

Oregon Department of Transportation

2015-2018 STIP Enhance Process Evaluation

Online Survey Summary

by JLA Public Involvement
9/12/2013



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I. Background

1) Introduction

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) implemented a new project selection process for the 2015-2018 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) cycle, known as Enhance. In order to evaluate how the process went and what could be improved for the next STIP cycle, ODOT conducted a survey and interviews with participants of the 2015-2018 STIP Enhance project selection process. The survey was available online from June 20 to July 18, 2013. STIP Enhance program participants including all Enhance applicants and application reviewers were invited to participate. Please note that this was not a scientific survey, so the results of the survey are not statistically valid.

2) Survey Outreach

ODOT sought input from both funding applicants and application reviewers. Accordingly, ODOT invited the following groups to complete the survey: statewide review committee members; Region 1's STIP selection committee members; Area Commissions on Transportation (ACT) members; all applicants (including ODOT staff), ODOT area managers, region planning managers, and enhance coordinators. For simplicity, general references to ACTs throughout this report also include Region 1's STIP selection committee.

ODOT sent an initial email and a reminder email to approximately 300 people to invite them to take the survey. ODOT also asked all ACT coordinators to forward the survey link to their membership. In total, 146 people completed the survey. 99 respondents said they applied for STIP Enhance funds and 84 reviewed applications. 37 people said they both submitted an application and participated in review.

3) Report Overview

This report includes responses to the survey from both applicants and reviewers. Section II highlights some of the distinctions in survey responses provided by applicants and reviewers in the different ODOT regions. Section III gives an overview of who responded to the survey, including respondents' affiliation, geographic area, and role in the Enhance process (i.e., whether they submitted a funding application, reviewed applications, or both). The survey asked different sets of questions depending on whether respondents submitted or reviewed applications. Section IV summarizes the responses from funding applicants, and Section V summarizes responses from application reviewers. Finally, Section VI summarizes responses to questions asked of all survey respondents (applicants and reviewers).

II. Survey Summary by Region

The survey responses showed clear differences in the way that respondents from different regions within Oregon felt about the STIP project selection process. The following section highlights some of these key differences.

1) Region 1

Applicants – Almost all applicants in Region 1 felt the amount of effort in completing the application was appropriate, and understood what was expected of them on the application. The vast majority of respondents noted that they neither liked nor disliked not having specific review criteria, and zero respondents noted that they liked not having specific review criteria.

Reviewers – Reviewers in Region 1 (most of which sat on a statewide review committee) were less likely to feel that they received sufficient information from applicants to understand the proposed projects or to compare and prioritize projects effectively. Yet, reviewers in Region 1 were more likely than reviewers in other regions to feel comfortable comparing and prioritizing different kinds of projects together, and to feel that their ACT or committee was able to compare and prioritize applications effectively. They were also more likely than other regions to feel that the right mix of projects were being put forward. No reviewers liked not having criteria for the project benefits section, and the majority felt neutral on the issue of criteria. Almost all feel that the Enhance process will improve the projects selected for funding in the STIP.

2) Region 2

Applicants – Applicants in Region 2 were more likely than other regions to say they understood what was expected of them on the application, and how to effectively present their project. Several commented that there were too many redundancies in application questions. Some applicants were frustrated with the Super ACT (i.e. a meeting of all of the ACTs in a region) process, and felt that the decisions at that level superseded and did not take into account the priorities set by the ACTs themselves, and that the process became too political. Some applicants commented that the process seems to create more competition for funds, and that applications are too difficult to write without objective criteria and knowing what is being measured.

Reviewers – Reviewers in Region 2 were less likely than other regions to feel they had sufficient time to review applications, and to get enough information from the applications to compare and prioritize projects effectively. There were also many reviewers who felt their ACT or committee was *not* able to compare and prioritize applications effectively, and did not receive enough information about the proposed Fix-It projects. Many were not comfortable with the list of projects put forward by their ACT or committee. They felt that there were too many local

and immediate needs projects put forward, particularly too many smaller bicycle and pedestrian projects. ODOT Region 2 staff said they had too many projects to scope in too short a period of time. Both reviewers and applicants seemed to feel that the process was too political.

3) Region 3

Applicants – Applicants in Region 3 had to create more attachments for their applications than other regions, though they did feel that the amount of effort was appropriate. They were somewhat less likely to understand what was expected of them on the application. They were also less satisfied with ODOT’s response to questions than in the other regions.

Reviewers – Reviewers in Region 3 felt more prepared than in other regions to review applications. They were somewhat less comfortable than other regions in comparing and prioritizing different kinds of projects together, although they felt their ACT or committee was able to effectively compare and prioritize Enhance applications. They were mostly comfortable with the list of projects put forward by their ACT or committee. Reviewers who saw applicant presentations appreciated the opportunity to be able to learn more about the project and ask clarifying questions. Several commented that the review process seemed too rushed.

4) Region 4

Applicants – Applicants in Region 4 felt that the application effort seemed like too much, and were less likely than other regions to feel that the application questions were easy to understand. They were also less likely to feel like they understood what was expected of them on the application. Applicants seemed to feel that the process could be improved by explaining in advance the criteria reviewers would use to judge applications. Some felt that the application process should be collaborative as opposed to competitive.

Reviewers – Reviewers felt that they got enough information from the applications to understand proposed projects and to compare and prioritize projects effectively. They were somewhat less comfortable than other regions in comparing and prioritizing different kinds of projects together, although they felt their ACT or committee was able to compare and prioritize applications effectively. Some commented that specific criteria would help in evaluating vastly different project types. Reviewers in Region 4 tended to dislike or be neutral about not having criteria.

5) Region 5

Applicants – Applicants in Region 5 felt that the application effort seemed appropriate, questions were easy to understand, and understood what was expected of them in the

application. They were more satisfied with ODOT’s response to questions than any other region. Applicants also tended to like that there were no criteria as compared to other regions.

Reviewers – Almost all reviewers felt they had sufficient time to review the Enhance applications, and that they received enough information from applicants to do an effective review process. Region 5 was most comfortable comparing and prioritizing different kinds of projects together, although fewer felt that their ACT or committee was able to effectively compare and prioritize applications. Many said that business representation was missing from their committee. While reviewers overwhelmingly felt that the right mix of projects would come from the process, some felt there were too many state and too many immediate needs projects. On mode balance, several felt there were too many bicycle and pedestrian projects. Reviewers tended to like that there were no review criteria.

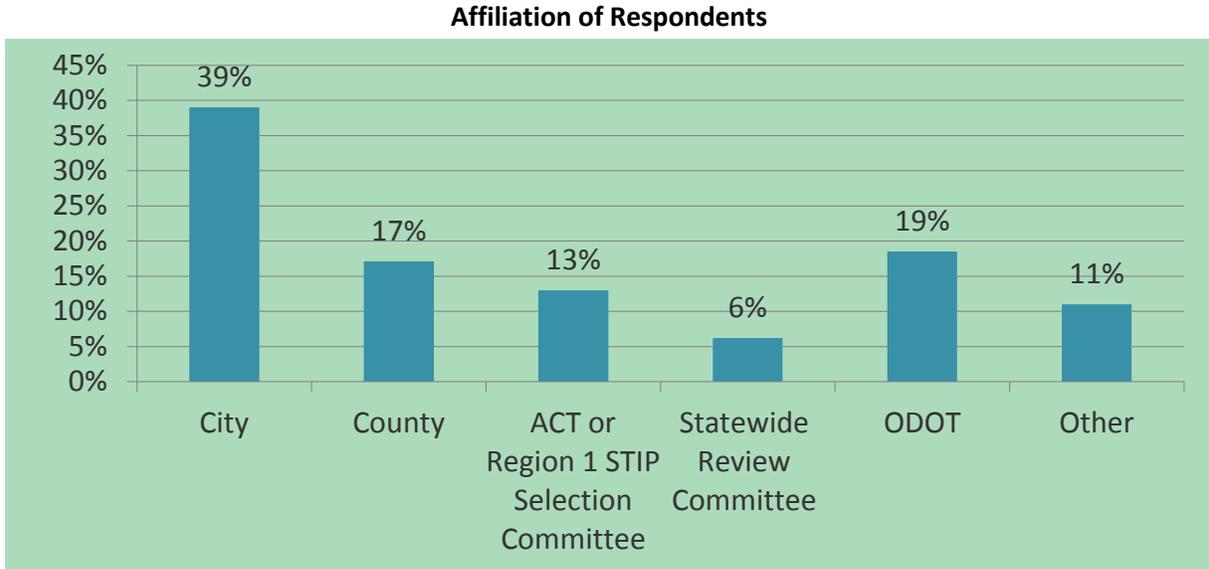
III. Respondent Information

1) Role in Project Selection Process

In total, 146 people completed the survey. 99 respondents indicated that they applied for STIP Enhance funds, and 84 respondents said they reviewed applications. Of the total 146 respondents, 37 said they participated in *both* the application and review process. Respondents were directed to answer questions based on their role in the project selection process

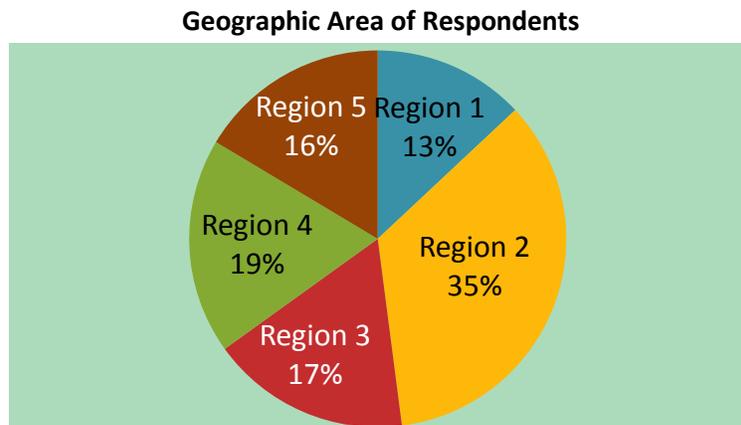
2) Affiliation

Respondents were asked to indicate their primary affiliation, and could select more than one affiliation. 39% represented cities, 19% were ODOT staff, 17% represented counties, and 13% represented an ACT or Region 1 STIP Selection Committee. 6% represented a statewide review committee (the Oregon Freight Advisory Committee (OFAC) and the joint Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (OPBAC) and the Transportation Enhancement Committee). Another 11% had an “other” affiliation, including transit or transit district (5 people), Council of Governments (2 people), Metropolitan Planning Organization (2 people), transportation district or provider (3 people), as well as one each of the following: Indian Tribe of Eastern Oregon, ACT Technical Advisory Committee, and Special District.



