INTRODUCTION

In order to demonstrate compliance with federal and state transportation planning requirements, and to ensure that state and local agencies have access to federal transportation funding for roadways, bridges, transit, and facilities for non-motorized modes, the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SIRTPO) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) must include all projects that are funded wholly or partially with federal funds, or are determined to be regionally significant. Though the TIP is developed in its entirety annually, routine maintenance is required to accurately reflect anticipated federal expenditures, and to provide transparency to the public interested in short term transportation improvements in the area.

SIRTPO has identified the following policies to provide guidance for the development and maintenance of the TIP and to assist in the effective administration of MPO and RTPO-managed federal grant funds. Currently, SCOG manages federal grant funding appropriated by the U.S. Congress through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to local government and agencies within Skagit County. Specifically, SCOG manages grant funds from the FHWA Surface Transportation Program (STP) and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). From time to time, SCOG may receive an allocation of revenues from other funding sources (e.g., Economic Recovery, etc.) for which spending discretion is also provided.

Policy 1  COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGIONAL PLAN

For a project to be eligible for the TIP, it first must be included in, or consistent with, the adopted Metropolitan/Regional Transportation Plan. Regionally significant capital projects, roadway capacity, and/or general purpose roadway projects must be individually listed or clearly part of a larger project included in the fiscally-constrained component of the plan. Certain projects seeking to improve safety, increase multi-modal opportunities, or enhance the existing transportation system may be programmed in the TIP without individual identification in the regional plan, so long as they are consistent with the established goals and objectives of the plan and are funded with revenue identified by the plan.

The proposed project must also be listed in a local TIP or CIP to be eligible for regionally managed grant funds.

Policy 2  FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

SIRTPO will program funds to projects eligible for TAP funds to match the expected four year allocation based on estimates provided by WSDOT. SIRTPO may determine it beneficial to program more than the four-year expected allocation. This decision will be made by the SIRTPO Policy Board.

The SCOG Transportation Policy Board (TPB) will program funds to Skagit County projects eligible for STP funds to match the expected four-year allocation based on estimates provided by WSDOT. SCOG
may determine it beneficial to program more than the four-year expected allocation. This decision will be made by the SCOG TPB.

The Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board will program funds to Island County projects eligible for STP funds to match the expected four-year allocation based on estimates provided by WSDOT. The Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board may determine it beneficial to program more than the four-year expected allocation. This decision will be made by the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board.

**Policy 3  ILLUSTRATIVE PRIORITIES**

Upon adoption of the TIP, SIRTPO shall endorse or reaffirm its commitment to seeking resources for regional priority projects not funded within the four-year financial feasibility table included in the TIP. The endorsed list of priorities shall be used to identify projects to be funded in the event that additional funding becomes available to SIRTPO, SCOGR or Island Sub-RTPO, either through higher than expected appropriations or new federal grant programs, or from funding that is returned to the region from any project not able to use its award.

**Policy 4  UNANTICIPATED FUNDS**

When SIRTPO, SCOGR or Island Sub-RTPO receive unanticipated funds (e.g. deobligations, project closeouts, additional grant allocations), the Transportation Policy Board can program a project from the appropriate list of illustrative priorities. If SCOGR and/or Island Sub-RTPO have already met the obligation target for the fiscal year that the unanticipated funds are received, they may be carried forward to be distributed at a future call for projects.

**Policy 5  ELIGIBILITY FOR MPO- AND RTPO-MANAGED FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS**

At minimum, any proposed project to improve the safety, capacity, operations, or physical condition of roadways identified on SCOGR’s adopted regionally significant network are eligible for regionally managed federal grant funds. In addition, projects that improve safety or multi-modal opportunities on routes not identified on the regionally significant network (e.g., sidewalks on local roads, greenways, etc.) also are eligible as long as they meet all applicable federal codes and regulations. Certain regionally managed federal grant funds may require additional conditions to be met in order to be considered eligible.

Regionally managed federal grant funds will be awarded to projects that are in locations contained within the geographic area of the associated grant program (e.g., STP Urban Small, STP Rural). Only the SIRTPO Policy Board has the authority to distribute TAP funds. The SCOGR TPB has the authority to distribute STP funds in Skagit County and the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board has the authority to distribute STP funds in Island County.

