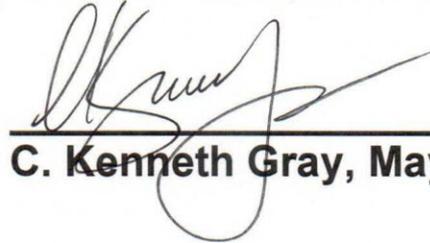




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AMESBURY CITY CLERK

**CITY OF AMESBURY
IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND NINETEEN**

SPONSORED BY:


C. Kenneth Gray, Mayor

BILL No. 2019-017

An Order to appropriate \$10,000 from the Smart Growth Stabilization Fund (7301) for the purpose of identifying the City's needs related to transportation improvement projects.

Summary: This Order seeks an appropriation of \$10,000 from the Smart Growth Stabilization Fund (7301) to identify needs for transportation improvements in the City. These funds will be used to develop and submit a Project Need Form (PNF) to MassDOT, an initial step necessary for a project to be eligible for federal funding through the Transportation Improvement Program.

Be it Ordered by the City Council of the City of Amesbury assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

That \$10,000 is hereby appropriated from the Smart Growth Stabilization Fund (7301) for the purpose of developing and submitting a Project Need Form and for the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto.

- [Home](https://mvpc.org/) (<https://mvpc.org/>)
- [About Us](https://mvpc.org/about-2/) (<https://mvpc.org/about-2/>)
- [The Valley](https://mvpc.org/the-valley/) (<https://mvpc.org/the-valley/>)
- [Programs](#) (#)
- [Regional Solutions](https://mvpc.org/regional-solutions/) (<https://mvpc.org/regional-solutions/>)
- [Information Center](#) (#)

Transportation

Project Development Toolkit

MVMPO Project Development Basics

My community wants to develop a transportation project that gets paid for with federal funds through the Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO). How do we do that?

Defining the Project with Public Input

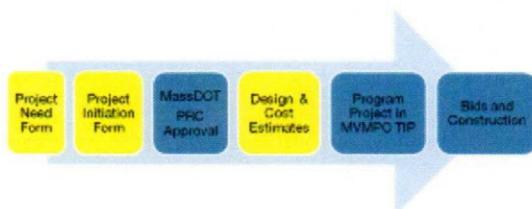
Communities usually start the process of developing a project internally through a local planning process that prioritizes their transportation needs. At the end of that process, a feasibility study or other study may be conducted to get an idea of the breadth of the project that the community wants to implement. MVPC staff may be able to help with the study. Communities need to hold a public hearing or series of public meetings to discuss the transportation need and proposed solutions and to receive comments that would influence the project's design, scope, etc.

Contact the MVMPO

The MVMPO is your community's conduit to federal funds. Contact Tony Komornick (akomornick at mvpc.org), Transportation Program Manager, to discuss your community's project and the options available for federal funds. We can help guide you through the process.

We have a project. Now what do we do?

Typically communities pay for the design of the project and that local money is then leveraged with federal funds (with state match) that pay for construction. Any project that is federally funded must go through a specific process and must be designed according to MassDOT regulations and design guides. You can find these on the [MassDOT](http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/highway/DoingBusinessWithUs/ManualsPublicationsForms/ProjectDevelopmentDesignGuide.aspx) (<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/highway/DoingBusinessWithUs/ManualsPublicationsForms/ProjectDevelopmentDesignGuide.aspx>) web site.



(<https://mvpc.org/wp-content/uploads/project-dev-graphic.png>) Figure 1: Demonstrates the basic steps for project development. The yellow blocks (PNF, PIF and Design/Cost estimates) are the responsibility of the local community. All others are the responsibility of either the State or the MVMPO.

PNF or PIF? Which comes first?

(https://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Portals/8/docs/projectManagement/Project_Need201312.pdf)

The **Project Need Form** (PNF) comes first and must be submitted to the MassDOT District 4 Office at 519 Appleton St., Arlington, MA 02476, as well as to the MVMPO. A community usually prepares the PNF, but sometimes seeks the assistance from a design consultant or MVPC staff.



https://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Portals/8/docs/projectManagement/Project_Initiation201312.pdf

Once the municipality and MassDOT agree on the projects' merits, the municipality then prepares and submits a **Project Initiation Form** (PIF) to District 4 and the MVMPO for review.

