

Eastern Federal Lands' Transportation Improvement Program

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PARK ROADS AND PARKWAYS PROGRAM (PRP)

Identified transportation projects to be funded under each funding category of the Park Roads and Parkways Program must be nominated through a call for projects and selected based on eligibility under the program and by priority, either nationwide or within the Region.

The Parks will nominate projects but the Region or Washington Support Office (WASO) will be responsible for selecting and prioritizing candidate projects. All projects utilizing FLHP funding must be submitted to the FHWA for approval. The selection processes for each Category are described as follows:

Category I: Resurfacing, Rehabilitation, Restoration (3R), and Reconstruction Projects (4R): Regions will call for and select projects on a maximum four-year cycle (3-years recommended). 4R projects shall be selected using the Choosing By Advantage (CBA) process and criteria. 3R projects are evaluated using these same broad criteria, but Regions may use other procedures other than CBA for prioritization. For more information relative to the CBA criteria visit http://www.nps.gov/transportation/roads/manual/appendix_d.htm.

For Category 1 projects, representatives from the Region, Federal Lands Highway Division (FLHD), and Parks will meet to form a selection committee to select and prioritize projects. Projects selected are summarized and forwarded to the Regional Director for approval. For eligibility guidelines visit http://www.nps.gov/transportation/roads/manual/revised_cat1.htm.

Category II, System Completion: The WASO will call for and select projects on a four-year cycle using CBA criteria. To complete congressionally authorized parkways, projects will be selected by the WASO based on prioritized projects, congressional interest, project scheduling, and availability of funds. The Parks, Regions and FLHDs will work together to nominate projects, develop, and update a five-year program and schedule of these projects, for use by the WASO for congressional inquiries, funding legislation, and planning.

Category III, Transportation Systems Projects: The WASO will call for and select planning, construction, or procurement projects on a four-year cycle using CBA criteria. Parks identify their transportation issues generated from General Management Plans, transportation planning, engineering studies or TEA-21 'Section 3039' transits need studies for the Parks requiring further study and analysis. Parks forward their project proposals to the corresponding Regions for regional approval. Regions prioritize the projects proposals and forward a selected number of project proposals to WASO for consideration. All project proposals are then evaluated service wide by using the CBA process and Alternative Transportation Program eligibility criteria by a committee consisting of Regional Federal Lands Highway Program Coordinators and

Washington office staff. For more information visit <http://www.nps.gov/transportation/alt/eval-plan.htm>

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

REFUGE ROADS PROGRAM (RRP)

23 USC 202 (e) and 204 (k) (3) provides guidance on criteria for selection of projects to be improved under the Refuge Roads Program. Projects are selected taking into consideration the following criteria:

- (1) The comprehensive conservation plan for each refuge;
- (2) The need for access as identified through land use planning;
- (3) The impact of land use planning on existing transportation facilities; and
- (4) The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966.

Since the transportation act requires funding to be eligible based upon the relative needs of the various refuges, the selection process favors project items that improve the condition rating factors that help establish the needs. These factors include the road condition rating which considers the number of miles of fair, poor, and failed (deficient) roads, and the bridge condition rating.

The basic eligibility requirements were established by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and are included in Title 23 - United States Code (23 USC). Section 204 of 23 USC requires that funds made available for refuge roads shall be used only to pay the cost of certain maintenance and improvement activities. Construction of new roads is not authorized by TEA-21. For more information visit the following Web page:
<http://refuges.fws.gov/roads/guidance/index.html>

The FWS Regional Offices are required to consider condition, congestion and safety in project selection, and identify any areas of specific concern to the national refuge roads coordinator. Projects related to human safety and welfare are given greater consideration. Regional Offices review all project submissions, develop five-year project lists and coordinate project proposals with the Federal Lands Highway Division Offices. The five-year lists are submitted to the Washington Office for review. The FWS provides the five-year list to the Federal Lands Highway Office for review and approval.

FOREST SERVICE

FOREST HIGHWAY PROGRAM (PFH)

The Forest Highway Program is managed through the "tri-party" partnership of the Federal Lands Highway Divisions (FLHD), State highway agency (SHA), and the Forest Service (FS). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is required to arrange and conduct annual program meetings with the FS and each SHA to jointly select the projects which will be included

in the programs for the current fiscal year and at least the next 4 years (23 CFR 660). Projects included in each year's program will be selected considering the following criteria:

- (1) The development, utilization, protection, and administration of the National Forest System (NFS) and its resources;
- (2) The enhancement of economic development at the local, regional, and national level, including tourism and recreational travel;
- (3) The continuity of the transportation network serving the NFS and its dependent communities;
- (4) The mobility of the users of the transportation network and the goods and services provided;
- (5) The improvement of the transportation network for economy of operation and maintenance and the safety of its users;
- (6) The protection and enhancement of the rural environment associated with the NFS and its resources; and
- (7) The results for FHs from the pavement, bridge, and safety management systems.

The recommended program will be prepared and approved by the FHWA with concurrence by the FS and the SHA. Following approval, the SHA will advise any other cooperators in the State of the projects included in the final program and shall include the approved program in the State's process for development of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. For projects located in metropolitan areas, the FHWA and the SHA will work with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to incorporate the approved program into the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program.

PUBLIC LANDS HIGHWAYS DISCRETIONARY PROGRAM (PLH)

Each year, a memorandum is sent from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Headquarters Office to the FHWA division offices requesting the submission of candidate projects for the following fiscal year's funding. The FHWA division offices provide this solicitation request to the State transportation departments, who are the only agencies that can submit candidates for this program under the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 202(b). The State transportation department coordinates with local and Federal agencies within their State to develop viable candidate projects. The State transportation department submits the candidate applications to the FHWA division office. After the division office has reviewed the submission and ensured that the submission and all applications meet the requirements, they send the applications to the Office of Program Administration in Headquarters. The candidate project applications are reviewed and evaluated by the Office of Program Administration and an allocation plan is prepared for presentation of the candidate projects to the Office of the Federal Highway Administrator, where the final selection of projects for funding is made. Note that, often Congress specifies in the legislative process that funding be designated for specific

projects. This congressional intent is honored provided that the designated projects meet the statutory eligibility criteria for the program. For more information relative to the selection criteria visit the FHWA's website at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/discretionary/012304a3.htm>

For additional information, please contact Satvinder Sandhu, Community Planner at 571-434-1542 or Nastaran Saadatmand at 703-404-6289. You may submit your comments by email to EFLHD.TIP@fhwa.dot.gov

