

STIP Stakeholder Committee
February 5, 2007
Meeting Summary

Members Present

Bob Cortright; Stuart Foster; Ann Hanus; Susie Lahsene; Ted Leybold; Mike Montero; Bob Russell; Satvinder Sandhu; Jeff Scheick; Gabrielle Schiffer; Andy Shaw; Bill Wagner; Tom Zelenka

Staff, Guests Present

Jerri Bohard; Darel Capps; Karen Green; Bert Hartman; Lisa Nell; MaryBeth Olson; David Patterson; Lucia Ramirez; Ken Woods

Welcome

Chair Foster opened the meeting with a welcome and note that the criteria the committee has worked on have helped ODOT move towards a more objective system of project selection. It is not perfect yet, but is continually improving.

He also noted that the newly adopted Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP) is a refinement of prior actions, not a course correction, and indicated that the current highway plan is consistent with the new OTP.

STIP Status Update

Jerri Bohard gave a quick summary of the status of the prior products prepared at the committee's recommendation and the 2008-2011 STIP. She stated that the STIP Users' Guide is now available, and brochures have been reprinted with updated financial numbers for the 08-11 STIP. Public comments received on Draft 2008-2011 STIP have been given to the OTC. Also the transportation reauthorization legislation has made some changes, and now a finding of consistency will be needed between STIP and OTP.

Criteria Discussion

Jerri Bohard began the criteria discussion by going over changes made in the initial draft document for the Committee. Most changes presented were small updates and clarifications. Notable recommended changes include:

- Prioritization factors – Bridge updated to include the freight and project readiness factors to parallel the factors for modernization.
- Language recognizing the updated OTP goals has been added to the Introduction
- Language acknowledging the project summary reports that regions prepare to document use of the criteria in project selection has been added to page 3.
- The TEA-21 reference on page 4 has been updated to SAFETEA-LU.
- Regions are being asked to go back and assess prior STIP projects before they are included again in the next STIP, and language acknowledging this has been added to page 9.
- Footnotes 2, 8, 14, and 18 go with the prioritization factor “Projects that best support the policies of the Oregon Highway Plan.” The language in these footnotes have been

changed to clarify how this factor is to be used in prioritization rather than listing many possible applicable policies.

- Footnotes 4, 10, 15, and 21 go with the prioritization factor “Projects that leverage other funds and public benefits.” Some of the examples of possible benefits listed in each of these footnotes have been updated a little to reflect the new OTP, but their intent is the same as before.

Group Discussion:

Bob Russell asked if there had been feedback on using the new freight criterion. Jerri Bohard replied that it has gone well, offers more structure, and is reflected in the project summary reports. She also indicated that the descriptions of the use of this criterion and the one regarding Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) policies in the summary reports has been inconsistent; this is one area in which we need more work.

Bob Russell stated that of the projects meeting the freight criterion, he would like to see higher priority for projects on state freight routes and intermodal connectors. Susie Lahsene pointed out that some Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) freight routes are not on the state system and Mr. Russell questioned why they are not listed as state freight routes.

Chair Foster pointed out that new freight routes have been adopted since this criterion was first included and that new state freight routes involve an OHP amendment and any further updates of OHP will not happen by time these criteria are approved in June.

Mr. Russell indicated that he thought the emphasis should be on state freight routes and connectors, possibly by removing one or more of the bullets included in the footnote included with the freight criterion. He thought that routes can be added to state freight route map as they rise to that level. He wants to set such a process in motion, allowing new routes to be included in the state list as appropriate.

The group noted that there are also unanticipated projects. Bill Wagner stated that we need to be careful that we do not end up with people trying to get all local roads included on the state freight route system. The question was raised if a forecast of freight traffic can be used as a condition of being listed. The group recognized that these issues are geographically dependent and can be much different between an urban area where there are many competing interests and a more rural area.

Mr. Russell stated his concern that a project in the next STIP should not reduce capacity on a route recently invested in to better accommodate freight, for example. Though Ted Leybold reminded the group that this criterion in our document is about project funding, not project design. Chair Foster also noted that politics can block any designation.

Bill Wagner summarized that the issue of concern is that once an investment is made, we do not want to effectively lose it later due to further projects. The group noted that flexibility in applying the criterion is useful, too. Chair Foster indicated that he did not want to tie hands by taking non-designated routes off the priority list. He said that the OTC would agree with the general issue of not losing investments made in freight routes due to later restrictions. He

suggested that more consideration of the issue is needed as there may be other ways to work on this issue besides the STIP criteria, perhaps an OHP policy, for example.

Bob Russell agreed to continued examination of this issue outside the criteria and noted that state freight routes protected by statute. Gabrielle Schiffer pointed out that shifting demographics can cause different and competing issues such as in our south coast towns.

Agreed:

- Continue exploring how to address this issue outside the STIP project criteria

Jeanne Lawson, facilitator, next proposed that the group identify other issues that they wanted to make sure were discussed and several more items were identified:

- Prioritizing between C and D STIP
- Whether the criteria apply to local bridge projects
- Innovative finance bullet under leverage on page 14
- Project readiness
- Assessing how OHP policies are addressed, guidance
- Project milestones and conditions of approval
- Role of facility plans

After a break, these issues were each discussed.