MassDOT staff may recommend certain changes to the project and/or request additional information from the municipality at this stage. MassDOT will then include the PIF on the MassDOT Project Review Committee (PRC) agenda for evaluation. The PRC meets quarterly. Once approved, the project will be given a project number and assigned a project manager who will work with the community and its design consultant to advance the project through the design, permitting, right-of-way and construction phases.

When do we get on the TIP?

The project proponents (the City or Town) and the MVMPO members work together to program transportation funds in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a given project. The TIP is an annually updated 4-year budget for allocating federal funds within the region. Funds are limited, so projects sometimes wait years to get funded. All projects must go through a project evaluation and are scored based on how the project addresses regional goals, gaps, needs and other factors.

Keep in mind that proponents may also apply funding from other federal or state grant programs outside the MVMPO process. Examples of such programs include the MassWorks Infrastructure Program administered by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and the former Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program administered by the U.S. DOT.

Race to the finish line.

Projects that receive state or federal funds must go through a strict process outlined by MassDOT. Communities must be mindful of deadlines so that the project is not delayed. A project that is not ready will be moved to another year or, infrequently, taken off the TIP entirely. Typical milestones in the design process include:

1. Submission and approval of the 25% design plans
2. A public hearing on the 25% design
3. Submission and approval of the 75% design plans
4. Submission and approval of the 100% design plans, and preparation of the plans, permits, ROW certificates, specifications and estimates (PS&E).

Project Implementation

Once the 100% design is approved by MassDOT (assuming it is on the TIP for that fiscal year), MassDOT will take the project through the advertizing and construction work.

Want to stay up-to-date or get more involved in the MVMPO process?

- Request to be put on our mailing list.
- Attend MVMPO meetings (published on our web site and we will also send you an e-mail)
- Provide your input on transportation plans and programs.
- Volunteer to serve on a focus group or advisory committee.
- We would be happy to make a presentation or start a discussion about transportation at your group's meeting. Let us know when and where.

- Contact your local planning department to see what projects they are working on and get involved.



- **Collective Procurement**
(<https://mvpc.org/programs/collective-procurement/>)

- **Economic Development & Planning** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/economic-development-planning/>)
- **Environment** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/environment/>)
- **GIS/ Information Technology** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/gis-homepage/>)
- **Regional Housing Plan** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/regional-housing-plan/>)
- **Transportation** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/transpo-new-homepage/>)
- **Transportation Home Page** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/transpo-new-homepage/>)
- **MPO Page** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/transpo-new-homepage/mpo-page/>)
- **Complete Streets** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/transpo-new-homepage/complete-streets/>)
- **Project Development Toolkit** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/transpo-new-homepage/project-development-toolkit/>)
- **Transportation Reports** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/transpo-new-homepage/transportation-reports/>)
- **Bicycle Parking Program** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/transpo-new-homepage/bikeracks/>)
- **Merrimack Valley Park & Ride Lot Index Map** (<https://mvpc.org/programs/transpo-new-homepage/park-ride/>)

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

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Translate This Page:

