



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director *MR*
DATE: August 25, 2020
SUBJECT: **2020 Regional Grant Solicitation – Project Evaluation and Prioritization**

ATA GLANCE

The action requested is acceptance of the 2020 evaluation and prioritization of grant submittals as recommended by RTAC. The project evaluation and ranking process is the basis for project selection and programming of available 2021-2024 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP), and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. The final action on the selection and programming of projects will occur at the October 1, 2020 RTC Board meeting.

INTRODUCTION

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Clark County region, RTC is responsible for selecting projects for the regional allocation of federal highway funds. This includes the regional allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program, Transportation Alternatives (TA) program, and Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP). This year’s selection will include the selection of STBG Rural projects.

Within Washington State, federal highway funds are split with 62% allocated to WSDOT and 38% allocated to local agencies. The local share of federal highway funds is allocated to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and other lead agencies. With RTC’s share of federal funds, the goal is to assist local agencies in implementing the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Since the need for transportation improvements exceeds the available revenue, and as required by federal regulations, a competitive grant process is conducted for the distribution of regionally allocated federal highway funds. Federal regulations specifically exclude the allocation of funds to agencies and require a competitive project selection process. Since this is a competitive process, an agency’s success can fluctuate year by year due to competition.

This memorandum will describe RTC’s Regional Grant Program and seek acceptance of the 2020 evaluation and prioritization of projects. The project evaluation and ranking process is the basis for project selection and programming of available 2021-2024 regionally allocated federal highway funds. The included evaluation results were endorsed by the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) at their August 21, 2020 meeting.

REGIONAL GRANT PROCESS

The current regional project evaluation and prioritization process will be the basis for project selection and programming of available federal STBG, CMAQ, and HIP funds. As adopted, the regional grant selection process includes the following three steps:

- 1) Project Screening
- 2) Evaluation and Ranking by Adopted Selection Criteria
- 3) Project Selection and Programming.

Based on needs identified in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), individual public agencies choose priority projects for consideration in the Regional Grant Program. In total, there were 15 projects submitted to RTC from member agencies, including 12 Urban and 3 rural projects. The region had approximately 25% reduction in project application in 2020 when compared to previous years. A brief project description for each project follows:

C-TRAN – Mill Plain BRT: Construct a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from east Vancouver to downtown Vancouver.

Camas - NW 38th Avenue, Parker to Grass Valley Park: Improve to 3-lane minor arterial standards with bike lanes and sidewalks.

Clark County – NE 99th Street, NE 94th Av. to NE 117th Av.: Construct new principal arterial to 3-lane urban standards with bike lanes and sidewalks.

Clark County - NE 152nd Avenue, Padden to 99th St.: Widen to 3-lane minor arterial standards with bike lanes and sidewalks.

Clark County – NE 179th Street at NE 29th Av. and NE 50th Av.: Construct 2-lane roundabouts at intersections. Roundabout will function as a 1-lane roundabout when first constructed.

Clark County – Orchards Sifton Adaptive Signals: This project will add hardware and software along NE 76th Street, Ward Road, and NE 99th Street east of SR-503 to improve signal operations.

Clark County – NE 182nd Avenue/NE Risto Road: Bring roadway up to rural road standards west of intersection with an overlay and add a roundabout at the intersection.

Clark County – NE 182nd Avenue/SR-500: Construct a single lane roundabout as well as provide bank stabilization.

La Center, 4th Street Widening and Brezee Creek Culvert: Widen 4th Street between Cedar Avenue and Highland Road by replacing the existing culvert with a box culvert or bridge over Brezee Creek.

RTC – Strategic Regional Partnership Planning: A multi-agency initiative, managed by RTC, which provides regional funding to carry-out regionally focused transportation planning studies. RTC member agencies may sponsor regional studies by providing local-match for a proposal to be considered under this program.

RTC – Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Congestion Management (CMP) Support: Provide financial support for federally-required planning activities.

RTC – Vancouver Area Smart Trek (VAST) Program Coordination and Management: Provide support to partner agencies on transportation operations and ITS projects.