3) Geographic Areas Represented

50% of respondents represented rural areas, 46% represented small urban areas, and 22% represented metropolitan areas. Respondents also indicated in which ODOT Region they reside. 13% reside in Region 1, 35% in Region 2, 17% in Region 3, 19% in Region 4, and 16% in Region 5.



IV. Responses from STIP Enhance Applicants

The STIP Enhance survey asked a different set of questions for applicants and reviewers. The responses described in this section refer to the 99 respondents that submitted applications for Enhance funds.

1) Summary of Applicant Responses

99 people indicated that they applied for STIP Enhance funds, and 78% of these said they personally filled out the Enhance application or part of the application. The feedback about the application process was generally positive. Some of the more common suggestions and comments were that some questions, particularly in the project benefits section, were repetitive and could have been consolidated.

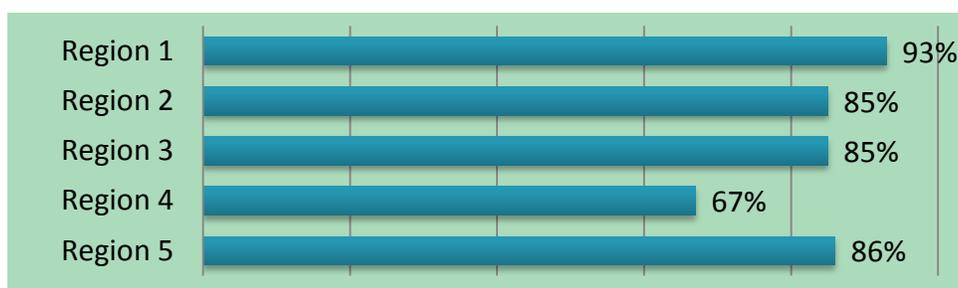
Many respondents also struggled with the lack of criteria to consider in preparing the application. They were concerned that the lack of criteria allows ACTs to be too subjective in scoring, and results in non-standardized scoring of applications among the ACTs. On the other hand, a few people commented that they liked not having criteria, because it provides more of a focus on values, and allows applicants to explain through narrative what is important about the project. Several people also recommended that applicants be given the opportunity to make presentations about their projects to the ACTs.

Many commented on the application questions about cost estimates. Some felt that applicants should be required to include very specific and data-based cost estimates, while others felt that coming up with cost figures at this early stage was inappropriate. The application process would likely benefit from more guidance on what level of detail is required in the cost estimate and the reason behind it.

2) Effort Required to Complete Application

Overall, the vast majority of applicants (83%) felt that the amount of effort required to fill out the application was appropriate, although over half of applicants did have to create most of the attachments such as maps and exhibits specifically for the application. The amount of effort it took to complete the application differed by region. Region 4 applicants were more likely to feel that too much effort was required.

Percentage of respondents who felt that the amount of effort it took to fill out the application seemed appropriate



20 people provided suggestions on how to lessen the effort on the application. Most commonly, people suggested eliminating redundancies and combining questions where possible, particularly in the project benefits section which may contain more questions than is

appropriate for small scale projects. There are particularly too many redundant questions about bicycle and pedestrian projects. One person suggested asking for a narrative that covers the pertinent project benefits elements rather than asking applicants to individually respond to each benefit.

Several people also suggested providing clear and objective criteria on how the application will be evaluated. Respondents felt that that the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) guidance material was quite vague and high level. The application and directions could also be more specific on the goals of the Enhance process. Two people suggested requiring applicants to provide a more accurate cost estimate. Cost estimates are often too low, which sets up unrealistic expectations and makes it more difficult for ACTs to make reality-based decisions.

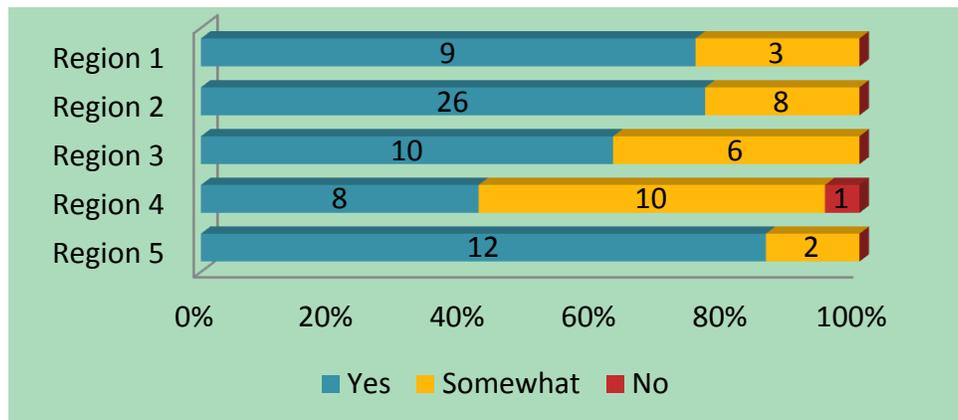
Other suggestions included providing training to applicants, providing a notice of intent, and providing more character limits on the application so that people could feel that a short response is appropriate. One person suggested setting the system up as a "proposal" process rather than an application process, based on collaboration versus competition.

Another person suggested letting jurisdictions know ahead of time what kind of engineering ODOT will do if projects are selected. Two people noted that ODOT assistance is vital, particularly for small jurisdictions.

3) *Ease of Application Questions*

The majority of respondents (69%) felt that application questions were easy to understand, and 31% felt they were somewhat easy to understand. There were some differences among the regions, with more Region 4 applicants responding that questions were not easy to understand.

Were application questions were easy to understand?



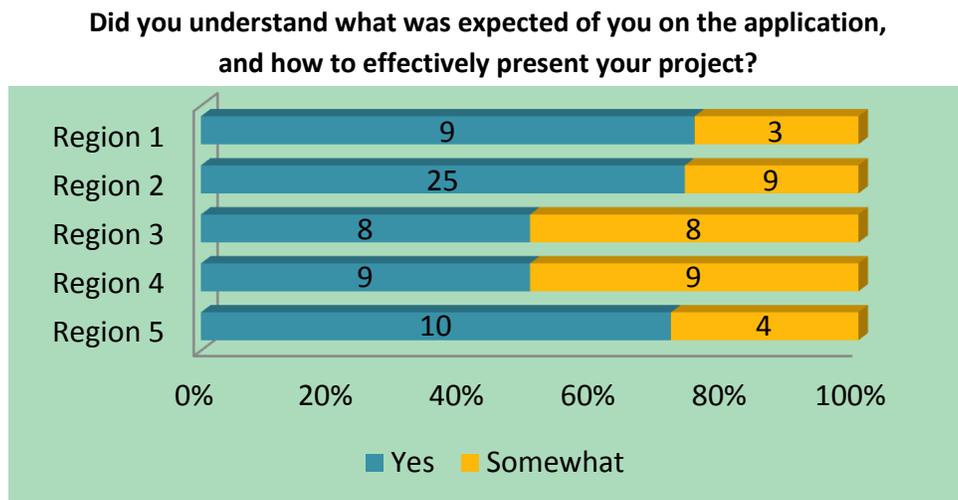
Eight people provided comments and suggestions for improvement. Several people said that some questions were repetitive and could have been combined. A couple of people said that

some questions were vague and open-ended, and it was difficult to understand what was being asked (particularly in the project benefits section). One person said that a check-box format would be fairer and reduce time required. On the other hand, another person suggested that there be fewer questions and that instead applicants simply describe in a narrative format what they think is important about the proposal.

One person said that the “Does it meet a referenced standard?” question was not clear and it took effort to find the definition of a referenced standard. It was also difficult to estimate project costs, and to provide a timetable without knowing the year the funding would be available.

4) Clarity of what was Expected in Application

Respondents indicated whether they understood what was expected of them on the application, and how to effectively present their project. 65% understood what was expected of them and 35% somewhat understood. The responses varied by region. Applicants in Regions 3 and 4 seemed to have less clarity on what was expected of them to effectively present their project.



Several people said that providing clearer expectations or selection criteria would make it easier to effectively present a project. Some people suggested writing clearer, more precise questions. A couple of people suggested providing examples of how different project types would be ranked and prioritized together, and examples of what qualifies for Enhance versus Fix-It funds, especially around transportation demand management (TDM).

5) Time to Complete Application and Technical Difficulties

87% of applicants felt that the time available to complete the application (about two months) was sufficient. However, several people commented that the time available was insufficient for

complex, large-scale projects. 92% of respondents said they were able to send in the application without technical difficulties. The main technical difficulty was the restricted attachment file size. One person suggested that ODOT send out an email response stating that the application has been successfully submitted.