 **English**

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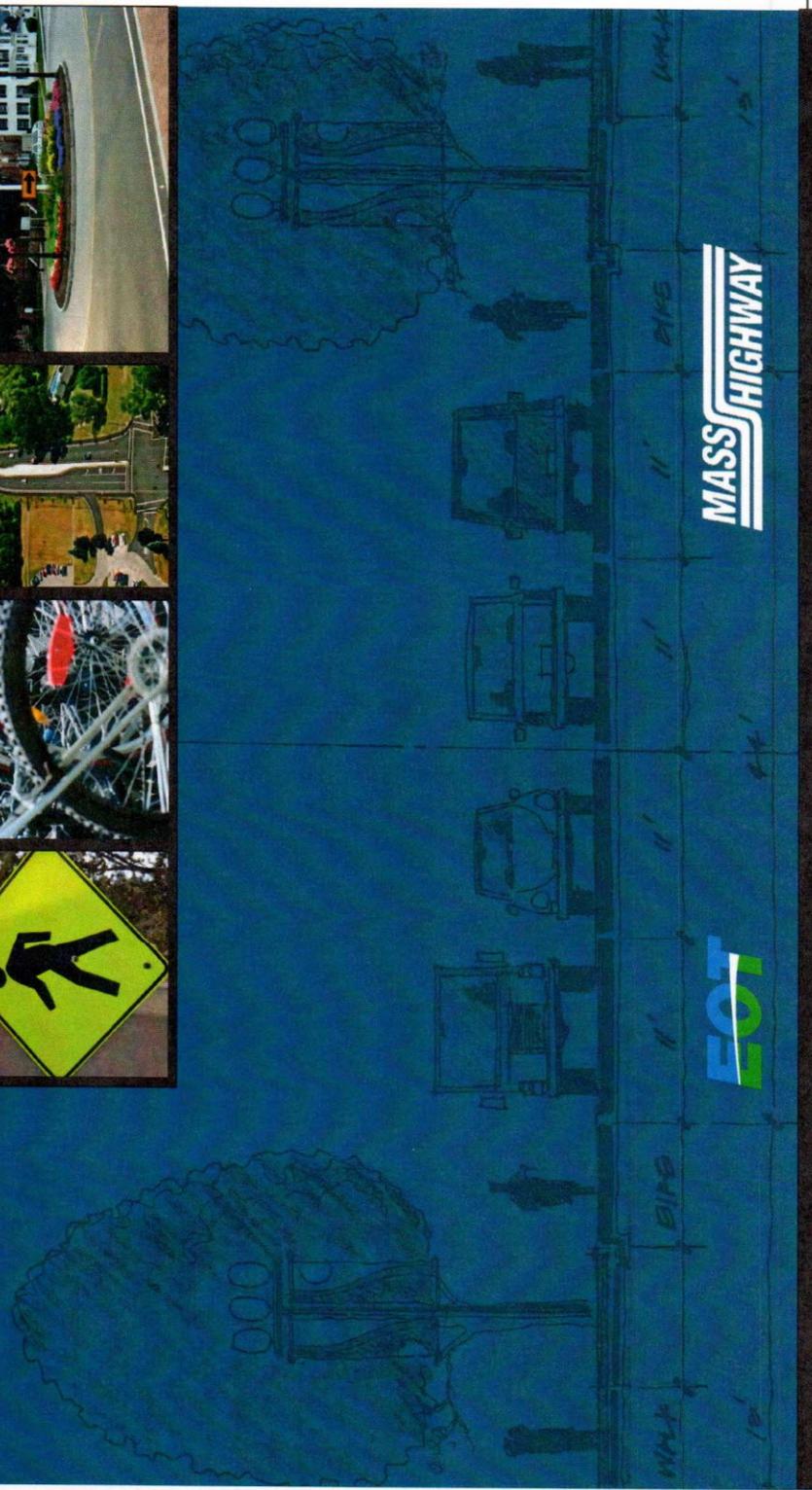
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2006

Design Guide

Massachusetts Highway Department

Project Development & Design Guide



MASS HIGHWAY

EOT

Project Development Process Overview

The project development process is initiated in response to an identified need in the transportation system. It covers a range of activities extending from identification of a project need to a finished set of contract plans, and to construction.

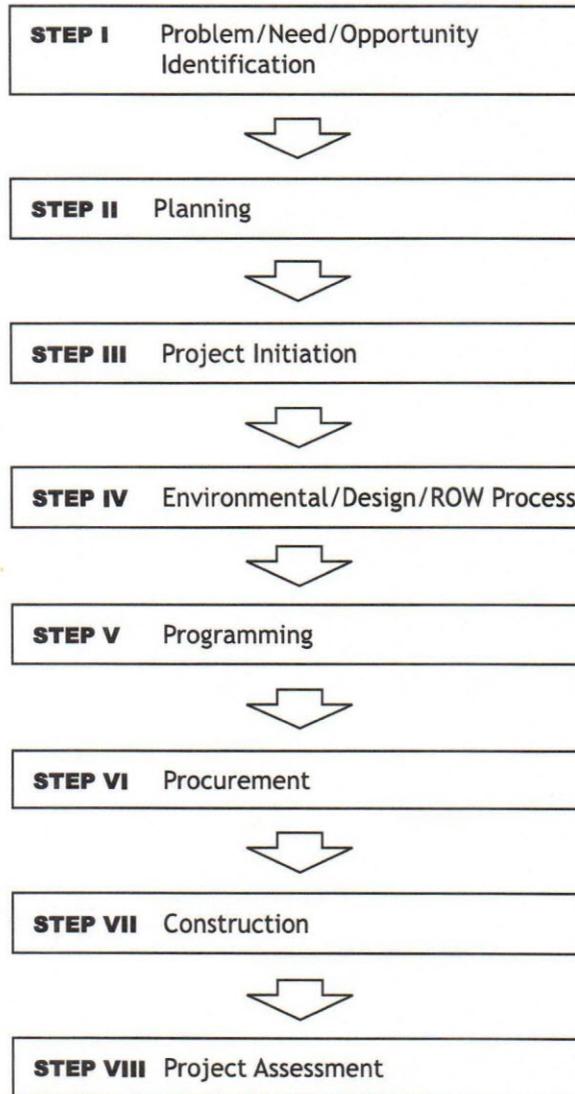
The identified transportation need might include one or more of the following: a congestion problem, a safety concern, facility condition deterioration, a need for better multi-modal accommodation, an environmental enhancement, or an economic improvement opportunity. The development of solutions to address these needs often involves input from transportation planners, community leaders, citizens, environmental specialists, landscape architects, natural resource agencies, local public works officials, permitting agencies, design engineers, financial managers, and agency executives. Solutions might target a single mode of transportation, or address the range of road users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit operators, automobile drivers, and truckers moving freight and goods. It is important to engage the right team of people on the project from the beginning.

