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Local Assistance Highway Bridge Program Project Prioritization Policy

I. BACKGROUND

This document provides policy and procedures for compliance with the federal Highway Bridge Program (HBP) regulations relating to project prioritization implemented under the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users (SAFETEA-LU).

Relevant regulations from the Code of Regulations for Title 23:

§ 650.409 Evaluation of Bridge Inventory.

(a) Sufficiency rating of bridges. Upon receipt and evaluation of the bridge inventory, a sufficiency rating will be assigned to each bridge by the Secretary in accordance with the approved AASHTO sufficiency rating formula. The sufficiency rating will be used as a basis for establishing eligibility and priority for replacement or rehabilitation of bridges; in general the lower the rating, the higher the priority.

§ 650.411 Procedures for Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Projects.

(a) Consideration shall be given to projects which will remove from service highway bridges most in danger of failure.

(b) Submission and approval of projects.

(1) Bridge replacement or rehabilitation projects shall be submitted by the State to the Secretary in accordance with 23 CFR part 630, subpart A Federal-Aid Programs, Approval and Authorization.

(2) Funds apportioned to a State shall be made available throughout each State on a fair and equitable basis.

Superseded by OB 11-01

II. POLICY

California Transportation Commission (CTC) Resolution LBS1B-G-0708 establishes the Proposition 1B Seismic Program as the top priority for programming HBP funds.

It is CTC's intent that the Department also program funds for the bridge inspection program and critical safety non-seismic projects. Bridges with serious structural deficiencies are also a top priority for funding.

The ranks below will be used to determine funding priorities for developing the Highway Bridge Program lists. After projects are prioritized and funds reserved, the Department submits the financially constrained program lists to the Metropolitan Plan Organizations (MPOs) for inclusion into the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP).

The lowest number rank is the highest priority.

Within each rank the projects are sorted by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Sufficiency Rating (SR) to reflect the general condition of the bridge. The lowest SR is the highest priority.

Preliminary Engineering (PE) (including final design) and Right of Way (R/W) phases for all projects, subject to budgetary constraints, will be funded to keep projects moving in the delivery pipeline. This means that lower ranked projects will have PE and R/W funded even though construction may be pushed out of the 4 year element of the FTIP. When these projects are ready for construction authorization, the ranking system will allow these projects to receive a high priority for construction programming within updated statewide program lists.

RANK 0:

1. This is not technically a priority rank. All projects with HBP funds obligated for construction will fall in this rank for listing purposes only. These projects cannot be pushed out of the 4 year element of the FTIP because funds have been obligated for construction.

2. Local funded Advance Construction (AC) projects not subject cash management commitments. Local funded AC conversion can be converted to HBP funds when programming capacity is available.

RANK 1A:

1. For the general support of the federally mandated bridge inspection program, including the development of scour plans of action.

RANK 1B:

1. Projects are ready to advertise AND;

2. Are critical HBP funded rehab/replacement projects. These bridges must have major structural deficiencies causing the bridge to be posted or closed. The National Bridge Inventory (NBI) data item 41 must be coded B, D, E, K, P, or R.

RANK 1C:

1. Cash managed projects with future AC conversion commitments by the Department. Projects may or may not be ready to advertise. Federal HBP funding commitments are on a case by case approved by the Department.

RANK 1D:

1. Projects are ready to advertise AND;

2. Are Proposition 1B seismic funded projects or;

3. Are Scour Countermeasure projects or rehab/replacement of scour critical bridges (NBI item 113<=3) or are Functionally Obsolete (FO) due to overtopping (NBI item 71 <= 3).

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RANK 1E:

1. All other projects ready to advertise.

RANK 2: (Projects Ranked 2 and below are not ready to advertise.)

1. High priority regionally significant (line item) projects that are not subject to cash management. Construction funding year is determined based on readiness to deliver and subject to Department case by case review. This rank highlights the sensitivities in rescheduling projects impacting regional air quality conformity determinations.

RANK 3: All projects NEARLY ready to advertise within six months of a new reprioritized program list being generated. Rank 3A parallels Rank 1B, Rank 3B parallels Rank 1D, and Rank 3C parallels Rank 1E.

RANK 4:

1. Critical HBP funded rehab/replacement projects. Projects are not ready to advertise. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and R/W are not clear. Bridge must have major structural deficiencies causing the bridge to be posted or closed. NBI data item 41 must be coded B, D, E, K, P, or R.

RANK 5:

1. Includes Proposition 1B Seismic Projects that are not ready to advertise. NEPA and R/W are not clear.

2. Includes scour countermeasure projects and rehab/replacement of scour critical bridges (NBI item 113<=3) or are FO due to overtopping (NBI item 71 <=3) and that are not ready to advertise. NEPA and R/W are not clear.

RANK 6:

1. All types of projects with State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) matching funds or other federal Regional Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for enhanced project scopes. Projects are not ready to advertise. NEPA and R/W are not clear.

2. Voluntary Seismic projects (no Proposition 1B seismic involvement). Projects are not ready to advertise. NEPA and R/W are not clear.

RANK 7:

1. General bridge rehabilitation/replacement and other stand-alone scopes of work defined in Section 6.2 of the HBP Guidelines, including preventive maintenance. Projects are not ready to advertise. NEPA and R/W are not clear.

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III. PROCEDURE

These priority ranks will be applied to projects to financially constrain any program list needed to update the FTIP.

District Local Assistance Engineers (DLAEs) are responsible for maintaining fields in the HBP FileMaker database that indicate a project's readiness to advertise.

Local Agencies are responsible for closely coordinating with the DLAE on project status, schedule, and estimates as documented in Sections 6.7.1 and 6.9.1 of the HBP Guidelines.

V. APPLICABILITY/IMPACTS

This Office Bulletin applies to local assistance bridge projects funded through the federal Highway Bridge Program (23USC144) as authorized by Streets and Highways Code 2400 – 2414, 179 – 179.3.

This policy/procedure is subject to annual review and recommendation of the Local Assistance Highway Bridge Program Advisory Committee. Members include representatives from the Department (chair), the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties, the California Association of Council of Governments, California Transportation Commission staff, and Federal Highway Administration.

Superseded by OB 11-01

Recommended: Original Signed by Eric Bost on 1/19/2010
Eric Bost, PE, Statewide HBP Coordinator — Date

Approved: Original Signed by Yin-Ping Li on 1/19/2010
Yin-Ping Li, PE — Date
Chief, Office of Bridge and Safety Programs

Attachments: None.