



June 10, 2009

To: Citizen Advisory Committee
From: Andrea Riner
Subject: Item 5: Surface Transportation Program-Urban (STP-U) Funding for
FFY 2011-2013

Action Recommended: None. Information only.

This memo provides background on the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) STP-U program, including:

- Information about the current structure under which the MPO programs STP-U funds; and
- Information to initiate a dialogue regarding regional priorities in preparation for a new round of STP-U programming covering Federal Fiscal Years 2011-2013.

Background

Part of the MPO responsibilities is to develop a process for allocating the MPO's share of the STP-U funds. STP-U is just one of many funding sources used for transportation projects in the MPO area. However, STP-U funds are the only revenue source allocated and programmed for eligible projects solely at the discretion of the MPO, within certain federal guidelines. These federal funds must be matched with local or other non-federal funds at a minimum ratio of 10.27 percent of the total funding. The maximum federal portion is 89.73 percent of the total funding.

Attachment 1 to this memo provides extensive detail on the source and eligible uses of STP-U funds.

STP-U Programming in 2009

Several actions have already occurred relating to the programming of STP-U funds in the last several months. In April, MPC approved the MPO's discretionary Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) STP-U funds for planning activities. MPC approval to program STP-U funds for transportation options activities is requested at their June meeting. Both of these funding requests relate to FFY 2010. The remaining balance of STP-U funds available to the MPO for FFY 2010 are targeted, per prior MPC direction, for Project Development, Preservation, and Modernization activities. As has occurred in previous years, this funding can be programmed across all transportation modes.

The MPO Planning calendar proposes a timeline for a variety of STP-U fund programming actions, including the following:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| September 2009 | Completing the project selection process to program FFY 2010 STP-U funds for Project Development, Preservation, and Modernization. |
| December 2009 | Completing a region-wide discussion of transportation funding priorities for Federal Fiscal Years 2011-2013 within all program areas and for all transportation modes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Transportation Demand Management/Transportation Options;▪ Operational planning for the MPO and partner agencies;▪ Transit operations (as permitted in accord with federal rules);▪ Project development, preservation and modernization for Bike/Ped improvements;▪ Project development, preservation and modernization for Transit improvements; and▪ Project development, preservation and modernization for Roadway improvements. |

Current Central Lane MPO STP-U Funding Process

It has been the practice of the MPO to program the STP-U funds in three year bundles. Three years is a time interval within which the expected amount of funding is reasonably certain and within which the readiness of projects can be anticipated. Programming the STP-U funds three years at a time also allows the MPO member jurisdictions to have some certainty about the use of the funds, and consistency for a 3-year period in the goals and criteria used to select the project priorities.

Since 2003, the Central Lane MPO has programmed STP-U funds using a model that targets portions of the funds to broad purposes, within which priorities are then determined. MPC approved the current structure in 2006. Of the STP-U funds available to the MPO over the three year period, the model sets the following targets:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 10% | Transportation options (transportation demand management, or TDM) activities, as carried out by the Commuter Solutions program. |
| 25% | Planning activities, as carried out by the local member jurisdictions and the MPO under the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program. |
| 65% | Project Development, Preservation, and Modernization (PPM) activities across all transportation modes within the MPO. |

Program Categories

In developing a recommended process to allocate STP-U funding, staff recognized the difficulty of comparing project proposals with one another given the wide variety of project types that are eligible for these federal funds and the large backlog of needs. For example, an evaluation that attempts to weigh the relative merits of a bikeway project, a resurfacing project on a major arterial, and funding of an ongoing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program is likely to produce outcomes that are overly favorable to one or two types of projects while totally excluding other types. To help achieve a desired balance among the competing project priorities, staff have continued to recommend a process similar to that used for establishing the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) priorities. In the STIP process, policy direction is established for major categories of need, such as system preservation or transportation demand management. The overall framework established by the MPO identified four major project categories as follows:

System Preservation

Preserving the life and functionality of the existing transportation system is recognized as one of the highest priorities for all levels of government who share responsibility for the system. This is true for all transportation modes—our multi-use paths, sidewalks, bridges, transit facilities, and highways. It has been documented that our local roadways have the greatest backlog of need. Also, our roadways represent the foundation for the other modes. However, there are also needs related to off-street bicycle and pedestrian paths, and the ongoing preservation and vehicle replacement cycle of the transit system.

System Modernization

Modernization is a category that relates to all transportation modes, not only to large roadway and interchange projects as many often assume. The majority of previous STP-funded projects have consisted of examples such as reconstruction of major streets to bring them up to urban standards. This includes the construction of off-street bike paths, traffic operational improvements such as new signals or intersection reconstruction, addition of transit enhancements such as passenger shelters, park and ride lots, or the improvement of a roadway to add curbs, drainage improvements, bicycle lanes, and/or sidewalks. All of these examples are modernization projects since they either provide a new facility or upgrade an existing one. While the large modernization projects on the state highway system will likely continue to require major funding by ODOT, there are numerous local agency projects in the Regional Transportation Plan that also fall within this broad category.

Transportation Planning/Project Development

This category includes ongoing transportation planning in support of the overall metro-wide planning process and implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). It also includes more specific project-related planning for those projects included in the RTP. Examples would include preliminary scoping of Bus Rapid Transit routes or developing alternatives for interchange improvements.

This category would not include detailed engineering or preparation of final construction plans. That type of project engineering is generally part of the overall scope of preservation or modernization projects as described above.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Commuter Solutions (now called *point2point*) is the region's Transportation Options program, charged with the coordination and implementation of many of the region's transportation planning strategies designed to reduce the use of, and reliance upon, the automobile. The program is overseen by a cross-jurisdictional committee acting in response to increasing traffic congestion and environmental risk factors and the mobility challenges facing our region. TDM is considered one of the three essential legs of the transportation triangle. Examples of TDM projects include Commuter Vanpools to and from Salem and Corvallis, the Gateway Transportation Management Area Program, and the LTD Group Pass Program

FFY2011-2013 STP-U Funds

Over the next several months the MPO and local jurisdiction staff will begin to engage the public, the CAC and the MPC in a full discussion of the STP-U funding process, including identifying any new goals, priorities or other considerations. That discussion is anticipated to follow the timeline provided on Attachment 2, the MPO 12 Month Planning Calendar. A preliminary discussion will be part of the agenda for the July 16th joint meeting of the CAC and MPC.

This agenda item is for information and discussion purposes, and to identify additional information that would be helpful in framing the discussion of funding priorities with the public, the CAC, and the MPC.

Attachments

1. STP-U Eligible Expenditures
2. MPO 12 Month Planning Calendar