STAFF REPORT/RESOLUTION

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors

FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director

DATE: March 26, 2019

SUBJECT: **Transportation Programming Guidebook – TIP Policies and Procedures, Resolution 04-19-09**

AT A GLANCE - *ACTION*

The purpose of this resolution is to seek RTC Board approval to modify the 2020-2023 grant selection process to manage an increase in regional federal funds and a short-term obligation need. This resolution also outlines the existing TIP obligation policies and procedures that the RTC Board has adopted and describes the current status of regional obligation.

BACKGROUND

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Clark County region, RTC is responsible for selecting and programming projects for the regional share of the Federal Highway program. RTC also has responsibility for ensuring the obligation of these federal funds. The federal programs managed by RTC include the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), and Transportation Alternatives (TA).

Federal Obligation Authority rules require that each state must spend its level of obligation for that year or forfeit funds to another state. In 2013, WSDOT delegated the responsibility to meet the local share of federal obligation levels to Metropolitan Planning Organizations and County lead agencies. Given RTC's obligation authority responsibility, the region adopted additional policies and procedures to assist the region in meeting our obligation targets, which are outlined in the attached Transportation Programming Guidebook.

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TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMMING GUIDEBOOK

The Transportation Programming Guidebook was first adopted by the RTC Board in 2017. The Guidebook outlines the background information, policies, and procedures for the region's grant process and for the development of the region's TIP. This includes policies and procedures associated with project delivery, cost limitations, project delays, and obligation. This ensures that policies and procedures are consistently and impartially applied.

Staff is proposing that the Transportation Programming Guide book be amended to include the following procedures that RTC has implemented in the last few years:

1) Grant Award Letters – Page 11: In 2018 RTC began to issue grant award letters that specify grant award information.
2) RTC Project Database – Page 12: In 2017 RTC created a project database to provide project information on projects awarded grants through RTC.

STATEWIDE OBILIGATION POLICY

The WSDOT obligation policy takes a "use it or lose it" approach. By August, each region must obligate 100 percent of their targeted obligation level. Any remaining funds not obligated will be sanctioned and could be lost. Collectively, local agencies statewide have been able to meet statewide obligation targets. This has been accomplished in part, due to regions such as RTC that have obligated well above our regional obligation targets. The following are key Federal and State obligation policies:

- Programming in the TIP is limited by available funds each year (financially constrained).
- Regions can only obligate up to two years in advance.
- Local agencies will need to use advanced construction authority, after regions meet their obligation target (reimbursements of federal funds are delayed).
- To obligate FHWA transit projects, they must be programmed in the first year of the TIP.

