Washington State Department of Transportation
Paula J. Hammond, P.E.
Secretary of Transportation

Transportation Building
310 Maple Park Avenue S.E.
P.O. Box 47300
Olympia, WA 98504-7300

360-705-7000
TTY: 1-800-833-6388
www.wsdot.wa.gov

November 30, 2011

The Honorable Mary Margaret Haugen
Chair
Senate Transportation Committee
PO Box 40410
Olympia, WA 98504-0410

The Honorable Judy Clibborn
Chair
House Transportation Committee
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

The Honorable Curtis King
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Transportation Committee
PO Box 40414
Olympia, WA 98504-0414

The Honorable Mike Armstrong
Ranking Minority Member
House Transportation Committee
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Re: Main Street Highways Report

Dear Senator Haugen, Senator King, Representative Clibborn, and Representative Armstrong;

As required by Chapter 367, Section 310(10), Laws of 2011 (2011-13 Transportation budget), the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is pleased to forward the Main Street Highways Report, outlining a proposed grant program that includes project selection and ranking methods, criteria consistent with the Complete Streets Bill (ESHB1071) and a plan for soliciting proposals.

Recognizing that improvements to these main street highways and comparable locations on local streets are critical to community economic development in cities and towns across the state, this program is designed to provide funds for transportation improvements that support economic vitality, accommodate infill, and connect housing and employment in order to improve the health and safety of Washington residents.

To develop this program proposal, WSDOT worked through the summer and fall of 2011 with interested agencies and organizations including: Association of Washington Cities, Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Transportation Choices Coalition, Bicycle Alliance of Washington, Department of Commerce, Cascade Bicycle Club, Feet First, Washington State Transportation Commission, Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition, and individual Cities, Counties, Tribal Nations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and transit agencies.

WSDOT has heard from citizens, downtown business owners and organizations, as well as many of the local agencies on how crucial this type of grant program is in addressing their community transportation needs and supporting community economic vitality.

If you have any questions about the content of this report, please feel free to contact me at 360.705.7871.

Sincerely,

Kathleen B. Davis
Director
Highways & Local Programs Division

Washington State
Department of Transportation

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) 2012 Report to the Joint Transportation Committee

Main Street Highways Report per 2011-13 Transportation Budget Chapter 367, Section 310(10)
December 1, 2011

The objective of this report to the Joint Transportation Committee is to outline a proposed grant program that includes a proposed project selection and ranking method, criteria to be considered consistent with the Complete Streets Bill (Chapter 257, Laws of 2011 (ESHB 1071)), and a plan for soliciting proposals consistent with the 2011-13 Transportation Budget Proviso, Section 310 (10).

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has worked with interested agencies and organizations through the summer and fall of 2011 to draft a grant program proposal. The program would improve conditions for all users on main street highways, city streets that also serve as state highways, as well as comparable locations on local streets.

Section I. Background

The 2011 Transportation Budget Proviso in Section 310(10) was the result of findings from recent research conducted by WSDOT and the University of Washington on main street highways and efforts by multi-modal transportation advocacy, healthy communities organizations, and local government organizations.

The objectives of the research were to explore community transportation design policy to improve collaboration when city streets in community centers also serve as state highways, determine successful approaches to meet the federal requirements for visioning set forth in SAFETEA-LU [23USC135(f)(3)(B)(ii)], find ways to assist local agencies in improving their grant applications to WSDOT, identify new ways to translate context sensitive design guidance into practice, and support staff and organizational development by connecting the architecture and transportation engineering professions. [1]

In 2011, the Washington State Legislature also passed the Complete Streets Bill, referenced in the Transportation Budget Proviso in Section 310(10). Due to similar goals of improving conditions for all users on main street highways and comparable locations on local streets, a single, competitive grant program for both is described in this report.

[1] Nicholls, Jim, *State Highways as Main Streets: A Study of Community Design and Visioning*, WA-RD 733.1 http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/research/reports/fullreports/733.1.pdf

Section II. Proposed Program Outline

The purpose of this program is to encourage street designs that safely and effectively meet the needs of all users including bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, and public transportation users. The program is also intended to protect and preserve community environment and character.

