



## Board Report

File #: 2019-0671, File Type: Policy

Agenda Number: 13.

### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE OCTOBER 16, 2019

**SUBJECT: STATE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

APPROVE:

- A. the State Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 5 Grant Assistance Priorities in Attachment A; and
- B. the regional ATP Point Assignment Method as described in Attachment B.

#### **ISSUE**

Cycle 5 of the ATP will award \$445 million over Fiscal Years (FY) 2022-2025. Policies for the provision of grant assistance as well as the assignment of the ten points for the Large Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) competition need to be balanced so that, on the one hand, they create a competitive group of projects likely to be a good fit for the Statewide ATP selection criteria and therefore maximize funding for Los Angeles County projects, while on the other hand, incentivize project sponsors to develop projects to implement Metro plans.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The ATP is a competitive funding program created in 2013 by Senate Bill 99 and Assembly Bill 101 to encourage increased use of active modes of transportation such as bicycling and walking. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) administers the ATP as a multi-tiered program with various sub-competitions. All Los Angeles County candidate projects not awarded funding through the Statewide Competition will then be considered in the Large MPO competition, which allocates 40% of the funding available. For the Large MPO competition, Senate Bill 99 requires the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to select projects in consultation with its member counties, which is accomplished by Metro's assignment of up to ten points to be added to each project's Statewide Competition score. Four cycles have been administered to date, awarding approximately \$459 million for Los Angeles County projects for the Statewide and MPO Competitions combined.

## **DISCUSSION**

As the ATP is a rigorous, competitive program, Metro has provided grant-writing services for Metro project managers as well as local jurisdictions for the past four cycles to ensure that strong applications are developed to secure maximum funding for Los Angeles County. Of the \$459 million awarded for Los Angeles County, \$234 million, or 51% was awarded for Metro-assisted applications. Cycle 5 represents an opportunity to continue and fine-tune priorities and policies to incentivize the development of projects that align with ATP criteria and priorities, as well as Metro plans and priorities.

### **Grant Assistance Priorities**

For ATP Cycle 5 Metro staff proposes to continue applying the framework approved by the Board in October 2017 (File ID 2017-0602) to ensure the selection of projects which are likely to fit well with the State ATP selection criteria, and contribute to implementing Metro plans and priorities. The pre-existing framework calls for:

- 75% of overall grant assistance directed to first/last mile projects sponsored by Metro and other local jurisdictions;
- 25% of overall grant assistance directed to other state ATP-eligible projects including but not limited to Call for Projects, LA River Path, Rail to River, Regional Bike Share, and the I-710 Active Transportation Corridor; and
- In all cases, if requests for grant writing assistance exceed available resources, priority will be assigned to project sponsors that can clearly demonstrate resource/technical limitations that would hinder submission of a complete and competitive grant application.

Some degree of modification is needed, however, to reflect lessons learned and updated board priorities. These changes include the following:

- Ensure better delivery outcomes: Since the inception of the ATP, funding for 13 projects or project phases in Los Angeles County have either lapsed or voluntarily returned by project sponsors, affecting ATP awards totaling nearly \$13 million. Staff proposes to address this issue by improving the screening performed as part of the grant assistance project selection process. This will include consideration of the extent and quality of community outreach performed in support of the project and the project sponsors' recent history with successful completion of ATP projects.
- Compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy: An additional change would be to provide priority for project sponsors that are in compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy. This policy applies to competition in the Call for Projects and other Metro funding opportunities. It is necessary to consider Complete Streets Policy compliance in selecting projects for ATP grant assistance because Metro plays a direct role in supporting ATP funding decisions in the Large MPO competition through the assignment of up to ten points.

- Metro Active Transportation Program: Finally, the new priorities will recognize the Metro Active Transport, Transit First/Last Mile (MAT) Program as a Board priority.

These changes are summarized in Attachment A, Grant Assistance Priorities.

### Point Assignment Method

Senate Bill 99 requires SCAG to select projects in consultation with its member counties. SCAG accomplishes this by combining up to 10 points assigned by Metro with up to 100 points from the Statewide Competition score for each ATP project application.

Staff is proposing three modifications to the previous point assignment method.

1. First, as a prerequisite for receiving any of the 10 points assigned by Metro, the project sponsor must have an adopted Complete Streets Policy or other qualifying document. The points will not be awarded until much later, possibly late calendar year 2020, thus local jurisdictions that do not currently have a compliant policy or other qualifying document will have approximately one year to develop and adopt the policy documents to qualify.
2. Second, to ensure successful project delivery, one point will be given for projects that demonstrate sufficient community outreach. This additional point would become one of the two points given for consistency with local and regional plans under the previous policy.
3. Third, to support Metro's Board and Measure M priorities, projects or corridors selected through the MAT Program will be included under eligible Metro Board priorities.

These changes are summarized in Attachment B, Point Assignment Method.

### Equity Platform

This report supports the third pillar of the Equity Platform, Focus and Deliver. The first priority of the ATP Cycle 5 Grant Assistance Framework is to assist project sponsors that can clearly demonstrate resource/technical limitations that prevent development of a competitive application. Three of the 10 points of the Point Assignment Method are assigned to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

The recommendations in this report will provide policies to facilitate the seeking of funds to improve safety, comfort, and convenience to the 75 to 88 percent of Metro customers accessing major transit facilities via active transportation.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Approving the staff recommendations will have no impact on the FY 2020 Budget. Funds for grant

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assistance have already been budgeted in the FY 2020 Budget for Cost Center 4420 under Project 405510, Task 05.05.01. Funds obtained for first/last mile projects will offset the need for resources to implement the Countywide First/Last Mile Priority Network.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

This report seeks approval of policies that will direct funding to meet Vision 2028 goals, especially the first goal, provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board could elect not to adopt a grant assistance framework for Cycle 5. Staff does not recommend this alternative, as policies would default to Cycle 4 policies which do not include considerations for Complete Streets Policy compliance, nor measures to ensure successful project delivery. The Board could elect not to adopt the Point Assignment Method at this time. Metro staff does not recommend this alternative as the method should be adopted timely to allow Los Angeles County project sponsors time to identify and develop projects for the ATP with Metro point assignment method in mind.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval, staff proposes to release a solicitation for Letters of Interest for grant assistance. Projects would be selected by February 2020 and the grant-writing process would begin in March 2020. Applications will be due to the State in summer 2020, with award recommendations published in early 2021. At that time Metro staff will identify up to ten points for consistency with local and regional plans and report back to the Board.

If necessary, staff will return to the Board early to revise the Point Assignment Method to address new policies or other developments.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Grant Assistance Priorities  
Attachment B - Point Assignment Method

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