

**AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA) UPDATE
Roadway and Bridge Program**

Background

Under the provisions of the ARRA signed by the President on February 17, 2009, the State of Texas received a \$2.25 billion allocation for Roadways and Bridges with a \$150 million allocation for the Houston metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Subsequently, at its February meeting, the Transportation Policy Council approved a program of projects for the MPO allocation and gave its concurrence to a program of projects for statewide funding and selection by the Texas Transportation Commission. The TPC also approved a list of contingency projects for both the MPO and statewide lists should additional funding become available or one or more selected projects experience delays preventing the use of ARRA funds.

In the past two months, the TPC has approved ARRA funding for projects on both the State and the MPO contingency lists due to cost under-runs on projects that have been let to contract and the removal of SH 99, Segment E from the list of funded projects.

Current Situation

At its October meeting the TPC approved a list of local rehabilitation and maintenance projects for inclusion on the MPO contingency list. The 39 projects were approved in rank order and totaled \$64 million. The TPC added the Clinton Drive rehabilitation project as the first priority on the local rehabilitation and maintenance list bringing the total to \$69 million. Clinton Drive is a priority due to the urgency of the PM2.5 designation discussed at the October TPC meeting. See the attached letter from the MPO Director for more details on Clinton Drive.

The most recent estimate of available funding for the local rehabilitation projects, after Clinton Drive is funded, is \$9.2 million. TxDOT – Houston District hosted a meeting at its office on November 10, 2009 to discuss with local sponsors the requirements and timeline for submitting projects for funding consideration. In order to ensure timely environmental clearance, design plans must be received by the Houston and Beaumont Districts by December 1, 2009. Projects that qualify for a Blanket Categorical Exclusion for environmental review purposes are the ones most likely to receive a federal authorization to proceed by the March 1, 2009 deadline for ARRA obligations.

Action Required

For information only.

Clinton Drive Information

Because the project will be using stimulus funds, the Clinton Drive project needs to be let by March 1, 2010. This deadline suggests that the project plans should be submitted to TxDOT for review by December 15, 2009. The City of Houston will be sponsoring the Clinton Drive project, and collaborate closely with TxDOT to assure plan approval.

The TCEQ will host a public hearing on November 19, 2009 to discuss the PM 2.5 issues concerning the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria area. The meeting will be in Galena Park at the Alvin D. Baggett Community Center, 1302 Keene Street, at 1:00 pm. The public hearing will establish a comment period to receive “informal comments” on possible PM 2.5 recommendations.