

AGENDA ITEM IV - ACTION

February 5, 2009

Proposed projects for the Economic Stimulus Recovery (ESR)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The current financial crisis which has enveloped not only the United States but other countries as well has prompted the president and congress to ‘jump-start’ the economy by developing an Economic Stimulus Recovery (ESR) plan. The “Rebuild America” proposal provides, in addition to other initiatives, \$85 billion of infrastructure investment to enhance the safety, security, and efficiency....of the transportation infrastructure. The assumption is that Texas’ portion of the package will equate to approximately \$2.5 billion for highways and bridges. Part of the criteria is that the projects must be available or ready-to-go within 90 days of enactment, they be obligated within six months and constructed within two years. The environmental and planning process cannot be waived.

It is our understanding that within seven days of the date of enactment, the U.S. Department of Transportation and Environmental Protection Agency will distribute formula funds to States, cities, and public transit agencies. At that point, TxDOT can immediately put out bids (typically for a period of 30 days) for ready-to-go projects. After receipt of the bids and contract award, work can begin on the project within an additional 30 days. **In this way, the Rebuild America proposal can “put shovels in the ground” within 90 days of enactment.**

In cooperation with member cities and TxDOT, a draft list of ‘ready-to-go’ projects was developed for submittal to Austin. By providing the list of most eligible projects, funding levels (yet to be determined) will address top priorities that meet all the requirements of the ESR and address pressing needs within our study area.. Projects will then be addressed until funding levels run out.

It should be noted that the list of projects is being developed in anticipation of the bill passage but the actual projects funded are dependent on the funding amount provided by Congress and adoption by the TPB. The TPB should prepare to act as soon as possible after the bill is passed and should consider holding a special meeting for final approval of the proposed projects.

ACTION REQUESTED:

The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) is requested to review the list of ESR projects and approve for submittal to TxDOT.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Proposed Economic Stimulus Recovery Projects
- Map

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