Recognizing that improvements to these main street highways and comparable locations on local streets are critical to community economic development in cities and towns across the state, this program is designed to provide funds for transportation improvements that support economic vitality, accommodate infill, and connect housing and employment in order to improve the health and safety of Washington residents.

This section provides details for a grant program as specified in the Main Street Highways Proviso including proposed project selection and ranking methods, criteria to be considered, and a plan for soliciting project proposals.

Examples of Eligible Projects

Priority will be given to projects with strong community support established through an outreach process to a broad coalition including business and economic development interests. Those agencies receiving grants through this program must have a complete streets ordinance, resolution or demonstrated equivalent ordinances or resolutions and related standards in place in order to receive funding. A "demonstrated equivalent" local ordinance(s) or resolution(s) and related standard(s) include the following:

- A vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets.
- Specifies that 'all users' includes pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses, and automobiles.
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way.
- Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions to the complete streets ordinance or equivalent.
- Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.
- Covers all roads within the jurisdiction.
- Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines, while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Directs that complete streets solutions will complement the context of the community.
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.

Eligible projects will include the addition of, or significant repair to transportation facilities with all users in mind including main street highways and comparable locations on local streets. These projects will make connections that improve access, including access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users. The following are examples of some eligible project elements.

Project Development – a maximum of 30 percent of project cost

- Community design that includes public engagement in planning and design decisions.

Right of Way Acquisition

Sample Construction Elements (Note: This is not a conclusive list of elements. Grant applications may include a combination of construction elements.)

- Crossing/intersection treatments/roundabouts
- Signage, striping, markings
- Streetscape, gateway treatments
- Sidewalks
- Roadway construction
- Lighting
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations
- Bicycle facilities
- Urban trails and trail crossings
- Bicycle parking and stations
- Traffic calming (medians, refuge islands, curb extensions)
- Freight accommodation, including signage and loading zone/parking strategies
- Transit accommodation, including bus pullouts, pads for bus stop installation, pedestrian access to transit
- Public electric vehicle charging stations
- Frontage improvements required to be constructed within existing or dedicated street right-of-way according to permit conditions established by the city for project development.

*Note: Eligible projects shall demonstrate their ability to adequately support ongoing operations and maintenance costs including a statement for how future preservation and replacement costs are supported. A maintenance and operations agreement may be required to demonstrate the community's capacity to adequately cover these costs.

This program is not intended to be a pavement resurfacing program.

Eligible projects must be included in community plans (i.e., local comprehensive plan).

Proposed Project Selection & Ranking Method

Project selection criteria will consider whether the project addresses a priority location on main street highways or a comparable location on local streets. These locations may be identified as safety priorities, multi-modal mobility priorities, freight priorities, or needs associated with scenic and recreational highways, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, or other.

All proposals will be reviewed to ensure that they are complete and eligible for funding. A grant review committee will evaluate the proposals and make recommendations. WSDOT staff will conduct site visits for priority projects.

The following criteria and other relevant considerations, will be used to evaluate the project proposals.

(a) Promoting healthy communities by encouraging walking, bicycling, and using public transportation – How well will the project improve connections and/or establish safer and fully accessible crossings, sidewalks, trails, bike facilities, and transit connections consistent with AASHTO, ITE, or other peer reviewed, context sensitive solutions guides, reports, and publications?

10 Pts = Substantial long term connectivity solution.

5 Pts = Moderate improvements.

1 Pt = Little or no improvement to connectivity will be derived from the project.

(b) Improving safety by designing major arterials to include features such as wider sidewalks, dedicated bicycle facilities, medians, and pedestrian streetscape features, including trees where appropriate – Based on recent state and national research, arterial streets in urban areas with higher speeds, higher motor vehicle volumes, and housing mixed with commercial attractions, transit service, and other pedestrian and bicycle generators are the locations with the most transportation conflicts, collisions, and risk. How will the project improve safety, while expanding mobility for all users, especially at-risk populations (e.g., the young, the aging, and disabled)?

