



# Local Highway Technical Assistance Council

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Lance Holmstrom, M.U.P.  
Local Highway Administrator

January 22, 2010

RE: Federal Stimulus and LHTAC Update

Dear Local Highway Official:

## Stimulus Overview

I have been remiss in providing sponsors an overall status report on LHTAC's progress in advancing local Federal Stimulus projects. We have been corresponding with the individual sponsors and their consultants to execute agreements, negotiate work scopes, and finalize contracts, but a broad overview may be helpful.

We have been incredibly busy and I am pleased to report that LHTAC, with the help of our consulting engineering partners, and ITD, have successfully completed the first 24 stimulus projects funded through Title 12 of the American Recovery and Revitalization Act of 2009 (ARRA). This was accomplished in less than 7 months from start to finish and on top of our regular Federal-aid work load. These projects had to comply with all Federal-aid regulations, and it is **an unprecedented achievement**. Our entire staff worked tirelessly to meet this ambitious deadline, but Dan Coonce, Deputy Federal-aid Manager and Vicki Courtois, Federal-aid Administrative Assistant deserve special recognition for their long hours and dedication to accomplish this difficult task. LHTAC staff have arrived early, stayed late, and worked weekends to make sure this effort was successful. For perspective, we normally bring 8-10 Federal-aid projects to construction each year.

We are in the process of advancing an **additional 31 projects** funded through Title 14, otherwise known as the Governor's Discretionary Program. (See attached list of projects for both Title 12 and Title 14 projects) All agreements and contracts have been executed, engineering consultants have received a notice to proceed and work is well on its way.

Starting Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, you can look on our web page to see the progress of your Governor's Discretionary project using the following link: <http://lhtac.org/programs/stimulus/>. This information will be updated weekly. Our goal is that all projects will be "shovel ready" in order to advertise by April/May of this year and constructed this summer/fall. Contact us if you have questions about your particular project or about the process and timelines.

## Construction Engineering and Inspection

Some of you have received letters from the ITD District Engineer (District 1 and District 3) stating that they will not be able to handle the construction engineering for local projects due to work load. This may have confused you. Let me be clear. The Idaho Transportation Department is legally required to ensure that Federal-aid money is spent according to Federal law, including overseeing construction projects. That responsibility will not change.

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However, LHTAC is currently developing an agreement with ITD to take over substantial responsibility for what is known as construction engineering and inspection for local stimulus projects and possibly some regular local Federal-aid projects. With the concurrence of the Council, I have recently hired a civil engineer, Todd Bartolome, with more than 28 years of experience in this field. He has both ITD and private consulting experience working on some of the largest ITD construction transportation projects delivered in the last 10 years.

## **Stimulus Round 2**

There is a possibility that Congress will pass a second stimulus bill. A bill has actually passed in the House of Representatives, and a similar, but slightly different bill is awaiting consideration by the Senate.

The House bill allocates the same amount of funds to transportation as the 2009 ARRA. The Senate bill provides less money for transportation infrastructure. In the House bill, approximately \$11.5 million dollars would be made available for local rural highway jurisdictions based on ITD Board policy. As was the case last year, if this legislation is approved, we will not know the final dollar amount, requirements and timelines until the House and Senate bills have gone through conference committee to reconcile differences.

The House bill specifies that 50% of the funds must be awarded within 90 days from receipt of the money. This means that approximately \$6 million dollars of local rural projects would need to be advertised within 90 days of receipt of Federal stimulus money.

LHTAC, in cooperation with ITD will be adding 19 projects to the State Transportation Improvement Program within the next few weeks. These are projects that local highway jurisdictions elected to make ready using their own funds. (See attached list of Local Provisional Projects) If the requirement to award 50% of local funds within 90 days of receipt of Federal stimulus money is retained, these projects will be our only chance to share in these funds. If additional money became available through costs savings or for other reasons, the Council gave priority to provisional projects in District 3, 4, and 6 if they could get projects ready (Districts 1, 2 and 5 initially received an additional project through a lottery). After that, projects will be funded based on readiness. If all projects are ready, we would anticipate funding projects on an alternating basis between Districts until all funds are expended based on the established \$500,000 dollar cap.

The remaining 50% of the Federal Stimulus funds would have a longer period to complete the engineering process. Rather than calling for additional applications, it is likely that the projects submitted last year, but not funded in either the first round, or through Governor's Discretionary funds would be funded. This decision will be up to the Council.

At this time it is not known if there will be a Governor's Discretionary provision in a new stimulus bill, and if so, how the Governor will elect to use those funds.

## **Other Activities**

LHTAC continues to strive to assist all local highway jurisdictions in Idaho on a variety of other critical activities. Our top priorities include:

- Explaining local funding needs to the Governor's Funding Task Force and Idaho Legislature.
- Developing better practices by providing classes and training on key subjects through our Technology Transfer Center (T2 Center)

- Reinstating and managing the local road inventory program.
- Assisting local highway jurisdictions in developing pavement management systems.
- Providing funding through our Local Rural Highway Investment Program.
- Managing Federal-aid programs for rural highway jurisdictions.
- Providing technical assistance and research on transportation topics (We recently completed the "Local Financial Needs Study")
- Encouraging ITD to provide funding to develop a local safety improvement program

Please remember we are at your service! We can be contacted free of charge at 1 (800) 259-6841. No question is too small!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lance Holmstrom". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lance Holmstrom, M.U.P.  
Local Highway Administrator  
Local Highway Technical Assistance Council