

2021 Transportation Conformity

Appendix 12.6

Definition of Regionally Significant Roadway System

Definition of Regionally Significant Roadway System Adopted September 26, 2016

The following summarizes the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) development and identification of regionally significant roadways in the metropolitan planning area in preparation for the potential classification of non-attainment. The definition is based on the federal definition (23 CFR § 450.104):

Regionally significant project means a transportation project (other than projects that may be grouped in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and/or State Transportation Implementation Plan (STIP) or exempt projects as defined in EPA's transportation conformity regulation (40 CFR part 93)) that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs (such as access to and from the area outside the region; major activity centers in the region; major planned developments such as new retail malls, sports complexes, or employment centers; or transportation terminals) and would normally be included in the modeling of the metropolitan area's transportation network. At a minimum, this includes all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer an alternative to regional highway travel.

[Beginning the Process](#)

On December 4, 2015, MPO staff participated in the first meeting of the MPO Air Quality Work Group with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) to discuss the challenges encountered in other MPO areas among various timings of calendar and fiscal years for transportation conformity-related activities.

One of the items discussed was developing a definition for a regionally significant roadway system. The item was then presented at the January 8, 2016, MPO Technical Advisory Committee meeting. The definitions adopted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), El Paso MPO and Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) were presented to the MPO's TAC. At that time, TAC requested additional information on transportation conformity and regional significance (purpose and implications of the definition) before moving forward with adopting a definition.

[Continued Coordination](#)

Throughout the spring and summer, MPO staff worked with the Air Quality Work Group to conduct presentations and workshops to help familiarize partner agencies, TAC and Transportation Policy Board members with the transportation conformity process and to refine a local definition of regional significance.

On September 1, 2016, MPO staff presented a draft local definition of regionally significant roadways to the Technical Working Group for Mobile Source Emissions (TWG) meeting of consultation partners. With general consensus around the language

in the definition, MPO staff decided to move forward with seeking action to approve the definition while maintaining the option to review and clarify some roadway federal functional classifications with our transportation partners.

Presented previously to the TAC on August 5, 2016 and the Transportation Policy Board on August 22, 2016, TAC took action on a recommended definition at their meeting on September 9, 2016, unanimously approving the recommended language in the definition. The Transportation Policy Board also unanimously approved the recommended language in the definition on September 26, 2016.

Definition of Regionally Significant Roadways

MPO regionally significant roadways include:

- Those facilities federally functionally classified as interstate freeways, other freeways or expressways
- Those facilities federally functionally classified as principal arterials
- Roadways and intermodal connectors included in the federally adopted National Highway System
- Roads designated as SH or US routes
- Community connections that provide direct, continuously signed connections between nearby or adjacent census defined urbanized areas, urban clusters and population centers with more than 5,000 people
- Roadways between activity centers that serve as primary regional connectors to an otherwise unserved regional activity center
- Extensions of regionally significant roadways to connect non-connecting termini

While not mapped because none currently exist, the MPO's regionally significant roadways definition also includes the following:

- Fixed guideway transit facilities that offer an alternative to regional highway travel
- Managed lanes as documented in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Grade-separated interchange projects on regionally significant roadways where no access existed previously

The resulting illustrative definition can be found in the MPO's online iMap application at: <http://www.alamoareampo.org/imap/>.