**Policy 6  MPO COMMITMENT TO PROJECTS**

With the adoption of the TIP, or its subsequent amendments, SIRTPO, SCOGR and Island Sub-RTPO formally commit to ensuring that regionally managed federal grant funds identified for a project are provided as programmed unless such funding is not available due to changes in law or federal regulations, or if funding is not appropriated at anticipated levels, or is lost to the periodic rescission of
unobligated balances. Should regionally managed federal grant funding be removed from a project as a result of a decrease in funding levels, that project shall remain a top priority for funding once revenues are identified or restored.

Any project programmed in the TIP with regionally managed federal grant funds, which continues to meet all eligibility requirements while maintaining the proper support of the project sponsor, shall continue to be a priority for SIRTPO, SCOG and Island Sub-RTPO as the region develops a new TIP. Programmed projects with federal funding already obligated shall automatically have unobligated programmed funds carried forward to the new TIP, unless that project is proven to have a fatal flaw, loses the support from the project sponsor, or is estimated to cost more than 25% beyond previous total project cost estimates provided to SCOG (see Policy 9).

Policy 7  PROJECT SPONSOR COMMITMENT TO PROJECTS

Project sponsors are responsible for ensuring that their project information contained in the TIP is correct, that it accurately represents the scope of work being performed, and the amount of funding being requested. The sponsor is responsible for providing to SIRTPO, SCOG and/or Island Sub-RTPO an honest accounting of project details including costs, implementation schedules, and local matching fund sources at the time of the application for federal funds and anytime such details change, or at the request of SIRTPO, SCOG or Island Sub-RTPO.

Three months prior to the beginning of the federal fiscal year, the Skagit and Island Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) will review the projects programmed for the upcoming year. If it is determined that the scheduled projects are not ready to move forward, SCOG and/or Island Sub-RTPO will reprogram projects that are ready to move forward for the upcoming fiscal year.

Policy 8  DORMANT OR INACTIVE PROJECTS

Project sponsors are given a one-year grace period to obligate funding on projects beyond the originally programmed year of work. Failure to do so may cause federal funds to be returned to the MPO general fund and reprogrammed to the next highest eligible priority as identified by the SCOG or Island Sub-RTPO list of illustrative priorities (see Policy 3).

Project phases which have been obligated, and appear on WSDOT's inactive project list, may be subject to deobligation and grant funds returned to the region. This determination is made by WSDOT and FHWA.

Policy 9  COST INCREASES/COST OVERRUNS

The responsibility for any cost overrun on a project already under contract shall be determined by the prevailing contractual agreement between WSDOT and the project sponsor. Such contractual agreement shall not bind SIRTPO, SCOG or Island Sub-RTPO to pay for cost overruns with regionally managed federal grant funds. In cases where a project that is awarded regionally managed federal grant funds does not have sufficient funding to fulfill the scope of the project as originally programmed, the project sponsor may be granted the flexibility to shift funding across phases and/or years (pending the availability of funding) to cover increased cost estimates for the affected phase. Should additional funding be required to implement the phase, the project sponsor will be responsible for securing that additional funding from an alternative source of revenue or compete for additional funds at the next available call for projects.
Policy 10 CHANGES IN THE SCOPE OF WORK

All changes to the scope of work for projects programmed in the TIP with regionally managed federal grant funds must be approved by the SCOG TPB or Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board through the amendment process. Projects are evaluated and selected based on the merits of the projects proposed at the time the TIP is developed. Any changes that significantly depart from the original scope may be removed from the TIP. If the project is removed from the TIP, it can compete for regionally managed grant funds in future calls for projects.

Policy 11 PROJECT TRACKING

In order to facilitate the implementation of the TIP policies, SCOG and Island Sub-RTPO will work with WSDOT and project sponsors to present to member agencies, at least quarterly, a full accounting of the funds obligated for each project and any changes in the status of those projects.

Policy 12 TIP AMENDMENT CYCLES

SIRTPO adopts the full Regional TIP in October of each year. SIRTPO grants authority to the SCOG TPB and the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board to manage the TIP through amendments for projects that are located in their planning areas.

