

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA) UPDATE

Background

Over the course of the summer months, concerns have been raised that nationally ARRA funds are not being spent quickly enough to stem job losses and reinvigorate the economy. In response to these concerns, Representative Oberstar, Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, recently sent a letter to States and MPOs requesting information on the status of ARRA funded transportation projects. The Texas Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the state's MPOs, is preparing the Texas response to the Chairman. Additionally, the Houston MPO sent a letter to the Houston congressional delegation with an update on the status of project lettings (attached).

In short, the State of Texas and the Houston region are on track in obligating transportation dollars. The state exceeded its June 30, 2009 deadline to obligate 50% of the state allocated ARRA funds. Statewide \$1.163 billion has been obligated, 52% of the total \$2.25 billion allocation for highway and bridge improvements for the State. Currently, \$454 million worth of projects are under contract with 3,507 jobs created and/or maintained.

Current Situation

Three highway projects were let in July:

- FM 1098 widening BS 290 to US 290 let for \$2.5M
- Gosling Rd construction Kuykendahl to FM 2920 let for \$1.6M
- FM 2004 widening and RR grade separation SH 288 to BS 288 let for \$18.4M

In August, anticipated lettings include:

- IH 10 reconstruction IH 45 to US 59 for \$27M
- BW 8 direct connectors at US 59N for \$50M
- FM 2978 grade separation at UPRR in Tomball for \$8.3M
- IH 10 rest area construction Chambers Co. for \$10.8M
- SH 288 at BW 8 Intersection Improvements for \$733K

TIGER Update:

In early July, TxDOT asked for MPO support in soliciting projects from agencies in the region that were applying for TIGER discretionary grants. TxDOT intended to review and evaluate submittals, ultimately selecting a list of projects that the State would submit to U.S. DOT. At its July 30, 2009 meeting, the Texas Transportation Commission declined to submit a statewide package of projects. Instead, the Commission instructed TxDOT to offer a letter of support to agencies seeking TxDOT's endorsement as part of their direct submittals to U.S. DOT. For more information, visit, http://www.txdot.gov/project_information/stimulus/tiger_application.htm

H-GAC will also provide a letter of support for projects that are included in the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) if requested by the sponsor. If a project is not in the RTP but is consistent with the goals of the RTP, a letter stating such will be provided. The deadline for submittal of TIGER grant applications to U.S. DOT is September 15, 2009.

Action Required

Information only