



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 7.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE APRIL 20, 2022

SUBJECT: FUNDING AWARD RECOMMENDATION FOR FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) SECTION 5310 (CRRSAA AND ARPA FUNDING) GRANT PROGRAM

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDER:

- A. APPROVING the recommended Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funding awards totaling \$2,817,612, as authorized under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and American Rescue Plan Act funds for Operating Projects as shown in Attachments A, B and C;
- B. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or their designee to negotiate and execute pass-through funding agreements with the sub-recipient agencies receiving awards; and
- C. CERTIFYING that the Section 5310 funding is included in the locally developed 2021-2024 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Los Angeles County ("Coordinated Plan") that was developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors and individuals with disabilities, as well as by representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human service providers and other members of the public.

ISSUE

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocated \$3,064,461 in FTA Section 5310 funds to the three urbanized areas in Los Angeles County. In March and July 2021, the Metro Board directed staff to initiate a competitive solicitation for these funds. Staff notified the Board in October 2021 that a solicitation would be released to existing sub-recipients. Applications were due on November 24, 2021. This report presents the funding recommendations for Board approval and summarizes the solicitation and evaluation process.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is the Designated Recipient of

FTA Section 5310 Program funds in urbanized areas of Los Angeles County. Metro is responsible for fund planning, programming, distribution, management, and sub-recipient oversight.

DISCUSSION

Program Description

The Section 5310 Program provides operating and capital assistance for public transportation projects that i) are planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable; ii) exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990; iii) improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit, and/or iv) provide alternatives to public transportation projects that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Funding Availability

A total of \$3,064,461 in Section 5310 funds were made available through the solicitation process, with specific amounts allocated to the following Urbanized Areas (UZAs): \$2,517,612 for Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, \$227,625 for Santa Clarita, and \$319,224 for Lancaster-Palmdale. These available Section 5310 funds include CRRSAA and ARPA funds appropriated for COVID-19 relief to support the transit industry during the COVID-19 public health emergency, in addition to unobligated funds that were appropriated in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020.

Application Process

On October 1, 2021, a notice of funding availability was transmitted to current Metro sub-recipients and posted on the Metro website. Metro hosted one information workshop on October 19, 2021. Fourteen responsive applications requesting over \$3.53 million in federal grants were received by the November 24, 2021 deadline.

Evaluation and Ranking

Two panels were convened to evaluate the applications. The ranking of each project is shown in Attachments A, B and C. Funding was allocated to the applications that ranked highest until the funds were depleted. Attachment D contains the Board-approved evaluation criteria applied by panel members in scoring the proposals.

Consistent with Board direction from Board Report dated April 17, 2019, Approve Solicitation and Allocation Process, funding awards are limited to proposals with a final competitive score of 70-100. However, due to the competitive nature of this solicitation, several projects scoring above 70 were not recommended for funding. Preliminary funding recommendations were distributed to proposing agencies on February 8, 2022. A total of ten projects were recommended for funding, including one that was partially funded, and four projects were not recommended for funding.

The Board-approved process ensures that the Section 5310 funds are fairly and equitably allocated to eligible sub-recipients. Where feasible, projects are coordinated with transportation services

assisted by other federal agencies.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Appeals

On March 2, 2022, TAC heard from two applicants appealing their preliminary award recommendations. One of the agencies appealing was Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) of Los Angeles County, which received partial preliminary funding. The other agency, Westside Pacific Villages (WPV), did not receive any preliminary funding. After hearing the presentations, TAC approved a motion supporting the preliminary funding recommendation and recommended further that the funds set-aside for the TAC appeals process be split between WDACS and WPV, offering both a partial award with the remaining unallocated Section 5310 balance for the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim UZA. Metro staff agrees with the TAC recommendation and has reflected this in the attached award recommendations.

Administrative Scope Changes

Grant sub-recipients may request to re-scope their project(s) from what is approved by the Board. The proposed recommendation will delegate to the CEO or their designee the authority to administratively approve minor changes to the scope of work. Minor changes include those which meet all the following criteria: 1) The scope change is consistent with the defined project limits as approved by the Board; 2) the scope of work, as modified, continues to meet the original intent of the approved project scope; and 3) to the extent that the scope change results in a reduced total project cost, the new total project cost shall be within 20% of the original total project cost.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Approval of the recommendation will have no impact on safety.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY22 budget includes a total of \$5.17 million for the Section 5310 Program in Cost Center 0441, Subsidies to Others, under Project 500005 (Seniors and Disabilities - S5310).

Since these are multi-year projects, the cost center manager and the Chief Planning Officer will be responsible for budgeting project expenses in future years.

Impact to Budget

The source of funds for the Program is Federal Section 5310, which is not eligible for Metro's bus and rail operating and capital budgets.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The Section 5310 Program focuses on a target population of older adults and persons with

disabilities who face unique challenges in accessing mobility options in LA County. Metro recently engaged these groups and other stakeholders to assess disparities as part of the Coordinated Plan update in 2020. After considering data on disparities related to income, disability, and age, and with input from the public, Metro approved a Coordinated Plan (2021-2024) that focuses on the mobility needs of the target population-seniors and persons with disabilities as a demographic priority. Metro carried this consideration through the current solicitation. Consistent with the goals of the Section 5310 (CRSSAA and ARPA funding) Grant Program, Metro evaluated and prioritized project proposals based on demonstrated funding need related to COVID-19 impacts, as well as project feasibility and readiness. Additionally, in an effort to gather data that might aid future disparity analysis, applicants identified service areas at the zip code level. This information may be used in future Coordinated Plan updates to define more acutely areas or populations of higher need within the target population.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The recommendation supports the following goals of the Strategic Plan:

Goal 1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling; and
Goal 3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may choose not to approve all or some of the recommended actions. Staff does not recommend this alternative because, without Board approval, Metro cannot fulfill its responsibilities as the Designated Recipient of Section 5310 Program funds and the projects recommended for funding awards in Attachments A, B and C would not be implemented. A portion of funds will lapse this year if left unobligated for eligible projects within a certain amount of time after appropriation. Without Board approval, Metro could risk losing \$410,227 in Section 5310 Program funds that will lapse if not obligated in an FTA grant by September 30, 2022.

NEXT STEPS

With Board approval, staff will send a notification of final funding award to each project sponsor and will submit the Section 5310 grant applications to the FTA on their behalf. Once the FTA awards the grants, staff will develop and execute grant pass-through agreements with those agencies as sub-recipients. As the Designated Recipient for these funds, staff will work to ensure that sub-recipients comply with all federal rules, regulations and requirements. At the conclusion of this programming cycle, there will be remaining balances in Section 5310 fund apportionments for the Lancaster-Palmdale UZA (approx. \$169,224) and Santa Clarita UZA (approx. \$77,625), which will be allocated to Access Services' operations, consistent with past practice (e.g., Board Boxes dated June 22, 2021: New Funding Award for the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Grant Program, and October 1, 2021: Funding Opportunity: Federal Section 5310 Program).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim Urbanized Area
Attachment B - Lancaster-Palmdale Urbanized Area

Attachment C - Santa Clarita Urbanized Area

Attachment D - Evaluation Criteria

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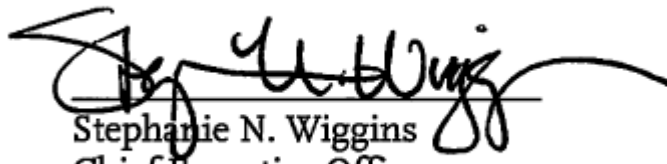
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