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SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Judy Gott, Executive Director

STP Urban Program Procedures
2007

In 2004, procedures for the administration of the STP Urban Program were adopted. Recent changes in the funding process and adoption of guidelines by Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT) concerning cost estimates necessitate updating of the 2004 procedures.

Communication from CDOT Deputy Commissioner Raeanne Curtis dated May 14, 2007 outlined the new CDOT policy for administration and funding of this program. The main changes are noted below:

- All phases of a project, design (PE), rights of way (ROW), and construction (CON) are now eligible for funding under the 80-10-10 formula (80% federal, 10 % state , 10 % local).
- Municipal participation in funding of the construction phase will be limited to 10% of the low bid cost. Any cost increases during construction will be covered by CDOT and FHWA funds.
- Municipal financial commitments will require a council resolution indicating commitment to the project and execution of agreements for each phase of the project.

The SCRCOG application forms have been updated to reflect these changes and the 2007 CDOT Preliminary Cost Estimating Guidelines. It is critical that the potential project costs are accurately identified as part of the application process. Due to the limited funding in this program, and the increasing costs of construction, review of all aspects of the project and an accurate estimate of the costs are vital to allow programming of the projects and funding.

Project Selection Process

All projects are scoped and placed in the process in a six year window, balancing the available funds and individual project schedule. If there are too many project dollars for the six year period, the Transportation Committee decides which projects go forward based on an accurate assessment when they will be ready and the best fit for the dollars available. If two projects are equal on this basis, the Transportation Committee will prioritize the project that is most needed for the region.

Cost Containment

At all stages, from application thru construction, cost containment is a priority. The greatest cost containment emphasis is placed on the early stages, where the use of technical expertise (improved scopes and cost estimates) and political efforts (requiring towns to reduce scope to contain costs if necessary or provide local funding to supplement unnecessary items) will keep the project viable and within the available funding.

At the time of application, SCRCOG staff will review:

- The major emphasis on the area of the project and review site to insure adequate limits and avoid expansion of the area over the life of the project.
- Use of DOT estimating guidelines.
- Sufficient information on the application to address design issues.
- Town estimate
 - Addressing of anticipated costs.
 - Compliance with current CDOT requirements.
 - Complete information.

Once these items have been reviewed and agreement on the scope of the project is obtained, the application will be forwarded to CDOT for scoping.

CDOT Scoping review includes:

- Review of project and cost estimates.
- Identification of scope problems that can have major cost implications.
- A SCRCOG organized meeting of all parties to identify options for reduction of cost

SCRCOG staff will report on all projects at the monthly at Transportation Committee meetings.

Cost Review Process

During project development, SCRCOG staff will work with CDOT, the municipality and its consultant to keep the costs contained. A thorough review of the project prior to application will help contain subsequent increases. Throughout the project, additions such as pavers, sidewalks, landscaping, etc., will be discouraged if they cause cost increases. Monthly reports to the Transportation Committee will monitor progress and budget.

Municipalities are requested to be mindful of the limited funding for this program. Additional costs may have to be funded by the municipality, or reduced by the use of less costly materials, or even by reduction in the scope of the project.

The STP Urban Program provides funding for projects which benefit the Region and its municipalities. Cooperative efforts among CDOT, the member municipalities and SCRCOG will allow the funds to be utilized in the best manner for the benefit of the motoring public in the South Central Region.