WASHINGTON FEDERAL LANDS ACCESS PROGRAM MEETING
September 25, 2012
Western Federal Lands – Tongass Conference Room
Vancouver, WA
1:00 – 4:00

Agenda

Objectives:

- Common understanding of the Access Program
- Understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Short and long term strategies for moving forward

1. Introductions

2. Review and adjust agenda

3. Overview of MAP-21 and Federal Lands Access Program

4. Roles and Responsibilities

    a. Role of Programming Decisions Committee
    b. Role of Federal Land Management Agencies
    c. Role of Western Federal Lands

5. Short Term Strategy for Moving Forward
    a. FY13 Program – decision needed
        i. Projects to fund
            1. Construction for FY 13 Programmed Projects
            2. Project Development for FY13 Programmed Projects
6. Long Term Strategy
    a. Call for projects – decision needed
        i. Which projects re-compete
        ii. Timing
        iii. Goal areas

7. Next Steps

8. Schedule next meeting

Washington Federal Lands Access Program Meeting

September 25, 2012
Western Federal Lands Highway Division Office
Vancouver, WA

1) Introductions

Welcome to the first Washington Programming Decisions Committee meeting for the new Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) that was established from the Transportation Bill Reauthorization (MAP-21). The objective of this program is to improve access to federal lands on Public Roads, Highways, Trails, and Transit systems on transportation facilities that are under non-federal jurisdiction or maintenance.

Objectives of the meeting:

- Develop a common understanding of the Access Program
- Understand roles and responsibilities of the parties involved
- Discuss short and long term strategies for moving forward (Official guidance is not out yet).

The meeting was attended by the PDC and representatives of the USACE, BLM, and USFS. The NPS and Fish and Wild Service were contacted but could not attend. An Attendee List is attached.

2) Review and Adjust Agenda

- Agenda was adopted as presented

3) Overview of MAP-21 and Federal Lands Access Program

Western Federal Lands (WFLHD) gave an overview presentation on the portions of MAP-21 that apply to the FLTP and FLAP programs.

4) Roles and Responsibilities

a) Programming Decisions Committee (PDC)

- The PDC, by statute, is composed of representatives from the State DOT, FHWA and a representative of an appropriate local political subdivision of the state.
- Where all Access program funds will be spent
- In Washington, the PDC will composed of the following representatives:
    - Aaron Butters, Washington DOT

    - Randy Hart, Washington County Road Administration Board (CRAB)
    - Phyllis Chun, Western Federal Lands Highway Division, FHWA
- The PDC is responsible for decisions related to the programming of projects for the FLAP.

b) Federal Land Management Agencies

- Purpose is to provide access to federal lands and thus the FLMAs need to be consulted. The PDC is required to consult with all appropriate Federal Land Management Agencies before programming decisions are made.
- MAP-21 specifies that preference will be given to High Use Recreation Sites and Federal Economic Generators. Each FLMA will need to define these terms as to how it applies to their agency. Most of the FLMAs are working on those definitions at a national level.
- Work with the appropriate public road agencies for project application and development.
- All the FLMAs will be invited to meetings of the PDC
- WFLHD needs to make contact with the Bureau of Reclamation to participate.

c) Western Federal Lands

- Represent interests of all FLMAs
- Lead the PDC, coordinate the meetings, and lead development of program of projects.
- WFLHD has a full complement of expertise to deliver projects including planning, environmental, design and construction. WLFHD hopes to deliver much of the program.
- Receives the funding allocation from the Federal Lands national office and provides stewardship and oversight of the funds.

d) County and State DOTs

- Roles of County/DOTs- you own and operated the roads, work with the FLMAs in proposing projects and providing information

Questions/Discussion:

- How will the call for projects work?
    - Will it be national in scope?
        - No - it will be by PDC state decision.
- Will applications need to be submitted jointly?
    - Yes – see the call for projects below
- WSDOT will meet total state non-federal match via the use of Toll Credits (up to $9.5M through 2017). WSDOT is sending WFLHD a letter explaining how that will work.
    - WSDOT will investigate the question if there are any constraints on the use of the Toll Credits for match. Specifically, can the state offer up Toll Credits to use on off system routes (from WSDOT perspective). Are there any limitation on using these credits on county routes?

