

Revisiting the Major Infrastructure Program Definition in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

MPO Options Moving Forward:

1. Continue to include the \$20 million threshold in the Major Infrastructure (MI) definition (existing policy)

- This option may require LRTP Amendments in the future if project costs increase during the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Project costs may increase as they move toward 100 percent design, as was the case for the most recent LRTP Amendment. There are three additional projects included in the federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2021–25 TIP that are programmed in FFY 2024 and 2025 with costs nearing \$20 million. Project costs may increase for the following projects as they reach final design:
 - Route 38 in Wilmington—\$19.6M
 - Essex Street in Lynn—\$19M
 - Route 38 in Woburn—\$16.7M
- The \$20 million threshold results in the MI program including a variety of projects that span across many project types. Revisions to the project evaluation criteria are currently being done with a unique set of criteria associated with each investment program. This lower threshold dollar amount will make it more difficult to develop a set of criteria for the MI program that can be applied to all projects.

2. Change the definition to increase the threshold dollar amount

- Projects in the Complete Street program will be the most affected. In reviewing project costs for Complete Streets projects that have recently been submitted, a threshold of \$50 million could exclude these types of projects from the MI Program, including:
 - Route 126 in Ashland—\$19.6M
 - Ferry Street in Everett—\$25M
 - Route 1A in Walpole—\$26M
 - Mount Auburn Street in Watertown—\$28.3M
 - Western Avenue in Lynn—\$36.2M

3. Change the definition to include a threshold that applies to projects on certain types of roadways

- The MPO could consider only projects that are on the National Highway System (NHS). The average daily traffic (ADT) on the roadway could also be considered.
 - Projects on the NHS:
 - Route 126 in Ashland—\$19.6M (17,700 ADT)
 - Mount Auburn Street in Watertown—\$28.3M (20,900 ADT)
 - Western Avenue in Lynn—\$36.2M (15,900 to 18,400 ADT)
 - Route 38 in Wilmington—\$19.6M (12,500 to 21,400 ADT)
 - Essex Street in Lynn—\$19M (8,900 ADT)
 - Projects not on the NHS:
 - Ferry Street in Everett—\$25M (12,400 ADT)
 - Route 1A in Walpole—\$26M (26,100 ADT)

4. Change the definition of the MI Program to exclude the threshold dollar amount

- This option allows all projects to remain in the investment program aligned with their project type, and the new project evaluation criteria can be properly applied.
- This option eliminates the requirement for LRTP Amendments during TIP development when costs increase as they move through project design.

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Research on Cost Thresholds for Major Infrastructure Projects for Other Large Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

MPOs with No Cost Thresholds for Major Infrastructure Projects

1. Atlanta Regional Commission (Atlanta, GA)
2. Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (Washington, DC area)
3. San Diego Association of Governments (San Diego, CA)
4. Metropolitan Transportation Commission (San Francisco, CA)

MPOs with Cost Thresholds for Major Infrastructure Projects

1. Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (Philadelphia, PA)—The Delaware Valley MPO's definition of a major infrastructure project is one that has a significant impact on regional travel. Almost all system expansion projects, large-scale reconstruction projects on the region's freeways, and major operational improvement initiatives are considered major infrastructure projects. Projects with the following characteristics in the operational improvement and system preservation category are included as major infrastructure projects:
 - *Roadway Projects*
 - that improve or reconstruct National Highway System facilities or facilities with more than 25,000 vehicles per day;
 - that have more than 25,000 square feet of bridge deck area;
 - that cover more than 20 lane miles; or
 - that cost more than \$10 million.
 - *Transit Projects*
 - that improve or make major repairs to existing rail lines at a cost greater than \$20 million;
 - that make major improvements to stations with more than 5,000 daily boardings or alightings, or cost greater than \$20 million;
 - that make procurements to replace five or more vehicles in the existing rail fleets;
 - that double track or add sidings to existing passenger rail lines; or
 - that upgrade a traditional bus route with bus rapid transit service.

2. New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (New York City area)—Major infrastructure projects are those that cost over \$100 million, however, for transit projects that do not use federal funds, the major infrastructure project requirements do not apply.
3. Puget Sound Regional Council (Seattle, WA)—The Council lists specific types of projects as major infrastructure projects, but only has a cost threshold for Intelligent Transportation System projects over \$100 million and bicycle and pedestrian projects over \$20 million, which are separated pathways on dedicated rights-of-way.
4. East-West Gateway Council of Governments (St Louis, MO)—Major infrastructure projects are considered projects over \$20 million.