MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Policy Board
FROM: Paul Brewster
DATE: September 2, 2020
SUBJECT: 2020 Rural Community Support Program Call for Projects Process Kickoff Discussion

PURPOSE
To review and provide direction on the Rural Community Support Program Call for Projects Process.

Summary:
• This fall, TRPC will convene a Call for Projects limited to South County Communities and Tribes.
• $550,000 will be awarded to eligible transportation grant proposals for calendar years 2022 through 2025.
• This memorandum outlines the process, eligibility requirements, and timeline.
• Staff will present the process and seek policy makers’ direction on funding priorities, match requirements, and project eligibility on September 4, 2020.
• On September 9, the Transportation Policy Board will craft a process recommendation for the Council’s consideration.
• The Council is scheduled to take action on the Call for Projects on October 2, 2020.

REQUESTED ACTION
Craft a Rural Community Support Program Call for Projects Process recommendation for the Council’s consideration.
BACKGROUND
Thurston Regional Planning Council’s (TRPC) 2020 Regional Federal Transportation Call for Projects Process, approved in February, includes a six percent Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) set aside to convene a second call for projects for the Town of Bucoda, the cities of Rainier and Tenino, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation. The Council approved a separate process with details to be determined by the fall. TRPC staff met with Thurston County Public Works and the potential applicants to identify a process that is agreeable to all parties. This memorandum outlines a draft process for the Board’s consideration.

This grant opportunity is known as the Rural Community Support Program (RCSP). Tribes and rural incorporated communities have unfunded priority transportation projects. The program helps communities overcome some of the barriers associated with the federal transportation grant program requirements, including the need for more robust levels of staffing and local revenue matching capacity. The program enables applicants to submit proposals alongside other communities that share similar competitive disadvantages. The region has issued similar RCSP calls for projects in the past. Although the process details varied slightly for each funding cycle, the general concept for this unique grant program remains the same.

- Thurston County, in exchange for a federal grant award (awarded in July 2020), allocates county revenue for community transportation projects that are consistent with regional transportation priorities.
- Thurston County reserves a portion of the set aside to establish and manage interlocal agreements and to process invoices to disburse the grant funds to the communities.
- TRPC leads the Call for Projects Process, assists the communities with the application procedures, reviews eligible proposals, and selects proposals for grant awards.

The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) will review the process on September 9 and consider a process recommendation for the Council’s consideration. The Council is scheduled to finalize the process and take action on October 2. The proposed details and timeline for the 2020 RCSP Call for Projects are outlined below. The items labeled "Decision" require the Boards' direction.

2020 RCSP Call for Projects
- **Total Funding Available:** $550,000
- **Funding Cycle:** 2022-2025 (first half of funding to become available in 2022, second half expected in 2023).
- **Eligible Applicants:** Town of Bucoda, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, City of Rainier, City of Tenino, and the Nisqually Indian Tribe.
- **Decision:** Match Requirement: Options: 1) No match; 2) Five percent; or 3) Ten percent.
- **Decision:** Funding Priorities: Safety, system preservation, and multimodal efficiency projects that support the goals and policies of the 2045 Thurston Regional Transportation Plan.
- **Decision:** Eligible Project Types: Design and construction projects and transportation programs that are consistent with federal Surface Transportation Block Grant and Transportation Alternatives grant programs. Projects are not limited to federally classified routes and may be located on local roads. Project examples include:
  - Construction, reconstruction, preservation, resurfacing, restoration, or operational improvements of roads, bridges, and tunnels (projects located on state routes must be coordinated with the Washington State Department of Transportation)
  - Intersection operational improvements
  - Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
  - Bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, street crossing improvements, shared use trails, and related trail amenities (per policy maker approval)
  - Modification of sidewalks to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act
  - R/T transit stop improvements
  - Safe Routes to School programs
  - Roadway safety projects, hazard eliminations, railway/highway grade crossings
  - Environmental mitigation
• **Pre-Application Submission Meetings:** September 1-30 (TRPC and County staff prescreen proposals and offer technical assistance and application development)
• **Application Window:** October 5 to October 30 with submittals due by October 30, 5 p.m. PST
• **Technical Advisory Committee Review:** November 5
• **Public Comment Period:** November 9-20
• **Transportation Policy Board Review and Funding Recommendation:** November 11
• **Thurston Regional Planning Council Review and Project Selection:** December 4
• **Award letters distributed:** December 18