6) Applicant Preparedness

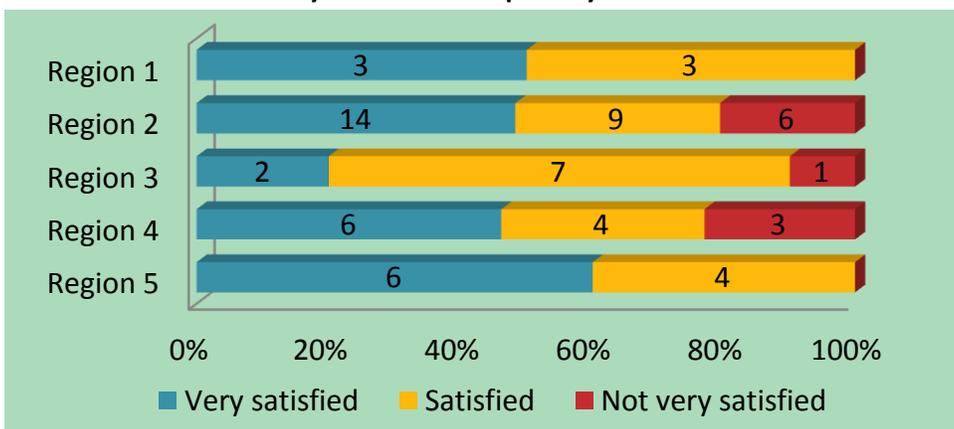
74% of respondents said that an ODOT staff member talked to or made a presentation to their group about the application process. Based on information received from ODOT, most (64%) felt prepared to apply for Enhance funds, 25% felt partially prepared, 1% did not feel prepared, and 10% responded with “other.” These responses were consistent across the regions, though applicants in Region 2 seemed to feel least prepared to apply for Enhance funds based on information received from ODOT. Of those respondents who felt less prepared, a couple said they had to apply at the last minute because of communication problems. Of those respondents who felt prepared, several said that they felt prepared because they have done this kind of application work in the past and that the assistance they got from ODOT was very helpful.

7) Consultation with ODOT

75% of people said they consulted with ODOT about the application. The most common question that applicants asked ODOT was about how projects would be scored, what kinds of criteria would be used, and generally how to respond to the vague guidelines of the OTC; overall, respondents wanted to know how to present the best possible application. Many also asked whether their particular project would be competitive, or what types of projects are eligible. Many people asked questions about what level of detail was expected in the application responses, or sought clarification on certain questions. A number of people asked about how to present cost information; including what assumptions should be used in preparing budgets, and what level of detail was needed. Several people asked questions about the project selection process and timing. A smaller number of respondents had technical questions about how to upload the form or package application materials.

Respondents also indicated how satisfied they were with the responses to question that they received from ODOT. 46% were very satisfied, 40% were satisfied, 15% were not very satisfied, and zero were not at all satisfied. The response differed somewhat by region.

How satisfied were you with the response you received from ODOT?

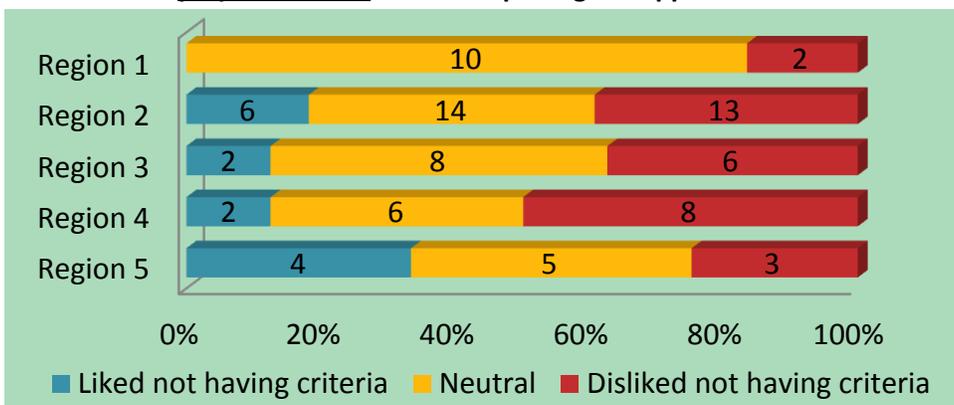


Several people provided other comments and suggestions for improvement. Some felt that they were not really sure what kinds of questions to ask ODOT because the process was new, and it would have been helpful to speak to ODOT representatives first to figure out what else they needed to know. One person said that ODOT should be clearer about how it values non-vehicular modes, and not assume that ACTs value the modes in the same way.

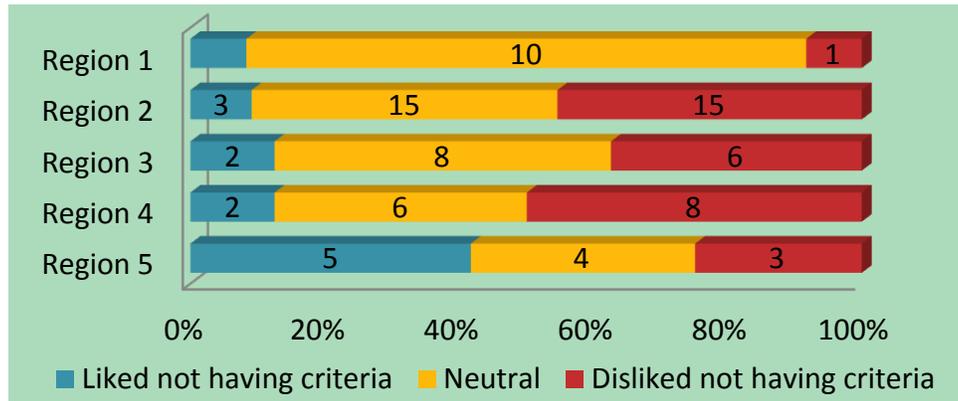
8) Evaluation Criteria

Overall, for both the project benefits section and the application as a whole, a little over 33% of respondents disliked not having review criteria, nearly 50% felt neutral, and 16% liked not having criteria. The results varied widely by region. In Region 1, the vast majority of applicants felt neutral about not having criteria. Regions 2, 3 and 4 generally disliked not having criteria or were neutral. Region 5 applicants responded most favorably to not having criteria, with most saying they either liked not having criteria, or were neutral.

How did you feel about not having specific review criteria for project benefits when completing the application?



How did you feel about not having specific criteria for review of the whole application?



Respondents provided comments or suggestions for criteria that would be useful. The most frequent comment was that criteria are needed to let applicants know what ACTs are looking for so they can better present their project to score more highly, and to keep the ACT review process more transparent. A few respondents suggested including a check box or rating system for applicants to indicate how well the project meets a given priority or benefit.

Recommendations for useful criteria include:

- How does the project benefit the state system? How is the project linked to or key to completing the system?
- How does the project meet the needs of the community?
- Does the project improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities?
- Criteria that focuses on the nature of the infrastructure being applied for (e.g. highway, bicycle, pedestrian, bridges) rather than blending all of those interests.
- Requirement that applicants provide quantitative and defensible projections for how their project provides benefits, such as by showing how many cyclists or pedestrians will use the facility, how many riders will use transit, what the traffic delay will be, etc.
- Criteria similar to the previous STIP project selection criteria.

9) General Suggestions for Improvement

40 people provided ideas about how to make completing and submitting the application easier next time. Many people said that the application was easy and streamlined and does not need much improvement, and that it was in fact easier than most ODOT funding applications.

Suggestions for improvement can be broken down into the following categories:

Explain how Applications will be Evaluated

The most common suggestion for improvement was to communicate to applicants how reviewers in their ACT will score/judge the applications, including any criteria that will be used; and set the reviewers' process for review and evaluation *before* the call for applications is made. This was suggested by applicants in Regions 2, 4 and 5. A couple of people also suggested using standardized criteria across ACTs, and not letting local ACTs have too much discretion in the process. An applicant from Region 2 said that there should not be criteria, and instead applicants should simply state what is important about the project.

Improvements to Application and Submission Process

Several people suggested consolidating, simplifying, and reducing the number of questions, particularly in the project benefits sections. Two people suggested having a word count available on the application. Another noted that character limitation for each question made it difficult to describe the benefits of the project in the appropriate category. One person suggested providing an online application similar to that of other state agencies, e.g Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. A couple of people would like to be allowed to send larger attachments through the email system, and one person noted that the project naming conventions could be made less cumbersome and confusing.

Level of Detail Required in Applications

There were conflicting suggestions on how much technical information should be required in the applications. A few people, particularly in Region 4, suggested a requirement that applications be more complete. This would require accurate cost estimates and evidence of methodology and calculations used, as well as data to support the problem statement (e.g. crashes, pedestrian volumes, delay). They also suggested eliminating questions that cannot be quantitatively responded to, such as questions about economic vitality, environmental stewardship, livability, and equity.

On the other hand, other applicants (particularly in Region 2) would prefer not to provide such quantified information. They felt it is inappropriate to require fully scoped projects at this stage. For example, small agencies without access to specialized design software cannot provide accurate preliminary design and cost estimates.

Cost/Budget

Several suggestions were made for improving the cost estimate portion of the application. A couple of people suggested allowing more time to gather cost estimates. One person suggested that applicants be allowed to submit their own budgets, because it was not always possible to make the cost elements fit into the application boxes, which sacrificed specificity and

usefulness. Another person noted that the cost question lumps together cost elements that are difficult to compile.

Process Improvements

Several people suggested changes to the overall project selection process. A Region 2 applicant suggested that, rather than having the Super ACT make the final decision, provide each ACT with a fixed amount of funding and allow them to prioritize and fund their own projects. Two applicants from Region 4 suggested making the process collaborative as opposed to competitive. A suggested approach would be one of individuals, groups of partners, or the ACTs themselves, generating draft proposals for discussion, evaluation, and ultimately collaboration and coordination.

A Region 2 applicant suggested using a process similar to the last round of Transportation Enhancement applications, which began with a statement of intent to apply that kept jurisdictions from spending resources on non-starter projects.

Miscellaneous Suggestions

- Create better communication between applicants and the County.
- Allow applicants to make presentations about their projects to local ACTs.
- Require applicants to state how engineering would be done and amount of dollar percentages towards engineering.
- Carve out funding for Transportation Enhancement and Safe Routes to School rather than lumping these into one pot.
- Better explain or provide examples of the types of projects eligible for this program.
- Allow more time to develop applications for larger, complex projects.
- Provide more funding.

