



January 26, 2008

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee

From: Paul Thompson

Subject: Item 2.a: ODOT *STIP Process & Program Funding Update* Memo Task 3:
Prioritization Criteria

Action Requested: Provide direction to staff.

Background

This agenda item follows up on the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) January 10, 2008 discussion of Task 3 in a memo from Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Region 2 regarding "*STIP Process and Program Funding Update*" (included as Attachment 1). Task 3 calls for prioritization of ODOT modernization projects for FY10-15 in preparation for a potential increase in statewide modernization funding that could result in approximately \$60 million in funding for ODOT modernization projects in Lane County over the six-year period. At the January 10 MPC meeting staff conveyed ODOT's request for a "150 percent list" – a list of priorities for the use of the funds that totaled 150 percent of the anticipated amount.

The ODOT STIP modernization process typically occurs every two years, and sets priorities for one STIP cycle, usually addressing only the two final years of each 4-year STIP. The prioritization requested under Task 3 in the ODOT memo is in response to Oregon Senate Bill 566 (2007 legislative session), which calls for identifying projects that could be prepared to utilize the potential increase in funding. Identification and prioritization of these projects will occur in much the same manner as during the regular STIP cycle, with essentially the same process, and the same Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) required eligibility criteria and prioritization factors for Development STIP (D-STIP) and Construction STIP (C-STIP) modernization projects. These OTC-established criteria and factors are to be taken into account when Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs), and other stakeholder groups determine priorities to forward to ODOT for prioritization at the Region level, and, ultimately, at the statewide level by the OTC. Stakeholder groups may also consider additional criteria and factors when determining priorities, but it is highly unlikely that prioritization at the ODOT Region and OTC levels will take those additional criteria and factors into account.

At the January 10 meeting, MPC unanimously passed a motion that stated, in part (according to the draft minutes), “. . . direct the Transportation Planning Committee to bring STIP criteria and suggestions for local criteria back to the MPC members and that an interim meeting be scheduled in early February to discuss and finalize those criteria . . .” This memo addresses that direction.

Discussion

Required Eligibility Criteria & Prioritization Factors

Attachment 2 presents the FY10-13 STIP *Project Eligibility Criteria and Prioritization Factors*. The first page of the attachment summarizes the eligibility criteria that all potential projects must meet and the second page summarizes the prioritization factors that must be considered when determining project priorities.

The D-STIP and C-STIP eligibility criteria are generally self-explanatory, requiring that projects are consistent with local or regional plans. One of the C-STIP eligibility criteria states that projects must be “consistent with the Oregon Highway Plan policy on Major Improvements (Policy 1G, Action 1.G.1), where applicable.” Action 1.G.1 states:

Use the following [four] priorities for developing corridor plans, transportation system plans, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, and project plans to respond to highway needs. Implement higher priority measures first unless a lower priority measure is clearly more cost-effective or unless it clearly better supports safety, growth management, or other livability and economic viability considerations.

1. Protect the existing system. The highest priority is to preserve the functionality of the existing highway system by means such as access management, local comprehensive plans, transportation demand management, improved traffic operations, and alternative modes of transportation.
2. Improve efficiency and capacity of existing highway facilities. The second priority is to make minor improvements to existing highway facilities such as widening highway shoulders or adding auxiliary lanes, providing better access for alternative modes (e.g., bike lanes, sidewalks, bus shelters), extending or connecting local streets, and making other off-system improvements.
3. Add capacity to the existing system. The third priority is to make major roadway improvements to existing highway facilities such as adding general purpose lanes and making alignment corrections to accommodate legal size vehicles.
4. Add new facilities to the system. The lowest priority is to add new transportation facilities such as a new highway or bypass.

In summary, the OTC-required prioritization factors are:

D-STIP Projects

- D-STIP project suitability (an assessment of the level of work completed to achieve the planned D-STIP milestone)
- Projects that best support the policies of the Oregon Highway Plan
- Projects that have already completed one or more D-STIP milestones
- Projects that have funding identified for development or construction
- Major Modernization Projects that leverage other funds and public benefits

C-STIP Projects

- Project readiness (an assessment of the likelihood of a project getting to construction in the timeframe contemplated)
- Projects that best support the policies of the Oregon Highway Plan
- Projects that support freight mobility
- Projects that leverage other funds and public benefits
- Class 1 and 3 projects that have completed an environmental milestone of a Record of Decision (ROD) or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Both sets include this prioritization factor: “Projects that best support the policies of the Oregon Highway Plan.” Attachment 3 presents a summary table of the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) policies. Details on the OHP policies are available here: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/orhwyplan.shtml>.

