WSDOT Runs Down Stimulus News

Local News

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Washington State received $65 million in the nationwide competition for $1.5 billion in TIGER grants for surface transportation projects on Wednesday, February 17. The grants will provide $30 million for Seattle’s Mercer Street project and $35 million for WSDOT’s North Spokane Corridor project.

Washington State is closing in on the 100% obligation target. All of the WSDOT highway stimulus funds have been obligated and 99% of local stimulus funds have been obligated. States that have obligated all stimulus funds by March 2, 2010, will become eligible to receive funds from states that do not meet the deadline. WSDOT advertised the first four Tier 3 projects and is continuing to advance additional projects for construction.

This week by the numbers (project dollars in millions)

Individual highway projects

State

Local

Total

Notes

Total highway funds

$340

$152

$492

Obligated funds

$340 (100%)

$150.5 (99%)

$490.5 (99%)

All funds must be obligated by March 2, 2010

Projects certified

47 (100%)

159 (100%)

206 (100%)

Two new individual projects certified this month

Projects obligated

47 (100%)

158 (99%)

205 (99%)

FHWA has obligated some or all funds for the projects

Project delivery to date

Operationally complete

21 (45%)

70 (44%)

91 (44%)

Two projects reported complete this edition

Awarded/underway1

34 (72%)

143 (90%)

177 (86%)

Includes completed projects

Advertised

43 (91%)

152 (94%)

195 (91%)

Includes completed and awarded projects

Certified, awaiting advertisment

4 (8%)

7 (5%)

11 (5%)

These projects, including several receiving surplus funds, are planned for upcoming advertisement.

Safety funding buckets ($12 stimulus)

Rumble

Strips

Cable

median

barrier

Total

Notes

Completed

15

2

17

State stimulus funds only

Awarded

17

7

24

Includes completed projects

Advertised

28

11

39

Includes completed and awarded projects

Transit projects

Large

urban

Small

urban

Nonurban/

rural

State total

Percent of total $179 awarded

97%

97%

100%

98%

Includes Washington State Ferries projects

Number of Transit projects obligated

33 of 35

18 of 19

20 of 20

52 of 55

FTA counts all rural projects as one project

December employment

State

Local

Total

Notes

Payroll

$1.7

$3.5

$5.3

for December

Cumulatively, $51.9 million in payroll to date

Average wage is $38 per hour

Hours

38,751

92,953

132,704

for December

Employees have worked 1,362,759 hours to date

FTEs

224

543

767

for December

FTE = 173 hours per month

Employees

960

2,648

3,608

for December

Note: Not a count of unique employees

1 This includes one state project that has stimulus funding authorized for pre-construction and is currently under way.

Key issues: State

Washington State received $65 million in Recovery Act TIGER grants – Senator Patty Murray and Governor Chris Gregoire announced Washington State received $65 million in stimulus funds that were awarded February 17 through a national $1.5 billion competitive grant process. The North Spokane Corridor grant valued at $35 million will complete the southbound lanes for 3.7 miles between Francis Avenue and Farwell Road. The Seattle Mercer Street grant valued at $30 million will help fund a city project to address a major bottleneck. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program awarded 51 grants for surface transportation improvements nationwide on February 17, the anniversary of the Recovery Act’s passage. The U.S. DOT received 1,380 applications seeking $56.5 billion, including 49 applications totaling almost $1.66 billion from Washington.

The WSDOT Spokane project is one of only four projects nationwide fully funded by the Recovery Act TIGER grants.

The applications provide more detail on the Seattle and WSDOT projects.

WSDOT had also submitted applications for the SR 520 Bridge Replacement ($300 million) and the Columbia River Crossing ($147) million.

The WSDOT federal issues blog features a refresher on the applications.

Washington prepares for March 2 obligation target – WSDOT and local governments have obligated $490 million of $492 million in Recovery Act highway funds. An obligation is a commitment—the Federal government’s promise to pay the State for the Federal share of a project’s eligible cost. This commitment occurs when the project is approved by the Federal Highway Administration and the accompanying project agreement is executed. States must obligate 100% of Recovery Act funds by March 2 or lose funds to other states that meet the requirement. Due to favorable bids, stimulus projects are averaging well under their anticipated budgets. Surplus funds originally obligated to projects are being used to deliver additional projects.

