



MEMORANDUM

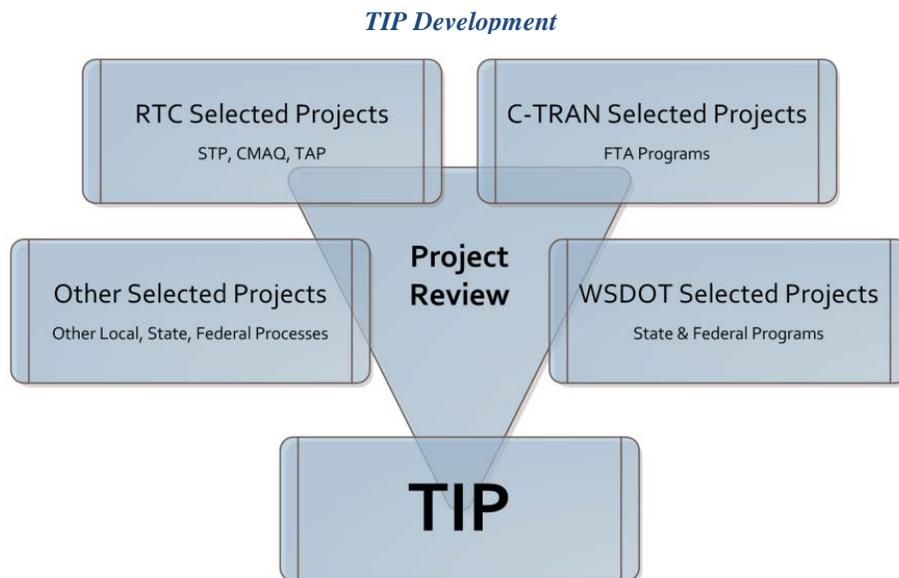
**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director  
**DATE:** December 29, 2015 *MR*  
**SUBJECT:** **Transportation Improvement Program – Regional Grant Process**

**AT A GLANCE**

*This memorandum outlines the existing policies and goals of the regional grant process and seeks RTC Board policy concurrence of the Funding Strategies used to guide the selection of projects. RTC staff will continue to work with member agencies through RTAC to refine the process and selection criteria for the 2017-2020 regional grant process. The strategies, policies, process, and criteria will be documented in a TIP Programming Guidebook and returned for Board approval prior to the upcoming grant solicitation planned for summer 2016.*

**BACKGROUND**

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Clark County region, RTC is required to develop a four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The purpose of the TIP is to demonstrate that available transportation resources are being used to implement the Regional Transportation Plan (2014). The TIP development process includes the programming of regionally significant projects that were selected for funding through various grant selection processes. These processes include the selection of projects by RTC, WSDOT, C-TRAN, and other grant funding processes (ex. TIB).