Vancouver - SE First Street/164th to 177th Avenue: Improve to 3-lane minor arterial standards with bike lanes and sidewalks.

Vancouver - NE 137th Avenue, 49th St. to Fourth Plain: Improve to 3-lane minor arterial standards with roundabouts, bike lanes, and sidewalks.

Vancouver – Jefferson-Kauffman Realignment: Realign intersections at 13th Street to create a single intersection. Reconstruct road to current standards, and continue Waterfront multi-use trail to Mill Plain Blvd.

Vancouver – NW Neighborhood Connectivity: Make bicycle and pedestrian improvements near Lincoln Elementary School. Project includes two signalized pedestrian crossings on Lincoln Avenue.

WSDOT – I-205 SB NE 134th St. to Mill Plain Ramp Meter: Install four ramp meters at Padden, SR-500, 18th St., and Mill Plain onto southbound I-205.

WSDOT – I-5 NB Fourth Plain Ramp Meter: Install ramp meter at Fourth Plain onto northbound I-5.

Project Screening

In the Project Screening step, projects are reviewed for consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), land use plans, air quality goals, and regional screening criteria. All 18 submitted projects are considered eligible to compete for federal funding.

Evaluation and Ranking by Selection Criteria

RTC staff evaluated projects per the approved regional selection criteria. Projects eligible for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding are evaluated by the same criteria as other programs except that air quality points are tripled. Project Delivery Score was added to the evaluation for the first time this year.

Following RTC Staff evaluation, local agency staffs were provided an opportunity to review the accuracy of evaluation. Based on the final technical evaluation, RTAC has recommended that the following evaluation and ranking of projects, be approved by the RTC Board. Shaded projects are below the cut line for funding.

Evaluation and ranking for STBG/HIP Urban eligible projects:

Rank	Agency	Project	Score
N/A	RTC	Strategic Regional Partnership Planning	N/A
N/A	RTC	VAST Coordination & Management	N/A
N/A	RTC	UPWP & CMP Support	N/A
1	Vancouver	SE First Street, 164 th Av. to 177 th Av.	91.0
2	Vancouver	NE 137 th Av., 49 th St. to Fourth Plain	90.0
3	Clark County	NE 152 nd Av., Padden to 99 th St.	84.8
4	Clark County	NE 99 th St., 94 th Av. to 117 th Av.	83.8
5	Camas	NW 38 th Av., Parker to Grass Valley Pk.	75.0
6	Clark County	NE 179 th St. at 29 th Av. and 50 th Av.	74.8
7	Vancouver	Jefferson-Kauffman Realignment	67.0

Evaluation and ranking for CMAQ eligible projects, air quality points are tripled:

Rank	Agency	Project	Score
1	C-TRAN	Mill Plain BRT	109.3
2	WSDOT	I-205 SB 134th - Mill Plain Ramp Meter	94.8
3	Clark County	Orchards Sifton Adaptive Signal	76.8
4	WSDOT	I-5 NB Fourth Plain Ramp Meter	71.8
5	Vancouver	NW Neighborhood Connectivity	53.0

Evaluation and ranking for STBG Rural projects:

Rank	Agency	Project	Score
1	La Center	4 th Street Widening/Brezee Cr. Culvert	78.0
2	Clark County	NE 182 nd Av./NE Risto Rd.	76.8
3	Clark County	NE 182 nd Av./SR-500	71.8

PROJECT SELECTION AND PROGRAMMING

The final step for completing the Regional Grant Program process is the selection and programming of projects. At their September meeting, RTAC will be asked to make their technical recommendation, based on the evaluation and ranking of projects, which will then be brought to the October RTC Board of Directors meeting for the Board's consideration and action. This final step will conclude the regional project selection process and provide for the flow of federal transportation funds toward regional project implementation.

ACTION

The proposed RTC Board action is *to accept the evaluation and ranking of federal project grant submittals* as recommended by RTAC. Upon acceptance, the results will be applied to the final selection and programming recommendations to be presented at the October 2020 Board meeting.