



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director *MR*
DATE: April 26, 2016
SUBJECT: **Transportation Improvement Program Guidebook – DRAFT**

AT A GLANCE – INFORMATION

The purpose of this memorandum is to present the Draft Transportation Programming Guidebook. The Guidebook provides an overview of the Transportation Improvement Program, the regional grant process, and the policies and procedures associated with the development of the Transportation Improvement Program.

BACKGROUND

RTC has the responsibility to develop a Transportation Improvement Program for the metropolitan area and select projects to receive regionally allocated federal funds. The RTC Board, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region, has selection and programming authority for the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program (CMAQ). As the Regional Transportation Planning Organization, the RTC Board has selection and programming authority for the regional Transportation Alternative Program (TAP).

The attached Transportation Programming Guidebook is a new document that RTC staff has prepared as a resource for the RTC’s member agencies and their staff. The document provides an overview of the Transportation Improvement Program, the regional grant process, and the policies and procedures associated with the development of the Transportation Improvement Program.

A draft of the Transportation Programming Guidebook was first developed in the spring of 2015. The RTC Board reviewed the document in May and June of 2015. The RTC Board provided additional policy clarification into the grant selection process at their January and February 2016 meetings.

Since October 2015 the TIP Subcommittee, a subcommittee to RTAC, has been meeting to review the Regional Grant Process and selection criteria. The TIP Subcommittee met on six occasions. The subcommittee recommendations have been reviewed by the full RTAC committee, and the attached draft Transportation Programming Guidebook has been recommended for RTC Board consideration.

TIP FUNDING: POLICY AND STRATEGIES

At the February 2016, RTC Board meeting, the Board provided policy guidance pertaining to the overall grant policy framework, funding strategies, and grant selection criteria. At that meeting the Board guided staff to advance the following:

Guiding Policy:

Guiding the grant program investments is the policy framework established in the current Regional Transportation Plan, 2014 (RTP). As stated in the RTP, the goals of the region are balanced to promote a vibrant community. Implementation of the RTP promotes goals which invest resources in the transportation system to enhance economic development, mobility, and safety. The RTP also promotes the efficient operations of the multimodal transportation system for the traveling public. Investments of the regional federal funds should continue to be diverse and aligned with implementing the goals of the RTP.

The goals of the RTP include:

Economy: Support economic development and community vitality.

Safety and Security: Ensure safety and security of the transportation system.

Accessibility and Mobility: Provide reliable mobility for personal travel and freight movement by addressing congestion and transportation system bottlenecks. Also, provide access to locations throughout the region while protecting the integrity of neighborhoods by discouraging cut-through traffic. These policy goals should be accomplished through development of an efficient, balanced, multi-modal regional transportation system.

Management and Operations: Maximize efficient management and operation of the transportation system through transportation demand management and transportation system management strategies.

Environment: Protect environmental quality and natural resources and promote energy efficiency.

Vision and Values: Ensure the RTP reflects community values to help build and sustain a healthy, livable, and prosperous community.

Finance: Provide a financially-viable and sustainable transportation system.

Preservation: Maintain and preserve the regional transportation system to ensure system investments are protected.

Guiding Strategies:

Since the need for transportation improvements exceed the available revenue, a competitive project selection process is conducted for the distribution of RTC's regional federal funds. The overarching strategy is to implement the goals and policies of the Regional Transportation Plan. Specific funding strategies were developed to promote multi-modal outcomes and create agency leverage due to the limited grant funds available.

STP and CMAQ Strategies

Leverage other grant sources. One of the successes of the regional grant process lies in its flexibility; allowing local governments to create projects that fit their local needs and use regional federal funds to leverage other grants to complete priority projects.

Implement Transportation Management and Operations improvements. Transportation System Management and Operations strategies provide money-saving, multimodal solutions that relieve congestion and optimize infrastructure investments.