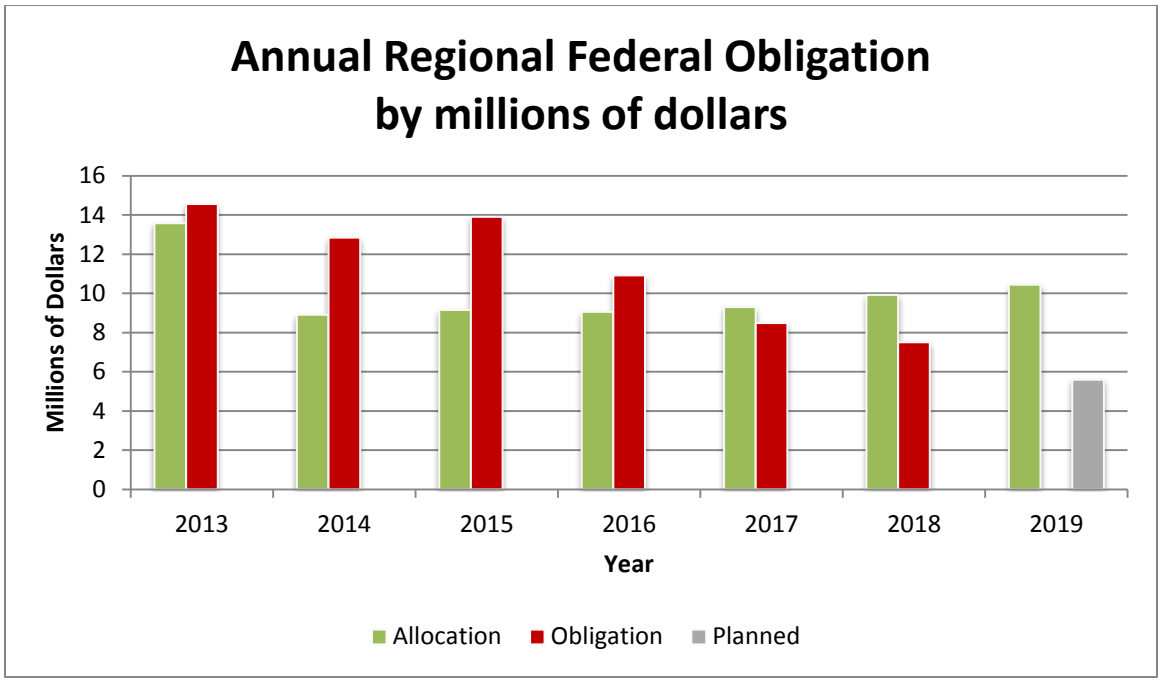
RTC ALLOCATION AND OBLIGATION

From 2013 to 2017, the region received approximately $9 million per year, with year 2013 being higher due to a $4.5 million carryover from year 2012. Recently, RTC received our 2018 and 2019 federal allocation, which has resulted in an increased allocation above $10 million per year.

Beginning in 2013, local agencies in Clark County responded and obligated projects at an unprecedented rate. By the end of 2016, the Clark County region was over one year in advanced of their obligation authority, which was creating issues with federal and state obligation policies. In 2016, the RTC Board revised policies to constrain obligation to the first two years of the TIP and make the process beneficial for all. This slowed obligation, but the region continued to meet our obligation targets each year.

Even though the 2019 allocation was $10.4 million, the region entered year 2019 needing to obligate $4.7 million to hit our obligation authority target. As of mid-March, no projects have been obligated in 2019. A review with local agencies shows only $5.6 million is planned to be obligated by August 2019. This provides little room for error, and the region is at risk of not meeting our obligation target if delays occur.

The Following table shows available funding and obligation from year 2013 through 2019:



RTC PROJECT DELAY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

RTC's policy allows projects to proceed one year prior to the year a project is programmed in the TIP, which allowed advanced projects to cover delayed projects. RTC's policy also allows for project delays of up to 3 years. The cumulative effect of delayed projects has placed additional pressure on our ability to meet regional obligation targets. In 2018, the region experienced three projects ($4.23 million) that have reached their final year of project delay, all of which may not meet the August 2019 deadline for obligation. Several other projects have been delayed one or two years. Project delays combined with fewer projects that are advancing a year early, has resulted in the region being at risk of not hitting our obligation target in 2019. The following are the projects that will hit their final obligation deadline in August 2019:

- Battle Ground - Chelatchie Prairie Rails with Trails $225,000 (Funds returned)
- Port of Ridgefield – Pioneer Street Railroad Overpass $2 million
- Vancouver – Mill Plain Blvd, 104th to Chkalov $2 million

Policy 5.8 from the Transportation Programming Guidebook provides the procedure for how the region will deal with projects that do not meet the August obligation deadline. A quick review of other agencies, found RTC's project delay policy to be more lenient than other agencies.

Policy 5.8 - If a project cannot make the August obligation deadline, the sponsoring agency must contact RTC in writing by March 1st of that year. *If a project does not meet the required obligation deadline, including allowable one-year delay, one of the following actions will be taken:*

Policy 5.8.1 – If delay is likely to impact regional obligation authority all future funds will be removed from the project. *RTC staff will develop a strategy to meet the obligation target which will be approved by RTC Board. The delayed project can seek funding in future call for projects without an increase in regional federal funds.*

Policy 5.8.2 – If delay is not likely to impact regional obligation authority, a project delay exception can be sought. *The request must be in writing and explain the circumstances for the project delay and why the delay should be considered. Delays of less than one additional year can be approved by RTAC. Delays of greater than a year, requires RTAC and RTC Board approval.*

A subcommittee of RTAC members is meeting to develop an obligation strategy that could be implemented if projects are delayed in 2019. If needed, RTC staff will return by July to take action to amend the TIP to allow the region to meet our obligation targets.

POLICY IMPLICATION

At the March Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) meeting, RTAC members recommended that the region's grant process be modified, given the significant funding increase and need to meet short-term obligation targets.

First, the regional selection criteria would be modified to include 2 additional points under the Multimodal/Operation criteria for roundabout only corridors. This would not change the overall total points, but would allow a project the potential to score additional points towards the maximum allowed points under the Multimodal/Operation criteria. The revised regional selection criteria are attached.

