



Board Report

File #: 2023-0284, **File Type:** Program

Agenda Number: 9.

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
June 14, 2023**

**SUBJECT: FUNDING AWARD RECOMMENDATION FOR FEDERAL TRANSIT
ADMINISTRATION SECTION 5310 GRANT PROGRAM**

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDER:

- A. APPROVING the recommended Section 5310 awards totaling \$13,891,798 as shown in Attachments A, B and C, available to Metro through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program;
- B. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or their designee to negotiate and execute pass-through funding agreements with the subrecipient agencies receiving awards;
- C. DELEGATING to the CEO or their designee the authority to administratively approve minor changes to the scope of previously approved Section 5310 funding awards;
- D. CERTIFYING that the Section 5310 funds are fairly and equitably allocated to eligible subrecipients and, where feasible, projects are coordinated with transportation services assisted by other federal departments and agencies; and
- E. 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 FTA Section 5310 Program provides operating and capital assistance for public transportation projects that improve mobility for seniors (65+) and individuals with disabilities (any age) by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available.

Following Board authorization (File #2022-0659), staff conducted a competitive solicitation for project proposals for the fiscal year (FY) 2021-2023 allocation of Section 5310 funds. Staff requests Board approval to fund the proposed projects as shown in Attachments A, B and C.

BACKGROUND

On April 23, 2014, the Governor of the State of California designated Metro as the Designated Recipient of Section 5310 funds apportioned to large-urbanized areas within Los Angeles County. On November 13, 2014, the Metro Board authorized the triennial process to allocate available Section 5310 funding to state, city, and/or nonprofit agencies as subrecipients for Metro in its role as the Designated Recipient. Metro is responsible for fund planning, programming, distribution, management, and subrecipient 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

On December 5, 2022, Metro announced the availability of \$13,845,982 in Section 5310 funds through a competitive solicitation process, which included the actual federal fiscal year (FFY) 2021 and 2022 funding apportionment amounts, and the projected FFY 2023 apportionment amount. The actual FFY 2023 funding level was finalized on May 10, 2023, and was slightly higher than the projected amount, increasing the total available funding to \$13,891,798. Metro allocated this additional funding to the next highest ranked projects in each Urbanized Area (UZA).

Overall funding levels for each UZA are: \$13,130,233 for Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, \$444,591 for Lancaster-Palmdale, and \$316,974 for Santa Clarita.

Application Process

As part of the December 5, 2022, notice of funding availability, Metro solicited project proposals in accordance with FTA Section 5310 guidelines and with input from a working group consisting of internal and external stakeholders throughout Los Angeles County, including the Bus Operations Subcommittee (BOS), the Local Transit Systems Subcommittee (LTSS), the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), and the Aging and Disability Transportation Network (ADTN).

The solicitation was advertised via The Source and was distributed to over 7,000 interested parties and potential applicants via mass email. The information was also posted on the Metro website.

Metro hosted an informational webinar on December 15, 2022, which was attended by more than 100 participants to review program requirements, the application package, project evaluation and the selection process. Private nonprofit organizations, state or local governmental authorities, and operators of public transportation were eligible to apply.

Evaluation of Proposals

Metro received 36 responsive applications requesting over \$17 million in federal grant funds by the February 27, 2023 deadline. Applications were evaluated and scored by a panel using the board-approved evaluation criteria identified in Attachment D. The panel was comprised of internal staff, and volunteers representing public transit agencies, BOS, and Access Services. The final project rankings are shown in Attachments A, B, and C.

Final rankings were based on the average scores of the panel members assigned to evaluate the application. Funding was allocated to the applications ranked highest to lowest, until funds were depleted. A minimum score of 70 was required to be recommended for an award.

Preliminary Funding Recommendations

Metro issued preliminary funding recommendations on April 6, 2023, for 95% of the projected available funding. These recommendations included: \$12,432,985 for 25 projects and one partial project for the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim UZA; \$418,683 for one project and one partial for the Lancaster-Palmdale UZA; and \$302,016 for one project for the Santa Clarita UZA. The remaining 5% of available funds (\$692,300) were set aside for Metro's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) appeals process.