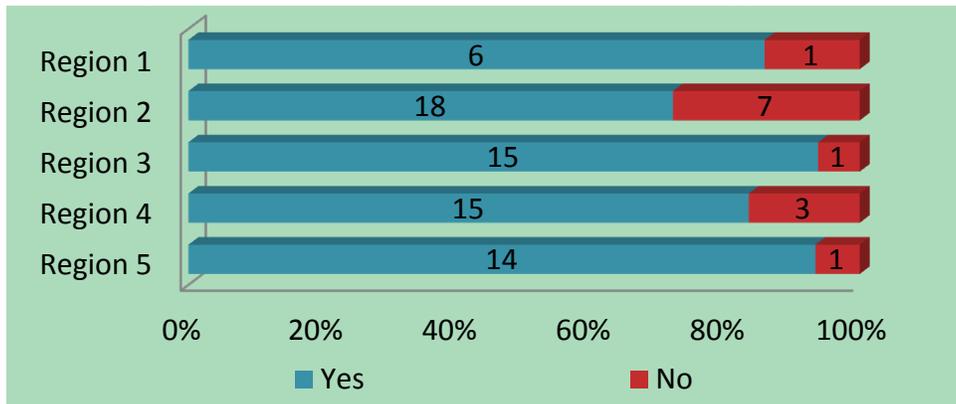
V. Responses from STIP Enhance Reviewers

The responses described in this section refer to the 84 respondents that participated in the review process. Reviewers include ACTs, statewide review committees, and key ODOT staff.

1) Time to Review

The overwhelming majority of reviewers (84%) felt that they had sufficient time to review applications. The response differed somewhat by region, with more Region 2 reviewers feeling they did not have enough time to review.

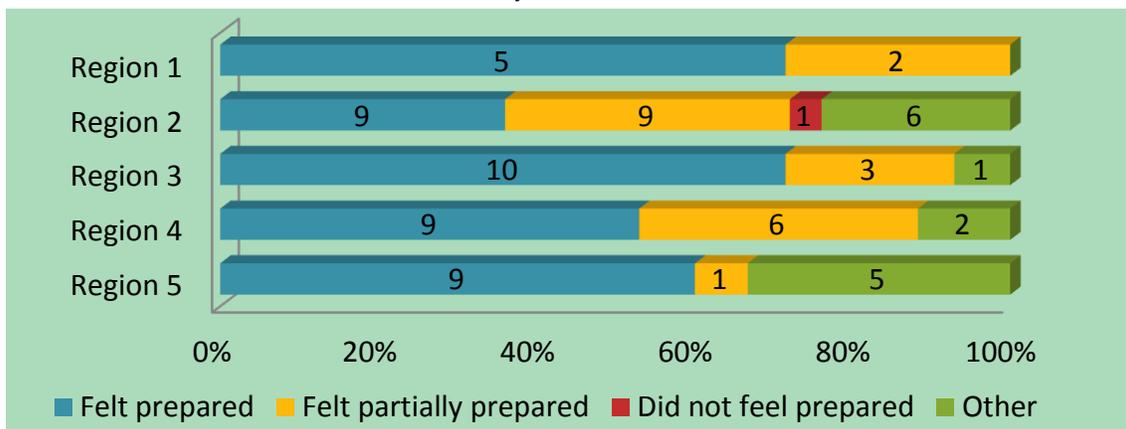
Did you have sufficient time to review the Enhance applications?



2) Reviewer Preparedness

90% of respondents said that an ODOT staff member talked to or made a presentation to their group about the application review process before they reviewed applications. Based on the information received from ODOT, reviewers generally seemed prepared to review applications. 54% felt prepared to review applications, 27% felt partially prepared, 1% did not feel prepared, and 18% said “other.” The response differed by region, with reviewers in Region 2 seeming the least prepared.

How prepared did you feel to review Enhance applications based on the information you received from ODOT?



Of those respondents who chose “other,” the lack of feeling prepared was not necessarily due to a lack of information from ODOT. Instead, people commented that some applications were not robust enough to allow for adequate review, or seemed to provide conflicting answers to questions. Several people said the review timeline was too tight, and some did not like the lack of criteria to select projects.

Two reviewers in Region 5 ACTs noted that there was not adequate time for both ACTs in the region to discuss projects jointly, and that ACTs did not have enough knowledge to review and prioritize the other ACTs' projects.

A Region 2 ODOT reviewer said that the process would have benefited from having pre-application meetings with each prospective applicant, which would result in better applications and less review and scoping later in the process. The scoping timeline was too short given that many applications were prepared hastily and needed substantial clarification.

A statewide review committee member noted that review was difficult because reviewers could not be sure if the application provided accurate information about the projects, and whether benefits would actually be realized.

3) Application Information

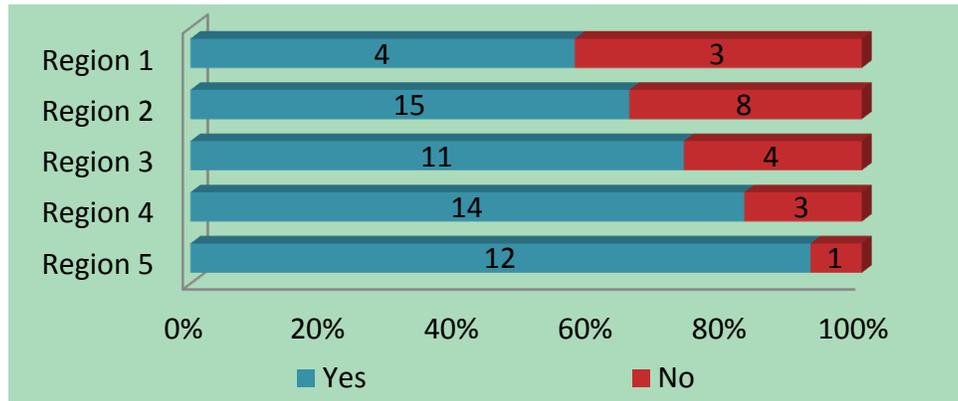
58% of reviewers said there were sections/questions in the application that were particularly helpful in the review process. The project description, maps and exhibits, and problem statements seemed most helpful. This was particularly the case for reviewers in statewide review committees who did not have time to do an in-depth review of each application. A few people felt the project benefits section was helpful, but a couple felt that some applications tried to tie their projects to all listed benefits, and this exaggeration was not helpful. Overall, the most helpful element for the review process was a well thought-out, concise, and complete application, as opposed to answers to any particular question.

Several respondents noted the benefits of applicant presentations (i.e. five minute presentation plus questions and answers). A couple of reviewers from the statewide review committees said that the excel spreadsheets, provided by ODOT, that summarized applicant information was too vague a summary to be useful.

4) Adequacy of Information in Applications

75% of reviewers said they were able to get enough information from the applications to understand the proposed projects, and 25% said they were not. The response varied widely by region, with 92% of reviewers in Region 5 feeling they were able to get enough information, as opposed to only 57% in Region 1.

Were you able to get enough information from the applications to understand the proposed projects?



Many people said that there was a wide variety in the quality of applications. Some applications were complete and understandable, and others simply did not have enough detail or sufficient responses to the questions asked. An ODOT reviewer in Region 2 suggested that the overall quality of applications could be greatly improved by offering a formal pre-application process in advance of application submittal.

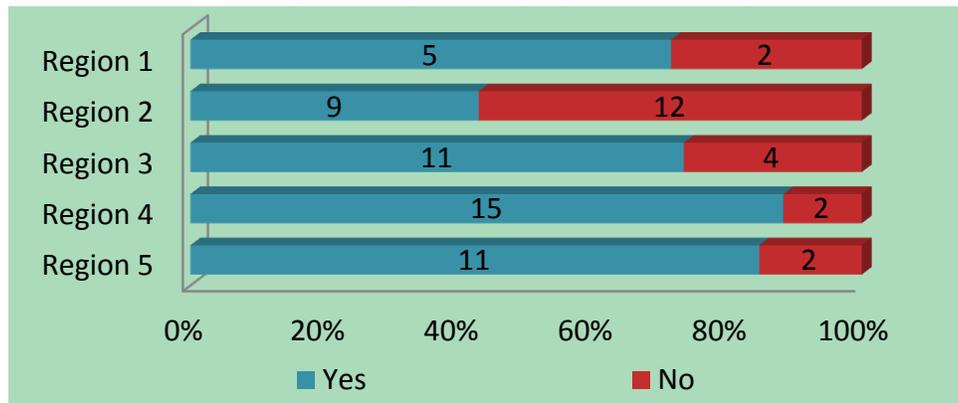
Suggestions for additional or different information that would have been helpful in review include:

- Explanation of how the project would work with existing conditions, and whether truly feasible.
- Better maps and pictures.
- Oral presentations by applicants.
- Percentage of jurisdictional funds dedicated to bicycle, pedestrian, and historic preservation projects, to ensure they are not relying solely on state funds to fund major improvements.
- Planning documents that support the project.
- Visit to all project sites.
- Documentation of property ownership related to proposed projects.
- More background information on funding sources available to bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects.
- Better cost estimates with more realistic justification/projections.
- More detailed scopes.
- Pre-prioritizing from ACTs.
- More detail on how the project affects all modes.

5) Adequacy of Information to Compare and Prioritize Projects

70% of reviewers said they received enough information from the applications to effectively compare and prioritize projects. 30% did not. The response varied widely by region, with over 80% of reviewers in Regions 4 and 5 feeling they were able to get enough information, as opposed to only 43% in Region 2.

Were you able to get enough information from the applications to compare and prioritize projects effectively?

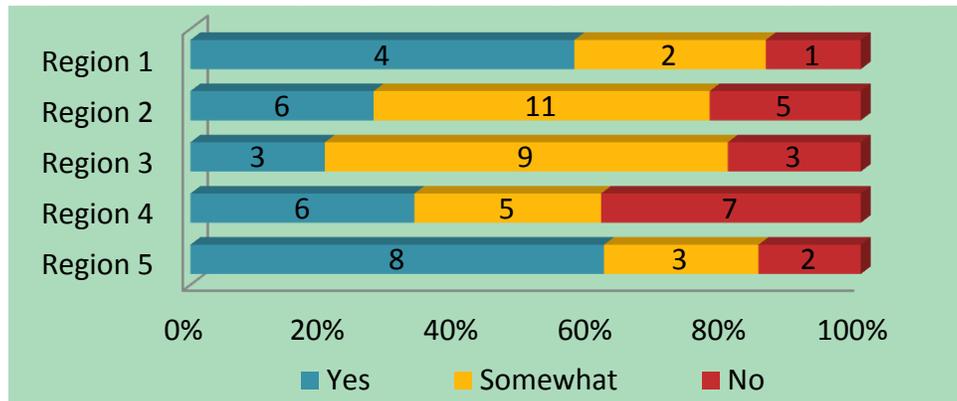


Reviewers commented that some applications were complete and provided adequate information, while other applications were not. The type of information that seemed to be missing most often was detailed and justified cost information, and an explanation of how the proposed project links to existing projects or other modes. Again, reviewers found presentations from applicants to be tremendously useful.

6) Review of Different Projects Together

Respondents indicated whether they were comfortable comparing and prioritizing different kinds of projects together, such as bicycle and pedestrian projects along with highway and freight projects. 36% said they were comfortable, 40% were somewhat comfortable, and 24% were not comfortable. The responses varied widely by region. Reviewers in Regions 1 and 5 seemed most comfortable.

Were you comfortable comparing and prioritizing different kinds of projects together?



Many comments were made that it was difficult to compare relative merits across categories. Some respondents suggested that the process go back to having separate funding pots so that different kinds of projects do not have to compete against one another. Some reviewers said that applicants sometimes proposed projects that seemed to be “disguised” as one or more particular modes that did not seem accurate, which made review even more difficult. A couple of reviewers in Region 2 felt that in most ACTs, bicycle and pedestrian projects would take second priority to road and infrastructure projects.

An ODOT reviewer suggested more parameters to help the ACTs prioritize, such as limiting the size of projects that would fall into the old Transportation Enhancement category to a maximum of \$1-2 million. Another recommendation would be to include some percentage of funding that must go towards projects that help the state system. Another reviewer recommended not allowing bus purchases and fare box upgrades to compete for STIP Enhance funding; instead, these could be funded by a different pot of funds.

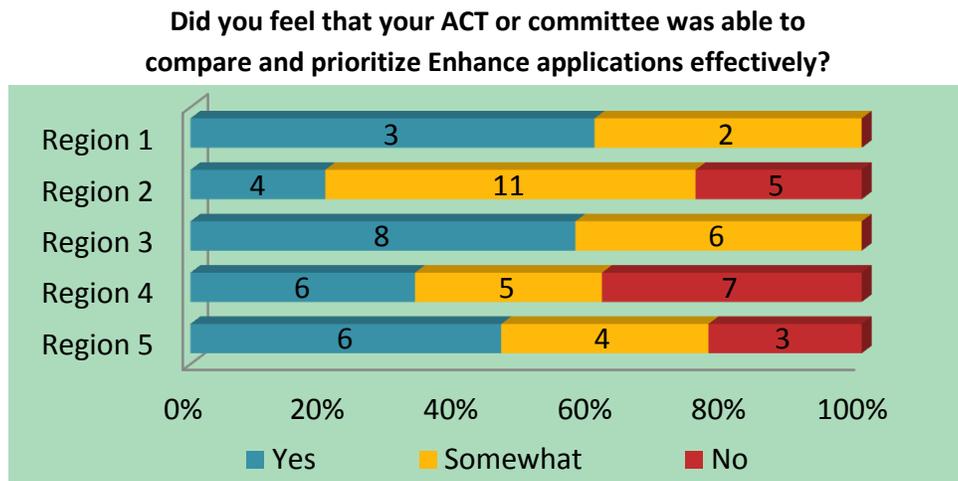
Several reviewers also said it was difficult to score projects across different modes without some standardized criteria. On the other hand, one ODOT reviewer said that breaking down the funding silos in pursuit of the best transportation investments demands a values-based, qualitative approach because there is no realistic way to develop objective scored criteria for such a diverse group of project types.

Some suggestions for making review easier included more training and education for reviewers on how to compare projects in different modes, and an understanding of other funding streams for particular modes. Some people also suggested capping the dollar amount of projects in some categories, since it is very difficult to compare projects that have vastly different expenditure needs. One person noted that having reviewers on a committee from diverse backgrounds (e.g. bicycle, pedestrian, transit, freight, etc.) helped members to compare different kinds of projects together.

Statewide review committee representative said that the review process was too rushed, and should have been a two or more day long process with presentations from staff.

7) *Committee’s Review of Projects*

Respondents indicated whether they felt their ACT or committee was able to compare and prioritize Enhance applications effectively. Overall, 41% of respondents said yes, 46% said somewhat, and 13% said no. For the statewide review committees, only 20% said yes, 40% said somewhat, and 40% said no. The response varied by region, with reviewers in Regions 2 and 4 feeling that their committee was less able to compare and prioritize effectively.



A couple of the Super ACT reviewers said that some ACTs provided a prioritized list of projects and others did not, and that the prioritized list was helpful and should be encouraged in the future. ACTs would like to know ahead of time how the Super ACT process will weigh the individual ACT's priorities.

A couple of ODOT reviewers noted that ACTs varied in their understanding of how to compare and prioritize applications. ODOT staff would also like to see more consistency in the summaries of projects provided to them.

Reviewers made suggestions for making the process easier. These include the following:

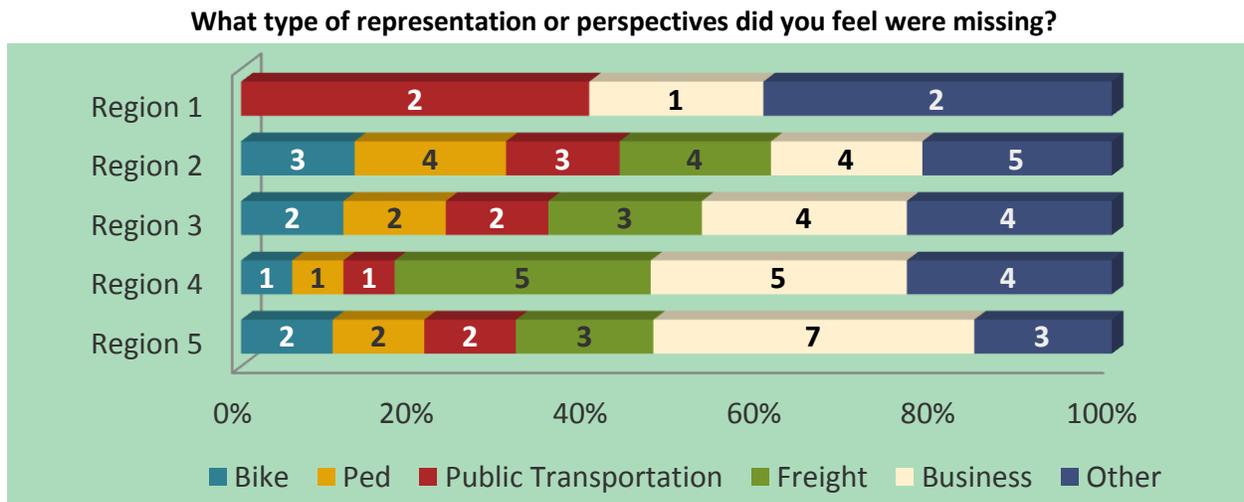
- The State should allocate funding dollars to different areas before the start of the 150 percent list process to make prioritization of projects more effective.
- Have applicants break up large projects into segments to determine partial funding options.
- ODOT region staff sometimes were frustrated that each ACT used a different process and type of criteria, which made comparing projects difficult.
- Provide a full understanding of how ODOT staff may influence the scoping process.

- Provide ACTs with education on how to evaluate projects that do not meet their specific priorities.
- Provide statewide review committees with full applications, not just spreadsheets.

8) Committee Makeup

66% of reviewers felt they had the right representation in their ACT or committee to discuss the different applications effectively. 27% felt they had somewhat the right representation, and 7% felt they did not have the right representation.

41 people indicated what type of representation or perspectives they felt were missing, which differed somewhat by region. Business representation seemed to be most lacking, particularly in Region 5. Freight was also lacking in all regions except Region 1. The chart below shows how many respondents felt that a particular type of representation was missing.



