

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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TO: Transit & Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC)
FROM: Ann Rajewski, Chairperson
DATE: May 6, 2011
RE: Fiscal Year 2011 FTA Discretionary Grants

In 2010, the FTA released six Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA) between April 13, 2010 and May 28, 2010. Many of these grants required that rural transit projects or projects under a specified dollar amount be submitted in a consolidated application by the States. Since Congress has decided not to earmark in FY 2011 and only recently passed a budget for the remainder of FY 2011, it is likely, but not guaranteed, that a similar situation will occur this year.

In February CDOT and CASTA made a joint visit to DC and while there visited the FTA to discuss the discretionary grant process, how we could make the process less arduous and present more fundable applications. The FTA encouraged CDOT to prioritize the projects that applied as part of a consolidated application. In order to help the Division of Transit & Rail to complete this task a draft list of prioritization guidelines (attached) is being sent to the various stake holders and interest groups. The TRAC will make recommendations to the Transit & Intermodal Committee on this important process.

The other groups that will give input to the TRAC include:

- Division of Transit & Rail staff
- CASTA Board of Directors
- Transit & Intermodal Committee
- STAC

In 2010 CASTA and CDOT worked together to gather information needed for a statewide consolidated application, but the effort suffered from the short deadlines and inadequate detailed reviews of content. It is the intent of CASTA and CDOT to collect information before issuance of NOFAs, better determine which requests fit into which NOFAs, to review the applications more closely for adequacy of content and consistency, and to submit the most competitive package of projects. To this end CASTA has hired a consultant to begin the process in hopes of getting much of the work done before the first NOFA is released which will likely to happen the second or third week of May.

Guideline Discussion Starters

Capital Prioritization (Rolling Stock, Facilities, Related Equipment)

Fleet Assessment:

Size of fleet

Age of vehicles

Mileage

Spare ratio (how many buses you have that aren't getting used). What is the optimum number for various types of agencies?

Overall condition of fleet (stored outside, driven in harsh environments)?

If this is expansion fleet is there a business plan in place to support the growth?

Prioritization:

- Replacement vs. Expansion
- Local Service vs. Intercity
- Get all fleets to a passable level first or help all fleets maintain their capital replacement plan (need vs. good repair)

Facility Project Assessment:

Is there the capacity to finish facility if this funding doesn't pay for the entire project?

How old is your existing facility?

What is your current capacity? Is your ridership growing, maintaining or shrinking?

How much of your fleet is stored indoors?

Where in the process is your project-concept, 30% design, shovel ready?

Industry standard for size/cost of facility based on agency size?

Prioritization:

- Level of need - take care of worst or help maintain agencies who are planning ahead
- Funding early steps of project vs. finishing projects
- Local benefit vs. regional benefit
- Project benefits-What is most important?
 - Safety
 - Preserve capital
 - Maintain service levels
 - Expand service levels
 - Other community benefits
- Cheapest possible construction vs. innovation or sustainability

Related Equipment: (software, bus stops, fare boxes, etc.)

What benefit will this equipment provide (efficiency, cost savings, passenger benefit, etc)?

Prioritization:

Maintenance vs. benefit

Efficiency, cost savings vs. Passenger comfort/convenience