

New Starts Bi-Weekly Briefing – October 21, 2010

Notes: Bring scorecard to each meeting.

TRO-2, TRO-5, TRO-9, and TRO-10 participated via teleconference.

Honolulu

- A construction staging yard will be needed, but this was not evaluated in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The yard will be a 30-acre site at the western end of the alignment.
- FTA has not signed the Record of Decision (ROD).
- The City says it does not have control regarding the location of the yard since the contractor has that responsibility. This is not part of a design-build contract.
- If the contractor is being paid with federal dollars, then NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) still applies.
- Documents had not explicitly noted that such a large facility would have been needed or that even a pre-cast yard would be needed.
- If a park-and-ride site or any site already evaluated in the FEIS is selected for the construction staging yard, then the current document is okay.
- Space will be needed for four phases.
- Staff proposed three options.
 - Option One: Review Two or More Potential Precast Yard Sites Prior to the ROD
 - Option Two: Review of One Selected Site Prior to the ROD
 - Option Three: Review of Selected Site After the ROD
- Staff noted that FTA does not sign a ROD knowing that a supplemental environmental document is needed. Evaluate all reasonably foreseeable impacts.
- **NEXT STEPS/ACTION ITEMS:**
 - Based on the discussion, Option Two was recommended.
 - TRO-9 will talk offline about how to communicate the decision to the City.

Vancouver, Washington – Columbia River Crossing

- FTA has received updated information. The proposed New Starts amount has increased from \$750.0 million to \$850.0 million.
- Without the legislative language, the New Starts share would equal 91 percent.
- How will FTA consider a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) that might not meet the statutory limit of 80 percent New Starts share?
- **NEXT STEPS/ACTION ITEMS:**
 - TCC needs to offer a legal opinion.
 - For now, consider putting warning language in the Annual Report.
 - Maybe the share issue should be discussed later when there will be a better idea about the amount of New Starts funds available.

Portland, Milwaukie LRT

- TriMet has proposed scope changes since less New Starts funds than desired will be available.
- They plan to have the ROD signed in December and receive final design approval in February.
- TriMet will want to have a Letter of No Prejudice (LONP) approved as soon as the ROD is signed in December. The LONP request will pertain to work in the water during the fish window.
- **NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:**
 - The Administrator is willing to consider the issue of approving an LONP prior to approving final design.

St. Paul-Minneapolis, Central Corridor LRT

- The Metropolitan Council assumes internal borrowing to finance delays in receipt of funding from state, regional, and local funding partners. Yet, the cash flow projection demonstrates that sufficient cash balances will be available through the construction period.
- They seek reimbursement through the anticipated FFGA.
- No one could recall that FTA approved of doing what the Metropolitan Council requests regarding reimbursement.
- Should FTA force them to remove the charges?
- Our financial contractor does not see merit in their proposal.
- **NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:**
 - TRO-05 will ask follow-up questions. FTA needs to be sure that the grantee needs to borrow the money?

El Paso, Mesa Corridor BRT

- Project Development approval of this project is expected to occur soon.

Urban Circulator

- TPE has talked with TCC about how to proceed.
- Do we want to change the process from exempt process to regular grant process? TPE will look at regulations to see if exempt projects have to be in preliminary engineering or final design.
- TPE mentioned that TCC seems to think there is some flexibility.
- Streamlining could add a burden to Regions by needing to carefully word grants.
- TPM said they can offer some PMO resources.
- Grantees should adhere to existing federal regulations like the ADA.
- **NEXT STEPS/ACTION ITEMS:**
 - We need to chart what happened with Cincinnati, Fort Worth, and Dallas. For BART-Airport, we did a combined PE and FD process.
 - Prepare a Federal Register Notice and indicate that we propose to/will suspend our traditional PE and FD phases, but add some structure to the process.