Reviewers indicated that the following “other” interests were missing:

- Region 1: rail and historic preservation expertise, and statewide overview
- Region 2: engineering perspective, local citizens
- Region 3: local citizens, small community transportation providers
- Region 4: cities, transit and transportation options representation
- Region 5: safety

9) Committee Discussion

56% of respondents felt that their ACT or committee was able to have a thorough, robust prioritization discussion. 31% felt they were somewhat able to have a thorough discussion, and 13% were not able to have a robust discussion. The response was generally the same across regions, though somewhat more reviewers in Region 2 said that their committee was not able

to have a thorough, robust discussion. Many open-ended comments were made that reflect the diversity of process issues across the ACTs and regions, including:

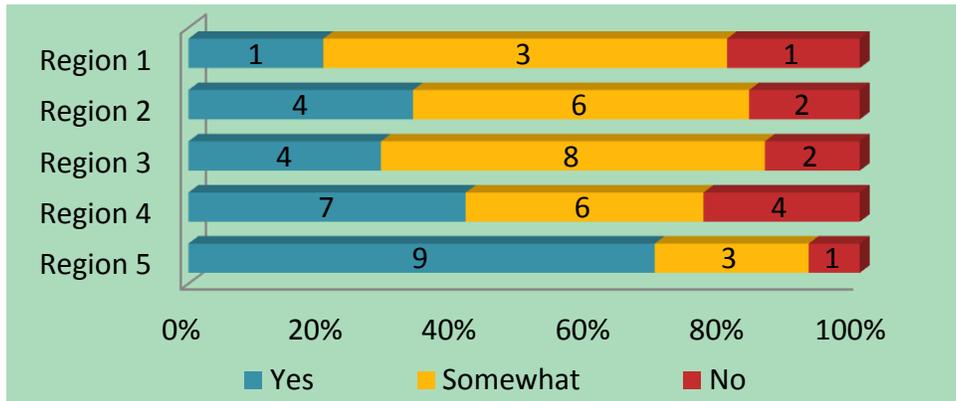
- Reviewers on statewide review committees felt there was not enough time for discussion, and that two days would have been better than one. There was also too much work done by conference call instead of in-person.
- Some Region 2 ACT members said that the process felt too political, and that the projects with the most outspoken proponents were pushed forward, although they may not have been the most beneficial projects. Another Region 2 reviewer said that the process would be improved by providing adequate time for conducting a pre-application review and discussion process between ODOT staff and prospective applicants.
- A Region 3 ACT member said there were too many finalists which left too little time for individual presentations.
- An ACT member in Region 4 said that having elected officials at the table stifled discussion somewhat. Similarly, another ACT member in Region 4 said that ODOT did a great job of facilitating discussion, but ODOT's presence may have stifled some opinions. A Region 4 ACT member also felt that it was inappropriate for ODOT to actually rank the projects, because they did not feel that the ACT was then responsible for the end result.
- A Region 5 ACT member felt that the ranking of the subcommittee was a done deal once it reached the ACT.
- Several reviewers across regions noted that the people with the loudest voices dominated the discussion, and that the process may have benefited from a neutral facilitator.

85% of reviewers felt they were able to fully participate in their ACT or committee discussion. Those who did not feel they were able to fully participate said that there were too many people at the table, or that meetings by conference call were limiting. A couple of people also said that the meeting was dominated by a few outspoken individuals.

10) Enhance and Fix-It Projects

35% of reviewers felt that their ACT or committee received enough information about the proposed Fix-It projects to be able to consider how proposed Enhance projects could complement them. 37% said they received somewhat enough information, and 28% did not receive enough information. The response differed across the regions; only 18% of reviewers in Region 2 felt they received enough information, while 70% in Region 5 felt they did receive enough information.

Do you feel that your ACT or committee received enough information about the proposed Fix-It projects?



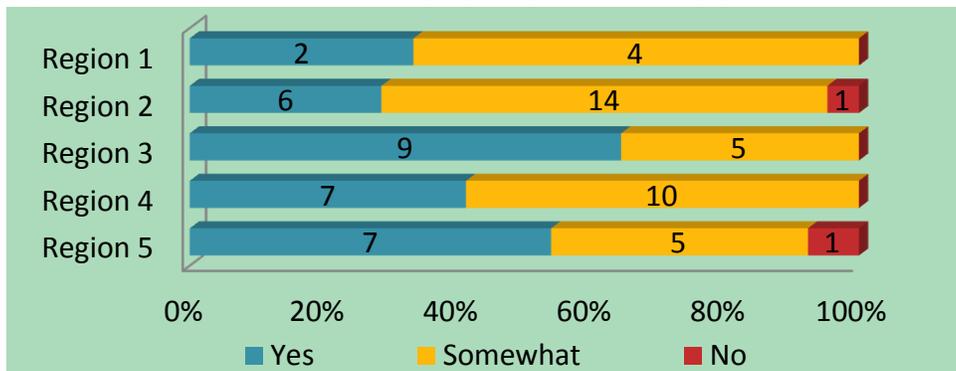
In Region 2, several people said they received no information on the Fix-It projects or received the information too late in the process for it to be meaningfully considered. One person said that Enhance applicants might benefit from having access to proposed Fix-It projects while developing their Enhance applications.

No information regarding Fix-It was included in the joint OBPAAC and Transportation Enhancement review session. In Region 4, several people said that Fix-It information was not part of the discussion. A couple of people said they would like more information on the difference between Fix-It and Enhance projects and how they fit in together.

11) Final Project List

44% of reviewers were comfortable with the list of projects put forward by their ACT or committee. 54% were somewhat comfortable, and 3% were not comfortable. Again, the results varied by region. Reviewers in Region 3 were most comfortable with the project list, while those in Region 2 were less comfortable.

Were you comfortable with the list of projects put forward by your ACT or committee?

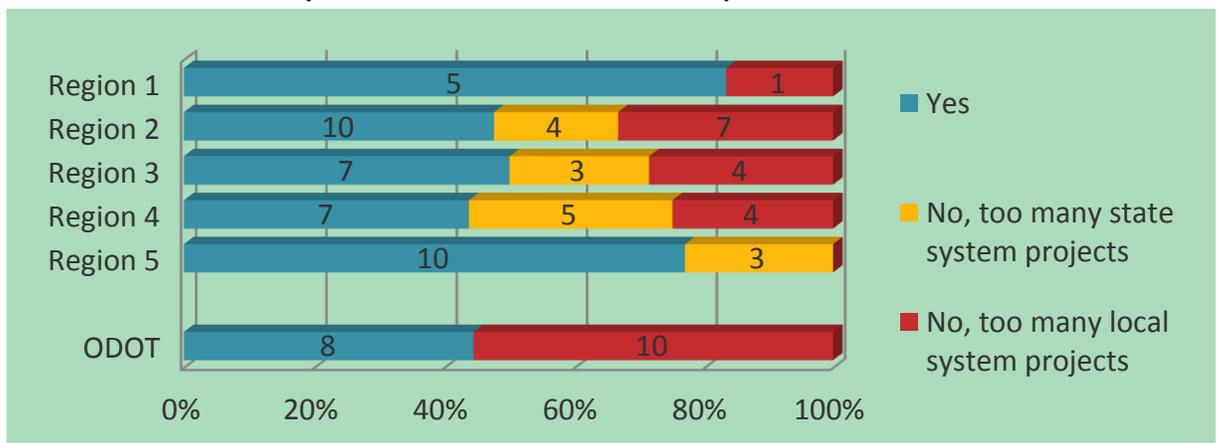


Respondents commented that the limited funding amount precluded larger projects from being considered, while the smaller bicycle, pedestrian, and local needs projects put forward did not address statewide needs. Some felt that the ACT did not consider transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects equally with other project types. Others felt that the selection process was too subjective or too political, so that the most politically popular projects won, even if they are not the most beneficial.

Respondents also indicated whether they felt that the right mix of projects is likely to come out of the STIP Enhance process, based on three topic areas:

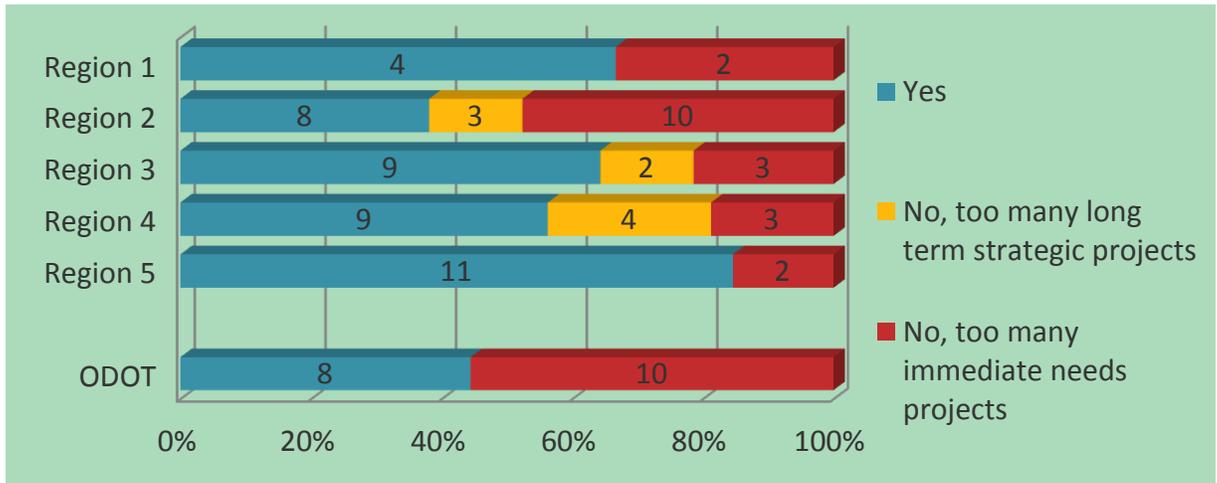
- a) State system vs. local system projects: Over half of respondents felt that the right mixture of state system and local system projects is likely to come out of the STIP Enhance process. 21% thought there will be too many state system projects, and 23% felt there will be too many local system projects. The results varied by region. A majority of ODOT reviewers felt that the process would result in too many local system projects.

Do you feel that the right mixture of state system vs. local system projects is likely to come out of the STIP Enhance process?



