

ACTION ITEM 6.C – RELEASE PROPOSED SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Document History

MEETING	DATE	TYPE OF ITEM	STAFF CONTACT	PHONE
Transportation Policy Board	07/20/2016	Discussion	Gabe Philips	360-416-6678
Technical Advisory Committee	12/1/2016	Discussion	Gabe Philips	360-416-6678
Transportation Policy Board	12/21/2016	Discussion	Gabe Philips	360-416-6678
Technical Advisory Committee	01/05/2017	Discussion	Gabe Philips	360-416-6678
Technical Advisory Committee	02/02/2017	Review and Recommendation	Gabe Philips	360-416-6678
Transportation Policy Board	02/15/2017	Release for Public Comment	Gabe Philips	360-416-6678

RECOMMENDED ACTION

SCOG staff and the Technical Advisory Committee recommend that the Transportation Policy Board release the Surface Transportation Program Selection Criteria as outlined below for public comment.

FISCAL IMPACT

This action will lead towards maintaining a fully-programmed six-year Regional Transportation Improvement Program

DISCUSSION

Over the last several months the Transportation Policy Board has discussed the upcoming Surface Transportation Program (STP) call for projects. It is estimated that around \$5.4 million will be available for allocation to regional projects. Of this, approximately \$2.2 must be used in urban areas, \$1.4 million must be used in rural areas, and \$1.8 million can be used in either area.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

The Technical Advisory Committee has prepared and recommended an [update to SCOG’s Surface Transportation Program project selection criteria](#). Overall, the criteria are relatively similar to those used in the 2014 call for projects. Minor updates to make the criteria more applicable and address issues that were noted during the last process include:

- Requiring all eligibility criteria to be met at the time of application
- Identifying proposed project in sponsor agency’s long-range plan and transportation improvement program
- Ensuring project has undergone a public involvement process
- Removal of the “Placemaking” criteria
- Removal of criteria based on previous amounts of STP funding awards

The weights of the major criteria areas have all remained the same. The Transportation Policy Board may consider adjusting the weights to address shifting priorities.

SET-ASIDE

In an attempt to account for the difficulty in developing selection criteria that comparatively ranks different types of projects, the Transportation Policy Board, in its last call for projects, decided to set aside ten percent of the available STP funds for non-roadway projects. In 2014, the first projects selected were the non-roadway projects, even though they may have scored lower in the prioritization process. Once the ten percent set aside was fulfilled, the project rankings were used for selection purposes. If less than ten percent-worth of projects are submitted, the remainder of the set aside would go back to the general pot for project selection. It is recommended that this practice continue.

CONTINGENCY LIST

In the past, SCOG has attempted to develop a contingency list of design and construction projects to be moved forward if other higher-priority projects are unable to do so. Unfortunately, many of these types of projects are difficult to move forward ahead of their scheduled time. Therefore, staff proposes developing a contingency list of projects that can easily be moved forward for obligation in the case of a regional obligation shortfall.

Staff proposes that this call for projects also include a call for planning projects that can be obligated relatively easily. Other projects that do not score well in the STP prioritization process but can easily be obligated may be added to this contingency list as well. The resulting list of projects would be maintained and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

It is recommended that staff will preliminarily prioritize the proposed planning projects based on the following criteria:

- What is the regional issue the study will address?
- What is the desired outcome?
- Does the study address a project/issue identified in Skagit 2040?
- What is the level of regional impact the study will have?

The proposed list of planning studies will then be presented to the Transportation Policy Board to make a final prioritized list of planning studies/projects. If future regional funding obligation seems likely to fall short of the target, the Transportation Policy Board can select prioritized projects to address the shortfall. It should be noted that lower-priority projects may be selected ahead of higher-priority projects based on the amount of funding available.

SCOG PLANNING FUNDING

Staff recommends that the Transportation Policy Board continue the practice of allocating ten percent of the regional STP funds to supplement SCOG's administration. Metropolitan Planning Organization and Regional Transportation Planning Organization planning funds allocated to SCOG are inadequate to support SCOG's planning efforts at the current level of service. Additional funding is necessary to support meeting state and federal planning requirements. This has been the typical practice of SCOG except in times of excessive budget surplus.

TIMELINE

Below is a tentative timeline prioritizing projects for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program:

- March 2017 Call for projects issued

- April 2017 Project proposals scored and prioritized
- May 2017 Project Selection Committee presents final project prioritization
- June 2017 Transportation Policy Board awards funding to prioritized projects
- October 2017 Projects included in the 2018-2023 Regional Transportation Improvement Program