- *Update since meeting* – WLFHD discussed this issue with Rick Judd of FHWA Division office in Olympia. Rick confirmed that Toll Credits can be used on County routes as long as it qualified for Title 23 funding.

5) Short Term Strategy for Moving Forward FY 2013 Program

The group discussed that we need to keep the delivery of projects going through the transition to the full program.

Discussion:

- Even though MAP21 is only a two year bill, we need to develop a longer approach (min 4 years)
- We want to be able to include needs expressed by the new FLMAs (NPS, FWS, BLM, USACE).
- Need to deliver projects in 2013, it takes time to prepare them.

What do we want to do in 2013 to allow the new FLMAs to participate?

- We should keep projects moving if there has been a significant investment in them already.
- If a new call for projects is started this winter, additional projects could be considered both in the short and long term.
- Phyllis explained the existing Forest Highway program sheet as a possible place to start and went over what was on the program for delivery in 2013. Additional things to consider:
    - There won't be additional funds based on non-federal match (13.50%) because of the State meeting the non-federal Match with Toll Credits.
    - New projects are going to take several years to develop
    - Desire to keep the program full, we do not want to stop projects in 2013

Projects Programmed:

In general, program the 2013 projects and simultaneously conduct a call for projects.

The following projects were discussed and accepted to be funded with FLAP funds as noted:

- **FY 2013**
    - Middle Fork Snoqualmie (WA PFH 29-1(1))
        - Project was programmed for $16.5M CN in 2013 under the forest highway program.
        - Background – Project has been on the program for a very long time and there is a large investment by King County and WFLHD

Decisions:

- Match provided by toll credits from WSDOT

- Approximately $10 M of FH funds will be applied to this project (See Forest Highway Notes and carry over spreadsheet). Fund remaining PE with forest highway carry over funds.
- Fund remaining portion of needed funds (CN/CE) with Access funds.

- Wynochee Road Phase III (WA PFH 203(3))
  - Project was programmed under the forest highway program for $700K FH and $300K County funds for $1M CN total.
  - Cost estimate went up and now the project needs $1.4M CN plus 10% CE and $60K additional PE for a total of $1.6M
  - County has secured an additional $600K of STP funds through the State and can now contribute a total of $900K ($300K County + $600K STP). The $300K of county funds will meet the required non-federal match.

  Decision:

  - If ready to go to construction in 2013 fund the $700K needed with Access funds. If not ready, then project will need to re-compete in the new call for projects.

- Union Creek Trailhead (WA PFH 12(9))
  - NEPA Delay, won't be ready in 2013

  Decision:

  - Re-compete in new call for projects

- Husum Park and Launch Site (WA PFH 17(2))
  - NEPA Delay and sight distance problems, won't be ready in 2013

  Decision:

  - Re-compete in a new call for projects

- Snow Creek (WA PFH 43(1))
  - PE has already been obligated to the county.
  - Note this project is not the same as a USFS project with the same name.

  Decision:

        - Fund CN/CE with Access funds if it's ready to go in 2013. If not, then the project must re-compete.

- **FY 2014**
    - Lewis River Road Phase 1 (Old WA PFH 16(2))
        - We have spent 350K in PE to date.

