



July 2, 2008

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee
From: Paul Thompson
Subject: Item 4.d: MPO Priorities for Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC)
Statewide Earmark Project List

Action Recommended: Approve MPO Priorities.

Background

The Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) considered the initial and revised drafts of the Oregon Transportation Commission *Policy on Federal Reauthorization Highway Program Earmark Requests* (Policy) at their February, March and May 2008 meetings.

According to the “advance copy” of the minutes of the May, 2008 OTC meeting, the OTC approved the Policy with the two following language changes:

- i. 1st bullet under “Earmark Request Criteria” page 2 – add the words ‘or consistent with’ after the words ‘is included’, to provide additional flexibility.
- ii. Remove the following language from the section on “Earmark Sponsor Roles and Responsibilities” at the bottom of page 2: *Except for funding already allocated in the STIP, the Department shall not make any advance commitment to allocate additional funds to provide matching funds or cover any shortfalls for earmarks received for projects not on the official Commission Earmark Requests List though these projects will be able to compete for funding within the normal STIP process.* Replace it with the wording: *When a project not on the Commission Earmark Requests List receives an earmark, the Department may provide additional funds for the project only in accordance with the Department’s funding priorities and only to the extent funds are available after Commission approved earmark requests are fully funded and after other funding priorities have been met.*

The approved Policy is included with this memo as Attachment 1. Also included as Attachment 2 is the ODOT *Guidance for Preparing Earmark Recommendation Lists*.

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is now moving to implement this Policy in advance of federal reauthorization of the highway program.

Discussion

ODOT is requesting that the MPO submit a list of priority projects to the Lane County Board of Commissioners and ODOT by July 15, prior to the Board’s selection of priority projects county-wide. The MPO’s priority list will be considered by both the Lane County Board of Commissioners and the Oregon Transportation Commission during both the county-wide and state-wide selection processes.

The attached *Guidance* document indicates that “each ACT should prepare a list of one to five priority projects . . . [that] need not be put in priority order.” The *Guidance* also indicates that “ACTs should limit earmark requests to no more than \$25 million [per project] . . . [and] should generally not recommend earmarks of less than \$1 million.”

Finally, the *Guidance* provides the “Commission Earmark Request Criteria,” summarized here:

- *Strategic Investment*: Included in or consistent with an existing transportation plan document or needs list.
- *Meets STIP Criteria*: Must meet the current approved Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) criteria.
- *Support*
- *Readiness*: Work will begin during the timeframe of the transportation authorization legislation (2010-2015).
- *Funding*: Earmark funding, when combined with funding already committed to the project and additional available resources, will be used to complete the project or a project phase.

Proposed Priorities

The MPC recently considered two topics that are directly related to providing the input requested on earmark priorities.

Over the course of several months, MPC determined large project priorities for the FY2010-2015 STIP horizon. These priorities were established using nearly the same criteria listed above for the earmark priorities: the *STIP Criteria* themselves, *Support*, *Readiness*, and *Funding*. The culmination of this process resulted in the following FY2010-2015 STIP priorities, as expressed in MPC’s April 10, 2008 letter to ODOT:

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| 1. I-5 @ Beltline Interchange | \$35.0 million |
| 2. Gateway/Beltline: International Way to Postal Way | \$15.0 million |
| 3. I-5 @ Coburg Interchange | \$19.5 million |
| 4. Beltline Highway: River Road to Coburg Road (Phase 1) | \$20.0 million |

The MPO’s Transportation Planning Committee’s (TPC) recommendation of the above four priorities was primarily based on the assessment of projects against a combination of the STIP criteria and MPO-specific criteria. The results of that assessment were presented to MPC at their February, 2008 meeting and are available here

http://www.lcog.org/meetings/mpc/0208/MPC4.c-Attachment3-TPC_Recommended_FY10-15STIP_Priorities_FINAL.pdf

MPC also recently responded to an ODOT request in response to Oregon Senate Bill 566 to identify large unfunded modernization projects that are expected to cost at least \$100 million. This list, as submitted, was:

- Beltline, River Road to Coburg Road
- Beltline Phase 3, Roosevelt to W. 11th
- I-5 @ Beltline (remaining units)
- Eugene-Springfield Highway (SR 126, I-5 to Main Street) improvements, including
 - Possible widening of segments to 6 lanes
 - Possible interchange improvements at
 - Pioneer Parkway/Q Street
 - Mohawk
 - 42nd
 - 52nd
 - Main
- Franklin Blvd, Ferry Street Bridge to Springfield Bridge, including EmX improvements
- Interstate-5 improvements, including
 - Possible widening to 6 lanes from SR 126 to OR 58
 - Possible interchange improvements at
 - Glenwood Interchange
 - 30th Interchange

The four FY2010-2015 STIP priorities address partial funding requests for two of the above large (\$100 million plus) unfunded projects: Beltline (River Road to Coburg Road) and I-5 @ Beltline.

For the pending request to identify one to five priority projects for earmark funding, the TPC, at its June 26, 2008 meeting, unanimously recommends that the MPC submit the four previously identified FY2010-2015 priorities, plus two additional projects, drawing from the large unfunded projects list:

- Franklin Boulevard, Ferry Street Bridge to Springfield Bridge, including EmX Improvements, for \$25 million for project development and early right-of-way acquisition
- Eugene-Springfield Highway (SR 126) @ Main Street Interchange Construction for \$50 million

The Franklin Boulevard project is included in the current *Federal Priorities 2008* document as a request for \$5 million to conduct an environmental analysis of possible improvements to Franklin Boulevard. The project is a partnership between Lane Transit District and the cities of Eugene and Springfield. TPC recommends that a \$25 million request for continued project development and early right-of-way acquisition be included on the earmark list.

The 126 @ Main project is also included in the *Federal Priorities 2008* document as a request for \$2 million for environmental documentation, preliminary design, and right-of-way acquisition. This project is included on the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) fiscally constrained project list as a \$50 million interchange construction project to address current significant congestion and safety problems at the intersection. TPC recommends that a \$50

million request for project development, right-of-way, and construction be included on the earmark list.

Staff will be available at the July, 2008 MPC meeting to provide further details on the proposed priorities and to answer questions.

Action Recommended: Approve MPO Priorities for Earmark Requests.

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|--|----------------|
| 1. I-5 @ Beltline Interchange | \$35.0 million |
| 2. Gateway/Beltline: International Way to Postal Way | \$15.0 million |
| 3. I-5 @ Coburg Interchange | \$19.5 million |
| 4. Beltline Highway: River Road to Coburg Road (Phase 1) | \$20.0 million |
| 5. Franklin Blvd, Ferry St Bridge to Springfield Bridge | \$25.0 million |
| 6. Eugene-Springfield Highway (SR 126) @ Main St | \$50.0 million |

Attachments

Attachment 1 – OTC *Policy on Federal Reauthorization Highway Program Earmark Requests*

Attachment 2 – ODOT draft *Guidance for Preparing ACT Earmark Recommendation Lists*