Federal Transportation Grant FAQ's

What is ARRA?

The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, ARRA, sometimes referred to as the "Stimulus Act", was enacted by Congress in early 2009. The purpose of the Recovery Act is to create and save jobs, jumpstart our economy, and build the foundation for long-term economic growth. According to the official website, Recovery.gov, the Act includes measures to modernize the nation's infrastructure, enhance America's energy independence, expand educational opportunities, increase access to health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need.

Why isn't my street on the list to be repaired?

Under Federal Funding guidelines, only those streets with a Functional Classification of collector or arterial are eligible for project funding. These tend to be larger streets, not neighborhood, residential streets. There is a formal listing of all such streets that is maintained by the MPO and approved by TDOT and FHWA.

Is there any cost to local taxpayers for ARRA projects?

The construction phase of ARRA projects is eligible for 100% reimbursement from Federal Funds if all criteria for the program are met. Some City funds have been invested to bring the projects in line with Federal criteria.

Can ARRA funds be used to relieve the City budget?

ARRA funds are intended to provide additional stimulus to the economy, so, City baseline spending can not be offset by ARRA funds. No such restrictions apply to STP and CMAQ funding.

What is STP?

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) is an ongoing Federal Grant program that provides flexible funding that may be used by States and localities for projects on any Federal-aid highway, including the NHS, bridge projects on any public road, transit capital projects, and intracity and intercity bus terminals and facilities.

Is there any cost to local taxpayers for STP projects?

The Federal share is generally 80%, with the local government paying 20% of costs. Certain safety improvements listed in 23 USC 120(c) have a Federal share of 100%.

What is CMAQ?

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) is an ongoing Federal Grant program that provides flexible funding for surface transportation and other related projects that contribute to air quality improvements and reduce traffic congestion. Funding is allocated to MPOs, to invest in projects that reduce regulated air pollutants from transportation-related sources.

Is there any cost to local taxpayers for CMAQ projects?

The design and construction phases of the CMAQ projects are eligible for 100% reimbursement from Federal Funds if all criteria for the program are met.

How much Federal Grant money are we talking about?

The current year allocations are as follows:

Stimulus ARRA Grants

\$3,555,000
2,007,000
1,862,000
3,170,300
3,004,200

Bridge Guardrail	344,050
Sam Coop. Bridge	216,500
Winchester Tunnel	270,000
TOTAL	\$14,411,050

STP Grants

RR Signs/Markings \$ 402,500 East CEI Signal 1,050,000 Signal Coordination 6,103,585 NW Signal Coord. 5,494,500 Poplar/Ger. Signal 848,715 Shelby Dr. Signal 2,500,000 Repaying Group 1 3,819,216 Repaying Group 2 3,965,639 Repaying Group 3 4,044,387 ADA Curb Ramps 2,507,500 Guardrail/Atten. 420,000 \$31,186,042 TOTAL

CMAQ Signal Grants

Coordinated Year 1 \$ 944,175 Coordinated Year 2 4,459,000 Coordinated Year 3 7,213,889 TOTAL \$12,617,064

Grand Total: \$58,184,156

Where the Grants funding are coming from?

Tennessee received \$572,701,043 in total Recovery Act funds for Highways and Bridges. Of that total, \$15.8 million went to the seven small Metropolitan Planning Organizations (Bristol, Clarksville, Cleveland, Jackson, Johnson City, Kingsport, Lakeway/Morristown) and the Rutherford County Urbanized area through the Nashville MPO for use on local projects. Another \$69.9 million was provided to the four large urban MPOs (Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville) for use on local projects as highway repaving, perform preventative maintenance of the settled bridge approach and damaged approach bridge joints. Tennessee is one of the first states to obligate 100% of Recovery Act funds for highway infrastructure.

What is an MPO?

By federal law, a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is designated by the Governor for every urban area with at least 50,000 residents. The MPO devises solutions to regional transportation problems, which involves addressing other important issues such as land use, air quality, energy, economic development and commerce. MPO provide training and research programs, maintains short-rage program of projects to fund with federal transportation money. The MPO also develops a long-range regional transportation plan.

When will paving begin?

Paving is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2010.

Lists of possible delays for paving projects (STP & ARRA) as these are TDOT process driven and that local municipalities will have to meet:

- 1. Obtain necessary Environmental (NEPA), R/W acquisition, Permits.
- 2. Preparation plans, construction documents for bid package.
- 3. Submittal deadline to State is the end of the month (September).
- 4. Once submitted it goes through TDOT / FHWA approval process and execute contract.
- 5. Posts for bids
- 6. Weather, paving can only be done when the temperature is consistently above a certain specified threshold.

I thought more streets were proposed to be paved, what happened?

The grants were for a set amount. Several factors combined that made the original estimates obsolete and necessitated dropping some roadway segments. Some of those factors were:

- 1. Cost increase of 30% due the State requirement to use TDOT Specification "411-D" asphalt mix versus City of Memphis standard "411-E" asphalt mix.
- 2. 10 to 15 % cost increases for administrative costs associated with Federal Grant oversight versus standard City project oversight.

Have any municipalities in the State of TN started paving using these Federal Programs?

Numerous other municipalities are participating in this program; however, as of this date none of them have began paving. According to TDOT officials, the City of Memphis is ahead of most other local jurisdictions in the contract process.

How can I get further information?

You may contact the City Engineering Division at 901-576-6700. The City also has a website under construction. On your browser's address toolbar, type in "engineering.memphistn.gov" (no www.). This will take you to the City Engineering Division website. Click the link for "Federal Transportation Grant Projects". A wealth of information will be added in the coming weeks.