10 Pts = Substantial long term safety solution.

5 Pts = Moderate improvements.

1 Pt = Little or no improvement to safety will be derived from the project or safety improvement is incomplete or short term.

(c) Protecting the environment and reducing congestion by providing safe alternatives to single occupancy driving –

In order to make alternatives to single occupancy driving safe and viable, proximity and connections are needed between and among existing housing, centers of employment, education, retail, and recreation. How well will this project support infill, encourage redevelopment and reuse of existing building stock, and connect housing and employment?

10 Pts = Substantial impacts to congestion through improving connections between housing, centers, of employment, education, retail and recreation.

5 Pts = Moderate impacts.

1 Pt = Little or no impacts to congestion will be derived from the project.

(d) <u>Preserving community character by involving local citizens and stakeholders to participate in planning and design decisions</u> –

Recent research has shown that transportation projects on main street highways have a greater likelihood of scope, schedule, and budget changes that often result in additional costs. This is primarily due to the complexity of the setting and level of interest by area residents and stakeholders. Research has demonstrated that more and better up-front coordination and communication and engagement of local citizens and stakeholders in design sometimes called 'Community Design', can reduce the potential for project delay or cost over-runs. How has, or how will this project ensure community engagement in planning and design decisions that will help to preserve community character?

10 Pts = Substantial commitment to community involvement in planning and design.

5 Pts = Moderate commitment.

1 Pt = Little or no consideration of citizen and stakeholder participation in planning and design decisions.

Other consideration will be given to the following (5 points maximum):

- Project delivery status (planning, environmental review, right of way acquisition, construction plans)
- Matching funds or services
- Consistent with RCW 70.235.070, consideration of impacts to green house gases and vehicle miles traveled
- Overlap with nationally designated Main Street communities, Main Street affiliates, or National Historic Districts that are also community main streets.
- Consistency with the federal principles of livability (EPA-HUD-DOT partnership) including:
  - Providing more transportation choices
  - Promoting equitable, affordable housing
  - Enhancing economic competitiveness
  - Supporting existing communities
  - Coordinating policies and leverage investment
  - Valuing communities and neighborhoods

Plan for Soliciting Proposals

All local agencies within Washington are eligible to apply, but must have in place an adopted complete streets ordinance, resolution, or demonstrated equivalent in order to receive funding.

WSDOT's Highways and Local Programs will use a solicitation process similar to other grant programs administered by the Division (e.g., Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety, Safe Routes to Schools, City Safety Program). Outreach will be conducted through Association of Washington Cities newsletters and website, WSDOT's website, and a call for projects.

Submittal Process

Submittals must either be sent via the website or by e-mail (paper submittals will not be accepted). The proposal shall be submitted as Microsoft Word documents or Adobe Acrobat pdf files and include the following to be considered:

1. A completed and signed Grant Application Form.
2. A plan sheet(s), no more than five pages, showing project design detail.

Section III. Advisory Committee Recommendations

WSDOT has worked with an advisory committee made up of interested agencies and organizations including: Association of Washington Cities, Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Transportation Choices Coalition, Bicycle Alliance of Washington, Department of Commerce, Cascade Bicycle Club, Feet First, Washington State Transportation Commission, Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition, and individual Cities, Counties, Tribal Nations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and transit agencies. Through summer and fall of 2011, the advisory committee drafted the grant program proposal.

In addition to the proposed grant program framework, the committee recommends that WSDOT Highways and Local Programs, with the advisement from a committee of stakeholders, produce a guidance document detailing how the Department will consult with local agencies in compliance with Section 4 of RCW 47.04.257, the Complete Streets Bill. The guidance, for use by WSDOT Headquarters and Region Offices, should detail how the agency will consult with local jurisdictions in the design and planning phases when constructing, reconstructing, or making major improvements to streets described in RCW 47.24.010 for projects initially planned or scoped after July 1, 2011.

Section IV. Program Assessment

How will WSDOT measure performance of this grant program?

In addition to the standard project information, WSDOT will report other program impacts to the legislature annually including project performance (i.e., safety, mobility, access).