

Waco Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board

Meeting Date: July 14, 2009

Agenda Item: Consideration and Action on project application recommendations for the 'Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery' program.

Comments:

The economic stimulus act approved by Congress in February, designated \$1.5 billion to be distributed at the discretion of USDOT for transportation projects valued between \$20 million and \$300 million. The maximum any one state could receive is \$300 million. Similar to the rest of the stimulus act, projects must meet all federal requirements, although projects have until the end of September 2011 to obligate funds. The program, however, gives preference to projects that can be completed prior to February 2012. The final adopted rules for the program are attached.

Any state, city, county or MPO can submit an application for TIGER funds. TxDOT estimates that it will submit between 5 and 10 project applications, depending upon the action of the Texas Transportation Commission. The Commission will be acting on July 30th, thus TxDOT administration has established a deadline of July 16th to submit requests for consideration of projects. Projects selected by the commission will likely be the most competitive submissions from Texas. Projects not selected by the Commission, however, are not precluded from being submitted from another entity.

The MPO staff has received requests for MPO support of IH-35 projects between Lacy-Lakeview and West and for the reconstruction of the bridge over the Brazos River. In addition, Congressman Edwards office has suggested that TIGER may be an opportunity to complete Loop 574. The Waco District has informed the MPO staff that Brazos River bridge for IH-35 could not be obligated by the September, 2011 deadline. For Loop 574, right of way acquisition could be an issue as well as a required review of the environmental studies, which were completed nearly 10 years ago.

The MPO staff and Waco District have been working on the assumption that the Lacy-Lakeview to West section of IH-35 would be our region's top consideration for this program. This is based upon actions previously taken by the Policy Board during discussions for funds from other sections of the stimulus act. Based on the limitations of other project requests, the MPO staff is recommending the Policy Board reiterate it's choice of this section of IH-35 as the top regional priority for the TIGER program.

Action Required: Approve, amend or disapprove regional priorities for the TIGER program.

Motion By:

Seconded:

Content of Motion:

Vote: