BUILDING THE ECONOMY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

What is included in Green Economy/Freight Mobility?

Green economy projects should be defined so as to have a measurable impact on freight efficiency and environmental footprint, transportation costs for system users, effective utilization of industrial sites, and jobs.

Triple Bottom Line: Economy, Environment and Equity: The efficient movement of raw materials and finished products not only sharply improves business productivity but reduces the emissions produced in the distribution process. These attributes are key factors for all kinds of businesses looking to locate in our region who need predictable access to sites. Projects that reduce trip time and cost and increase operational efficiency and trip reliability are critical to shippers and businesses.

Freight Components of an Evolving "Green Economy" are Multimodal and Interdisciplinary: Because we have a multi-modal transportation system and a marine port, our region is already far less reliant on trucks to move cargo than others of our size. In fact, we may be one of the more efficient freight distribution communities in the United States. However, the success of these modes is dependent on the ability to truck goods to and from terminals. A multimodal system cannot work efficiently if it is missing key components.

Desired Outcomes: The following factors help identify freight projects, project development, and programs that produce measurable positive impacts:

- Projects that would have a regional or systemic impact (e.g., on a freight route, critical link, serves regionally significant industrial land)
- Projects that have costs that are in line with the scale of MTIP RFFA funds or a multi-year allocation of RFFA resources
- Projects that increase the efficient movement of goods produced by the larger "green economy", particularly the traded sector
- Projects that serve industrial areas that will be the sites for "green" production, or where the footprint of existing production can be reduced
- Projects that reduce the environmental footprint of the whole supply chain (e.g., reduces GHG, other pollutants, noise or land use conflicts)
- Projects that retain, expand or attract good jobs on freight routes, or at regional industrial areas

Suggested MTIP Bonus Points:

- Projects that serve the freight needs of traded green sector jobs or significantly "cleaner" traditional industry
- Projects that help implement one or more goals of the Regional Freight Plan, part of the Regional Transportation Plan
- Projects with local and regional business support

Small Scale/Regional Impact Projects:

Working with regional freight stakeholders, it is possible to identify small (less than $3 M) projects that achieve one or more of the outcomes identified above, but still provide regional or system results. Projects here would include modest but regionally important infrastructure improvements such as:

- Improved operational or physical connectivity to regionally important industrial land or jobs
- Freight-focused transportation system management and operations (TSMO) projects (e.g., ITS solutions on Hwy 30 or Hwy 212)
- Alternative fuel or diesel retrofit for freight vehicles, corridors, infrastructure construction or funding and coordination programs that could leverage opportunities for small business while reducing greenhouse gas, particulates, and pollutants

Focus on Funding Preparedness: The freight, business and economic development community strongly supports a "funding opportunity preparedness" category – an idea discussed at the April 2, 2010 JPACT retreat. Recently, we have missed out on making optimal use of large streams of federal economic recovery funding, as well as ongoing or intermittent state funding programs, because of the dearth of projects ready for construction. With draft transportation reauthorization language emphasizing MPOs' urban freight problems as well as corridor coalitions such as the West Coast Corridor Coalition, this is an ideal time to anticipate the future and meet it with a full pipeline of projects, including the more complex freight-oriented projects so critical to our regional economy.

Whether this critical new innovation for MTIP funding is included as a strategy within the overall "Green Economy/Freight Mobility" category, or whether it is ultimately funded as a stand-alone category, this focus offers the region a much greater chance of leveraging discretionary dollars. This fiscal stewardship constitutes another component of economic sustainability.

Two subsets of this category are critical to freight: project development and freight-oriented regional planning.

Project Development: Preliminary engineering or other technical work needed to move large projects through the pipeline, to be ready for programming (funding). Types of projects include:

- Projects that meet the "green economy/freight" criteria
- Projects that support the efficient movement of freight (because more efficient is cleaner)
- Development of large projects to relieve freight bottlenecks
- Small scale demonstration or pilot projects that could be scaled up and/or permit technology transfer (e.g., alternative fuel projects)

Freight-Oriented Regional Planning: General or mode-specific freight plans and studies that focus on where and how to invest to reduce freight costs and environmental footprint. Examples are:

- A regional freight rail study that tells us how to get more goods and people moving by rail—and what investments are needed from private and public sectors
- Community/industrial economic development analysis to help us direct upcoming freight mobility funding sources to achieve our desired regional outcomes
- Hazardous materials or oversize materials routing plans to help reduce land use conflicts and safety/security/environmental problems in the future