Decisions:

- State will provide match with Toll Credits
- Use Access funds to design the entire project (all 11 miles) – Approx $750K is needed to complete the design.
- Delay decision for CN/CE until after the new call for projects and have it re-compete and evaluate how it ranks.
- WFLHD will stop work on this project until the Project Agreement is revised to ensure that the county will assume maintenance of the road once the project is complete. Wording in the existing project agreement is not adequate.
- It's not clear if we will be allowed the flexibility to determine if a route is eligible based on a future transfer of jurisdiction or maintenance when the project is implemented. WFLHD is waiting to see what the wording is in the final implementation guidance from headquarters.
- WFLHD must get this ready for delivery in 2014
- Assuming they want the same project, sponsor doesn't have to resubmit, just a letter that says they still want to support it.
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    - Blue Mountain Access Parking Expansion (WA PFH 165(2))
        -

Decision:

- Re-compete in a new call for projects and consider investment that has been already been made

    - Monte Cristo Trailhead (WA PFH 7(9))
        -

Decision:

        - Re-compete in a new call for projects and consider investment that has been already been made

- All projects in **2014** and beyond on the old Forest Highway program need to re-compete with a new call for projects. The one partial exception is Lewis River Road where design will continue funded through Access funds.
    - Re-compete doesn't mean they need to re-submit. The sponsor doesn't need to resubmit unless scope has changed but they will need to submit a letter requesting that the project continue to be considered in the new call for projects and they still support the project.

- Discussion of 2015 projects:
    - Crystal Mountain – Randy is concerned that w/o programming out the full 4 -5 years that the county won't know what we are committed to. The guidance requires at least a 4 year program but it is of course subject to available funding from Congress. We need to keep working on out year projects because we have to start expending Access road $ for project development (PE). CRAB will contribute $4.2M but Randy needs some assurance to the CRAB board that Access funds will be there for CN.
        - PDC does not want to program this project at this time but do want special consideration for the project as it's through design and can be delivered in 2015.
        - PE has already been obligated. County can continue development of the project with the funds already obligated (forest highway funds).

6) Long Term Strategy

a) Call for Projects

- George presented DRAFT timeline, criteria, call letter, and proposal and explained the contents. Very draft and needs work.
    - Start call in Nov 2012. Due date back by mid Jan 2013. Goal is to program short term projects and long term projects.
    - WFLHD requests a working team to go over criteria, forms, etc and come back to the PDC with recommendations for the call for projects.
        - Project staff selection team:
            - Greg Humphreys (WFLHD)
            - Amy Thomas (USFS)
            - Justin De Santis (NPS)
            - Jon Lebaron or Dick Bergen (BLM)

            - Jeff Holm (FWS)
            - Scott Moore or Kevin Paff (USACE)
            - Bill Leonard (WSDOT)
            - Randy Hart (CRAB)
        - PDC should convene once there is a ranked list by the staff selection team
- Consideration for past development of projects
    - Concern for those projects that have significant investments already made in them and there is commitment from the all parties to deliver.
    - Would like a letter explaining this – probably part of the call letter.
- Much more discussion needs to occur on the documents
- Additional consideration for multiple FLMAs that are accessed by this.
- The staff will meet on **Oct 10 at 1000 - 1400 office at WFLHD**, to work on revising the drafts.
- Consider having webinars to get the word out on how to complete the applications, and call completion mechanism.

Decision:

- A new call for projects is needed to fill out the 2014 and beyond program.
- Staff will work out the details for the call including schedule, evaluation criteria, objectives, etc.

7) Next Steps

- Official program guidance from FHWA HQ is expected in the next few weeks
- WFLHD will start working on projects for 2013/2014 that were approved today for project development.
- WFLHD will start working on a new agreement (Charter) PDC Charter and get out for review.
- Notification of Project Sponsors from old FH program (2015 and on) – WFLHD (George or Greg) will develop letters and send to partners.

8) Schedule Next Meeting

- The purpose of the next meeting is to discuss call documents and how the call will work. PDC will need to frame the objectives of the call and if there are certain types of projects that they want to emphasize. (i.e. size, type, scale, etc)
- Next PDC meeting is scheduled for 10/23/2012 at 0900 in WFLHD in Vancouver.