

Research Review Committee Guidance

The Research Review Committee (RRC) oversees the Research Projects Program.

This committee is made up of MDT Division Administrators, a representative from FHWA, and a member of WTI. The role of the committee is to assist in determining the research projects that will be funded and developed. Research ideas are submitted during the annual research solicitation and can progress to the technical panel stage based on MDT need and funding availability.

When project demand outweighs funding (that is, MDT has received more ideas than can be funded in a year), the following factors are considered to assign funding priority:

- ❖ Priority research focus areas – for example, TranPlanMT focus areas that lend themselves to research;
- ❖ Scope, budget, and timeline are appropriate for available resources (limited funds need to be allocated to highest priorities) and timeliness/urgency of topic;
- ❖ Importance – for example, federal or state initiative or compliance;
- ❖ Benefits and pay-off as they relate to MDT’s mission and strategic plan – for example, return on investment or cost/lives savings;
- ❖ Implementability; and
- ❖ Feasibility/probability of success/risk.

Specific to research projects, the other instances when the RRC will be consulted are:

- Identifying technical panel members for specific research projects.
- Approves technical panels recommended action. This action could include canceling, funding, implementing, or amending a research project.
- Tabling projects. A project may be tabled if its contentious within the RRC. When these situations occur, the RRC will provide guidance during the meeting as to how to proceed. If a project gets tabled, the RRC will be consulted on further project idea modifications and how to move the project forward. RRC meeting notes will serve to document the status of a proposed idea.
- Reviewing and approving project scope changes on a case-by-case basis. If a significant pivot in scope is suggested by the researcher or technical panel, the RRC opinion on the project change would be sought.
- Reviewing and approving project cost increases. The table below is provided as a guideline for when the RRC consultation and approval should be sought. The left column is the initial cost of the project. If the proposed increase meets the criteria in the right column, the RRC needs to approve of the proposed change.

Project Cost	Percent Increase in Project Cost
\$50,000 or less	N/A
\$50,001 to \$100,000	30%
\$100,001 to \$500,000	25%
Greater than \$500,000	15%

Beyond approving and advising on specific research projects, the RRC also provides the Research Section with the following:

- Identifies and approves high priority research topics, partnership projects, and small projects.
- Approves funding for pooled-fund studies, based on the SOW and staff recommendations.
- Reviews project progress.
- Reviews and makes implementation recommendations.