

## **Integration of the ODOT Project Selection Process with the University Transportation Center**

The SAFETEA-LU transportation reauthorization bill passed by Congress in 2005 created 10 national University Transportation Centers, including one in Oregon. The new Oregon center is comprised of a consortium of universities, including Portland State University, University of Oregon, Oregon State University, and Oregon Institute of Technology.

The center, housed at Portland State University, is called the Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium (OTREC). It has received an earmark of \$16 million over the life of the reauthorization, and it is expected to receive at least \$11 million of that. Funds are for transportation research, training and education. The grants require 50% (dollar for dollar) local participation of matching funds.

The establishment of OTREC provides an important opportunity to meet ODOT's research needs. Many projects that would have previously been funded entirely by ODOT may now be funded jointly by ODOT and OTREC. This will allow ODOT to do significantly more research with the same commitment of resources, allowing ODOT's research budget to go further.

Thus the ODOT Research project selection process has been adapted to integrate it with a parallel proposal process operated by OTREC (see diagram below). When problem statements are selected by the Expert Task Groups to advance to the Stage Two level, the member universities in OTREC will be notified and faculty members with relevant expertise invited to consider submitting the same proposal for funding by OTREC. If faculty from more than one university wish to take on a given problem statement, ODOT Research will negotiate the matter with them, recognizing that collaboration among universities is encouraged by OTREC.

Ideally, the problem statements most strongly supported by ODOT will also be selected for funding by OTREC, mutually benefiting both organizations by stretching ODOT's research dollars further and by providing a source of match for the OTREC funds. It is also likely, however, that some ODOT supported projects will either not be submitted to or not be selected by OTREC. In this case the prioritization of a project by the ODOT Research Advisory Committee will determine whether it will be funded solely by ODOT.

