

## AMPO TIP SURVEY: RESULTS

This survey was conducted to gain an understanding of how MPOs feel about the treatment of the TIP and the plan in the Administration's TEA-21 reauthorization proposal, SAFETEA. It was distributed to all MPOs on July 15, 2003 and received 115 responses. Though the survey didn't include a section for additional comments, several respondents provided elaboration on their answers to the survey. Those comments have been included in this document, but because they were not part of the survey should not be interpreted as perfectly representative.

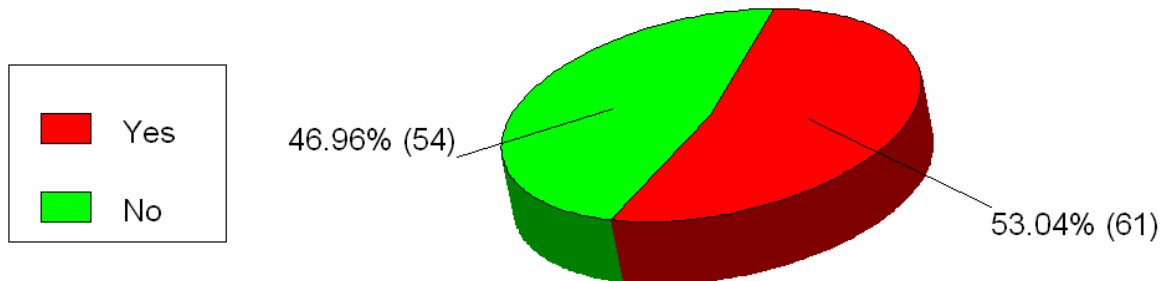
Respondents were given the following introduction:

The Administration's transportation reauthorization bill, SAFETEA, contains a proposal to eliminate the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as a separate document and extend the maximum update cycle for the plan from three to five years. The "Governor need only approve the first five years of the plan; and the first five years of the plan become the focal point for project programming." (SAFETEA fact sheet on Transportation Planning).

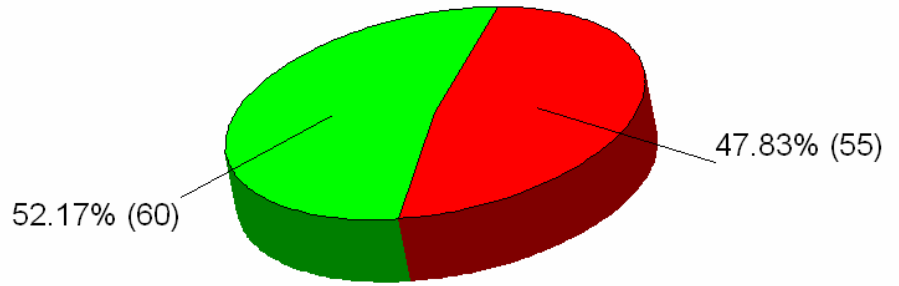
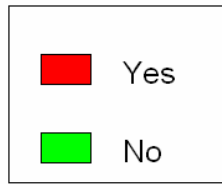
According to US DOT, a benefit of the proposal is to reduce the administrative and technical effort involved with the current two-year TIP cycle, three-year plan cycle (five-year in attainment areas), and the associated air quality conformity determinations in non-attainment areas. Some AMPO members think the proposal could confuse the purposes of the plan and the program - blurring the distinction between the plan as a comprehensive, visionary strategy and the TIP as a concrete list of projects.

### Questions:

#### 1. Does your MPO cover a Transportation Management Area (TMA)?

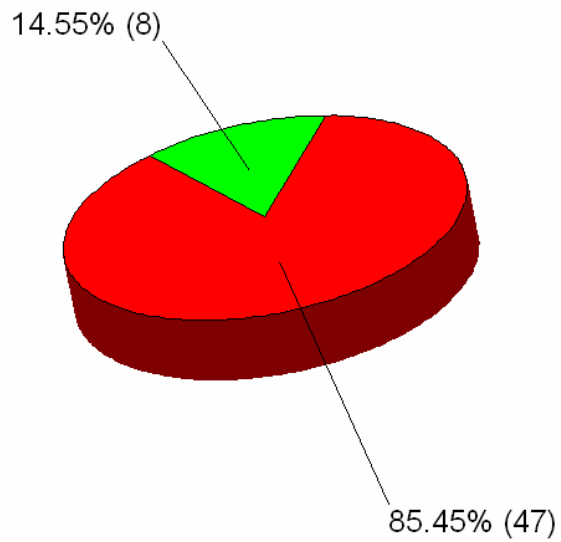


**2. Is your MPO in a non-attainment area?**



No (Skip to Q.5)