Second, RTC should conduct a 2020-2023 call for projects, with a "one-time" exception to Policy 4.1, allowing existing (currently authorized) regional capital projects (Roadway and Transit) which can obligate additional funds by August 2020, to apply for additional funds in excess of existing policy limitation. Eligible projects could receive a one-time boost of $500,000 for right of way phase and $1 million for construction phase, but would be subject to the project delay policy if they are unable to deliver their project by August 2020 (Policy 5.8). This one-time exception to Policy 4.1, will boost the total maximum grant contribution up to a maximum of $4.5 to $5 million on a few projects. As proposed, the policy exception should help the region address the short-term obligation shortfall, while further supporting currently authorized regionally significant projects.

Policy 4.1 - Projects are limited to $4 million in regional federal funds, regardless of length or size, with an annual maximum award of $2.5 million. *The project can reach the cap based on one of the following sub-policies:*

Policy 4.1.1 – Maximum of $4 million per mile. *The maximum per phase is $750,000 for preliminary engineering, $1.25 million for right-of-way, and remaining federal funds, up to the total maximum for construction. If a project is less than a mile, the maximum per phase is factored by the percentage of mile.*

Policy 4.1.2 – Intersection improvements are limited to $1 million per intersection or $2 million for high volume intersections. *High volume intersections are intersections with 20,000 or more entering vehicles per day. The maximum per phase is 15% for preliminary engineering, 20% for right-of-way, and remaining funds for construction.*

Policy 4.1.3 – Shorter high cost projects are limited to $4 million. *Projects such as a bridge, interchange, and park-and-ride are limited to $4 million even if the length is less than one mile. Project will follow funding limits per phase as found in Policy 4.1.1, as if the project was considered to be one mile in length.*

BUDGET IMPLICATION

There is no direct budget impact to RTC. RTC will use the Transportation Programming Guidebook policies, with the revised regional selection criteria, and a "one-time" exception to the maximum funding limitation to select projects for regional grant funding.

ACTION REQUESTED

Adoption of Resolution 04-19-09, "Transportation Programming Guidebook – TIP Policies and Procedures."

ADOPTED this 2nd day of April 2019, by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

ATTEST:

_____
Anne McEnerny-Ogle
Chair of the Board

_____
Matt Ransom
Executive Director

Attachments:

1. Transportation Program Guidebook
2. Regional Selection Criteria

RTC Selection Criteria
Transportation Improvement Program

Project Screening Criteria

1. Is the project consistent with Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Local Comprehensive Plans, and Congestion Management Process? *(Road and transit projects that add capacity must be listed in the RTP)*
2. If a road project, is the facility federally classified as an urban collector/rural minor arterial or above?
3. Is the project an improvement project, rather than a maintenance project?
4. Does the request for STP/CMAQ funds exceed the regional cost limitation of $4,000,000 per mile?
5. Is the project ready to proceed and has a reasonable timeline for implementation?
6. If an operational improvement, does the project follow TSMO guidance?

Summary of Needs Criteria

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

Mobility — *20 Maximum*

Existing Peak Hour Condition	**0-10**
• V/C Ratio 0.9 or greater/Less than 60% of Posted Speed	10
• V/C Ratio 0.8 to 0.89/60-64% of Posted Speed	7
• V/C Ratio 0.7 to 0.79/65-69% of Posted Speed	5
• V/C Ratio 0.5 to 0.69/70-74% of Posted Speed	3
• Transit (based on level of transit expansion)	6-8
Regional System	**0-2**
• Project is located on the RTC designated regional system	2
Congestion Management Process	**0-6**
• On CMP Network	2
• Project Addresses CMP Concern	0-4
Network Development	**0-6**
• Extends Improvements	1-3
• Completes Gap	3-4
• Completes Corridor	5-6
• New Network Connection	2-6
• Improves Parallel Corridor	0-3
Benefit Weighted by Existing Peak Hour Volume	**0-5**
• 1,501+ Vehicles	5
• 901-1,500 Vehicles	3
• 500-899	1

Multimodal/Operations — *15 Maximum*

Operational Improvements	**0-8**
• Signal integration/upgrade	2
• Data Collection (Volume, speed, occupancy, classification)	2
• Traffic Surveillance	2
• Communication Infrastructure (conduit, fiber, switches, etc.)	1-3
• Variable message signage	2
• Traveler Information	2
• Smart Transit Management/Transit Signal Priority	2
• Roundabout only corridor	2
Multimodal	**0-10**
• Transit Expansion	1-8
• Peak Hour Transit Buses (1 point per 2 Buses)	0-5
• Exclusive Transit Lanes (Transit Only, BAT Lanes, etc.)	2-8
• Transit Amenities (Shelter, Platform, etc.)	0-2
• Park and Ride Construction	5-8
• Carpool/Vanpool	1-3
• Improve Non-Motorized Access to Park and Ride/Transit	1-2
• Completes gap in Bicycle or Pedestrian Route	1-3
• Construct 10-foot separated path or two 5-foot striped bicycle lanes	2
• Sidewalks (Both Sides)	1-2
• Sidewalks wider than 5'and/or Planter Strip (3' minimum)	1-3
• Improves Transit Speed/Reliability	1-3
• Transportation Demand Management	1-3
• Contact C-TRAN's Capital Project Manager (10+ days)	1
• Adopted Complete Street Policy/Ordinance	1-2

