



Board Report

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PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

JUNE 17, 2020

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

JUNE 18, 2020

Motion by:

DIRECTORS BUTTS, BONIN, GARCIA, GARCETTI, and FASANA

Modernizing the Metro Highway Program

On January 13, 2020, Chair Butts appointed a subcommittee of board staff to reconcile conflicting interpretations of policy direction with regard to the Metro Highway Department. His direction to the subcommittee was to “chart a roadmap toward a more future-oriented highway program that reflects the Board’s strategic priorities of efficiency (defined multimodally), safety, equity, and sustainability.” The scope of the subcommittee’s work included reviewing and recommending changes to relevant guidelines, policies, and procedures related to project scoping, prioritization, funding/eligibility, and stakeholder engagement.

In October 2014, the Metro Board adopted the Complete Streets Policy, marking a shift in philosophy from traditional highway capacity projects toward comprehensive, multimodal planning and implementation.

A key policy goal, especially in light of the Covid 19 Pandemic crisis, should aim to reduce vehicle miles travelled by expanding the traditional definition of Metro’s highway program including geometric changes, infrastructure and technologies in public rights of way that support transit, ridesharing and working from home.

In 2016, Measure M continued this trajectory by diversifying the types of projects and programs included in the expenditure plan, incorporating stakeholder input via a “bottom up” planning process, and giving subregions a more direct role in setting funding priorities on an ongoing basis. This decentralization of highway planning and the increasing prevalence of projects on city streets makes it timely to assess the structure, policies, and procedures of the Metro Highway Program to identify opportunities for increased alignment with current board policies, funding priorities, and street design best practices.

The subcommittee focused its recommendations on how the Metro Highway Program can better fulfill Metro’s role as a planner and funder, as well as a leader. These functions are traditionally

associated with planning, rather than construction. The subcommittee expressed confidence in the Highway Program's capabilities for engineering and project delivery of freeway projects. These recommendations are intended to guide the development of highway improvements without altering the project lists approved by voters.

On May 21, 2020, the subcommittee transmitted their final report to the Board Chair for review and consideration by the Board. The report outlines recommended actions that Metro should take to modernize the Highway Program, including broadening its mission, expanding funding eligibility, recommitting to the previously adopted Metro Complete Streets Policy, and updating performance metrics. The report is attached to this motion and is incorporated by reference.

SUBJECT: MODERNIZING THE METRO HIGHWAY PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Motion by Directors Butts, Bonin, Garcia, Garcetti, and Fasana that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. Circulate the recommendations in this report for stakeholder input, including the Policy Advisory Council (PAC), the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and Councils of Governments (COGs).
- B. Initiate amendment processes for the Measure R Highway Program Eligibility Criteria and the Measure M Guidelines to clarify eligibility for transit, active transportation, and complete streets improvements, as described in Attachments A and B, and gather stakeholder input on proposed amendments concurrent with A, above; and
- C. Report back to the Planning & Programming Committee in 90 days with a summary of stakeholder input, Metro staff responses to recommendations, and proposed criteria/guideline amendments for the Board's consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Recommended Improvements to Metro Highway Program