Previous MPO-Specific Prioritization Factors

During the previous STIP prioritization cycles, the Central Lane MPO has included a set of MPO-specific prioritization factors when considering C-STIP projects. These factors evaluate projects with respect to the MPO’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) policies in four policy areas:

- Supports RTP Land Use Policies
- Supports RTP Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Policies
- Supports RTP System Improvement Policies
- Supports RTP Finance Policies

A summary of all of the RTP policies is included as Attachment 4. Full details on the RTP policies are available here:

<http://www.lcoq.org/mpo/PDF/rtp/2007/FinalDraft/Chapter2.pdf>

Potential Additional MPO-Specific Prioritization Factors

In response to the January 10, 2008 MPC direction to bring “suggestions for local criteria back to the MPC,” staff consulted with the MPO’s Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and worked during the weekly regional staff meetings to arrive at TPC recommendations for local criteria.

The CAC discussed the ODOT Task 3 request for FY10-15 priorities at their January 16, 2008 meeting. While not taking formal action, by consensus the CAC recommended that the MPC consider the following additional local prioritization factors:

- Congestion¹
- Volumes¹
- Safety¹
- Relationship to Regional TDM Activities²

In addition to the four factors above forwarded by the CAC, regional staff and TPC discussions added the following potential local prioritization factors to the list for consideration:

- Freight Mobility^{1,3}
- Leverage other Improvements or Off-system Benefits³
- Relationship to Regional Employment Centers
- System Hierarchy

It should be noted that while at least six of the eight factors listed above are reflected to some extent in the OTC-required statewide prioritization factors, the CAC and/or TPC recommended these as additional local factors as a way of indicating that the factors should be given greater weight or consideration. Specifically, of the eight potential local factors listed above, the freight mobility and leverage factors are explicit OTC statewide criteria. Furthermore, the potential local congestion, volumes, safety and TDM factors are addressed in the OHP policy set that forms the basis of one of the OTC-required prioritization factors. However, again, the TPC and CAC felt that these factors should be raised as MPO-specific factors and given greater consideration.

Similarly, all eight of the potential additional local factors are reflected in the MPO's RTP policy set, which forms the basis of the MPO-specific prioritization factors that have been evaluated over the past several STIP cycles.

At the January 24, 2008 TPC meeting, staff also discussed the feasibility of collecting data and evaluating projects on additional local criteria in the one week between the January 29 MPC meeting that will provide direction on prioritization criteria, and the February 6 packet deadline for the February 14 MPC meeting at which the MPO's priorities must be determined. While supporting further consideration of local MPO-specific criteria, the TPC unanimously passed a motion recommending that, given the very tight timeframe associated with ODOT's Task 3 request, the MPO proceed at this time with an evaluation of FY10-15 STIP project priorities with the established prioritization factors used by the MPO during the most recent STIP cycles, while directing staff to embark on a process to further evaluate and establish a broader MPO-specific project prioritization process.

¹ Considered in OHP and RTP Policies

² Considered in OHP and RTP Policies, but not in direct relationship to highway modernization projects

³ Explicit OTC Prioritization Factors

TPC specifically noted that all eight of the potential additional local factors are already reflected in the MPO's RTP policy set, and can thus be considered at this time as part of the evaluation of projects in light of the RTP policies. Similarly, TPC noted that at least six of the eight factors are part of the OTC-required statewide factors, and can be addressed and documented within that framework, not only at the MPO level, but also during the ODOT Region and OTC statewide prioritization processes.

Included for the MPC's consideration of potential additional MPO-specific prioritization criteria are two examples of other Oregon MPO's prioritization process for the STIP. Attachment 5 presents the Cascades West Council of Governments FY10-13 STIP scoring sheet. Attachment 6 presents the Mid-Willamette Valley Area Commission on Transportation D-STIP and C-STIP modernization project evaluation matrices.

Action Requested: Provide direction to staff on eligibility criteria and prioritization factors for funding priorities for FY10-15.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – ODOT *STIP Process and Program Funding Update* memo
- Attachment 2 – FY10-13 STIP *Project Eligibility Criteria and Prioritization Factors*
- Attachment 3 – Summary of *Oregon Highway Plan* policies
- Attachment 4 – Summary of Central Lane MPO RTP policies
- Attachment 5 – Cascades West COG FY10-13 STIP scoring sheet
- Attachment 6 – Mid-Willamette Valley ACT project evaluation matrices