SCOG and Island Sub-RTPO will consider amendments to the TIP on a monthly basis. The annual schedule of amendment cycles will be established by SCOG and Island Sub-RTPO prior to the beginning of each federal fiscal year (October 1).
TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM SELECTION PROCESS

Adopted by the SIRTPO Policy Board on _____, 2014

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) distributes Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds to each state for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. Washington State Department of Transportation then suballocates these funds to Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO's) across the state.

Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SIRTPO) has the responsibility of distributing TAP funds to projects within the region that are selected on a competitive basis. This document is designed to identify the process that SIRTPO will use to rank and prioritize projects within the RTPO.

SELECTION CRITERIA

With the guidance of both the Skagit and Island Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and the SIRTPO Transportation Policy Board, SIRTPO staff will prepare selection criteria to award TAP funding. The criteria will be based on identified priorities in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) or directives given by the Transportation Policy Board. The selection criteria will be reviewed by the TACs to ensure they meet the priorities of the Region. The TACs will then recommend the approval of the selection criteria to the SIRTPO Policy Board. The SIRTPO Policy Board will then discuss and approve the final selection criteria.

- Current SIRTPO TAP Selection Criteria

CALL FOR PROJECTS

As TAP funding becomes available SIRTPO will issue a call for projects to be considered to utilize the funds. SIRTPO member agencies and eligible applicants will then have 4-6 weeks to submit applications to SIRTPO for consideration to be funded.

The amount of funding available in the call for projects will be at least enough to achieve a fully-programmed and fiscally-constrained four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). SIRTPO intends to program an additional two years' worth of projects outside the fiscally-constrained portion of the TIP. The projects selected for the unconstrained portion of the TIP (years five and six) will serve as an illustrative list of projects until they can be moved into the fiscally-constrained portion of the TIP.

Proposed projects must be included in the project sponsor's local TIP or CIP at time of submittal.

PROJECT REVIEW AND PRIORITIZATION

Project applications will receive an initial screening by SIRTPO staff to ensure they meet TAP eligibility requirements. SIRTPO staff will also score the projects based on any objective measures identified in the
selection criteria. A selection committee composed of TAC representatives or other designees from both Island and Skagit Counties will be nominated by Island Sub-RTP and SCOG and appointed by the SIRTPO Policy Board. The committee will review the objective measure scores by staff and, if necessary, will score any subjective measures for the projects. The committee will then preliminarily rank the projects based on the approved criteria or other committee recommendations. The preliminary rankings of projects will be distributed to both the Island and Skagit TACs for review and recommendation to Island Sub-RTP and SCOG. Island Sub-RTP and SCOG can then recommend the projects to be selected for funding to the SIRTPO Policy Board.

If the Selection Committee is unable to come to a consensus, the project selection will be done by the SIRTPO Policy Board.

PUBLIC REVIEW

In accordance with SCOG’s Public Participation Plan, the public will have an opportunity to view the selection committee’s project ranking recommendation prior to the SIRTPO Policy Board meeting in which action will be taken. The public can submit written comments to SCOG or Island Sub-RTP staff prior to the meeting or give verbal comments at the SIRTPO Policy Board meeting itself.

SIRTPO POLICY BOARD

The SIRTPO Policy Board will then consider the project prioritization proposed by the selection committee. The prioritized list will serve as a guide for the final selection. The SIRTPO Policy Board has the freedom to reprioritize the list as they see fit.

INCLUSION INTO THE TIP

If a project is selected to be funded with TAP funds within the four year funding window, it will be included in the next TIP update or it may be included into the current TIP by amendment. It is the responsibility of the project sponsor to submit accurate project information to SCOG using the WSDOT STIP web-based software, regardless of which of the four years it is programmed to be funded in.
2015-2020 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

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 the Metropolitan Planning Organization, consisting of Skagit County, all cities and towns within Skagit County, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Samish Indian Nation, Skagit Transit, Skagit PUD, 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) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 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 TIP

SCOG is required by federal and state regulations to develop a Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTP) for both SCOG and Skagit-Island RTPO which spans at least four years and is updated at least every two years. The TIP 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 TIP 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 federal funds—even though the funds have been awarded—unless they are included in the Regional TIP and the STIP. Once the project funds have been obligated, the obligated funds will not be included in the next update to the TIP, even if all of the funds have not been spent. SCOG produces an Annual Listing 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 TIP also demonstrates the financial feasibility of the projects included in it. Essentially, the TIP demonstrates that the projects that are programmed in the next four years will not cost more than

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1 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.

