2014 Awards of Excellence Selections
The Awards of Excellence program is a collaborative effort between WSDOT Local Programs and FHWA to formally recognize local agency projects that have achieved excellence in construction, innovative design, environmental compatibility, and public involvement and satisfaction. The award categories are Best City Project, Best County Project, Best Special Project and the Director’s Award. The following projects were selected for the 2014 Awards of Excellence.

Best City Project - City of Wenatchee, South Wenatchee Avenue Improvements
This half-mile arterial safety improvement project south of Wenatchee is in a part of the community that is a mix of industrial and residential areas. This project was selected due to the City’s remarkable accomplishment in transforming a two-lane minor arterial into a modern, multi-modal complete street, resulting in substantial safety enhancements, congestion relief, and an upgrade to the local stormwater system. Funding for this $3 million project was provided by the City of Wenatchee, FHWA, and Washington’s Department of Ecology.

Best County Project - Adams County, Hooper Store Bridge #223-1
This project began as a small scale bridge project, but by applying innovative design and effective project management, Adams County built a bridge that restored a vital transportation link for those that use this bridge to conduct their lives and maintain their livelihoods. With the innovative design that saved taxpayers $220,000, Adams County utilized most of the existing concrete substructure from the old bridge to improve safety and usefulness on time and within budget. Funding was provided by WSDOT’s Local Federal Bridge program, as well as local funds to complete this $456,000 project.

Best Special Project - City of Redmond, Redmond Central Connector Trail
Redmond Central Connector Trail links over 60 miles of trails into the core of the downtown urban growth center by providing access to multimodal transportation opportunities for residents and employees and improving the livability of downtown Redmond. This project was selected due to the City’s steadfast commitment to their regional trail system that includes ten acres of open space with an integrated landscape design that tells the story of Redmond’s history and unique character. Funding for this $5.3 million project was provided by the City of Redmond, FHWA, and the Washington’s Department of Commerce.
Director’s Award - City of Vancouver, NE 137th/138th Avenue Improvements

This project was selected due to the City’s practical solutions to improve safety and capacity for a one-mile urban arterial in east Vancouver. The City’s improvements included: a two-lane divided roadway, raised center median, three roundabouts, private turnaround access upgrades, sidewalks, bike lanes, and lighting. This approach diverted from the City’s standard multi-lane section, saving an estimated $11 million in right of way costs. Funding was provided by FHWA, TIB, and Vancouver’s local utilities and city bond, totaling $15.3 million.

Local Federal Program Delivery

Give yourselves a big round of applause. For the second year, local agencies not only delivered their portion of obligation authority (OA), they over-delivered while utilizing Advance-Construction (AC). Local agencies had a target for delivery of approximately $158 million, and as of the end of August, had delivered over $185 million. In addition, Washington State received approximately $21 million of redistributed OA from other states that allowed just over $7 million of the AC local projects to be converted and expenditures reimbursed.

Local Programs is working with the Task Force to develop targets for delivery of the 2015 local federal program. The additional transparency and accountability put in place two years ago through the Local Agency Federal OA Policy highlighted the need for local agencies to focus on delivery as resources and funding continue to be limited. Additional information can be found on the Local Programs website. WSDOT encourages all of you to contact your respective MPO/RTPO or Gary Rowe of WSACE, GRowe@wacounties.org to understand how you contributed to meeting the goal.

FFY 2015 Status

In early August, Congress provided $10.8 billion of general fund dollars to the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) to avoid delays in federal reimbursements on FHWA funded projects and extended MAP-21 through May 31, 2015.

Two weeks ago, Congress approved a continuing resolution (CR) through December 11th rather than the nine months of funding to align with the MAP-21 extension. Due to the short-term nature of this CR, Congress will need to return in mid-November to provide additional spending authority to states beyond early December. The next critical action date for Congress is May 31st since the MAP-21 extension expires and the HTF is estimated to become insolvent.

Senator Murray’s office also announced two TIGER VI grants for Washington. The Port of Seattle will receive $20 million to modernize the Port’s Terminal 46, a container terminal that serves as one of Washington State’s critical export hubs and economic engines. The Makah Tribe is also receiving a small capital grant (under $1 million). Both projects are expected to be administered through the Maritime Administration.
Local Programs Fall 2014 Report

**FFY 2014/2015 Allocations**
FHWA issued revised notices for FFY 2014 apportionment and obligation authority (OA) to states and the updated Federal Forecast was adopted in mid-September. The 2014 final allocations for the Surface Transportation Program (STP), Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) and the Transportation Alternatives programs are being updated and will be distributed to the MPO/RTPO/County lead agencies in October. In addition, FFY 2015 estimated allocations will also be provided to each MPO/RTPO/County lead agency.

**2015-18 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**
Metropolitan, regional and local transportation improvement programs (TIP) are currently being developed for inclusion in the 2015-2018 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). All TIPs are to be submitted to Local Programs no later than October 15. The draft 2015-2018 STIP is anticipated to be out for public comment mid-November. Final approval by FHWA and FTA of the 2015-2018 STIP is expected early January 2015.

