

## **TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY (TIGER) DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROGRAM**

### **The TIGER Grant Selection Process Summary**

Over 1450 TIGER Grant applications were received, requesting nearly \$60 billion. After initial evaluations, 166 highly-rated projects were advanced for further review. During the review process, the advanced projects underwent additional analysis. The review team ultimately recommended that the Secretary fund 51 projects for \$1.5 billion.

#### The Technical Evaluation Process:

The Department established ten teams to evaluate the applications. [1] Each team member separately assessed every project assigned to the team, based on five long-term outcomes, short-term contributions to economic recovery and two secondary criteria. [2] After every member of the team had evaluated a project, the team met and determined if the project should be “advanced” for further review and possible selection.

A “Control and Calibration Team” led by career staff in the Policy Office oversaw the evaluation effort. This team ensured that the ten evaluation teams graded the categories equitably, and advanced some additional projects for further review to promote regional balance, as required by the statute.

The process of evaluating every application took over two months and resulted in 166 projects – just over 11% of all the applications -- being advanced for further review.

#### The Review and Selection Process:

The Review Team, consisting of the Department’s senior leadership, [3] narrowed the list of advanced projects down to the 51 projects that were ultimately recommended to the Secretary, and selected. The Review Team generally met twice a week, beginning in November. The Review Team met as a group to assess each project, using the same criteria as the Evaluation Teams.

A presentation of each advanced project was made to the Review Team by the appropriate Evaluation Team leader. An Economic Analysis Team, chaired by the Department’s Chief Economist, presented a cost-benefit analysis of each advanced project. TIGER Grant requests were not approved if the Economic Analysis Team concluded that project costs would likely exceed public benefits.

After each presentation the Review Team made an initial determination of whether they were likely to approve all or part of an application, and assigned follow-up questions for the evaluation team to answer.

An Environmental Analysis Team, consisting of agency career staff, advised the review team whether each advanced project had the necessary environmental clearances, or was on track to get them, for timely completion of the project.

At the Review Team's request, five additional teams were created to provide further analysis to help differentiate among certain advanced projects that had similar characteristics. These teams assessed 1.) Major freight projects; 2.) How the widening of the Panama Canal could affect port projects; 3.) Streetcars; 4.) Tribal and Federal lands road projects; and, 5.) Projects that claimed substantial livability benefits.

As responses were received to the Review Team's questions, and with input from the environmental and other teams, the Review Team revisited its initial project assessments, adjusted for regional balance, and made final recommendations to the Secretary.

**Footnotes:**

[1] Each team consisted of five career DOT employees, usually consisting of one technical or professional representative from each from the highway, maritime, rail, and transit administrations and one individual from either the counsel or policy office within the Office of the Secretary.

[2] The Long-Term Outcomes were Safety, State of Good Repair, Sustainability, Economic Competitiveness, and Livability. Each of these factors was defined in the June 17<sup>th</sup> guidance published in the Federal Register. Evaluators provided one of four ratings for each factor: "Highly Recommended", "Recommended", "Not Recommended" or "Negative." No factor was assigned more weight than another. Long-Term Outcomes and short-term contributions to economic recovery were weighted more heavily than the two secondary criteria of Innovation and Partnership. In accordance with the Recovery Act, evaluators considered if projects could be completed quickly and leveraged non-federal funds, when determining which projects to advance. As a policy matter, the Department also chose to examine whether the project was in an Economically Distressed Area, although this was not required by law.

[3] Each Review Team meeting was attended by the Administrator or his/her representative from the Highway, Maritime, Rail, Research and Transit Administrations, and the heads of Budget, Counsel, Inter-Governmental Affairs and Policy within the Secretary's Office. Review Team meetings were chaired by either the Deputy Secretary or the Under Secretary.