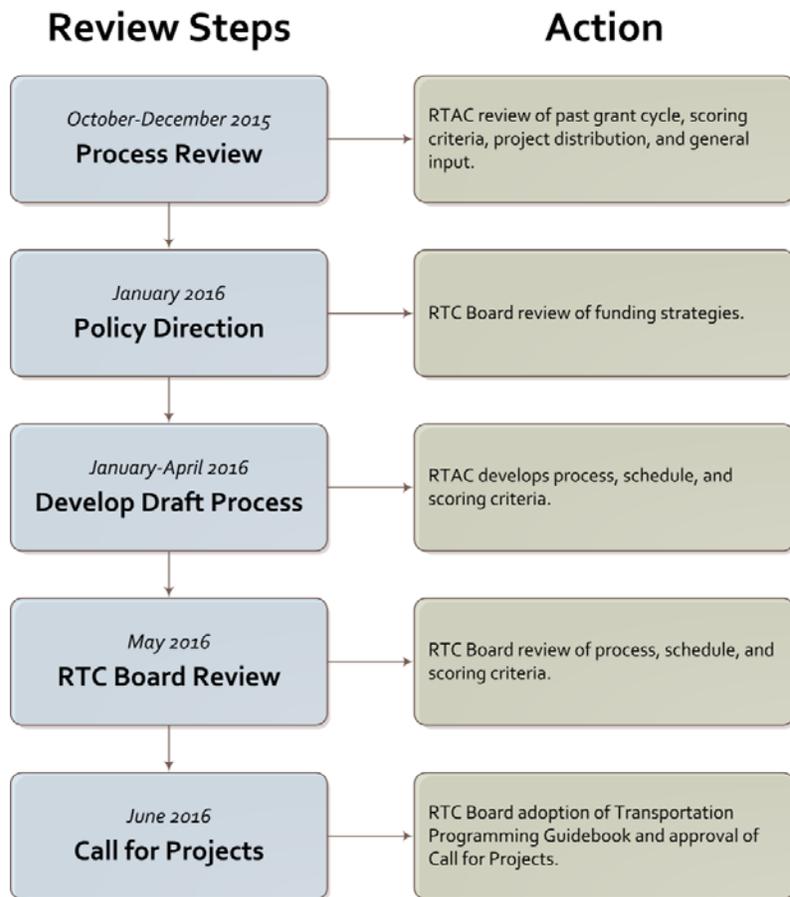


RTC, in consultation with member agencies, is responsible for selecting projects for the regional allocation of federal highway funds. This includes the regional allocation of Surface Transportation Program (STP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), and Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funds.

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the existing goals and process of the regional grant process and seeks RTC Board review of the funding strategies used to guide the selection of projects.

### REVIEW OF REGIONAL GRANT PROCESS

RTC has developed the following outline for the update to the 2017-2020 regional grant process. This process began with RTAC members meeting over the last few months to review last year’s regional grant process. In January 2016, RTC staff will be seeking RTC Board policy direction. RTAC will then develop a recommended process and scoring criteria, which will be brought back to the May RTC Board meeting. Based on RTC Board input, RTAC will make final recommendations for the regional grant process. This will result in a June adoption of the TIP Programming Guidebook and a call for projects.



## **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN GOALS**

Guiding the investment in the regional transportation system is the policy framework established in the current Regional Transportation Plan, 2014 (RTP). As stated in the RTP, the goals of the region are balanced to promote a vibrant community. Implementation of the RTP promotes goals which invest resources in the transportation system to enhance economic development, mobility, and safety. The RTP also promotes the efficient operations of the multimodal transportation system for the traveling public. Investments of the regional federal funds should continue to be diverse and aligned with implementing the goals of the RTP.

The goals of the RTP include:

**Economy:** Support economic development and community vitality.

**Safety and Security:** Ensure safety and security of the transportation system.

**Accessibility and Mobility:** Provide reliable mobility for personal travel and freight movement by addressing congestion and transportation system bottlenecks. Also, provide access to locations throughout the region while protecting the integrity of neighborhoods by discouraging cut-through traffic. These policy goals should be accomplished through development of an efficient, balanced, multi-modal regional transportation system.

**Management and Operations:** Maximize efficient management and operation of the transportation system through transportation demand management and transportation system management strategies.

**Environment:** Protect environmental quality and natural resources and promote energy efficiency.

**Vision and Values:** Ensure the RTP reflects community values to help build and sustain a healthy, livable, and prosperous community.

