STIP, UTP, and letting schedule. DCIS is often the primary tool to check for the updated information on individual projects and a key tool for project consistency checking.
- **Environmental Compliance Oversight System (ECOS)** to check the consistency of environmental documents with planning documents—ECOS is a statewide computer application for stakeholders involved in the environmental process to provide enhanced tracking, reporting, and metrics for environmental issues. It provides an automated initial scoping form that generates recommended tasks to be performed based on the information that the user has entered.
- **E-STIP** to check the consistency with STIP—E-STIP is TxDOT’s electronic Statewide Transportation Improvement Program database that collects and stores project information for all highway, transit, non-motorized, and statewide planning projects to be constructed/implemented within the four-year STIP horizon. A similar format is in development for the UTP.

- **Primavera Version 6 (P6)** to check project schedules with letting schedule and environmental clearance dates—P6 is the new project management tracking program where users can access information on transportation projects in one database in real time. It creates project schedules for project development work, from preliminary tasks such as surveying, environmental clearance, right-of-way acquisition, and utility coordination, through schematic and final planning, and contract letting.

4.7. THE ROLE OF THE FINANCE DIVISION

The main focus of this document is to outline the responsibilities and best practices at the District level where the majority of changes to a project occur. However, there are changes that are initiated at the divisions, most notably the FIN and TPP divisions.

FIN is involved at the very end of the project development process when the project is ready to let, but before FHWA allocates the funding. FIN receives a letting list from the Districts every month listing the projects that are environmentally cleared. Shortly before the letting date of a project, FIN prepares an FPAA and sends the package to FHWA/FTA for its authorization to proceed. The FPAA package includes:

- Project location information.
- Work description.
- ENV clearance.
- STIP approval.
- Amount of federal funds and the specific federal program that FIN estimated the project will need as well as any non-federal fund sources.

After FHWA/FTA signs the FPAA, TxDOT can begin to incur costs for federal reimbursement.

FIN is involved in communication with the Districts in two ways:

- FIN updates the funding changes that will impact the FPAA package sent to FHWA for authorization. In most cases, the Districts know about the funding changes before FIN and TPP; therefore, the District staff needs to communicate the changes to FIN and TPP.
- In some cases, changes can be made to funding of projects by TxDOT administration. Examples of such cases are budget cuts and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. In these cases, it is the responsibility of FIN to communicate the changes to the Districts and TPP in a timely manner.

APPENDIX A: PROJECT CONSISTENCY CHECKLIST

Project Manager							
District PD&E							
District Env. Coordinator							
DCIS Current Information	CSJ#						
	District						
	County						
	Roadway						
	Limits From						
	Limits To						
	Project Description						
	Ongoing and Completed Steps	<input type="radio"/> Plan and Program	<input type="radio"/> Prelim Design	<input type="radio"/> Env. Doc	<input type="radio"/> PS&E 30%	<input type="radio"/> PS&E 60%	<input type="radio"/> PS&E 90%
	Estimated Year of Completion	20__					
	Phased Project	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	If the answer is Yes , are all the phases that fall within the MTP timeframe included in the MTP?				Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>
Applicable Planning Documents	<input type="radio"/> Env. Doc/NEPA	<input type="radio"/> MTP	<input type="radio"/> TIP/STIP	<input type="radio"/> UTP or SPA			
Conformity	Only applicable to <u>nonattainment</u> and <u>maintenance</u> areas	The 1 st year in which the project is included in the MTP emissions analysis			The Last Year in which the project is NOT included in the MTP emissions analysis		
	Analysis Years (AY) for MTP Conformity Determination	20__			20__		
	The expected year of completion MUST fall between these years.						
Project Scope Consistency (for non-grouped projects)		Env. Doc/NEPA	DCIS	MTP	TIP/STIP	UTP or SPA	Comments
Current Time Frame of Planning Documents	Start		20__	20__	20__	20__	
	End		20__	20__	20__	20__	
Date on which information was checked from each document		MM, D D 20__	MM, D D 20__	MM, D D 20__	MM, D D 20__	MM, D D 20__	
Expected Let Date (MM/YYYY)		MM, 20__	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
Expected Year of Completion		20__	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
Design Concept	CSJ#		<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
	Roadway		<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
	Type of facility		<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
	Limit From		<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
	Limit To		<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
Design Scope	Number of Lanes		<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
	Length (mi)		<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
	Signalization (if yes, how many?)		<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
	Access Control (if yes, how many?)		<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
	Number and Location of Interchanges		<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	<input type="radio"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict	
Project Cost	Project Cost Consistency (All projects with cost >\$1.5M)	Env. Doc/NEPA	DCIS	MTP	TIP/STIP	UTP or SPA	Comments
	Total Project Cost						
Project cost in DCIS, TIP/STIP, and UTP/SPA must NOT exceed what is contained in the MTP by more than 50%.							

REFERENCES

(1) Texas Department of Transportation, *July 2013 Cash Forecast*. Retrieved from: ftp://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/fin/cash_forecast.pdf. Accessed February 2014.