The sequence of decisions made through the project development process progressively narrows the project focus and, ultimately, leads to a project that addresses the identified needs. There should be ample opportunities for public participation throughout the process.

Transportation decision-making is complex and can be influenced by legislative mandates, environmental regulations, financial limitations, agency programmatic commitments, and partnering opportunities. Decision-makers and reviewing agencies, when consulted early and often throughout the project development process, can ensure that all participants understand the potential impact these factors can have on project implementation. An eight-step project development process is defined to move a project from problem identification to completion, as illustrated in Exhibit 2-1.

**Exhibit 2-1
Overview of Project Development**

PROCESS



OUTCOMES

1. Project Need Form (PNF)
2. Project Planning Report (If necessary)
3. Project Initiation Form (PIF)
3. Identification of Appropriate Funding
3. Definition of Appropriate Next Steps
3. Project Review Committee Action
4. Plans, Specs and Estimates (PS&E)
4. Environmental Studies and Permits
4. Right-of-Way Plans
4. Permits
5. Regional and State TIP
5. Programming of Funds
6. Construction Bids and Contractor Selection
7. Built Project

Source: MassHighway

These eight steps are described in detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

2.1 Step I: Problem/Need/Opportunity Identification

Projects begin with the identification of a problem, need, or opportunity. This can result from a regularly maintained asset or performance management system, such as MassHighway's bridge management system, the top 1,000 intersections safety list, or a recent corridor or area planning process. Problem, need or opportunity identification can also occur through the regional planning initiatives of a Metropolitan Planning Organization or arise from community, legislative, or citizen input. Communities and state transportation agencies are responsible for providing a wide range of transportation services. A number of on-going system management and planning processes are often where projects begin. These include:

- Long-Range Transportation Plans
- Statewide, Regional, and Metropolitan Area Plans
- Corridor Studies and Plans
- Asset Management Systems
 - Bridge
 - Pavement
- Performance Management Systems
 - Congestion Management
 - Safety Management
- Operational Plans and Initiatives
- Road Safety Audits
- Local/Community Plans
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Program Access. (These improvements must be incorporated in all transportation improvement projects or may be proposed as separate barrier removal projects.)

Road safety audits, noted above, are a relatively new activity in the United States with more emphasis on crash prevention—designing safer new roads and modifying existing roads before crash statistics reveal a problem. Road safety audits foster safer road projects by promoting elimination or mitigation of safety hazards (such as dangerous intersection layouts) and encouraging incorporation of crash-reducing features (such as traffic control devices, delineation, etc.) during the planning and design stages of project development.

2.1.1 Problem/Need/Opportunity Definition

As problems, needs, or opportunities for improvements arise they can be simple and straightforward, or complex in nature without an obvious solution at the start.

Most issues are addressed through the development of a discrete project, specifically tailored to solve the identified need or problem. These projects could include, as examples: geometric improvements at an intersection, or increased parking and improved bicycle and pedestrian access at a transit station where parking demand clearly exceeds supply, or traffic control enhancements. These types of projects often proceed relatively quickly from issue identification into actual design.

Other more significant needs require a robust multi-modal planning effort to identify possible solutions and analyze various alternatives. For example, with a corridor whose roadway network is overly congested, or whose transit service is overcrowded, there may be a need for a corridor- or location-specific planning study. These studies may require an extensive public participation process to identify the problems and examine a wide range of possible solutions through an alternatives analysis.