**Inactive Projects**
The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the US Office of the Inspector General (OIG) are continuing to review all local agency inactive projects quarterly. Inactive projects are those which no expenditures have occurred for the past 12 months. FHWA is expected to take the additional step and direct WSDOT to de-obligate the federal funds and close the inactive federal projects without the State’s consent when a project is found inactive.

Therefore, Local Programs has taken a proactive approach and are identifying all projects that have not submitted a reimbursement request in the past nine months to ensure that local agency projects are not listed on the FHWA report and projects closed. For those of you that have been contacted by your Region Local Programs Engineer regarding an inactive project - it is imperative that a timely reimbursement with adequate justification be submitted. This information is being reviewed by FHWA and OIG to determine the validity of the project and if the project should remain open.

The best way to avoid this exercise is to ensure due diligence is placed on timely delivery of all local projects, which includes the timely reimbursement requests being submitted. As a reminder, for projects with federal discretionary funds that are closed, these funds may lapse and may not be reallocated to the State in the future for authorization on the project.

**WSDOT DBE Reform Efforts**
Local Programs continues to remain engaged in the department’s DBE reform activities. To this end, several adjustments have been made to improve our ability to report on Local Agency DBE participation. Local Programs is also currently evaluating how to best apply goals to local agency pre-construction consultant contracts in an effort to capture all the DBE participation on local federal projects.

**Approvals of Consultant Indirect Cost Rates**
In partnership with WSDOT’s Consultant Service Office, Local Programs has implemented a new process for the approval of indirect cost rates for those consultant firms working on local agency projects. This new process involves firms submitting their information directly to the following email: ConsultantRates@wsdot.wa.gov. The Consultant Services Office will work directly with the firms, utilizing a risk based assessment approach, in evaluating their submitted information to establish and approve indirect cost rates to utilize on local agency projects.
What exactly is Least Cost Planning? & Practical Design?
Many of you have probably heard about Practical Design and Least Cost Planning as these concepts continue to rise in visibility at both the state and federal levels.

Least Cost Planning – Is an approach to making planning decisions that considers a variety of conceptual solutions to achieve desired system performance targets at the least cost. Least cost Planning results in the best mix of practical policy and capital investments to optimize the total transportation system performance – the solution may or may not be on a state corridor.

Practical Design – Practical Design is an approach to making project decisions that focuses on the specific problem the project is intended to address. This performance based approach looks for lower cost solutions that produce the best return on investment in order to meet outcomes that communities and stakeholders have identified. Practical Design allows more flexibility and freedom to innovate, and considers incremental solutions to address uncertainties in future scenarios.

Local Programs is actively evaluating the best methods to provide support and guidance to local agencies and anticipates a new Planning chapter in the Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) manual in the April update.

Schedule for Program Awards
Local Programs is completing the site reviews and evaluations for prioritizing each program of projects. At this time all programs are on schedule to announce the project selections as follows:

• Bridge Program – Final selections December 2014
• County and City Safety Programs – Final selections December 2014
• Pedestrian and Bicycle Program – Report due December 15, 2014
• Safe Routes to School Program – Report due December 15, 2014

Upcoming Training
NEPA Roundtables – Local Programs is pleased to announce a series of free one-day training workshop entitled the NEPA Roundtable. These workshops will cover current issues practices that affect NEPA on fed-aid eligible projects. The agenda topics will include:

• Changes to the Environmental Classification Summary.
• New “c-list” Categorical Exclusions.
• What makes an eligible project? Purpose and need, logical termini, etc.
• NEPA, the STIP and final environmental approval.
• Endangered Species Act updates – timelines, recent listings, and construction noise guidance.
• Regional Road Maintenance Program ESA 4(d) coverage with NMFS.

A portion of the workshops will be reserved for a discussion of additional topics that are important to local agencies. Roundtables are scheduled as follows:

• Spokane - October 22, 2014
• Benton County - October 23, 2014
• Thurston County - October 29, 2014
Bridge Inspection & Inventory Training – Local Programs will be offering various bridge inspection training and inventory courses early next year as follows:

- Bridge Inventory Coding (BIC) – January 13-15, 2015 – Moses Lake
- Bridge Condition Inspection Fundamentals – January 27-29, 2015 – Thurston County
- Bridge Condition Inspection Update – February 11-12 & 25-26 – Moses Lake & Thurston County
- Bridge Condition Inspection Training – March or May – Thurston County
- NHI Bridge Inspection Refresher – April 14-16 – Thurston County

Interested in the following or other courses go to the LTAP website:
http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/Training/default.htm

Staff Changes at Local Programs

**Headquarters:** Dianna Nausley and Dawn Fletcher, formerly of the WSDOT HQ Real Estate Services office, recently joined HQ Local Programs as part of the Engineering Services team. This move will provide more focused real estate support, specifically for local agency projects.

In addition, Charlotte Claybrooke has accepted an interim appointment to manage the Community Design group and their on-going efforts with the recent reassignment of Paula Reeves to WSDOT’s Design Policy and Innovation Division.
For More Information

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