



August 1, 2022

To: Regional Planning and Highways Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell E. Johnson", is positioned to the right of the "From:" field.

Subject: Release 2023 Annual Call for Projects for Measure M2 Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs

Overview

The Measure M2 Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs guidelines provide the mechanism for administration of the annual competitive call for projects for the Measure M2 funding program. The 2023 Regional Capacity Program (Project O) and Regional Traffic Signal Synchronization Program (Project P) call for projects is presented for review and approval.

Recommendations

- A. Approve proposed revisions to the Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs guidelines.
- B. Authorize staff to issue the 2023 annual call for projects for the Regional Capacity Program.
- C. Authorize staff to issue the 2023 annual call for projects for the Regional Traffic Signal Synchronization Program.

Background

The Regional Capacity Program (RCP) provides Measure M2 (M2) Project O funding for improvements to the Orange County Master Plan of Arterial Highways. The RCP also provides for intersection improvements and other projects to help improve street operations and reduce congestion.

The Regional Traffic Signal Synchronization Program (RTSSP) provides M2 Project P funding for multi-agency, corridor-based signal synchronization throughout Orange County to support efficient operation of existing arterials.

These programs allocate funds through a competitive process and target projects that improve mobility by considering factors, such as degree of congestion relief, cost-effectiveness, and project readiness.

The Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs (CTFP) serves as the mechanism through which Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) staff administers the RCP and RTSSP, as well as other competitive transit (projects S, T, and V) and environmental cleanup (Project X) programs.

The CTFP guidelines identify procedures and requirements that local agencies must satisfy in order to apply for M2 funding and how project applications are evaluated. The guidelines also define how local agencies can seek reimbursement once funds are awarded. The guidelines were first approved by the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) on March 22, 2010, and were most recently updated and approved in March 2022.

Discussion

Recommended updates to the guidelines have been prepared in anticipation of the release of the 2023 annual call for projects (call) for the RCP and RTSSP. Staff comprehensively reviewed the guidelines and worked closely with both the Technical Steering Committee (TSC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to determine areas that needed to be adjusted and/or updated. The guidelines were also reviewed and updated, as appropriate, to provide for better consistency and streamlining throughout the document.

The proposed 2023 guidelines have been updated to reflect appropriate deadlines and call cycle dates for the 2023 call. A total funding target of approximately \$45 million is available for Project O and Project P for this call cycle. However, this number may be adjusted based on updated sales tax forecasts that will be included in OCTA's upcoming Comprehensive Business Plan, anticipated for Board review in fall 2022.

In this cycle, staff is recommending several notable changes to the guidelines, which are described below.

RCP – Project O

The changes that are recommended for the RCP were derived from requests by the local jurisdictions and from lessons learned. These include:

- Revisions to the “Operational Attributes” scoring criteria to emphasize safety improvements and to incentivize incorporation of Active Transportation Program attributes (within the roadway) that are executed as part of an approved local or regional transportation plan; and
- Clarification of eligibility of utility relocations with local agency-demonstrated prior rights.

RTSSP – Project P

There are several technical and clarifying changes that are recommended for the RTSSP, which were derived from lessons learned and from efforts to emphasize improvements that best align with the updated Traffic Signal Synchronization Master Plan. The most significant of these proposed changes are listed below:

- Revisions to the point spread and modifications to the “Project Characteristics” scoring criteria to emphasize more critical project elements and prioritize faster, cost-effective project delivery;
- Updates to the project improvements categories with clarified scoring and component descriptions in line with the modified “Project Characteristics” scoring;
- Revisions to the “Current Project Status” scoring criteria to allow for greater competition among applications to claim signal retiming points and to incentivize projects for corridors that have not yet implemented signal coordination improvements through the RTSSP; and
- Clarification of ineligibility of regular signal operations and maintenance, specifically related to communication repairs.

For this call cycle, OCTA is not in a position to lead RTSSP projects on behalf of local agencies. OCTA staff is managing previously committed signal synchronization projects and undertaking the Countywide Signal Synchronization Baseline project to synchronize approximately 2,500 traffic signals throughout Orange County.

Attachment A provides a table of all proposed guidelines changes, and Attachment B provides a marked-up version of the guidelines in track changes format. It should be noted that proposed changes that were deemed to be non-substantive (i.e., wording/grammatical, streamlining, and minor clarifications) are generally not described in this report but are shown in the attachments.

The guidelines revisions were presented to the TSC and TAC in June 2022, and both committees, after providing input, approved the recommended changes. Accordingly, these proposed revisions are now being submitted to the Board for final consideration and approval. Authorization is also requested to initiate the 2023 call for the M2 RCP and RTSSP to support local streets and roads improvement projects throughout Orange County.

Next Steps

If the Board approves the recommendations noted above, staff will notify the local jurisdictions of the call's initiation timing and any other pertinent information. Staff will offer a workshop for local agencies as an additional resource. The workshop is tentatively scheduled for August 23, 2022. Grant applications will be due to OCTA by October 20, 2022, and based upon selection criteria specified in the 2023 guidelines, projects will be prioritized for TSC, TAC, and Board consideration in spring 2023. Selected projects can be eligible to receive funding as early as July 1, 2023, through fiscal year 2025-26 depending on each project's schedule. Grant allocations for this call will be escalated, consistent with the guidelines, based on inflationary conditions at the time projects are awarded.

Summary

M2 provides funding for roadway improvements through the RCP and signal synchronization improvements through the RTSSP. The guidelines serve as the mechanism that OCTA uses to administer these competitive funding sources. Recommended changes to the guidelines were presented and approved by both the TSC and TAC in June 2022, and staff is now seeking Board approval of proposed modifications to the 2023 guidelines and authorization to initiate the 2023 RCP and RTSSP annual call.

Attachments

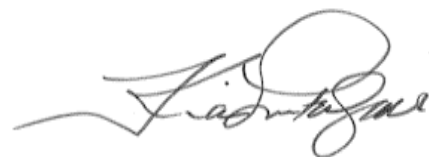
- A. 2023 CTFP Guidelines (Project O and Project P) – Proposed Changes List
- B. Guidelines Excerpt, Comprehensive Transportation Funding Programs Guidelines, 2023 Call for Projects

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