As a first step in the project development process, the proponent would lead an effort to:

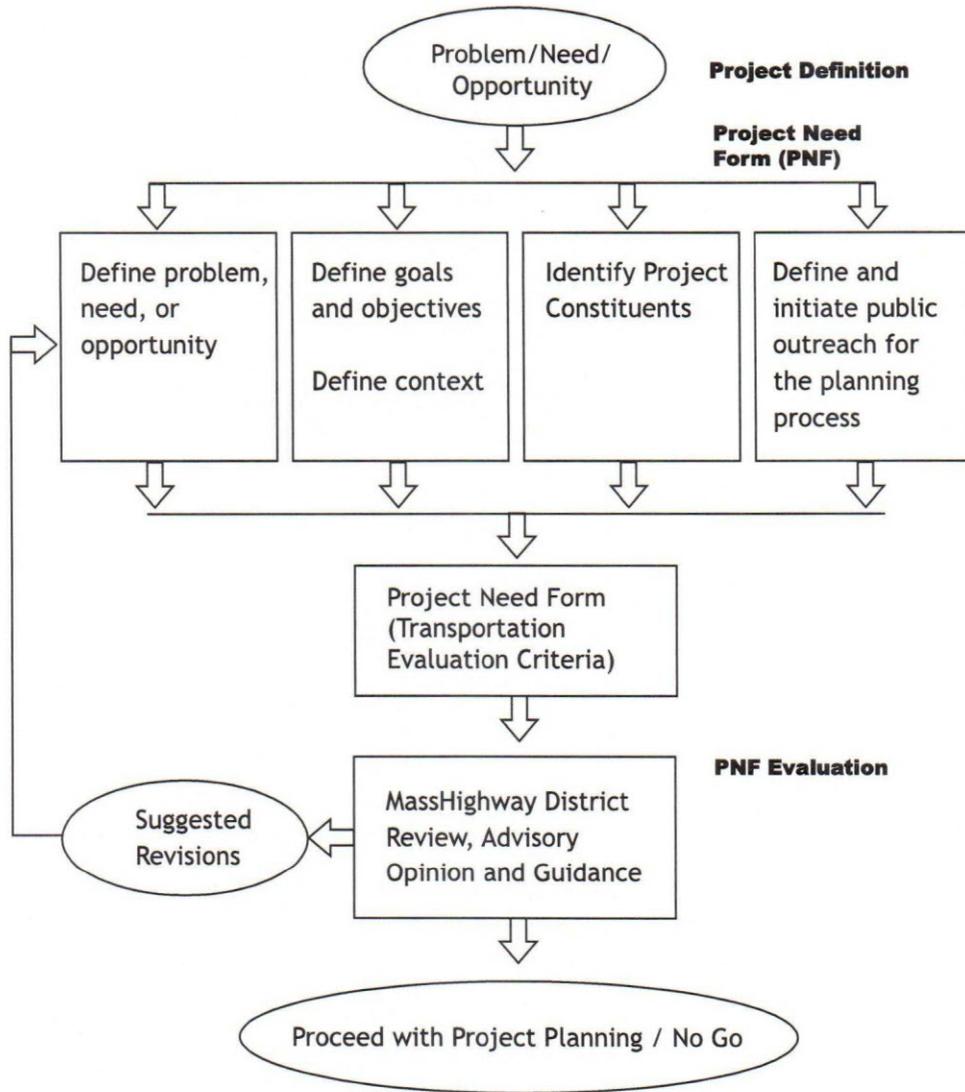
- Define the problem, need, or opportunity based on objective criteria;
- Establish preliminary project goals and objectives; and,
- Define the scope of planning and public outreach needed.

2.1.2 Project Need Form

This step in the project development process leads to completion of a **Project Need Form** (PNF). The problem/need/opportunity identification and PNF process is illustrated in Exhibit 2-2. The PNF provides sufficient material to understand the transportation need(s), and results in one of the following three outcomes:

- Verification of the problem, need, or opportunity to enable it to move forward into design;
- Determination of the level of further project planning warranted; or,
- Dismissal of a project from further consideration.

Exhibit 2-2
Step I: Problem/Need/Opportunity Identification



Source: MassHighway

A copy of the Project Need Form is provided in Appendix 2-A-1 of this chapter. Electronic versions of this form and instructions for completion can be found on MassHighway’s website (www.mass.gov/mhd).

At the beginning of this process, the proponent should meet with potential participants, such as MassHighway District staff, the MPO, regional planning agencies, environmental agencies, local boards and officials, and community

members. This proactive, informal review and consultation can help ensure the project will develop with fewer problems in future phases.

The Project Need Form is important to define the condition, deficiency, or situation that indicates the need for action — the **project need**. The statement should be supported by facts, statistics, or even by plans or photographs to the extent that information is available.

The project need is not a project description (such as “replace a bridge” or “reconstruct a road”). That approach “decides” the project outcome too early in the process. A goal of the PNF is to state, in general terms, the deficiencies or needs related to the transportation facility (such as “the bridge is structurally deficient” or “the pavement is in poor condition”). The Project Need Form should document the problems and explain why corrective action is needed. An example of a need could be:

The intersection is hazardous. The high-crash rate at the intersection illustrates this problem.

Other examples might be:

There is significant congestion at the intersection. During peak periods, traffic from the side street has difficulty exiting onto the main street and long queues develop.

Or:

There is no formal accommodation for bicycles or pedestrians between the elementary school and the large residential neighborhood to the north where a significant portion of the student body live.

The purpose of a project is driven by these needs. As examples, the purpose might be to improve safety, to enhance mobility, to enhance commercial development, to improve structural capacity, to enhance pedestrian and bicycle movement, etc., or some combination of these.

2.1.3 Transportation Evaluation Criteria

The MPOs and MassHighway use transportation evaluation criteria (TEC) to assess whether proposed transportation projects should be supported with state or federal funding. The criteria are organized by two basic project purposes: preserving the current transportation

system; and improving or expanding the transportation system. A discussion of these criteria are provided as Appendix 2-A-2 to this chapter. These are useful in the preparation of a Project Need Form and should be submitted as an attachment, if available.

2.1.4 Identify Project Constituents and Public Outreach Plan

When defining the project need, the proponent should also think about public support of the project. To achieve this, the Project Need Form should:

- Identify interested parties;
- Document public outreach and feedback to date (if any); and
- Outline a public participation process for moving forward.

More information on the types of project constituents and elements of an outreach plan are found in Section 2.9.

2.1.5 Project Planning Scope

With the preliminary elements of a project defined (need, goals and objectives, project constituents, etc.) in the Project Need Form, the planning scope necessary to move the project forward requires definition.

The proponent may need to conduct planning activities appropriate to the extent and complexity of the type of project under consideration to ensure that all project benefits, impacts, and costs are objectively estimated:

- For a straightforward project (examples might include a sidewalk project, roadway resurfacing, or a traffic signal equipment upgrade), the proponent can seek approval to advance the project to design from the **Project Need Form**. In this case, the proponent defines the actions proposed to address the project need(s), describes the alternatives considered (if necessary), and documents any anticipated impacts as part of the Project Need Form. (This may also be the best approach where detailed planning for the project has already occurred and is documented).
- For more complex projects (as examples, if there are several alternatives to consider, if there are contextual constraints which add complexity to the solution, or if there is keen public interest), the project proponent should define the range of actions to be

considered and suggest a planning scope for a **Project Planning Report**. Guidance on the scope of this effort is provided in the next section of this chapter.

2.1.6 Project Need Form Review

Once the Project Need Form is prepared, it is submitted to the MassHighway District Office and Metropolitan Planning Organization staff for initial review. MassHighway typically develops a multi-disciplinary team to review project requests.

The intent of the Project Need Form review process is to allow the proponent to propose a project at its most basic level to the MassHighway District Office and MPO staff. Through this process, MassHighway and MPO staff can provide guidance for project scoping and planning considerations, in addition to suggestions for likely steps needed for project approvals. This guidance can be very valuable, especially if given before the proponent invests significant time and resources in the project design. The MassHighway and MPO staff suggestions at this stage can go a long way in ensuring the project's success.

Through this review, the proponent may be asked to answer questions that arise from the PNF review, to provide further documentation on the alternatives considered, and/or to complete (additional) public outreach.

After the Project Need Form has been reviewed and evaluated by the MassHighway District Office, a project requiring further planning would move into Planning (Step II). Some projects that are straightforward, or are supported by prior planning studies, are expected to move directly to Project Initiation (Step III).

Step I Outcomes:

The following are potential outcomes from Step I of the development process:

- Agreement by the project proponent and the District on the problem and project definition (extent and magnitude) to enable it to move forward into design (no further planning required); or
 - Determination that there is a problem, need, or opportunity to address but further project planning is warranted to better define the project; or
 - Advice on alternatives to consider and the planning process; or
 - A recommendation that the project be dismissed from further consideration. (For example, the proponent's analysis may reveal that the projected negative impacts outweigh the expected benefits, thus reducing the project's likelihood for approval in the subsequent review and programming phase).
-