

2015-2018 Regional Flexible Fund Allocation - Regional Programs Application

Program Name: Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Planning Program

I. Program Description

The funding from this allocation contributes to a broad range of activities within Metro that are linked to regional policy making and local planning support. These activities include:

- Regional Transportation Planning (RTP)
- Best Design Practices in Transportation
- Transportation System Management & Operations (TSMO)
- Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)
- Regional Freight Planning
- Regional Model Development
- Technical Assistance Program
- Economic, Demographic & Land Use Forecasting
- Federal Grant Management & Coordination
- Bi-State Coordination
- Local Project Development

The programs grouped under the "in lieu of dues" category are typically activities that have a direct relationship to local land use and transportation planning. The Regional Transportation Planning program, for example, provides for regular updates to the RTP, which serves as the policy framework for local plans and establishes federal funding eligibility for local transportation projects.

The MTIP, Best Practices, Freight, TSMO and Local Project Development activities assist local jurisdictions in planning transportation improvements and managing the transportation system. The Bi-State program is specific to the corridors linking to Clark County, and provides support for coordination among affected jurisdictions.

The regional model development and economic, demographic and land use forecasting activities support local jurisdictions developing comprehensive plans and conducting special studies related to comprehensive planning with a data platform that can be consistently applied across the region. The technical assistance program provides direct support to local jurisdictions in using these tools for local analyses.

Finally, the Grants Management program provides for the flow of federal funds to local projects and planning through Metro's coordination with ODOT and the Federal Transit Administration.

II. Regional Implementation Context

The regional programs funded with the "in lieu of dues" grants are not directly tied to meeting JPACT's performance targets. Instead, they provide both the policy framework that helped create the targets, and the technical evaluation capability for ongoing

monitoring of the region's progress toward targets. In this way, the programs are essential to meeting the targets.

III. Recent Policy Work

The 2035 Regional Transportation Plan was adopted in 2010. The 2012-2015 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program was adopted in 2012.

IV. Regional Funding Context

Since 1994, the region has opted to allocate federal transportation funds to Metro in lieu of the "local dues" system that was once used to fund planning services. At the time, the argument was a direct allocation from the federal flexible funds was simpler and more efficient than asking 25 cities and 3 counties to separately budget for a dues contribution. Together, these regional activities broadly support JPACT's strategy for flexible funds, and are consistent with the regional planning activities that were once funded through the local dues program. The region's decision to use flexible funds to support regional planning is not unique: most MPOs have supplemented their metropolitan planning funds with flexible funds in recent years, reflecting both constrained federal planning funds and increasingly complex planning efforts.

The operating budget for each of these activities is also significantly funded from other sources, including Metro's excise tax, federal metropolitan planning grants, and other sources. Though cities and counties no longer pay dues to Metro, it should be noted that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and TriMet continue to provide a supplemental contribution to Metro's planning program, in recognition of the reliance that these agencies have on regional modeling and forecasting capabilities.

V. Major Accomplishments

The most recent major accomplishments from programs funded with the "in lieu of dues" grants are the following in 2010-12:

- Adoption of the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) - 2010
- Adoption of the 2010-13 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program - 2010
- Adoption of the 2012-2015 Metropolitan Improvement Program – 2012
- Development of a bicycle model
- Updates of regional travel demand model
- Climate Smart Communities – 2011-ongoing

VI. Opportunities

Examples of upcoming work program items funded with the "in lieu of dues" grants include:

- Development and adoption of the Active Transportation Plan - 2013
- Completion of the Climate Smart Communities project – 2014
- Development and adoption of the updated 2035 Regional Transportation Plan – 2014
- Development and adoption of the 2016-2018 MTIP

VII. Proposed Regional Allocation Request

The regional MPO planning program requests \$3.63 million dollars.