**3. Do you think the current three-year plan cycle is:**



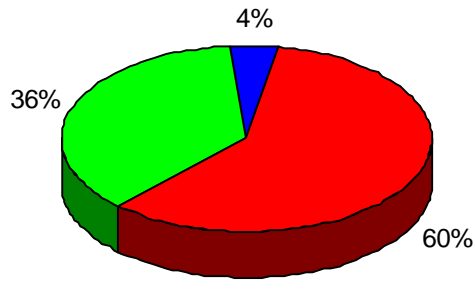
**Crosstabs (Percentages):**

	All	TMA	Small
Too short	85	83	87.5
Just right	15	15	12.5
Too long	0	0	0

(“Just right” & “Too long” = skip to Q.5)

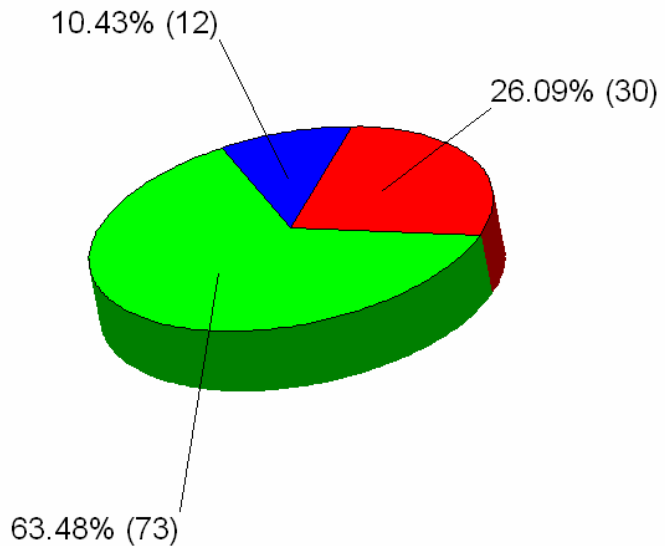
**4. What is the primary reason you think it is too short?**

- Time is too compressed to undertake a meaningful plan development effort
- There is no need for a plan update every three years
- The effort to complete an air quality conformity determination detracts from other activities



**5. Do you think the current two-year TIP update cycle is:**

- Too short
- Just right
- Too long



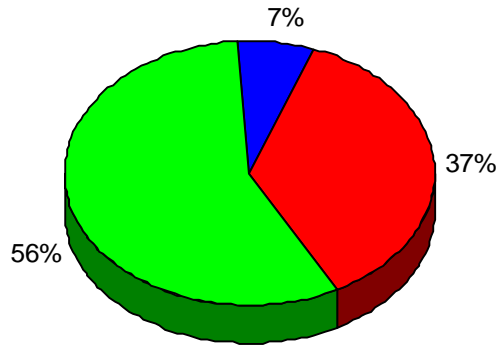
**Crosstabs (Percentages):**

	All	TMA	Small	Attainment	Non
Too short	27	23	30	28	24
Just right	63	66	61	62	65
Too long	10	11	9	10	11

(“Just right” & “Too long” = skip to Q.7)

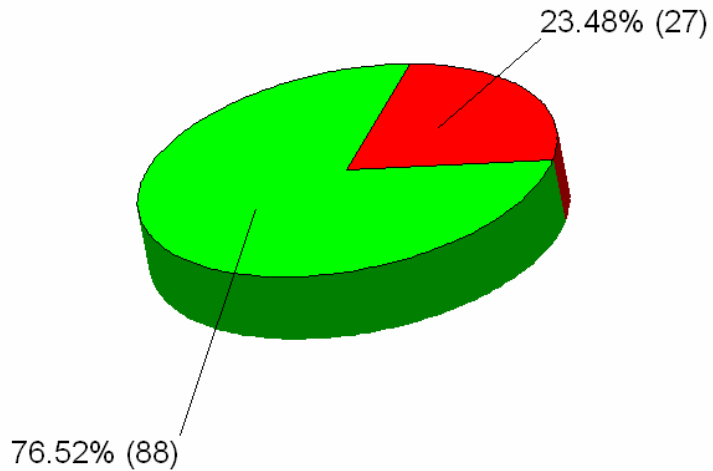
**6. What is the primary reason you think it is too short?**

