



Highway 61
North Shore of Lake Superior

FHWA Minnesota Division

MnDOT Project Coordination with MPOs - Results

MPO Summer Workshop 9/29/20



MPO Interview Themes

FHWA Minnesota Division

- Good relationship with most districts; specialty offices less so
- Most districts, specialty offices and local agencies unaware MPO federal requirements
- Feeling of limited influence on projects in MPO area
- MPOs find out about project changes last minute; inadequate time to review
- Pressure to push TIP amendments through last minute
- Beginning to see improvement in MnDOT





MnDOT Meeting Themes

FHWA Minnesota Division

- District Knowledge Loss
 - Subtle over time
 - Need for organized training process
- Caught in the Middle
 - Putting out fire between CO, local agencies, and MPOs
- Self – Examination – Offered Several Suggestions
 - 6 of 9 recommendations originated with Districts



Recommendations

FHWA Minnesota Division

- Joint Effort - FHWA/MnDOT

- FHWA – MPOs
- OTSM – MnDOT Districts
- 9 Total

- Purpose:

- Understand how MPOs were consulted on project coordination; determine MPO influence
- Identify any regulatory and opportunity gaps – Continuing, Comprehensive, & Cooperative (3C) Process
- Allow MPOs & MnDOT to provide improvement ideas



Recommendation #1 – TIP/STIP Admin Mod Policy



FHWA Minnesota Division

- **Observation:** Admin Mods force adjustments to MPO TIPs, often at the last minute.
- **Recommendation:** Implement a STIP policy ensuring changes are routed through MPO
 - MPO must concur
- **Timeframe:** Underway
- **Progress Discussion**





Recommendation #2 – MnDOT Project Managers

FHWA Minnesota Division

- **Observation:** Often unfamiliar with MPO requirements and timing procedures
- **Recommendation:** Assign projects in MPO areas to 2nd quarter letting schedule
 - Provides flexibility cushion
- **Timeline:** By April 15, 2021
- **Progress Discussion**



Recommendation #3 – Local Governments



FHWA Minnesota Division

- **Observation:** Often unaware of MPO federal responsibilities
- **Recommendation:** OTSM & State Aid develop training for local agencies
- **Timeline:** By April of 2021
- **Progress Discussion**





Recommendation #4 – HSIP Coordination

FHWA Minnesota Division

- **Observation:** HSIP Funding Guidance has no MPO Coordination Steps
- **Recommendation:** Update HSIP Funding Guidance to include MPO Coordination for both local agencies and MnDOT Districts
 - MPO Feedback on Changes
 - Met with HSIP Contacts
- **Timeline:** By March 2021
- **Progress Discussion**

