



## Board Report

File #: 2022-0659, File Type: Program

Agenda Number: 10.

### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 16, 2022

**SUBJECT: FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION SECTION 5310 GRANT PROGRAM  
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2023**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER:

- A. APPROVING the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Solicitation for Proposals for up to \$13,845,982 in funds under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program; and
- B. ALLOCATING \$14,748,981 in FTA Section 5310 funds for Access Services as identified by the FY 2023 funding allocation process for traditional capital projects to support complementary paratransit service required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

#### **ISSUE**

The FTA apportions Section 5310 funding to Urbanized Areas (UZAs) in Los Angeles County. Consistent with Metro's role as the Designated Recipient of these funds, staff is requesting Board approval to issue a competitive funding opportunity and to allocate available FTA Section 5310 program funding for the recommended purposes above.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Metro is the designated recipient of FTA Section 5310 Program funds in the urbanized areas of Los Angeles County (Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim (UZA 60020), Santa Clarita (UZA 61770), and Lancaster-Palmdale (UZA 63570), and is responsible for planning, programming, distribution, management, and sub-recipient oversight. Consistent with Metro's Section 5310 Program Management Plan, Metro periodically allocates FTA Section 5310 funds available to Los Angeles County sub-recipient partners via competitive funding opportunities, Access Services via formula allocation, and for Metro's administrative expenses.

#### **DISCUSSION**

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Program Description

The FTA 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 (65+) and individuals with disabilities (any age) 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 for seniors (65+) and individuals with disabilities (any age). The goals of the FTA Section 5310 Program are to improve mobility for seniors (65+) and individuals with disabilities (any age) by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available.

Private nonprofit (501(c)(3)) organizations or state and local governmental authorities are eligible applicants for funding. Metro must certify that projects receiving FTA Section 5310 funds are included in a locally developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan). Metro adopted the 2021-2024 Coordinated Plan for Los Angeles County in June 2021.

Funding Availability

The recommended FTA Section 5310 funding allocations are derived from \$30,099,962 in FTA funds apportioned to Los Angeles County UZAs as authorized under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and reauthorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law as follows: \$28,450,764 for the Los Angeles County portion of Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim UZA, \$691,112 for the Santa Clarita UZA, and \$958,085 for the Lancaster-Palmdale UZA. These funds include three years of FTA Section 5310 apportionments (FFY 2021, 2022, and projected for FFY 2023). Before staff returns to the Board for approval of funding recommendations (anticipated in Spring 2023), the final FFY 2023 apportionment amount should be available by the FTA, and the allocated amounts per UZA would be adjusted accordingly.

Allocation Process

As the designated recipient, Metro is responsible for allocating FTA Section 5310 funds and must certify that the distribution of funds to its sub-recipients is fair and equitable. Metro convened a Section 5310 Working Group consisting of representatives from the Bus Operations Subcommittee (BOS), the Local Transit Systems Subcommittee (LTSS), the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), and the Aging and Disability Transportation Network (ADTN) to review and discuss the allocation of funds.

The Working Group's recommended allocation (Attachment A) is a hybrid approach for FTA Section 5310 Program funds that allocates 49% of total funds to Access Services for Traditional Capital Projects, 46% of total funds to the competitive project selection process, and the remaining 5% to Metro to administer grant funds, conduct federally required oversight and provide technical assistance to grant sub-recipients. This allocation is the same as the allocation used for the FY 2019 Solicitation for Proposals. The 49% allocation to Access Services is based on the agency's regional reach, needs, and historical shares of FTA Section 5310 funds previously awarded. The 5%

allocation to Metro is sufficient to support program administration activities and is half of the maximum allowed by the FTA.

### Application Package

The FY 2023 Solicitation for Proposals Application Package (Attachment B) is based largely on the application used for the FY 2019 Solicitation for Proposals for Section 5310 funds. Metro solicited and received input from the Section 5310 Working Group on the Application Package content and format, including the evaluation criteria and the selection process. Overall, the Working Group recommended that the format generally remain the same as the application used in FY 2019 with a few updates, mainly to increase funding award limits and revise project evaluation criteria incrementally.

### Evaluation Criteria

Metro staff will screen all proposals for completeness and eligibility by the deadline. All accepted applications will be reviewed and scored to ensure the proposed projects are derived from and consistent with the 2021-2024 Coordinated Plan for Los Angeles County and that they are responsive to the eligibility and evaluation criteria for the program. The final score for each proposal, and corresponding ranking, will be calculated based on the average of all scores from the panel members tasked to evaluate and score the application. Applications will be ranked based on the final scores. With the available funding, Metro will recommend awards to proposals that receive a final score of 70 or above (out of a maximum of 100).

## **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

Approval of the recommended actions will have no adverse safety impacts on Metro's employees or patrons.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is no budget impact in FY 2023. 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

All of the recommended actions will be fully funded through the Federal Section 5310 Program. No other Metro funds will be required to manage, administer, and oversee the program. These FTA Section 5310 Program funds are not eligible for Metro bus and rail operating and capital expenditures.

## **EQUITY PLATFORM**

The FTA Section 5310 Program focuses on a target population of older adults and persons with disabilities who face unique challenges in accessing mobility options in Los Angeles County. Per Metro's 2019 Aging and Disability Transportation Report, one out of eight Angelenos are over 65

years old, and by 2030, this ratio may reach one out of every five. Coupled with the number of persons with disabilities that have almost doubled in the past five years, the percentage of Los Angeles County's target population in need of mobility services will outpace the growth in work age adults (age 25-64) by 2040. By 2050, the ratio of seniors to working age adults will reach one senior for every two working adults. Based on the large share of these target population groups, services for seniors and persons with disabilities are a significant need throughout Los Angeles County.

Metro 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 carries this consideration through the current solicitation. Consistent with the goals of the FTA Section 5310 Grant Program, Metro will evaluate and prioritize project proposals based on demonstrated funding needs related to transportation mobility needs, as well as project feasibility and readiness. Metro will present award recommendations to the Technical Advisory Committee and assess how the awards would benefit Equity Focus Communities (EFCs). Per Metro's competitive grants process, 5% of the total funding amount is set aside for TAC to allocate at their discretion, which should include equity considerations, evaluation results, and appeals. Metro will also use project location information in future Coordinated Plan updates to define more precisely areas or populations of higher need within the target population and future funding opportunities to ensure sufficient coverage of Equity Focus Communities (EFCs).

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

The recommendation supports the following goals of the Vision 2028 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 not 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 FTA Section 5310 Program funds. Metro could also risk losing about \$7.75 million in FTA Section 5310 Program funds that will lapse if not obligated through the FTA by September 30, 2023.

### **NEXT STEPS**

With Board approval, staff will administer the activities necessary to allocate funds to Access Services and Metro's FY 2023 FTA Section 5310 Solicitation for Proposals. The application package will be released on December 5, 2022, and project applications will be due on February 27, 2023. Staff expects to return to the Board for approval of funding recommendations in Spring 2023, as shown in the schedule in Attachment B.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - FY 2023 Section 5310 Funding Allocation Process

Attachment B - FY 2023 Section 5310 Solicitation for Proposals Application Package

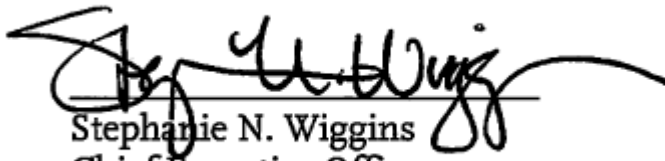
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