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Local entities may get a trickle of stimulus \$\$\$

By Andrea Kelly

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The share of the economic stimulus package coming to local governments in Arizona could be as low as 22 percent of the total money the state receives, local officials said Thursday.

The state could receive as much as \$522 million, but less than 40 percent may trickle down to smaller governments, and that number could sink as low as 22 percent, said John Liosatos, transportation planning manager for the Pima Association of Governments.

The actual delegation of the funding will likely be up to the state, and the State Transportation Board is scheduled to talk about the issue at its monthly meeting this morning in Phoenix.

Not all of the requirements for the projects have been specified, but the state and the Pima Association of Governments are working on a list of projects that could get done at various funding levels. The list includes projects that could be ready to go to bid for construction within 90 days, Liosatos said at the Pima Association of Governments' regional council meeting Thursday.

The state has heard the federal government may require that 50 percent of the funding be designated for projects within the first 120 days, and the rest may have to be earmarked within one year, said Si Schorr, who represents the Tucson and Pima County metropolitan area on the State Transportation Board.

The projects would have to be completed within three years, Schorr said.

Though no requirements have yet been lifted for stimulus projects, Tucson Transportation Director Jim Glock said he hopes ADOT realizes how long it can take to get environmental and other approvals from the state.

"We are concerned ADOT is unaware of the issues," Glock said.

Glock said he hopes the state can find a way to address the slow approvals if only for projects slated to receive stimulus funding.

Most of the projects on the region's list are pavement preservation, which is maintenance on existing road surfaces. Many governments have long delayed this maintenance because they didn't have a funding source.

The projects on the list are constantly being updated, Liosatos said.

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