



October 14, 2009

To: Citizen Advisory Committee
From: Andrea G. Riner
Subject: Item 6: Surface Transportation Program-Urban (STP-U) FFY 2011-2013 Framework

Action Recommended: None. For discussion and information only.

Purpose

The CAC participated in an initial discussion of the STP-U Framework at their September meeting. The purpose of this agenda item is to continue this discussion based on the findings of the Draft Assessment of the Existing Framework, provided as Attachment 1.

Background

Approximately every three years the MPO has reviewed current STP-U funding practices in order to evaluate the program's effectiveness and to consider how the STP-U framework might be revised to reflect changing economic, community, environmental or other conditions. Over the next several months the MPO will engage the public, the CAC and the MPC in a full discussion of the STP-U framework following the proposed process timeline provided as Attachment 2. This review is intended to result in an updated STP-U framework to guide the programming of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2011 through FFY 2013 STP-U funds.

Overview of Current Framework

Within this context, the term Framework is meant to describe the overall decision-making process the MPO follows in allocating STP-U funds. Components of the framework include the funding structure (i.e., the 10%-25%-65% model) as well as the application process and the factors or criteria used in evaluating each jurisdiction's funding requests.

It has been the practice of the MPO to program the STP-U funds in three year bundles primarily based on the three-year MTIP/STIP cycle under prior Federal regulations. Under SAFETEA-LU, this cycle has been extended to four years. A three or four year time interval is one 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 or four years at a time also allows the MPO member jurisdictions to have some certainty about the use of the funds, and consistency for a significant period in the goals and criteria used to select the project priorities.

Normally under SAFETEA-LU regulations the MPO would have been considering a four-year funding cycle from 2010-2013. That has been reduced to three years from 2011-2013. This is due to funding issues and state legislative action impacting the ODOT STIP cycle. This resulted in the MPO considering FFY 2010 funding on its own. Thus, for this cycle, the MPO will program three years of funding in order to remain consistent with the STIP.

Assessment of Existing Framework

A draft Assessment of the Existing Framework is provided as Attachment 1. The assessment presents data and draws some initial conclusions regarding the pros and cons of the existing process. Section II of the Assessment presents several sets of supporting data, including:

- An overview of STP-U expenditures from 2004-2009 (Table 1);
- Operational planning funded by STP-U for 2009-2010 for each of the six agencies within the MPO, including LCOG, Eugene, Springfield, Coburg, Lane County, and LTD (Table 2); and
- Other planning funding for the six agencies (Table 3).

Additional data presented in the Assessment include funding for project-specific planning efforts from FY 2004-2009, and charts depicting expenditures for the STP-U category for Project Development, Preservation, and Modernization (PPM).

Further clarification and correction of information in the “Other Planning Funding” section on page 5 of 9, and of Table 3 is necessary. Currently the draft document states, “Table 3 is provided to indicate additional planning dollars that may be brought to the table by the various agencies” and titles this Table as “Other Planning Funding”. However, further input from agency partners indicates that in fact, only a very minor portion of these funds are available for MPO transportation planning.

Previous CAC Discussion

The Citizen Advisory Committee discussed the Framework process at their September 16 meeting (see Meeting Minutes) and provided the following comments:

- Present the discussion in terms of benefits and outcomes that CAC members and the public can respond to effectively. From that, staff should develop the tools and processes that they feel would have the best chance of achieving those outcomes. The CAC asserted that they do not feel that their expertise is appropriate to developing specific recommendations on funding amounts or funding targets.
- Provide additional information about the implementation of construction projects, and show the on the ground results of past expenditures.
- Include an evaluation of how the current planning allocation is being applied.
- Frame the public information and public involvement by focusing on ideas that are more relevant to the public than funding allocations, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions or promoting alternative transportation.

MPC Discussion (October 8, 2009)

The MPC participated in a lengthy discussion of the STP-U Framework Assessment at their October meeting, and provided the following comments and questions:

- Assess how the Framework can best support regional shared interests amongst the various jurisdictions;
- Continue to emphasize the importance of asset preservation;
- Describe how increasing the current TDM allocation of 10% might benefit the region;
- Ensure that programs with limited access to other funds are given priority when allocating STP-U funds which are more flexible than most other types of funding;
- Consider an increased level of support to Transit;
- Include public health benefits as an important decision-making factor somewhere in the process;
- Consider both economic benefits and economic realities throughout the discussion;
- Consider Greenhouse Gas reduction as an important decision-making factor or focus.

Next Steps

Staff will finalize the Existing Framework Assessment based on the October 8th MPC discussion and the results of the CAC's discussion. This input and the Final Assessment will then inform the development of a number of options for the MPC and CAC to consider in November. A recommended framework for 2011-2013 will be to be presented at the December MPC meeting for final approval in January 2010.

Recommendation

Discuss the Assessment of Existing Framework and provide direction to staff.

Attachments

1. Assessment of Existing STP-U Framework
2. Framework Process Timeline