



Board Report

File #: 2020-0049, File Type: Program

Agenda Number:

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE MARCH 18, 2020

SUBJECT: OPEN STREETS GRANT PROGRAM CYCLE FOUR

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE the Metro Open Streets Grant Program Cycle Four Application Package and Guidelines.

ISSUE

In June 2013 the Board introduced Motion 72 (Attachment A), directing staff to award up to \$2 million annually to support Open Streets events. Cycle Four Application and Guidelines (Attachment B) build on the Cycles One, Two, Three and 2020 Mini-Cycle framework and support a competitive, regional, and equitable process. Board authorization of the Metro Open Streets Cycle Four competitive grant program framework and release of competitive application package and guidelines are needed in order to proceed.

BACKGROUND

Open Streets events are one-day events that temporarily close streets to automotive traffic and open them to people walking, bicycling, or rolling. Cycles One, Two, Three, and the 2020 Mini-Cycle of the Metro Open Streets Grant Program were successful in encouraging participants to ride transit, walk and ride a bicycle on urban streets, possibly for the first time. The program contributes to meeting Metro objectives by encouraging future transportation mode shift and encouraging civic engagement to foster the development of multi-modal policies and infrastructure at the local level. The Metro Open Streets Grant Program provides opportunities for economic development and the improvement of public health by getting people out of their cars and onto the streets, patronizing local businesses, while exercising and interacting with their community.

The Metro Outreach booth at Open Streets events also provides a platform for public input on Metro active transportation corridor projects and programs, such as the LA River Gap Closure, Rail to River, and the Metro Bike Share Program, as well as various transit corridor projects throughout Los Angeles County. During Cycle Four events, the Metro booth will continue to provide a platform for Metro departments to promote Metro projects and programs in the communities where constituents live and work.

DISCUSSION

Cycle One Implementation

In response to Motion 72, staff developed a comprehensive framework and competitive grant process to solicit and evaluate applications for Open Streets events throughout Los Angeles County. At the September 18, 2013 meeting, the Metro Board awarded \$3.7 million to fund 12 separate event applications. One event was subsequently cancelled, and the funding was reprogrammed to Cycle Two. Of the 11 events completed, nearly 84 miles of streets were closed to cars and opened to pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized forms of transportation across 18 separate jurisdictions. The events allowed participants to experience the region in a car-free and/or car-light manner and ride transit possibly for the first time.

To support cities in executing Open Streets events, staff held a half-day workshop prior to accepting applications that highlighted the objectives of the program; provided application assistance; described the process for planning, implementation and reimbursement; and showcased examples of previous successful regional events.

Cycle Two Implementation

On March 16, 2016, the Metro Board authorized staff to release the Cycle Two Application and Guidelines. An Amendment by Board Member Hilda Solis was included that asked staff to seek opportunities to work with Councils of Governments and provided additional points to multi-jurisdictional events and events that include disadvantaged communities as determined by CalEnviroScreen. Staff provided outreach to cities across LA County and hosted application workshops at Metro Headquarters and Councils of Government offices in LA County. In total, 19 competitive applications were received. In September 2016, the Board awarded \$4.04 million to 17 Cycle Two events scheduled through December 2018, programmed \$200,000 in supplemental funds to a Cycle One event that was postponed due to natural disaster, and reprogrammed \$100,000 from a cancelled Cycle One event to Cycle Two. Thirteen (13) of the 17 awarded Cycle Two events included disadvantaged communities and seven (7) were multi-jurisdictional. In total 14 Cycle Two events were delivered totaling 76 miles of car-free streets.

Open Streets Evaluation Study

Staff released a Request for Proposals Package (RFP) in the spring of 2016 seeking the professional services of a contractor to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the Cycles One and Two events utilizing grantee's Cycle One post-implementation reports, transit TAP data and other sources. Due to inconsistency in the data collected independently by cities during Cycle One, the contractor collected standardized data at the Cycle Two events. Some key findings of the evaluation study indicate that:

- Systemwide rail boarding increased an average of 7% on the day of the events compared with other typical weekend days;
- Lines directly adjacent to events saw the largest increase, with Metro Gold Line boarding increasing by 32% during the May 31, 2015 CicLAvia event in Pasadena;
- Overall sales of TAP Cards increased an average of 11% systemwide on the day of the events

- indicating introduction of new riders to the system; and
- People ride bikes more often after attending Open Streets events for the first time.

Cycle Three and 2020 Mini-Cycle Implementation

On September 27, 2018, the Metro Board awarded \$4 million in funding to 15 new Open Streets events scheduled through December 2020. The Board also reprogrammed \$447,000 from two cancelled Cycle Two events toward Cycle Three, which received the largest number of funding applications of any Cycle to-date due to extensive community outreach to notify Los Angeles County jurisdictions of the program. In total 26 applications were received, of which 15 received funding. A motion put forth by Directors Hahn, Garcia, and Dupont-Walker directed staff to report back on the regional diversity of previous cycles and potential strategies to ensure regional diversity of funding in future cycles; and to create a \$1 million dollar Mini-Cycle in 2020.