Upon federal authorization of the Bellingham – Bakerview & Hannegan/Woburn project, Washington will have met the 100% obligation requirement.

Next employment reports due this week – WSDOT will submit employment reports for the month of January later this week to the Federal Highway Administration and House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Through December, employees on state and local projects receiving Recovery Act highway funds have worked over 1,360,000 hours. The full data set is available at WSDOT’s stimulus employment webpage. Due to winter weather and project completions this fall, payroll for the months of November and December have declined from a high in October, when employees worked 284,000 hours earning $10.9 million.

Four Tier 3 projects advertised – WSDOT advertised the first four Tier 3 projects using surplus stimulus funds and three more projects are planned for advertisements. WSDOT advertised the US 195/Idaho State Line to Colton – Paving project on February 8. On February 16, WSDOT advertised the SR 26/Royal City East, US 97/Okanogan to Riverside, and US 97/Pateros

South chip seal projects. The seven Tier 3 projects received $12.3 million in Recovery Act funds due to low bids on the initial Tier 1 and Tier 2 project lists.

Two local Recovery Act projects awarded –

Poulsbo – Viking Ave Phase 3A
Mountlake Terrace – 230th Street Reconstruction

Three local projects advertised –

Port of Pasco – Intermodal Rail Project Phase 5
University Place – Intermodal Transit Phase 2
Rockford – First/Emma Street Sidewalks

Key issues: National
Almost 7,000 FHWA projects totaling $16.8 billion under way – The Federal Highway Administration has obligated over $23.8 billion to 10,978 projects as of January 29, or 89% of $26.8 billion in Recovery Act highway funds. Of those projects, 6,950, costing $16.8 billion are under way, and almost $6 billion has been spent as of January 29.

House T & I Committee plans one year progress report hearing on Recovery Act – On February 23, the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will hold a hearing to review the one-year progress report on Recovery Act transportation and infrastructure investments. It will be the full committee’s sixth review of stimulus project performance since the Recovery Act was signed into law in February 2009. Snow delayed the hearing originally scheduled for February 10.

The agenda includes testimony from Deputy Transportation Secretary John D. Porcari and Amtrak President and CEO Joseph H. Boardman.

Highlight of the week
Amtrak Cascades provides status report

Amtrak *Cascades* wrapped up its 10th anniversary year with continued growth in ridership and improvement in on-time performance. A total of 761,610 passengers rode Amtrak Cascades in 2009 and on-time performance improved by 8 %.

WSDOT this week released the Amtrak *Cascades* 2009 Performance Report, which is available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/Freight/publications. The Amtrak *Cascades* 2009 Performance Report is an annual summary of ridership, on-time reliability, operating costs and revenue for the service, which is sponsored by Washington State in partnership with Amtrak and the state of Oregon.

“We see passenger rail as a viable alternative available to travelers up and down the I-5 corridor, which is why Washington has invested more than $331 million in passenger rail since 1994,” said Paula Hammond, Washington Transportation Secretary. “With our recent Recovery Act funding award of $590 million, we will offer increased travel options and improved reliability.”

Ridership for 2009 was up 12.5 % over 2007, just a few points below 2008’s record levels. In August, a second daily service to Vancouver, B.C. began which contributed to additional ridership growth. Amtrak *Cascades* improved its on-time reliability averaging nearly 72 % for the year. This is a significant improvement towards the performance goal of 80 % or higher.

Important dates

February 20: Next performance report due to T & I Committee

February 23: House T & I Committee holds next Recovery Act hearing

March 2: Deadline for obligating federal highway funds

March 5: Deadline for obligating federal transit funds

April 10: Third quarterly performance report due to OMB

Websites of interest

WSDOT ARRA website: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/funding/stimulus

Washington recovery website: http://www.recovery.wa.gov/

Federal recovery website: http://www.recovery.gov/

FHWA recovery website: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/economicrecovery/index.htm

Federal Transit Administration recovery website: www.fta.dot.gov/recovery

Federal Rail Administration recovery website: http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/2153

Federal Aviation Administration recovery website: http://www.faa.gov/recovery

OMB recovery website: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recovery_default/