

New Starts Bi-Weekly Briefing – July 30, 2009

Notes: Bring scorecard to each meeting.

TRO-1, TRO-2, TRO-5, TRO-6, TRO-8, TRO-9, and TRO-10 participated via video conference or teleconference.

Houston, North and Southeast Corridors

- FTA held a call with the FMO today. The FMO stated that the majority of financial concerns have been addressed.
- The updated financial plans will be reviewed.
- NEXT STEPS/ACTION ITEMS:
 - TPE plans to circulate the final design (FD) packages to TCC, TBP, and TPM next week.
 - Staff goal is to get the packages to the Administrator by August 5th.

New Jersey, Northern Branch

- This is not a New Starts project, but a couple of correspondences are associated with it.
- The sponsor announced they will not apply for New Starts funds. Consequently, they will not be eligible for a grant so the Section 5309 grant from 2006 will lapse.
- Does FTA want to include any language to the letter about adding discretionary funds? No.
- The letter should note that FTA understands the project has changed and that light rail is now proposed.
- We will also remind the sponsor that a financial plan will be needed.
- FTA will not refer to the earmark since we were not asked about it.
- The letter will indicate that FTA looks forward to processing \$0.492 million for environmental work.

Detroit, Transit Option Growth Strategy

- On June 12th, the Detroit Department of Transportation sent a letter to the Administrator for preliminary engineering (PE) approval and issuance of a Notice of Intent for environmental work.
- TRO-5 drafted two distinct letters. One letter indicates that the grantee is not ready to enter PE and notes technical work that must be done. This letter would come from the Administrator.
- TRO-5 sent a letter to DDOT dated July 22nd.
- A Notice of Intent can not be issued until there is clarity about the project alignment.
- An explanation is needed about the distinction between the privately and publicly funded portions. FTA acknowledges that there is private participation.
- Will the grantee be able to implement a federal project? It can not given the current situation.
- TPM stated that technical and financial system reviews would be needed.

- A business group wants to construct an approximately three-mile segment. Then, the City wants to use that segment as local match for a larger project. Much of the ridership would come from the privately funded segment.
- Can FTA accept the private support as local match or expedite the project's processes?
- For now, DDOT has only committed to the portion of the project within the city limits.
- There might be language in legislation that could override concerns about New Starts requirements.
- The Region noted that TCC had given them advice about an Americans with Disabilities Act issue for PACE, which is implementing CTA's paratransit service.
- NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:
 - TOA will review the draft letter.

Draper, Transit Corridor

- The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) hopes to request preliminary engineering (PE) approval this fall. The request would include a New Starts share of 80 percent.
- The memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the program of projects was rescinded last year.
- Even without the MOU, UTA continues to follow MOU provisions.
- The total cost of the program of projects is \$2.8 billion. The projected cost for Draper is \$262.0 million.
- UTA hopes the project will be a funding candidate for FY 2011.

Portland, Streetcar Loop

- The project construction grant agreement package is with OST and OMB. Most sign-offs have been completed.
- FTA still needs to send the package to Congress tomorrow for the 60-day review.
- NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:
 - The Administrator and Deputy Administrator will go to OST's Executive Secretary and Legal Counsel's offices to encourage quick concurrences.

Honolulu

- A PE request was received during the first week of May.
- All project reviews, except the financial plan, have been completed.
- FTA needs to indicate whether assumptions are okay.
- A new financial plan would take 30-40 days to complete.
- The New Starts share is now \$1.55 billion; it was \$1.2 billion.
- TPE has prepared a memorandum about the project and potential actions. The document can be sent to TOA tomorrow.
- NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:
 - The mayor will visit Headquarters on August 4th. Financial issues can be discussed at that meeting.

Contingent Commitment Authority

- Is there \$3.0 billion or \$2.6 billion in contingent commitment authority? Is there enough money to fund the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project?
- The range of contingent commitment authority is \$2.7-\$3.0 billion.
- Possible demand for the funds could come from the ARC, St.Paul-Minneapolis Central Corridor, Hartford Busway, San Francisco, Denver East, Denver Gold Line, and possibly Draper projects.
- TRO-2 asked if the early systems work agreement for ARC will soon be signed. TOA noted that an event might be held on August 14th.