

## Progress on Stimulus

100 member projects inform needs, compete for funding, frame future opportunities

Many readers will recall that GPCOG surveyed its members and partners this past winter, asking for 'shovel ready' (meaning designed, permitted and ready to build) and 'shovel worthy' (meaning needing additional development) projects that needed either partial or full funding to break ground and create jobs.

The survey response was strong. We received information on 100 projects totaling almost \$500,000,000 in estimated costs. 58 projects had some level of existing or committed funding while the rest needed full financial support.

29 municipalities and partner organizations submitted projects from locations all over our region. Roughly 60% of the projects were transportation related, along with 15% coming from waste and wastewater projects, with power and energy, marine infrastructure, parks, and housing projects rounding out the list.

GPCOG has used the project list for three efforts.

First, early in the New Year, we shared the list with state and federal officials, including the Mills Administration and our Congressional delegation, to inform them of the need for new stimulus investment in our region. Federal and state decision makers have seen the geographic scope and the diversity of project needs in our region as they shape recovery and resilience efforts.

Second, we've used the list to inform our members about funding opportunities, particularly the new 'Congressionally Directed Spending' (CDS) process in the House and the Senate which many readers will remember as 'earmarks.'

Many of the projects identified in the survey were submitted by our members for CDS consideration. Also, PACTS (the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System) incorporated the survey list in its recent public process to select a limited number of transportation priorities to submit as CDS candidates.

Finally, GPCOG continues to use the list to connect emerging federal stimulus opportunities (including the American Rescue Plan Act and the still evolving American Jobs Plan) with local and regional investment needs. Our staff is carefully reviewing projects and looking for matching state or federal funding opportunities across the region.

In short, thanks to our members and partners' information, we're making progress on attracting stimulus funding to our region.

And as the year goes on, GPCOG will continue to work to bring stimulus opportunities to our region.

We'll identify opportunities to bundle projects together to make them more competitive, and we'll reach out to communities when we see funding streams that can support local projects. We'll keep working with our Congressional delegation and the state as new stimulus and recovery opportunities unfold.

And most importantly, we'll keep working with you to make sure important investment opportunities in our region have the chance to attract federal funding.