2 “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 TIP.
the amount of funding the region expects to receive. Section 3 includes detailed financial tables for the projects programmed in the fiscally constrained portion of the TIP.

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

2 TIP DEVELOPMENT

Development of the TIP is coordinated with the development of capital improvement plans and local TIPs by 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 Transportation Improvement Program, that includes both programmed and planned projects.

Local agencies and WSDOT Northwest Region then submit their programmed projects to SCOG or Island Sub-RTPO. The Regional TIP is a compilation of the funding-secured projects for the first four years of the planning horizon. 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 TIP REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The Draft TIP is presented to both the Skagit and Island Technical Advisory Committees (TACs)^4, the SCOG Transportation Policy Board (TPB) and the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board for their approval.

^3 The fiscally constrained portion of the TIP includes the first four years of the TIP that are also included in the STIP. The TIP 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.
review and comment in September. The TACs make a recommendation that the SCOG TPB and Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board consider the Draft TIP. The SCOG TPB and Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board then make a recommendation on the adoption of the Draft TIP 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 TIP 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

The TIP 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 adoption, a public review of the Regional TIP 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 TIP 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. Copies of the entire Draft TIP are available from SCOG on request. Submit comments on the Draft 2015-2020 TIP to:

Gabe Philips  
Skagit Council of Governments  
204 W. Montgomery St.  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
gabep@scog.net

The deadline for submitted comments is the close of business on Friday, October 10, 2014. The final draft of the TIP 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 TIP.

- Public Comments on the 2015-2020 Regional TIP

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

2.3 PROGRAMMING POLICIES

SIRTPO has developed policies to aid in the development and maintenance of the TIP.

SIRTPO TIP Policies

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4 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.
2.4 PROJECT SELECTION & PRIORITIZATION

SCOG is responsible for selecting projects for the federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) in Skagit County and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds in Skagit and Island counties for inclusion in the TIP. Island Sub-RTPO is responsible for selecting projects to receive STP funds in Island County. These project selections are incorporated into the TIP along with other federally funded or regionally significant projects (see section Error! Reference source not found.).

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 Board using a competitive process guided by evaluation criteria designed to ensure that projects are prioritized consistently with the Regional Transportation Plan.

- 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 in the fall of 2013. 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 Transportation Policy Board ultimately making the final determination of the STP awards. The projects selected in this process will be added to the TIP through a formal amendment.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM
TAP funds are distributed at the RTPO level. Funding decisions regarding TAP funds are made by the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization 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 TIP 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 TIP 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 TIP is “fiscally constrained.”
**Financial Planning Assumptions**

Accounting for Inflation

The project costs reported in the TIP 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 TIP 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, NHS, etc.) generally equal the amount programmed in the TIP. MPO/RTP-managed federal funds, such as STP and TAP, are generally assumed to be the same as the 2013 appropriations.

3.2 Financial Tables

| 2015-2018 SCOG TIP Financial Summary & Feasibility |
| 2015-2018 Island Sub-RTP TIP Financial Summary & Feasibility |

4 Amendment & Modification Process

Transportation priorities and funding strategies change over time. It is likely that the project list identified in this TIP will need to be altered at some point prior to the development of the 2015 TIP. SCOG has developed TIP procedures that include a process to be followed if modification to this TIP is necessary.

SCOG TIP 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.

5 TIP Projects

5.1 Financially Feasible 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 TIP

| 2014-2017 SCOG TIP Projects |
| 2014-2017 Island Sub-RTPO TIP Projects |

5.2 Illustrative Priorities

To ensure that SCOG has a fully-programmed four-year TIP, when a call for projects is issued SCOG will generally ensure that six years’ worth of STP and TAP projects, including those projects already programmed, are selected. The first four years in the TIP 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 TIP if additional funding becomes available. Examples of ways that funds can become available include:

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

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

2018-2019 SCOG Illustrative Projects

2018-2019 Island sub-RTPO Illustrative Projects