- Time is too compressed to undertake a meaningful TIP effort
- There is no need for a TIP update every two years
- The effort to complete an air quality conformity determination detracts from other activities



**7. Do you support eliminating the TIP as a stand-alone document, with the first five years of the plan serving in its place (as proposed in SAFETEA)?**

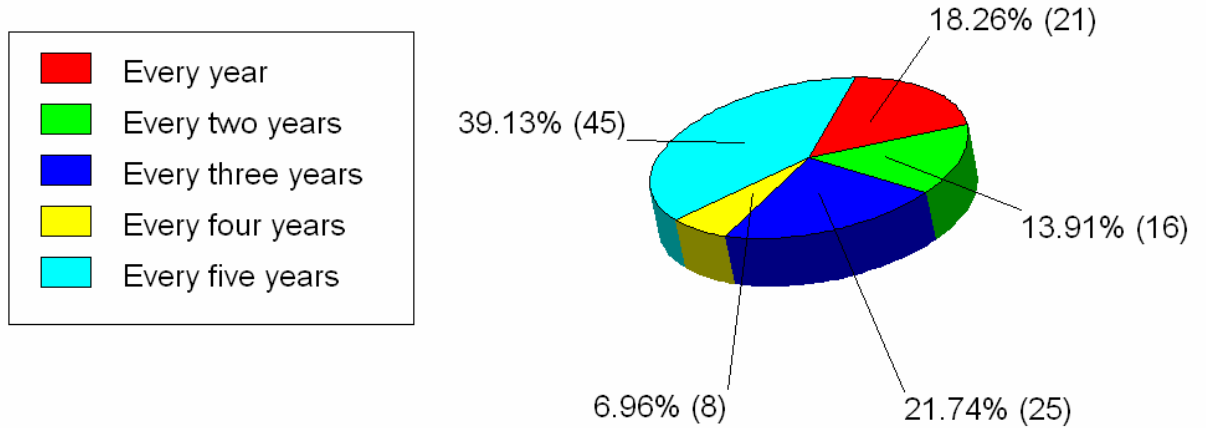
- Yes
- No



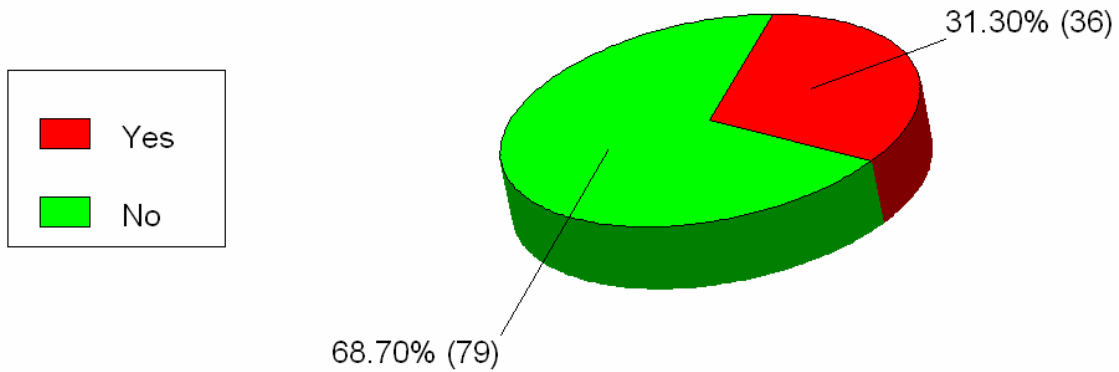
**Crosstabs (Percentages):**

	All	TMA	Small	Attainment	Non
Yes	23	18	30	27	20
No	77	82	70	73	70

8. If the TIP were eliminated as a stand-alone document, approximately how frequently do you anticipate that your MPO would complete an update to the plan (within a five-year maximum time period)?



9. All things considered, would the plan (with updates at the frequency you cited in question 8) adequately serve the purposes currently served by the TIP?