Metro TAC Appeals

On May 3, 2023, TAC heard applicant appeals from one applicant for the Lancaster-Palmdale UZA set-aside funding and four for the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim UZA set-aside funding. These appellants met the minimum score required to be recommended for an award but fell under the funding line due to the depletion of funds. Five percent of the available funding per UZA was set aside for this appeals process.

After hearing the one presentation for the Lancaster-Palmdale UZA funding, TAC approved a motion recommending that the Antelope Valley Transit Authority be fully funded with additional funding (\$9,183). After hearing the four presentations for the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim UZA funding, TAC approved a motion to fully fund the City of Monrovia with additional funding (\$140,069), partially fund the Institute for the Redesign of Learning (\$180,000), fully fund Westside Pacific Villages (\$132,750), and partially fund New Horizons with the remaining available funding (\$201,500) plus any additional funding made available after the FFY 2023 funding levels are finalized. Metro staff incorporated TAC's recommendation into the final awards.

Administrative Scope Changes

Grant subrecipients 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; 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; and 4) the parties shall maintain the original grant to grantee funding commitment ratio (for example, if the grantee originally committed 20% of the total project cost, with the remaining 80% comprised of Section 5310 funds, those percentages shall apply to the new total project cost).

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Approval of the recommendation will have no impact on the safety of Metro's customers and employees.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no budget impact in FY 2022-23. Since these are multi-year projects, the cost center manager for 0441 (Planning - Subsidies to Others) and the Chief Planning Officer will be responsible for budgeting in future years.

Impact to Budget

FTA Section 5310 funds will fully fund the recommended action. No other Metro funds will be required to manage, administer, and oversee the program. These funds are not eligible for Metro's bus and rail operating and capital expenditures.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Consistent with the goals of the Section 5310 Grant Program, Metro evaluated, and prioritized project proposals based on the Coordinated Plan consistency and prioritization of projects, ability to enhance mobility for the target population, demonstrated funding need, as well as project feasibility and readiness. The Metro TAC similarly considered this in their evaluation of project appeals. Additionally, in an effort to gather data that might aid future disparity analysis, applicants identified service areas at the zip code level. The next Coordinated Plan update is scheduled to begin in FY 2024 and will be an opportunity for Metro and stakeholders to analyze any geographic and other disparities within the target population and to prioritize funding as necessary to further promote equitable services.

Metro does not offer dedicated transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities but relies on proposals from senior and/or disabled transportation providers to fulfill a portion of the demand for those services with funding through the Section 5310 Program. The recommended awards would fund 31 projects that would deploy senior and disabled transportation services countywide, covering the large-urbanized areas of Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, Lancaster-Palmdale, and Santa Clarita. Some projects serve areas within city boundaries (e.g. Pasadena, Whittier); others are countywide (e.g. County New Freedom Service); and others, primarily nonprofit organizations, have broad catchment areas that often overlap (e.g. Valley Village in the San Fernando Valley and PIH

Health in the 25-mi area around Downey). The range of service areas captures all Equity Focus Communities (EFC) within the county, sometimes more than once. Approximately 38,000 seniors and/or persons with disabilities will be afforded mobility as a result of the projects, with approximately 488,000 one-way trips provided annually.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

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 could elect not to approve the recommended action. Staff does not recommend this alternative because without Board approval, Metro cannot fulfill its responsibilities as the Designated Recipient of Section 5310 Program funds. Metro could also risk losing program funding if no action is taken to use the funds for achieving program goals.

NEXT STEPS

With Board approval, staff will submit a Section 5310 grant application to the FTA on behalf of all Board-approved projects for Los Angeles County. Once the grant is awarded, staff will execute pass-through funding agreements with the successful applicants as subrecipients. As the Designated Recipient for these funds, Metro staff will monitor project implementation, and work to ensure that subrecipients comply with all federal rules, regulations, and requirements. Staff will meet with any applicants that request a debriefing to explain the evaluation and scoring of their project proposal(s) and help them better prepare and improve for future funding opportunities.

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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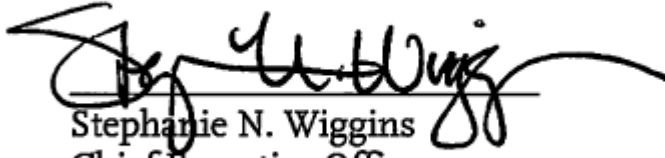
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