Build multimodal urban arterials. The urban areas of Clark County have grown rapidly, resulting in many urban areas being served by a rural character transportation system (ex. two-lane roadways with no sidewalks, bike lanes, street lights and storm drainage serving urbanized areas). Arterials built to urban standards provide an efficient, balanced, multi-modal regional transportation system that improve modal options, safety, reduce congestion, and support economic development.

No Preservation of transportation system. Local agencies have the primary responsibility for maintaining the transportation system and regional federal funds will not be used for maintenance or preservation projects.

TAP Strategies

Build bicycle and pedestrian projects. There is a strong need for stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian projects that improve the multi-modal travel experience and benefit local communities.

GRANT SELECTION CRITERIA

RTAC has made recommendations for refinement of Urban STP/CMAQ grant scoring sub-criteria (to better assess individual project merits by objective measures), but did not recommend any changes to the Board’s major criteria point allocation or weighting. No changes were recommended for Rural STP grant scoring criteria. The TAP scoring criteria will be reviewed as part of the next call for projects in the spring of 2017. The following represent the recommended STP and CMAQ grant selection criteria:

**Urban STP/CMAQ
Summary of Needs Criteria**

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Mobility	20
Multimodal/Operations	15
Safety	20
Economic Development	20
Financial/Implementation	15
Sustainability/Air Quality*	10
Total	100

**Air Quality points are tripled for CMAQ projects*

**Rural STP
Summary of Needs Criteria**

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Project Need	15
Safety	25
Road Condition	25
Economic Development	10
Financial/Implementation	25
Total	100

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMMING GUIDEBOOK

The Transportation Programming Guidebook documents the policy framework for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process. The Guidebook includes six sections that explain the regional process for development and maintenance of the regional TIP. The intent is to bring the overall regional transportation programming process into one document and clarify the process for member agencies and their staff. The Guidebook is intended to clarify policies and provide procedures to equitably implement adopted RTC Board policies. The Guidebook is a working document that can be updated as needed.

The development of this Guidebook is the result of RTC staff working with member agency technical staff and has been recommended by the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC).

NEW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RTAC has recommended that the following policies and procedures be added to RTC’s process. An explanation for each new policy follows, with the wording for each new policy shown in purple text within the attached Transportation Programming Guidebook.

Policy 1.4 –CMP Toolbox Checklist.

Federal regulations require that applicants consider alternatives to traditional road widening prior to adding general single occupant vehicle capacity. The CMP Toolbox Checklist is a simple method for the region to ensure that we meet this requirement. On average, less than one project a year would be required to complete the Checklist.

Policy 3.2.1 – Scope Modification

This policy clarifies how scope modification will be handled.

Policy 3.2.2 – Build to project scope

This policy clarifies that agencies must build to grant application scope of work or correct construction work.

Policy 3.3 - Recognition of grant award through RTC

This policy is intended to improve the awareness of RTC's contribution to regional transportation projects.

Policy 3.4 – Project Showcase

This policy requires the development of a one-page Project Showcase following the completion of a project. This allows the RTC Board to see the public benefits of regionally awarded grants.

Policy 3.6 – Regional Selection of first 3-years of TIP

The region has obligated funds at such a fast pace over the last few years, that obligation needs to slow down or projects will no longer be able to proceed. This policy will allow only projects programmed in the first 3-years of the TIP to proceed on a first come basis.

Policy 4.5 – Move regional funds back to later phases.

This policy allows cost savings from design to be moved back to construction without amending the TIP.

Policy 5.7 – Project delivery deadline not met

This policy clarifies how a project will be handled if a project delivery deadline is not met.

Policy 6.1 – Construction Funding

This policy ensures that a project is far enough along, so that construction delivery becomes reliable.

NEXT STEPS

The Transportation Programming Guidebook is currently out for partner agency review and comment. It will be presented in final form for RTAC review and endorsement at the May RTAC meeting. The Transportation Programming Guide and RTAC's recommendation to the RTC Board will be presented at the June RTC Board meeting for review and adoption.

Attachments