

Memo



Metro

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Date: Thursday, October 8, 2020
To: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and Interested Parties
From: Grace Cho, Senior Transportation Planner
Ted Leybold, Resource Development Manager
Subject: Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Comment Letter on the 2024-2027 STIP development process

Purpose

Provide JPACT an update on the 2024-2027 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) development process and an overview of the proposed regional comment letter to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) on the 2024-2027 STIP.

Request

Request approval to submit a comment letter from the Portland metropolitan region on the 2024-2027 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the allocation of ODOT administered funding.

Background

In July 2020, the OTC kicked off the development process for the 2024-2027 STIP. As part of the kickoff, ODOT staff outlined a three-phase process for developing the 2024-2027 STIP. The following are the three phases (as quoted from the ODOT 2024-2027 STIP factsheet):

- ***"Dividing up the money:*** *Based on the Commission's policies, priorities and goals, the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) – the entity to approve the STIP – divides the money among programs that fix roads and bridges, address safety problems, provide more options to get around and improve our transportation system— both state highways and local roads. The OTC will decide how to divide up the money by the end of 2020.*
- ***"Picking projects:*** *Once we know how much money each program has to spend we start picking projects. We use data on conditions, safety and congestion to come up with a list of the highest priority projects that help us make progress toward meeting our goals. We figure out how much each project will cost and when we could deliver them. We also work with advisory committees made up of local elected officials and citizens to help understand which projects are most important to our communities. They help us come up with a list of the best projects that fit within our budget and help us meet our goals. This list is the draft STIP.*
- ***"Public review and approval:*** *The draft STIP will go out for public review in early 2023 so you can comment on the list of projects."*

As the designated and federally recognized metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Portland region, JPACT and the Metro Council are responsible for developing the regional, near-term investment strategy for fiscal years 2024-2027 under a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuous process. In developing the MTIP, which is the metropolitan area portion of the STIP, JPACT and the Metro Council have a keen interest in successful coordination with the Commission, to ensure the selection of projects within the metropolitan area that will utilize ODOT administered funds and propose inclusion in our MTIP, reflect shared goals by the region and the state.

As presented by ODOT staff, the development of the 2024-2027 STIP is currently in step 1. As part of step 1, the Oregon Transportation Commission seeks input on allocation of forecasted revenues

for federal fiscal years 2025-2027 across six funding categories, as listed. The estimated revenue total for the years 2024-2027 is \$2.1 billion.

- **Enhance Highway:** Highway projects that expand or enhance the transportation system.
- **Fix-it:** Projects that maintain or fix the state highway system.
- **Safety:** Projects focused on reducing fatal and serious injury crashes on Oregon's roads.
- **Non-Highway:** Bicycle, pedestrian, public transportation and transportation options projects and programs.
- **Local Programs:** Funding to local governments for priority projects.
- **Other Functions:** Workforce development, planning and data collection and administrative resources using federal funds.

In particular, the Oregon Transportation Commission has interest in hearing feedback on the allocation of revenues between four funding categories: Enhance Highway, Fix-it, Safety, and Non-Highway.

At the September and October OTC meetings, ODOT staff is presenting different scenarios which look at different levels of revenues across the Enhance Highway, Fix-it, Safety, and Non-Highway investment categories. As part of the review of the funding scenarios, ODOT staff will also produce a report on how well each scenario performs relative to ODOT key performance measures and the Commission's strategic action plans goals. A graphic of the five different scenarios being evaluated and discussed by the Commission is attached. The scenarios start with a baseline of funding levels, as represented by the current 2021-2024 STIP, and the four following scenarios adjust revenue levels between the Fix-it, Enhance, Safety, and Non-Highway categories.

Development of Regional Comments - Proposed MPO Comments Letter on the 2024-2027 STIP – Step 1 Development Process

At the September 2020 TPAC meeting, members of TPAC received a presentation by ODOT staff on the development of the 2024-2027 STIP. Following the 2024-2027 STIP presentation, TPAC members opened a discussion about whether the Portland metropolitan region plans to submit a comment letter. Based on the discussion, TPAC members recommended to Metro staff to add the 2024-2027 STIP comment discussion as an agenda item at an upcoming meeting. Based on an understanding of the phase 1 process for the 2024-2027 STIP, ODOT will accept feedback and comments on the funding scenarios through a set of open houses scheduled between mid-October through November 2020.

At the October 2020 TPAC meeting, Metro staff presented a set of potential messages and themes to communicate in the comment letter on the 2024-2027 STIP from the region. The potential messages and themes are consistent with adopted regional policies and a starting point for discussion. Metro staff gathered feedback and input from TPAC on refinements to the key messages. In addition, TPAC members provided additional feedback on how the comment letter can respond to the questions being asked by the Commission.

Following the October TPAC meeting, additional information and discussion on the 2024-2027 STIP took place at the Region 1 ACT meeting. In light of the information to emerge from the Region 1 ACT meeting, some additional refinements were made to the comment letter.

The attached comment letter is a reflection of TPAC input and refinements as well as the new information to emerge from the Region 1 ACT.

Recognizing the number of comments the Metro region has related to the allocation of ODOT administered funding, Metro staff, on behalf of the region, will submit a second staff-to-staff comment letter. This comment letter will provide additional specifics related to the key messages, such as supporting data and examples, as well as provide procedural and administrative comments which are more specific to how ODOT Region 1 or other divisions/sections of ODOT operationalize the funding allocation direction from the Commission.

Next Steps

If JPACT approves the submission of the 2024-2027 STIP comment letter, Metro staff will finalize the comment letter and submit it to the Oregon Transportation Commission. The OTC is expected to finalize the allocation of revenues to the different funding/investment categories at the Commission's December 2020 meeting or in January 2021.