C-P earmarks funds for street projects

By JIM McDONNELL
Advocate staff writer

Mayor Tom Ed McHugh's administration hopes to make some progress in local roadway construction needs by using federal urban system funds and reallocating dormant federal highway money to other projects.

According to a report issued to Metro Council members Monday, the administration has earmarked 19 projects for funding either totally or partially with federal urban system money.

Chief Administrative Officer Graydon Walker said the projects are not listed according to priority and the administration's ability to fund them will depend on how much federal and local highway money is available at any given time.

Between now and 1991, according to projections, the city-parish will have $9.5 million in federal urban system money on hand. To complete every project on the list, however, would require about $19 million in federal money and another $5.4 million in local matching funds, according to official estimates.

The administration has also taken steps to assist the state with two area highway projects by transferring dormant federal highway funds to other uses.

McHugh has asked state Secretary of Transportation and Development Neil Wagoner to take the action necessary to secure federal transfer of $5 million appropriated for construction of a westbound on-ramp on Interstate 10 at College Drive to another project, the widening of Siegen Lane from I-10 to Airline Highway.

Also, at the administration's request, the Metro Council has authorized the transfer of $1.8 million in federal urban system money to the state for use in a state project involving construction along Jefferson Highway from Airline Highway to Drusilla Lane.

The most expensive projects on the administration's urban system list issued Monday are two $5 million projects involving South Choctaw Drive and Tiger Bend Road.

The portion of South Choctaw between the existing four-lane section and Monterey Road would be transformed from a two-lane, open-ditch road to a four-lane, curb-and-gutter street.

The two-lane, open-ditch stretch of Tiger Bend Road would be built into a five-lane, curb-and-gutter street from Jefferson Highway to Antioch Road and a portion of the roadway would be relocated to straighten the road near Hickory Ridge Subdivision.

North Sherwood Forest Drive from Florida to just south of South Choctaw Drive would be built up from a two-lane open ditch street to a five-lane, curb-and-gutter street at a cost of $2 million.

Millerville Road, in conjunction with state construction of I-12 interchange, would be widened from two-lane open-ditch to five-lane curb-and-gutter, along with widening intersections at each end at Old Hammond Highway and South Harrell's Ferry, at a cost of $4.13 million.

Monterrey Drive from South Choctaw to Greenwell Springs Road would go from a two-lane open-ditch road to a five-lane curb-and-gutter street at a cost of $2 million.

McHugh Road from Groom Road to the northern city limits of Baker would be widened and straightened at its northern end into a two-lane, curb-and-gutter street at a cost of $1 million.

The intersection of South Choctaw Drive at North Sherwood Forest Drive would be widened at a cost of $1 million.

These and several other less costly improvements involving road construction would be paid for with 75 percent federal money and 25 percent local money.

For some of the projects on the list, no local matching funds would be required. About $2.35 million in traffic signal improvements would be paid for exclusively with federal funds, according to the report.

Railroad crossing improvements near the School Board office on Choctaw just east of Ardenwood and on Stevedale Road would cost $100,000 each and require no local funding, the report says.

Upgrading the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad crossing at Sorrel Avenue just south of Choctaw includes road elevation and would require $150,000 in federal and $50,000 in local funds.

The list also includes improvements expected to cost less than $300,000 each for South Choctaw Drive at Airway Drive, Sherwood Forest Boulevard at Coursey Boulevard, Sullivan Road at Lovett Road, O'Neal Lane at George O'Neal Lane, Coursey Boulevard at Stumberg Lane, Florida Boulevard at Flannery Road, and Lanier Drive at Greenwell Springs.