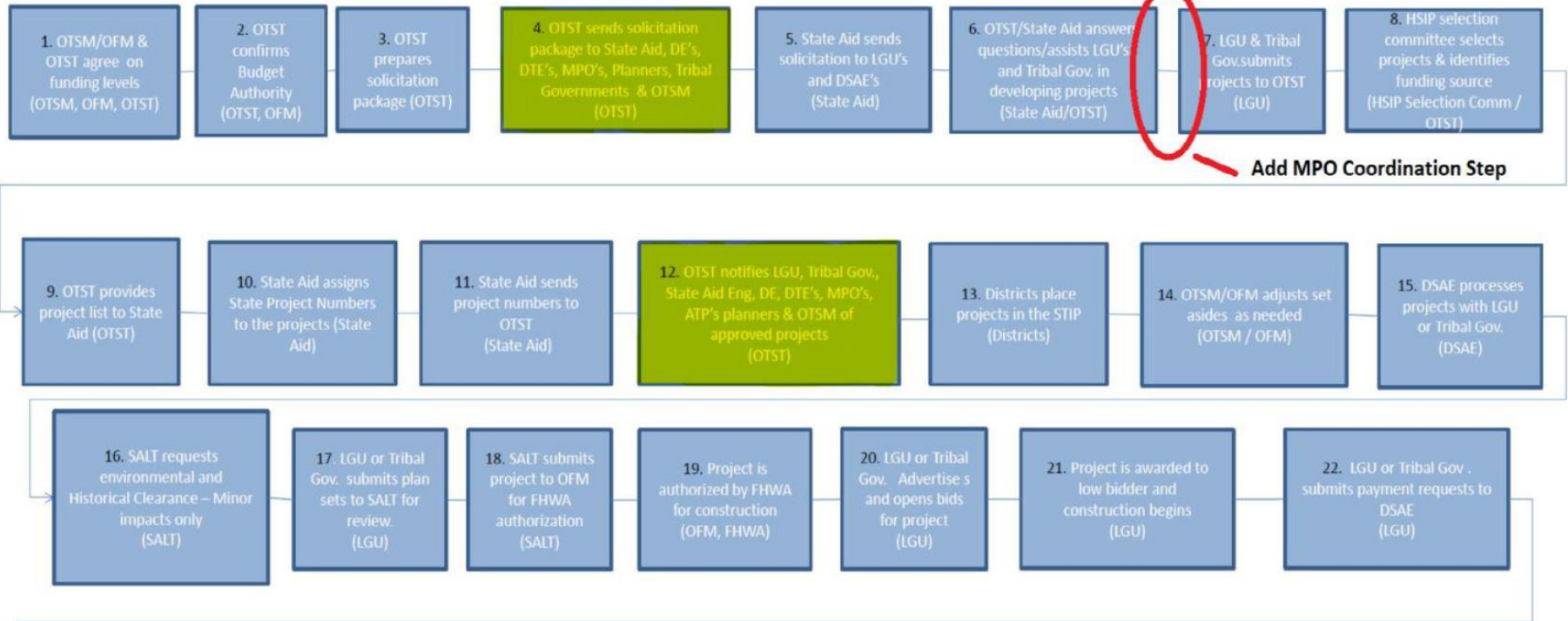




Local Agencies HSIP Chart

FHWA Minnesota Division

Greater MN - Local



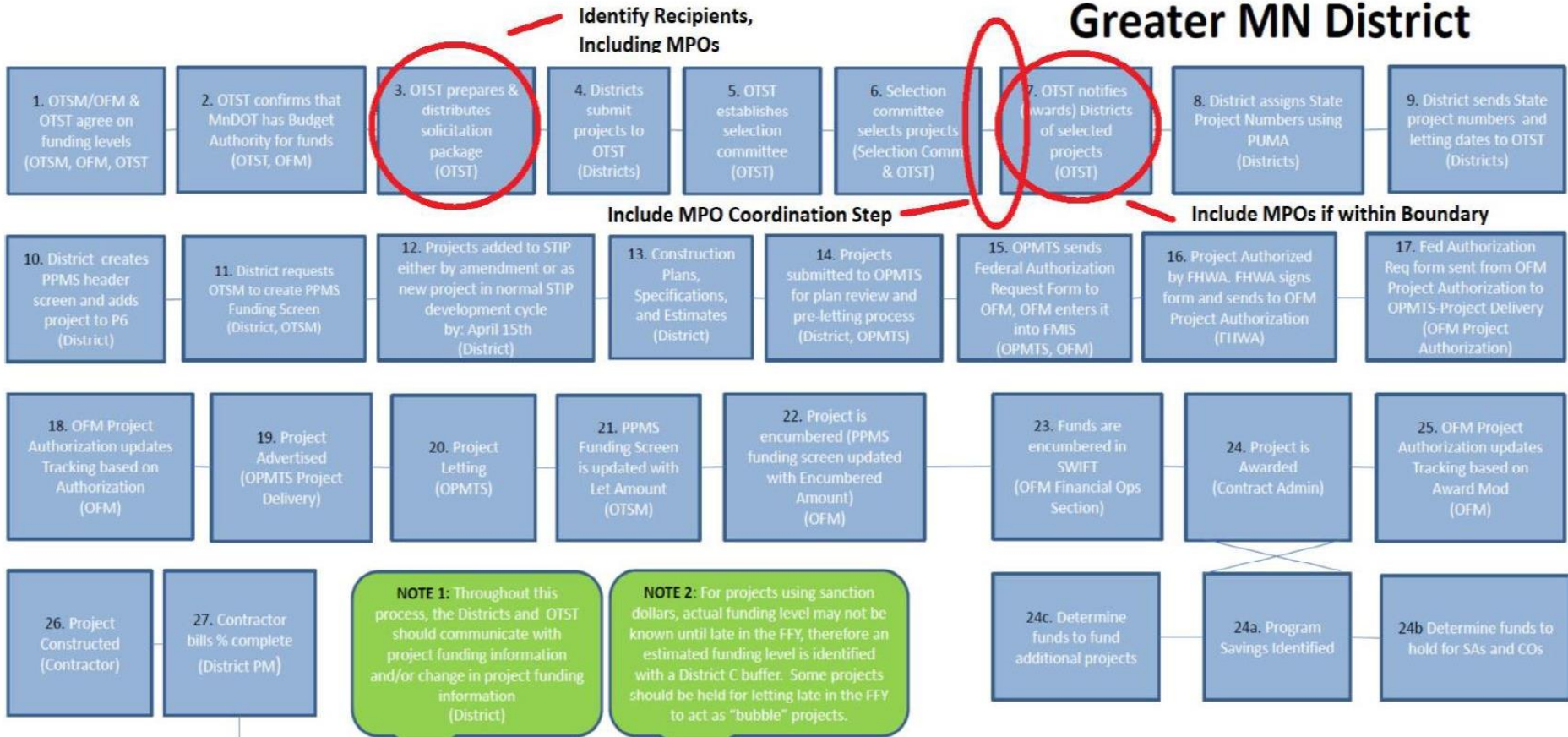
Yellow = Existing MPO Coordination Step



MnDOT Districts HSIP Chart

FHWA Minnesota Division

Greater MN District





Recommendation #5 – District Staff Knowledge Loss

FHWA Minnesota Division

- **Observation:** MnDOT has Experienced Substantial Planning Knowledge Loss
 - Retirements, Promotions
 - MPO Federal Requirements
- **Recommendation:** OTSM Should Develop Training for MnDOT District Planning Staff
- **Timeline:** Completion in 2021
- **Progress Discussion**



Recommendation #6 – MPO Point of Contact



FHWA Minnesota Division

- **Observation:** MPO Policy Boards lack a single key contact at District Offices for high-profile projects
- **Recommendation:** The District Engineer should be the main point of contact for all high-profile projects
- **Timeline:** Currently Underway
- **Progress Discussion**





Recommendation #7 – Transit Projects

FHWA Minnesota Division

- **Observation:** Numerous examples of TIP/STIP Coordination Inconsistency, Inadequate MPO Review time
- **Recommendation:** All Transit Projects come Directly from MPO (TIP into STIP)
- **Timeline:** By Dec. 30th, with new District Guidance
- **Progress Discussion**





Recommendation #8 – General Documentation

FHWA Minnesota Division

- **Observation:** MnDOT’s “Overview of Planning & Programming in Minnesota” has not been updated since 2010
- **Recommendation:** Update document and develop a schedule for keeping it current
- **Timeline:** By December 2021
- **Progress Discussion**





Recommendation #9 – Coordination Documentation

FHWA Minnesota Division

- **Observation:** Districts, OTSM, and the MPOs have no Documented Procedures for Coordination
 - ½ MPOs wanted formal coordination, ½ did not
- **Recommendation:** Formalize Coordination if (at least) One Party Wishes
 - The “how” and content decided by parties
 - Would assist with staff turnover
- **Timeline:** March 2021
- **Progress Discussion**



Closing Comments

- It is FHWA's expectation that MnDOT will use the review and its recommendations to make staged improvements for project coordination with the MPOs.
- OTSM will coordinate the implementation of these recommendations and will report back regularly with TPIC.



Feedback/Open Discussion

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- What is progressing?
- What is not working?
- Doable? Do you see it happening?
- What will be the most difficult?



Questions?

FHWA Minnesota Division



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