

Recommended Flexible Funds Purpose Statement, Vision and Criteria
8/11/10

Background and Context

Increased focus around the interrelated issues of connectivity, the environment, mobility and access, livability and the need for sustainable energy sources has enhanced the ways to respond to Oregon's transportation needs. The Department, with the assistance of stakeholders, will consider investing in a wide range of multimodal and/or non-highway transportation strategies. A redirecting of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Surface Transportation Program (STP) or *flex funds*, based in part on direction from the 2009 session of the Oregon Legislature and the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP), has created opportunities to increase the investment in these endeavors.

The Flexible Fund Program is a new targeted program requested by the Oregon Transportation Commission in an effort to strategically focus investment in non-highway transportation projects, programs, and services. For the purposes of this program non-highway is bicycle/pedestrian, transit, and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) activities. The Flexible Fund Program is currently established to target STP funds made available by the OTC without affecting the current funding levels of other programs that use flexible STP funds. As this program is funded with federal STP funds, all proposed projects must meet federal STP funding requirements.

Purpose Statement

A portion of the flexible federal funds available through the FHWA STP Program will be used to support sustainable non-highway transportation projects, programs and services that positively impact modal connectivity, the environment, mobility and access, livability, energy use and the overall operation of the transportation system.

Vision

Projects identified for these funds should help create livable and sustainable communities where multimodal transportation facilities, services and programs provide safe, comfortable and convenient options that support active living. Projects should provide equitable options for accessing housing, jobs, services, and educational and recreational opportunities. The outcomes of these investments will help Oregonians access transportation choices and enhance energy independence and sustainability.

Program Goals and Eligibility

Program Goals

The use of federal flexible funds will further development of a multimodal transportation system that is interconnected, safe, seamless and increasingly looks to non-highway solutions that are:

- Interconnected/multi-faceted
- Environmentally Sensitive
- Sustainable
- And will foster Community Livability as well as
- Provide Oregonians with better access and more transportation choices.

Project Eligibility

Projects likely to be funded include transit, bicycle and pedestrian, TDM, and the planning, research and project development that supports those projects, as well as related programs and services.

Basic Qualifications/Eligibility for Round-One Consideration

Basic Qualifications for Round One Consideration

- Project demonstrates consistency with FHWA eligibility and funding requirements for the STP Program.
- Project is sufficiently developed to be ready for construction or implementation and can be obligated by September 30, 2011. Construction projects should be “shovel ready”.
- Applicant is a Governmental entity and is eligible to receive STP funds.
- Applicant has requested a funding level within the range identified for this program: The minimum project threshold is \$50,000 and the maximum threshold is \$1,000,000.
- Applicant has identified the required minimum 10.27% match for FHWA funding.
- Project demonstrates local political and financial support.
- Project clearly, effectively plans for and/or addresses a critical system need or gap.
- Expected results are achievable and quantifiable.

Additionally, applicant recognizes that flexible federal funds, for the purpose of this program, mean those STP funds that the Oregon Transportation Commission has decided to make available for non-highway transportation purposes for this program.

A. Connectivity, Integration and Overall Benefit to the Transportation System

- Plans for/contributes to the development of a “seamless” multimodal transportation system.
- Plans for/connects modes or serves multiple modes.
- Completes/extends a critical system or modal link.
- Reduces the need for a highway expansion.
- Helps preserve a critical non-highway facility, service or program.
- Enhances the user experience.

B. Sustainability

- Plans for/contributes to improved environmental quality (i.e. GHG Reductions).
- Plans for/contributes to the use of sustainable energy sources for transportation.
- Plans for congestion mitigation/mitigates congestion.
- Plans for/contributes to the development of livable communities.
- Supports/preserves/creates long term employment.
- Reduces VMT.

C. Mobility, Access and Health

- Plans for/expands transportation choices for all Oregonians.
- Plans for/expands or protects mobility for public transportation dependent users.
- Plans for/extends access to goods and services.
- Plans for/links workers to jobs.
- Contributes to a healthy, active lifestyle.
- Reduces exposure of the population to air pollutants.