

Memo



Metro

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Date: Thursday, November 16, 2017
To: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and Interested Parties
From: Grace Cho, Associate Transportation Planner
Ted Leybold, Resource Development Manager
Subject: 2021-2024 STIP – MPO Comment Letter on ODOT Funding Programs

Purpose

Request JPACT approval to submit a comment letter to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) regarding the funding levels for the ODOT administered funds.

Introduction and Background

As part of Metro's duties as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Portland region, Metro in partnership with ODOT, TriMet, SMART, and local partners, is responsible for developing the federally mandated Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP). The MTIP is a coordination process of the expenditures (i.e., spending) of federal transportation funds as well as significant state and local funds in the Portland metropolitan region. As a report, the MTIP provides the implementation schedule of federally funded transportation projects and demonstrates how the transportation projects comply with federal regulations, such as fiscal constraint, air quality impacts, and public involvement. The MTIP also monitors the region's progress towards achieving the vision and goals set forth in the region's long-range transportation plan.

JPACT and the Metro Council have the responsibility of overseeing the MTIP. For eligibility purposes any transportation project using federal funds, seeking a federal action, or making an investment on a regionally significant facility in the metropolitan area must be included in the MTIP. This includes those transportation funds administered by different agencies (e.g. ODOT, TriMet, SMART).

2021-2024 STIP Development – Assigning Revenues to ODOT Administered Funding Programs

At the October meeting of JPACT, the region submitted a comment letter requesting the OTC consider five desired outcomes the Portland metropolitan region wishes to see from the different ODOT administered funding programs. These outcomes were developed in collaboration with stakeholders and addressed the questions the OTC posed for stakeholder input. The outcomes specified in the comment letter (in no particular order) are:

1. Invest comprehensively and adequately in urban arterials.
2. Invest in project development and the Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) program to allow future transportation investments to emerge successfully.
3. Have all ODOT funding programs create a "shelf" list of priorities for consideration when unexpected revenue emerges.
4. For funding dedicated to addressing transportation safety, allocate these funds to where they will be most effective at reducing serious injuries and fatalities.
5. Further invest in the transportation strategies which are the most effective in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Since the submission of the comment letter in October, ODOT staff developed a recommendation for the ODOT administered funding programs. In summary, the staff recommendation proposes to

distribute the available discretionary funding between the Fix-It program and the Enhance Highway program. At this time, the OTC seeks input on what the discretionary funding split should be between the two programs. At the OTC workshop, various stakeholders, including all the ACTs, modal committees, and a representative from OMPOC provided feedback. At the November Region 1 ACT meeting, the ACT recommended a higher level of discretionary funding in the Enhance Highway program.

Recommendation & Comment Letter

Metro staff reviewed the proposal recommended by ODOT staff and looked at how the proposal advances the outcomes identified in the October comment letter submitted by the region. In addition, Metro identified key concerns from the recommendation. In light of the review and identified concerns, Metro staff recommends the region submit another comment letter to the OTC for the November meeting. Metro staff recommends the comment letter express concerns about the ODOT staff proposal, reiterate the region's desired outcomes from the ODOT funding programs, and respond to the question the OTC seeks feedback.

To gather input and achieve consensus, Metro staff held a discussion with jurisdictional staff in November and listened to the discussion at the November Region 1 ACT meeting. Through these venues, Metro staff developed the following key messages to convey in the OTC comment letter. Again, these messages are based on two core principles: 1) to reiterate desired outcomes the region wishes to see from the ODOT funding programs which are currently not addressed in the ODOT staff proposal; and 2) express the region's concerns around the ODOT staff proposal. These messages (in no particular order) are:

1. Invest discretionary revenues in a moderate Enhance Highway program between the \$24 million and \$124 million options, and invest additional discretionary revenues in the ODOT Non-Highway and Safety funding programs.
2. Increase local input opportunities and the importance of enhancement priorities within the proposed leverage programs.
3. Have all ODOT funding programs create a "shelf" list of projects ready for programming in the STIP.
4. For funding dedicated to addressing transportation safety, allocate these funds to where they will be the most effective at reducing serious injuries and fatalities.

Further detail about each message is provided as part of the comment letter (attached). The comment letter is consistent with the recommendation made by the Region 1 ACT. The draft comment letter seeks JPACT approval for submission to the OTC.

Next Steps

The following timeline illustrates the next steps for the 2021-2024 STIP.

Timeline – 2021-2024 STIP Policy Discussion

| Activity | Timeframe |
|--|-------------------|
| Stakeholder Input at OTC Retreat | October 19, 2017 |
| Ad hoc meeting of TPAC members to discuss content for the OTC comment letter | November 6, 2017 |
| Region 1 ACT meeting and further discussion of the 2021-2024 STIP | November 6, 2017 |
| Request approval from JPACT to submit a comment letter to the OTC | November 16, 2017 |
| Further discussion at OTC on 2021-2024 STIP and Program Funding Levels | November 17, 2017 |
| Approval of 2021-2024 STIP Funding Scenario and Program Funding Levels | December 15, 2017 |