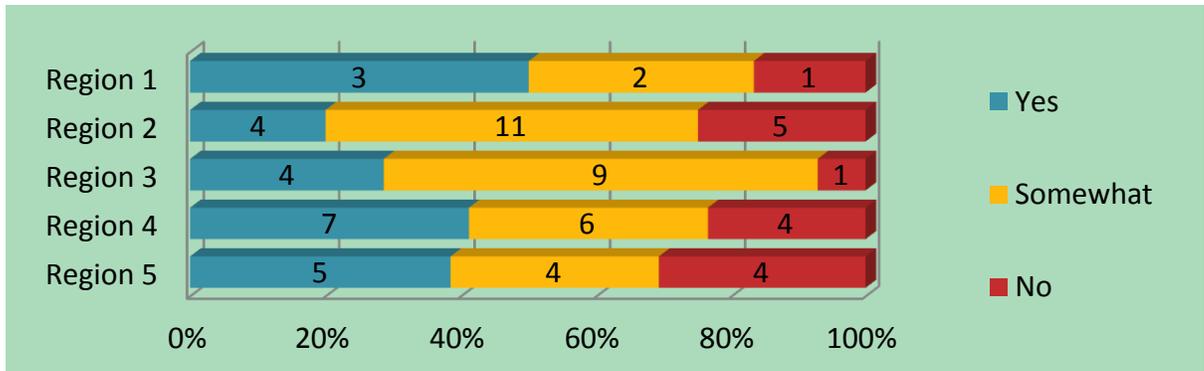
- b) Long term vs. short term projects: 59% of reviewers felt that the right mixture of long term strategic projects and projects that address immediate needs are likely to come out of the STIP Enhance process. 13% felt there will be too many long term projects, and 29% felt there will be too many immediate needs projects. The results varied by region. ODOT reviewers tended to feel that the process will result in too many immediate needs projects and not enough long-term strategic projects.

Do you feel that the right mixture of long term strategic projects vs. projects that address immediate needs is likely to come out of the STIP Enhance process?



- c) Mode investments balance: 33% of reviewers felt that the right balance of different mode investments is likely to come out of the STIP Enhance process. 46% felt that somewhat the right balance will result, and 21% felt that there will not be the right balance. The results varied by region.

Do you feel that the right balance of different mode investments is likely to come out of the STIP Enhance process?



People made comments on which modes they think will likely be overrepresented. One person in Region 1 thought freight would be overrepresented. Reviewers in Region 2 thought that bicycle and pedestrian projects would be overrepresented, and in Regions 4 and 5, respondents thought that local, small projects and bicycle and pedestrian projects would be overrepresented. In Region 3, a few people thought freight and motor vehicle projects would be overrepresented. A respondent from Region 2 noted that, with the limited funding available, it was predictable that more local and bicycle and pedestrian projects would be put forward, especially considering that “state benefit”

was not a pass-fail criteria. What is considered the “right mix” of projects will also vary from region to region and person to person, based on local needs and personal goals.

Reviewers were split regarding which modes to prioritize. Some felt that the process should continue to consider bicycle and public transport projects in the same vein as other modes. Some felt that roadway infrastructure projects should be prioritized, as long as they enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities. One person suggested limiting bicycle and pedestrian projects to 10% or less of available funding.

49 people shared ideas about how to improve the mixture of projects from the STIP Enhance process. These ideas include:

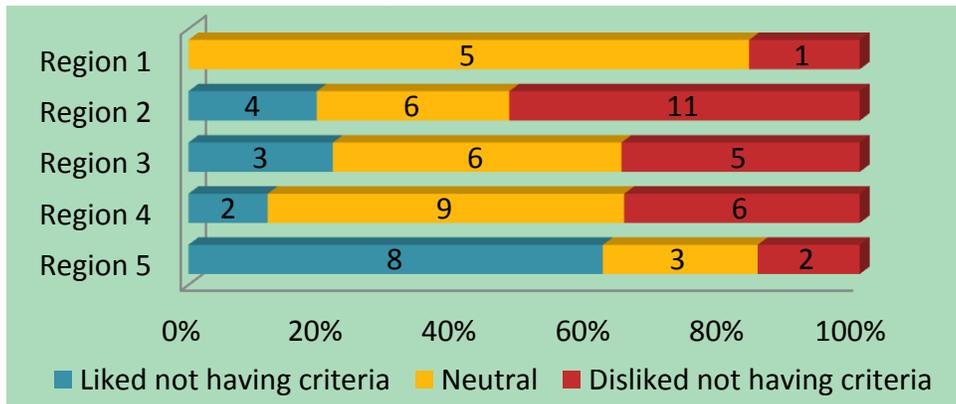
- Make more funding available. (5 comments)
- Create separate pots of money for some project types:
 - Allocate a percentage of funds to each project type, as in the past. (4 comments)
 - Allocate a percentage of funding to each geographic area ahead of the process, so that the ACTs have realistic expectations of how much funding they are working with. (2 comments)
 - Separate services and equipment (such as transit service and buses) from transportation infrastructure. It is inappropriate to consider them together.
 - Have a separate pot of money or application process for bicycle and pedestrian projects.
 - Create separate funding pots for both Transportation Enhance-type projects and Safe Routes to School type projects, and allow local-only applications (no ODOT applications).
- Provide education to ACTs:
 - Provide education to ACTs to improve their understanding of multimodal projects, and provide examples of high quality bicycle and pedestrian and transit projects. (3 comments)
 - Provide a suggested standard to the ACTs of what constitutes “mode balance.”
- Suggestions to create better applications:
 - Clarify better the expectations on percentages for targeting the funds.
 - Projects submitted should have already been vetted through adopted plans.
 - Allow only one project per application.
- Better Communication:
 - Increased communication between state and local jurisdictions on what local jurisdictions feel is needed for the near, mid, and long range.
 - Better communication with the ACTs and local governments (and internal to ODOT).

- Many respondents, particularly ODOT reviewers, felt that the process resulted in too few projects of statewide significance being put forward. Suggestions to ensure more statewide projects are put forward include:
 - Set aside funds for projects of statewide significance to solve bigger transportation issues.
 - Identify statewide priority projects for all modes prior to the application process.
 - Make it easier to consider projects that cross ACT boundaries.
 - Eliminate projects that have limited effect on state system early in the process.
 - Be clearer about statewide goals.
- Solicit more applicants:
 - Ensure that all the agencies that are qualified to apply are involved and that they are represented at the ACT level.
 - Encourage more cities and counties to apply for Enhance funds.
- Suggestions to improve the review discussion:
 - Have a more diverse selection panel for reviewing applications.
 - Invite and include the applicants in the review discussion.
 - Have modal input through the process.
- Allow for more time:
 - Allow more time for the review process. In Region 5, provide more time for discussion for the combined-ACT meeting.
 - Allow more time for prospective applicants to contact and collaborate with other agencies before the application is due so they can submit integrated proposals that solve problems in a more strategic way.

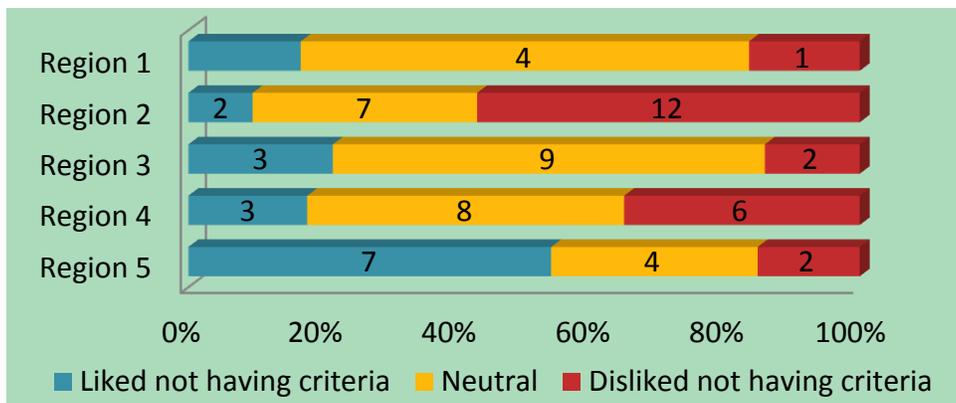
12) Evaluation Criteria

For both the project benefits section and the application as a whole, about 33% of respondents disliked not having review criteria, a little less than 50% felt neutral, and 25% liked not having criteria. The results varied significantly by region, with Region 5 being most positive about not having criteria, and Region 2 being least positive.

How did you feel about not having specific criteria when reviewing project benefits?



How did you feel about not having specific criteria for review of the whole application?



Those that would like to see criteria suggested criteria for the following:

- Engineering readiness
- Goals of the grant program
- Community and/or user benefit (i.e. number of people that will benefit from the project)
- Relationship to Fix-It projects
- Safety
- Cost-benefit analysis or economic benefit
- How the project fits into the regional context or system benefit
- Health and environment benefit
- Reduction in delay/congestion
- OBPA and Transportation Enhancement Committee standards as a guideline for criteria

Some people also suggested pre-ranking or review by ODOT prior to ACT discussion. One person noted that whatever ODOT values and determines a priority should be clearly described for all applicants and reviewers. Some people would like to see criteria that help reviewers

compare small vs. large projects, urban vs. rural projects, as well as the different project modes together.

13) Suggestions to Make Review Process Easier

Respondents shared their ideas about how to make the review process easier next time. Their suggestions mirrored those in response to suggestions for creating a better mix of projects (see 11. *Final Project List* above). In addition, people made the following suggestions:

- Have ODOT staff work with applicants to prepare better applications.
- Have a protocol for communication on email threads.
- Ensure that statewide goals, such as reductions in greenhouse gases and vehicle miles traveled, are met, perhaps by offering incentives for meeting statewide goals.
- Reduce or streamline some questions in the application.
- Allow applicants to make presentations.
- The ACT process of ranking projects as high, medium and low priority worked well.
- Create new dialogue between ACT and local communities, advocates and ODOT staff to create needs lists. Create priorities and get validation of those priorities with input from local jurisdictions.
- Provide technical reviews by ODOT staff and information from them on project viability.
- For statewide review committees, provide more complete information in spreadsheets, or provide full applications.
- Provide a list of Fix-It projects well before the application deadline for Enhance projects.
- Ensure that all ACTs and committees across the state use a similar ranking process and use similar criteria.
- Have a checklist for applicants for specific criteria to be considered in each section of the application.
- Suggestions for different kinds of processes to help prioritize projects:
 - Implement a two-step approach, in which applicants first provide a short, preliminary description of proposed projects that does not take much time. Then, priorities would be set and projects moving to step-two would provide more in-depth applications. This would help smaller jurisdictions apply.
 - One ACT conducted an anonymous, electronic straw vote of priority projects before delving into discussion, which was a useful exercise.
 - Have a subcommittee of broad membership (e.g. specific representation of interest groups at each ACT) that reviews and ranks projects and creates a 150% list. The full ACT would then approve or disapprove that list, with minimal opportunity for changing either its makeup or its order. This would reduce the opportunity for political manipulation.