Prioritizing between C and D STIP

Jerri Bohard noted that further guidance for prioritizing between these is not planned. It is the regions' choice how to split their allocation among needs and D-STIP projects must always be funded to completion of a milestone.

Local Bridge Program projects

Jerri Bohard reminded the group that these criteria apply only to the state bridge program projects, not local bridge program projects.

Innovative finance bullet under leverage Page 14

Jerri Bohard explained that this was added last time to recognize new opportunities, not to limit choices. Mike Montero offered an example of another innovative finance tool used elsewhere, basically a rest area lease with profit share called "Interstate convenience centers," including driver rest area with services such as fast food and profit sharing with the DOT.

Project Readiness

Jerri Bohard noted that the agency is getting better at clarifying project readiness each STIP cycle. For 2010-2013 ODOT will be adding project assessment for prior STIP projects.

Guidance/assessment for how OHP policies are addressed

Jerri Bohard pointed out that more planning is going on at D-STIP level now; OHP policies are addressed there, too. Ted Leybold raised asked if the OHP policies are applied to the pool of projects. Are they used to select from the whole pool or pool of locally identified needs? Chair Foster noted that it is possible to take advantage of the system if you only advance a select set of projects, but with a broad pool the current criterion should work.

Satvinder Sandhu asked how we can be sure we choose the right projects from management systems. When all systems are taken together are we getting the right projects – looking at net bang for buck across management systems? Jeff Scheick explained that we are doing this now through asset management with the goal of looking at all management systems when selecting projects. Jerri Bohard explained that the management systems are the yes or no factor for bridge and preservation project eligibility. Right now system choices are not analyzed as a pool in that way, but asset management goals will move the agency toward allowing comparison between management systems for the best investments.

Mike Montero noted that the new language is a good improvement that will help local jurisdictions. It was pointed out that a problem still exists when regions have multiple acts: how to split the revenue between them? Usually done on equitable basis, allocating funds by area and therefore not necessarily to the top priority projects of the whole region. Mike Montero explained that in Region 3, equitability is a goal, but hands are not tied by it. The group noted that these divisions occur after the OTC allocates money overall to each program reflecting the full state's needs.

Agreed:

- ODOT will improve the summary report instructions for the individual project reports and the modernization cover sheet to request that respondents discuss which policies are addressed and why.
- The process needs work, the criteria language does not.

Milestones, Conditions of approval

Bob Cortright raised the concern that conditions utilized to date have been process-oriented, not specific about what is being asked of local governments to protect the facility. The feedback he has heard so far on this topic is that planning at this stage is not usually far enough along to do specific requirements.

Chair Foster noted that the OTC wants these things to be negotiated before project is funded, or in place before project goes to contract. He does not want the agency to do a lot of work prior to knowing that we have a project. The guidance on interchange area management plans (IAMPs) is broad, but the OTC expects commitments to be negotiated. This is still a relatively new requirement; the agency is learning and improving. Local partners are learning about this new requirement at the same time. Also, these and other facility plans are amendments to the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) and they continue to be discussed among planning managers and highway division executive staff.

Jerri Bohard pointed out that many IAMPs done now were started before the guidance was published. We still need to answer the question of how and when to assess what they have accomplished. Project readiness requirements in the criteria make conditions on projects less needed.

The group noted that IAMPs currently are triggered by a change of use, or when ODOT makes a substantial change to an interchange. The question was raised that maybe IAMPs could be triggered by a number or percentage increase in traffic.

Jerri Bohard explained that the goal in the future is to be proactive with IAMPs. Chair Foster added that he does not want to add very specific language about IAMPs in the criteria, as we do not want to require a lot of detailed planning work for a project that may still drop out for another reason.

Agreed:

- Proactive IAMPs is a good goal: the sooner they are done, the easier they are, and this is better for all interests.

Facility Plans' role

Bob Russell raised the question of what kinds of facility plans are there and what is their role in the process. Jerri Bohard indicated that facility plans can include: Access Management Plans, IAMPs, Corridor Plans, Refinement Plans, and Special Area Plans (such as designated highway segments), for example. She also agreed to reattach Appendix B to the criteria, which contains a diagram showing where plans fit in the STIP process. Chair Foster stated that adding aspirational language is okay, but again he does not want to require a lot of planning for a project that is not necessary committed.

Agreed:

- Add explanatory but not prescriptive language regarding facility plans.
- Ensure that Appendix B is sent out with the criteria for review.

Agreed Next Steps:

- Reattach Appendix B to the criteria
- Criteria draft will be sent for public review with two changes:
 - Clarification that other information besides the summary report may be developed to compare projects and report on selection
 - Addition of explanatory language about facility plans
- ODOT will send the review draft out by the end of the month
- The meeting summary will reflect direction from group
- This group will reconvene after public comments are received, in late April