Safety — *20 Maximum*

Correctable Collision History (3 year)	**0-8**
• Sliding Scale	0-8
Accident Rate	**0-2**
• Below Average, Average, or Above Average	0-2
Safety Strategies Implemented	**0-10**
• Public Transit Safety or Security	1-8
➢ Passenger Safety (Camera/Lighting/Visibility/Security Patrols)	
➢ Enhanced Pedestrian Access/Crossings near Stations	
➢ Improved Maintenance	
➢ Employee Safety (Collision/Drug Testing/Distracted Diving, etc.)	
• Pedestrian Safety	1-5
➢ Add sidewalk where one does not exist	
➢ ADA accessibility	
➢ Wider sidewalk	
➢ Buffer	
➢ Improved Street Crossing (crosswalk/signal)	
➢ Lighting	
➢ Improve Access to Transit	
➢ Target Zero Strategy	

- Bicycle Safety 1-5
  - Add Striped Bicycle Lane
  - Add Separated Path
  - Buffer
  - Improves Access to Transit
  - Target Zero Strategy
- Improves Intersection 1-5
  - Provide Appropriate Traffic Control
  - Improves Visibility/Sight Distance
  - Improves Geometry/Approach
  - Address Collisions at Intersection Identified in Safety Management Assessment
  - Target Zero Strategy
- Improve Road Safety 1-5
  - Improve Clear Zone
  - Improve Geometry
  - Improve Visibility/Sight Distance
  - Add Rumble Strips, raised markers, barrier/guardrail
  - Target Zero Strategy

Existing Conditions **0-6**

- Pavement Widths (Deviation from standards) 0-2
- Shoulder Widths (1 pt. per 2 feet less than 6') 0-3
- No Center Turn lane/Pocket (Project must correct) 1

Provides Access Management **0-6**

- Add Non-Traversable Median greater than 50% of project length 3
- Add C-Curb at Intersections or less than 50% of project length 2
- Close Minor Intersections 1
- Reduce Access Points 2-5
- Eliminate Existing At-Grade Crossing 5

Economic Development ***20 Maximum***

Employment Growth **0-12**

- Retail Employment Growth (Regional Model-Select Link) 0-5
- Other Employment Growth (Regional Model-Select Link) 0-7

Provide or Improves Access to Existing Employment and CTR Employers **0-8**

- Existing Employment (Regional Model-Select Link) 0-8

Freight Generator **0-5**

- Improves Access 1-3
- Creates Access 4-5

Truck Route **0-5**

- T5-T1 1-5

Private Development **1-5**

- Signed Development Agreements 1-3
- Private Investment in Public Infrastructure 1-3

Environmental Justice **0-2**

- Bike, Pedestrian, Transit Enhancement to EJ block group 0-2

Financial/Implementation — *15 Maximum*

Overmatch Funding	**0-8**
• 1 Point per 4% Above Minimum Match	
Previously Completed Work (Prior to application deadline)	**0-10**
• Land purchase not needed or completed	3
• Stamped Engineer Estimate	3
• Direct Purchase	2
• Survey Completed	2
• Geotechnical Report Completed	2

Sustainability/Air Quality — *10 Maximum*

Air Quality Benefit	**0-10**
• TCM Tools (Reduction of CO and VOC)	0-10
Sustainability Measures	**0-8**
• LID or Enhanced Treatment Stormwater Control	2
• Hardscaping or Native Planting (no permanent irrigation)	1
• Correction of Fish Barrier	0-3
• Enhances Stream Bank Conditions	1
• Corrects Existing Sensitive Area Impacts	2
• Appropriate Reduction in Existing Pavement Width	0-2
• Replace or Install Low Energy Street Lighting	2
• Reuse/Recycling of Materials	2
• In-Place Pavement Reconstruction or Structural Retrofit	2
• Transit – Reduced Emission	2
• Transit - Reduced noise and vibration	2
• Transit - Reduced per capita VMT	2
• Transit – Creating Livable Communities	2