- Have the ACTS review their own projects for their regions.
- Provide direction on how funding will be distributed to ACTs within each region.
- Do not mix bike projects with highway projects, transit projects, and capacity projects.

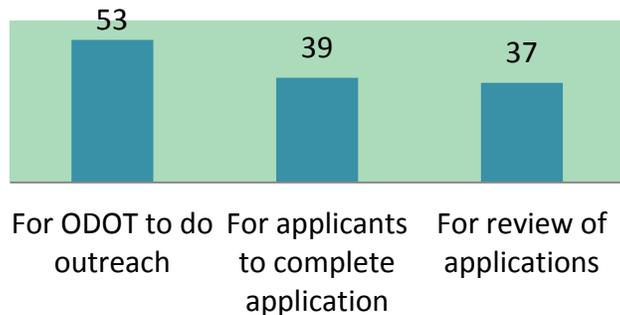
VI. Responses from All Respondents (Applicants and Reviewers)

The final portion of the Enhance survey asked a set of questions that applied to all respondents, including applicants and reviewers. This section summarizes those responses.

1) Time Allocation in Future

Respondents indicated where more time should be allocated in the project selection process in the future, if available. More people felt that additional time should be allocated for ODOT to do outreach about the application process.

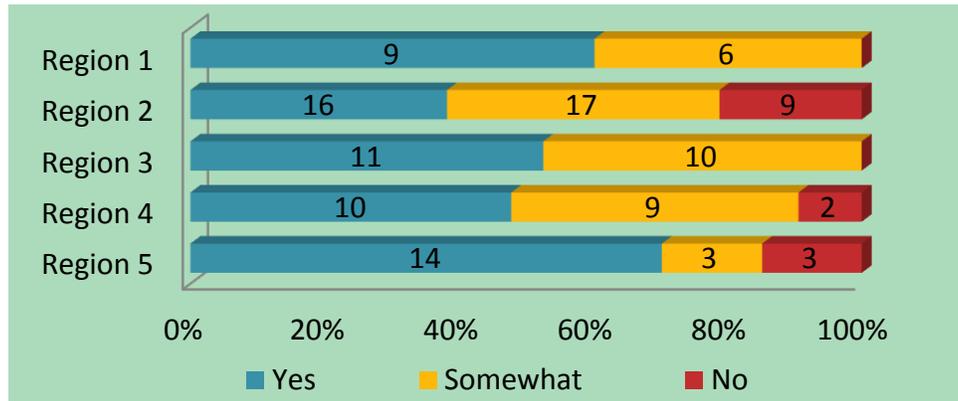
If it becomes possible to provide more time for the STIP Enhance application process in the future, where do you think ODOT should allocate this time?



2) Effective Presentation of Projects

50% of people felt that the Enhance application allowed applicants to present their proposals effectively. 38% felt applicants were somewhat able to effectively present proposals, and 12% felt that applicants were not able to effectively present proposals. Overall, respondents in Regions 1 and 5 felt that the process allowed applicants to effectively present proposals.

Do you feel that the Enhance application allowed applicants to present their proposals effectively?



Many respondents suggested that ACTs allow applicants to make five minute oral presentations. Others suggested having a sub-committee or some kind of pre-review process to conduct an initial review and scoring, and/or provide criteria for applicants to use in preparing their application. Other suggestions from respondents included more technical assistance to applicants, and to require more detailed information rather than vague descriptive statements. Graphics and photos should also be encouraged or even required in applications.

3) Ability to Present Multiple-Component Projects as One Whole

Respondents indicated whether they felt that the application process allowed projects with multiple components (e.g. sidewalk, bus stop, roadway) to be presented as one whole project. 67% of respondents said yes, 28% said somewhat, and 6% said no. Respondents provided the following ideas for how the application could be improved to allow applicants to present projects with multiple components as one whole project next time:

- Provide check boxes in the application for individual multimodal components and be sure everyone knows what will be treated as a multimodal project.
- Require applicants to cost out subcategories separately to facilitate scaling discussions.
- Provide bonus points for multimodal projects.
- Encourage or facilitate partnerships between jurisdictions to apply together for combined funding of projects.

4) Consider Needs and Priorities Together

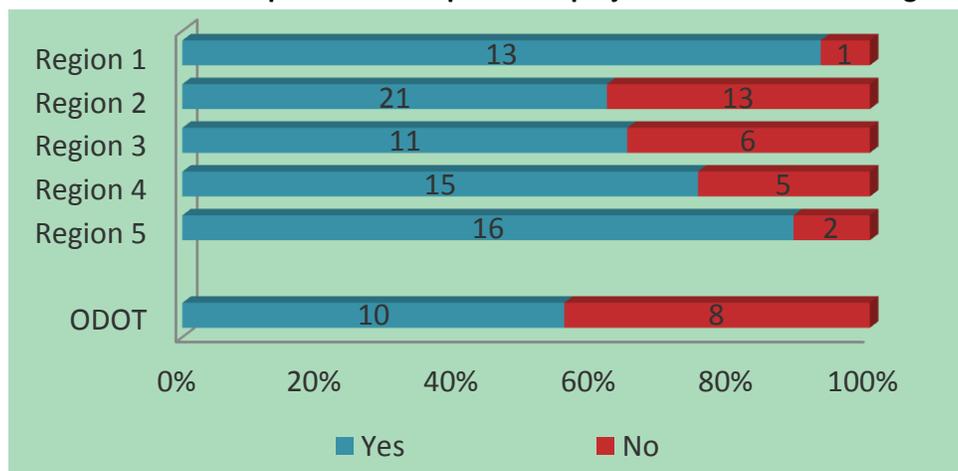
Respondents indicated whether they felt that the application process allowed applicants and reviewers to consider needs and priorities together, independent of specific mode and funding questions. 45% said yes, 50% said somewhat, and 15% said no.

Several comments noted that the application itself does not seem to strengthen or weaken an applicant’s or reviewer’s ability to consider needs and priorities together. One suggestion is that the front-end guidance to applicants and reviewers could say more about priorities. Others commented that it is not really possible to have a thorough discussion and review process without talking about mode and funding issues.

5) Improvement of Projects Selected for Funding

74% of respondents felt that the Enhance process will improve the projects selected for funding in the STIP, although the results varied by region. Nearly all respondents from Regions 1 and 5 felt that the process would improve projects, while only 62% of respondents from Region 2 felt the process would improve projects. 44% of the ODOT respondents felt that the Enhance process will not improve the projects selected for funding.

Do you feel that the Enhance process will improve the projects selected for funding in the STIP?



Respondents who felt that the process will improve projects selected said that they appreciated that ODOT opened up the process to include local input, and that even though the process needs some improvement, they are confident that tweaks based on this survey will result in better projects selected. A number of people said they cannot really answer this question until they see the final projects selected for funding.

Many comments were made by respondents who felt that the Enhance process will not improve the projects selected. ODOT respondents said that projects selected did not seem to be the result of strategic thinking and that the process resulted in too many local and bicycle and pedestrian projects that do not improve the state system. Another ODOT respondent said that combining modes together for funding just highlights the strain between the various modes and is not an improvement.

Some people said that there needs to be objective criteria in the process. If not, group dynamics may take over in the review process and projects with little merit are pursued. One

person noted that this new process does not consider technical merit and feasibility of projects as in the past.

6) What did you like most about the process?

Many diverse responses were given about what respondents liked most about the process. Some of the more common responses include:

- The process allowed presentation of projects as “transportation solutions” and multimodal projects, rather than forcing a project into a category or single mode for funding purposes.
- The ability to submit a wide variety of projects in one process, rather than worrying about determining which funding program to apply to.
- The process provided an opportunity to have a robust local discussion about projects and local decision-making. There was also much more involvement of local jurisdictions in the review process.
- Community members were able to take a more active role.
- It required jurisdictions to be selective and deliberate about the projects to put forward.
- It provided an opportunity to see all projects together as a big picture, rather than in silos by mode. It also allowed for a system-wide view rather than a local view.
- The application seemed simpler and more streamlined than other application forms.
- Applicants were allowed to make oral presentations to ACTs to clarify projects.
- There was better interaction between ACTs, and with ODOT.
- The new process focuses on values rather than strict, objective criteria.
- It provided an opportunity to build relationships and meet people from other jurisdictions and agencies.
- System-wide level thinking was encouraged and recognized.

7) What did you like least about the process?

Many diverse responses were given about what respondents liked least about the process. Some of the more common responses include:

- The lack of criteria or guidelines made it difficult to put together an effective application, and provided no guidance as to how projects would be judged.
- Not enough funding was available for needed projects.
- The process created more competition for funds, and forced rural areas to compete with urban areas for funds.
- The project selection was not based on detailed, technical information. Instead, projects were selected based on politics and subjective reasons.

- Large projects were disadvantaged because of the limited funding. The process also resulted in too many local and not enough statewide projects.
- The timeline was too compressed.
- There was not enough time for a robust review process.
- There was a lack of communication from ODOT regarding applications once projects were submitted (for example, there was no update on application status and next steps).
- Lack of timely information about Fix-It projects.
- Lack of clarity about the roles of ODOT and ACTs.
- Inconsistent processes were used throughout the state. Each ACT and Region seemed to have its own process and criteria.
- The application form was too long.
- There was potential for political interests to outweigh merit-based selection.
- Participants in the process have not yet put aside their mode preferences, but this may change as the process is improved and people get used to thinking in a multimodal way.

Appendix 1: STIP Enhance Process Survey Instrument