Crosstabs (Percentages):

	All	TMA	Small	Attainment	Non
Yes	31	23	41	38	24
No	69	77	59	62	76

## Comments:

Our TIP is a short range, dynamic document which because of the three year planning period permits frequent modifications. It contains non-capacity building projects and is stable enough to provide jurisdictions and engineers with a list of projects which have priority at the local level. Jurisdictions have real problems thinking five years into the future and small projects in the fourth and fifth years would be very problematic. Both because of the difficulty of estimating costs and changing political agendas. Combining it with the LRTP on a five-year cycle will remove its value as a short range planning document. The LRTP is static and is based on a 20 year planning period. It identifies demand/needs for future capacity building projects and does not contain small projects which are funded through the MPO. The process seems to be working well now. Combining the TIP and LRTP on a five year cycle is a **bad** idea.

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The point that your survey is missing is that towards the end of the proposed five year cycle for the Plan update the projects that were in the original Plan have almost all been completed and there are no authorized projects in the pipe line. In year four for instance, the state staffs will have all environmental documents done for the year five projects and nothing to work on unless they want to hazard a guess as to which projects the MPO may select for the next Plan's five year element. All continuity will be lost.

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I believe the proposal to combine the TIP and the Plan into a single document is the most asinine proposal in a decade. It could not have been proposed by an MPO or anyone who favors the work of MPOs. The TIP, and its requirement for financial constraint, has been the single most important factor in giving regions the power to exercise their credentials as partners with the state DOTs. Anything that significantly detracts from the prominence of the TIP will, in fact, serve to weaken the partnership and return MPOs to their pre-ISTEA status.

I believe that it is critical for AMPO to lobby long and hard against this proposal. While the TIP could be improved with some minor adjustments, this proposal is entirely too drastic and harmful to the cause of MPOs and should not be supported in any form.

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My difficulty in filling out the survey was with the (too) simple characterization of the current RTP and TIP cycles being "too short" or "too long". With the long range plan, I think we can definitely say that the current 3-year cycle is, in fact, too short-- with a region as large and complex as the San Francisco Bay Area, a 5 year planning update cycle makes far more sense. However, the cycle on the TIP is more tricky. While it is overly resource intensive to have to crunch through a full fledged TIP update every two years, complete with air quality conformity determinations, a longer time period only makes sense IF we have a reasonably responsive process for amending the TIP in between cycles. Revenues and priorities, at least in our region, can change significantly, and we do need the opportunity to respond to actual project programming changes in a timely way-- whereas planning priorities, by their very nature tend to be more robust.

Having said that, the consolidation of the TIP and RTP as suggested by the SAFETEA proposal is most troublesome because any amendment to the TIP would seem to open up the entire plan for scrutiny as well-- with the opportunity for unnecessarily broad challenges mid-stream, thereby negating a longer and presumably more stable "planning" cycle.

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Regarding Question 5, for planning and budgetary reasons, our MPO updates the TIP every year, so we think the 2-year TIP update cycle is too long. However, in Question 8, regarding how frequently we would update the long range plan if the TIP were eliminated as a stand-alone document, we would continue to update the long range plan every 3 years. This is because it's likely that we would continue to produce a TIP annually regardless of what FHWA requires.

The TIP is a crucial programming and monitoring document of transportation facilities and services that are to be implemented in the near future. It includes **local** roadways, transit, and other infrastructure; and is, therefore, a useful planning tool.

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I have completed the survey as requested and wanted to provide you with a little more insight into why I am in support of doing away with the TIP. In our area the TIP is not a "concrete list" of projects that will be started in the 3 year time frame. It is merely a list of projects that could, might, hopefully will be started in that time period. We have several projects that have been moved in and out of the TIP multiple times. Two projects in particular have been moved out of the current TIP and moved to the future TIP three times. We have one project that was added to the TIP at the request of the State DOT, removed from the TIP the next quarter by the State DOT, and put back in the same TIP the next quarter at the DOT's request. I hope this is an isolated problem but I am hopeful that by using the first 5 years of the MTP as the "TIP" it will make it more difficult for the DOT to make changes and it will reduce the amount of staff time and funding we spend on the revision process. Additionally, because our MPO resides in two states with different TIP update schedules we have to update our combined TIP every year. By using the first 5 years of the MTP we will only have to do a single update every 4 years. This is much more efficient for an MPO with a full staff of 3. Thank you for your time and efforts on behalf of all MPOs. I hope this provides a little more background to the issue. If nothing else it demonstrates how unique individual MPOs can be when trying to meet requirements that supposedly fit everyone.