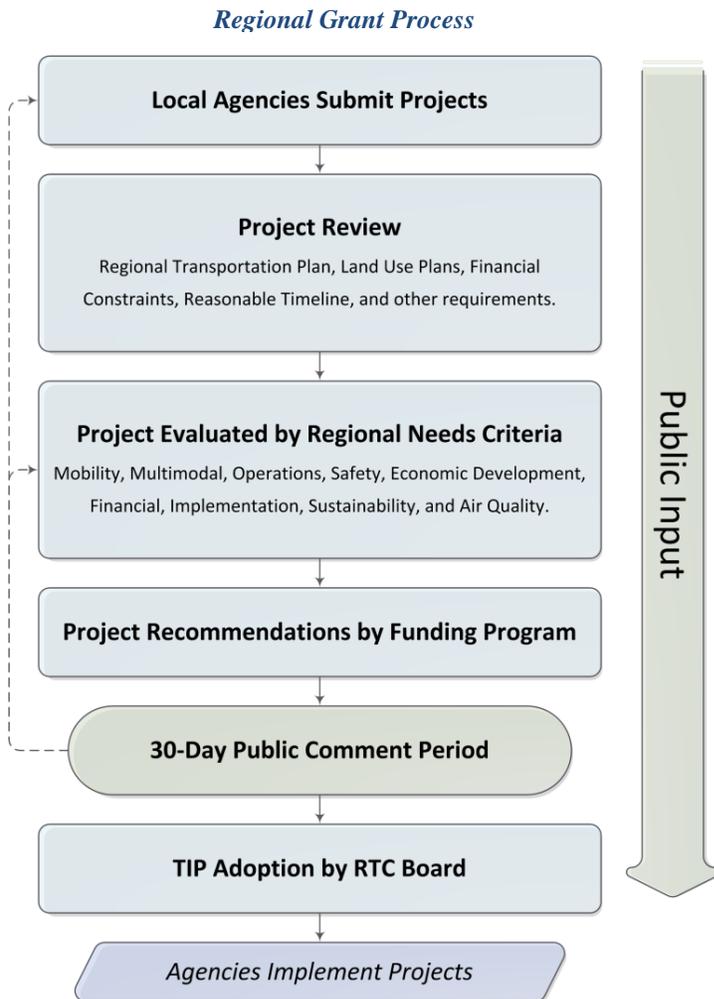
**Finance:** Provide a financially-viable and sustainable transportation system.

**Preservation:** Maintain and preserve the regional transportation system to ensure system investments are protected.

## **REGIONAL GRANT PROCESS AND SCORING CRITERIA**

Scoring criteria were developed to advance the goals of the RTP (ie. diverse versus singular project types), while providing objective metrics so that projects could be compared one to another in a project review process. The process begins with local agencies identifying and submitting their priority projects for consideration. Projects are reviewed for consistency with the RTP and then evaluated by regional scoring criteria. Projects are selected for funding based on individual project merits as established by the scoring evaluation results.

At the regional level, the scoring criteria are intermodal and multimodal. The scoring criteria support the Regional Transportation Plan and Congestion Management Process. The range of criteria, grouped by major category, is summarized in the following table:



*Urban STP/CMAQ Criteria*

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Mobility	20
Multimodal/Operations	15
Safety	20
Economic Development	20
Financial/Implementation	15
Sustainability/Air Quality	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*\*Air Quality points are tripled for CMAQ projects*

*Rural STP Criteria*

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Project Need	15
Safety	25
Road Condition	25
Economic Development	10
Financial/Implementation	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*TAP Criteria*

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Public Benefit	25
Connectivity	20
Accessibility/Equity	10
Safety	20
Financial/Readiness	15
Other	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**FUNDING STRATEGIES**

Since the need for transportation improvements exceed the available revenue, a competitive project selection process is conducted for the distribution of RTC’s regional federal funds. The overarching strategy is to implement the goals and policies of the Regional Transportation Plan. Specific funding strategies were developed to promote multi-modal outcomes and create agency leverage due to the limited grant funds available.

STP and CMAQ Strategies

**Leverage other grant sources.** One of the successes of the regional grant process lies in its flexibility; allowing local governments to create projects that fit their local needs and use regional federal funds to leverage other grants to complete priority projects.

**Implement Transportation Management and Operations improvements.** Transportation System Management and Operations strategies provide money-saving, multimodal solutions that relieve congestion and optimize infrastructure investments.

**Build multimodal urban arterials.** The urban areas of Clark County have grown rapidly, resulting in many urban areas being served by a rural character transportation system (ex. two-lane roadways with no sidewalks, bike lanes, street lights and storm drainage serving urbanized areas). Arterials built to urban standards provide an efficient, balanced, multimodal regional transportation system that improve modal options, safety, reduce congestion, and support economic development.

**No Preservation of transportation system.** Local agencies have the primary responsibility for maintaining the transportation system and regional federal funds will not be used for maintenance or preservation projects.

#### TAP Strategies

**Build bicycle and pedestrian projects.** There is a strong need for stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian projects that improve the multi-modal travel experience and benefit local communities.

#### **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

At the January RTC Board meeting, staff will review this memorandum and solicit Board input regarding the scope of the current Funding Strategies. The following question is posed for Board consideration: Do the current Funding Strategies align with the RTP and regional interests and guide the use of limited grant funds?