After initial authorization and subsequent workshops, staff returned to the Board for approval authorizing the 2020 Mini-Cycle. In May 2019, the Board awarded \$1,053,341 to five (5) new Open Streets events scheduled through December 2020, reprogrammed \$242,000 from one cancelled Cycle Three event towards the next-highest-scored Cycle Three event, Beach Streets Downtown, in accordance with funding policy; and reserved the remaining \$44,347 in Board-awarded Cycle Three and 2020 Mini-Cycle funds to be reprogrammed in any future Board-authorized funding Cycles of the program. To date, 8 Cycle Three and Mini-Cycle events have been implemented totaling nearly 40 miles of streets temporarily closed to automotive traffic.

Cycle Four Initiation

The success of the Open Streets Grant Program-funded events to date has been the result of the strong partnership between Metro; the grantee cities; the Council of Governments; and nonprofit community-based organizations (CBOs), such as CicLAvia, Bikeable Communities, Community Arts Resources, BikeSGV, and others. Staff will encourage similar partnerships with the Cycle Four Open Streets Grant Program solicitation process.

The proposed Application Package and Guidelines for Cycle Four are informed by feedback from applicants, grantees and participants of Cycles One, Two, Three, and the 2020 Mini-Cycle as well as recommendations solicited from the Open Streets Evaluation Study. In response to feedback and in order to ensure that the Cycle Four program continues to increase multi-modal access, advance active transportation at the local level, and encourage transit usage, the Cycle Four Application Package and Guidelines emphasize the following:

- The Board-directed funding ceiling of \$500,000 per single event will remain in effect and continue to be implemented during Cycle Four.
- An increased focus on regional distribution and disadvantaged communities will continue to be implemented.
- An increased focus on innovative events that encourage new and increased participation in Open Streets will also continue to be implemented.

During Cycle Three of the Open Streets Grant Program significantly more funding requests were

received than available. Because of this, staff is recommending to increase the annual allocation from \$2 million to \$2.5 million. The increase in funding is consistent with the September 2018 Board Motion 16.1 which directed staff to create a \$1 million 2020 Mini-Cycle with a focus on ensuring regional distribution of events.

Equity Platform

By providing additional scoring points to events held in disadvantaged communities during the competitive application review process, as defined by the CalEnviroScreen, Cycle Four of the Open Streets Grant Program advances the Equity Platform. Metro has the opportunity to provide these communities with informational resources on a variety of transportation options and ongoing and planned initiatives with community members in the communities where they live.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Authorizing the Application Package and Guidelines for Cycle Four of the Open Streets Grant Program will not have any adverse safety impacts on our employees and patrons, and increases safety for people walking, bicycling or rolling at the events.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no impact or amendment required to the FY 2020 budget authorizing the Metro Open Streets Grant Program Cycle Four Application Package and Guidelines.

Cycle Four funding will be requested during the FY 2021 and FY 2022 budget process. Staff will work with Regional Programming, Budget and Local Programs, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to identify a funding source through FY 2022. As this is a multi-year program, the cost center manager and the Chief Planning Officer will be responsible for budgeting funds in future Cycles.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The Metro Open Streets Grant Program Cycle Four aligns well with Strategic Plan Goal 3. By introducing local communities and stakeholders to the value of car-free and car-light mobility and providing opportunities to experience this mobility firsthand and possibly for the first time, Metro is leveraging its investment through the Open Streets Grant Program to promote the development of communities that are not reliant on personal automobile.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board has the option to not authorize the Cycle Four initiation. This alternative is not recommended as it does not align with Board goals to increase awareness of opportunities throughout Los Angeles County for taking public transportation, walking, riding and rolling.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, staff will release the Metro Open Streets Grant Program Cycle Four Application Package and Guidelines. An easy to fill out web-based application will be utilized, and an informational workshop will be held for applicants. It is anticipated that the application will be released in spring 2020 with staff returning for Board approval of the Cycle Four Open Streets Grant Program in early fall 2020.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - June 27, 2013 Board Motion #72

Attachment B - Metro Open Streets Grant Program Cycle Four Application Package and Guidelines

Attachment C - Metro Open Streets Grant Program Evaluation Study

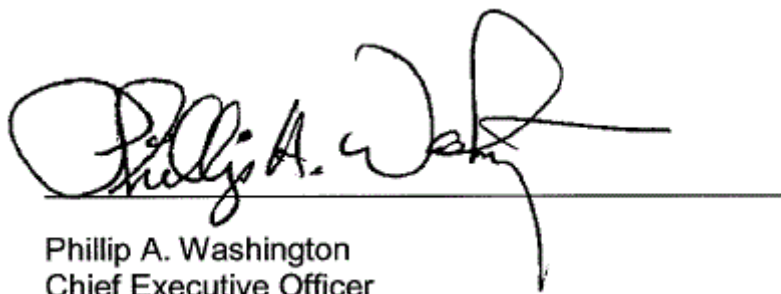
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