



## Transportation Committee

Meeting Date: May 2, 2024

[[!Agenda Item No. {{item.number}}!]]

### Consideration of Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation Regional Grant Submittal

Consent

**Prepared by:** Chase McFadden

**Attachments:** No

**Approved by:** Kristina Svensk

**Referring Committee:** Not Applicable

#### 1. Issue:

SACOG staff has identified the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant Program as a promising grant opportunity to support the implementation of the *Regional Transit Network* (RTN) study findings, Sacramento Region Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Partnership coordination, and overarching 2025 Blueprint goals.

#### 2. Recommendation:

That the Transportation Committee recommend that the SACOG board authorize staff to submit an application for a federal SMART Grant.

#### 3. Background/Analysis:

The SMART Grants Program, established as part of the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) (BIL), aims to provide grants to eligible public sector agencies to conduct demonstration projects focused on advanced smart community technologies and systems projects that improve transportation efficiency and safety.

The program is divided into two stages:

1. Stage 1: Planning and Prototyping - Up to \$2 million over 18 months. This stage is focused on building partnerships, developing a proof-of-concept, and ultimately developing an implementation plan.
2. Stage 2: Implementation - Up to \$15 million over 36 months. Implementation projects should result in a scaled-up demonstration of the concept, integrating it with the existing transportation system.

Eligible project types for the SMART Grants Program include coordinated automation, connected vehicles, intelligent sensor-based infrastructure, systems integration, commerce delivery and logistics, leveraging the use of innovative aviation technology, smart grid, and smart technology traffic signals.

This grant program is administered by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and has completed two cycles of the program (Fall 2022 and Fall 2023). The next Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for fiscal year (FY) 2024 Stage 1 is set to be released in Spring 2024.

#### 4. Discussion/Analysis:

SACOG leads the coordination and facilitation of the Sacramento Regional ITS Partnership. The Partnership is comprised of staff representing cities, counties, and other public agencies from across the greater Sacramento region, and aims to improve transportation efficiency, safety, and sustainability within our region by implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) solutions. Member agencies from the ITS Partnership

have expressed interest in pursuing a regional grant application this year with SACOG's support and leadership.

The County of Sacramento led an application the previous two cycles of this program (FY 2022 and FY 2023) in collaboration with other regional partners – City of Rancho Cordova, City of Sacramento, Sacramento Regional Transit, and Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District. The proposed project focuses on Smart Traffic Signal Technology, such as Automated Traffic Signal Performance Measures (ATSPM) with cloud-based Transit Signal Priority (TSP) and Emergency Vehicle Preemption (EVP). While not successful in the previous two rounds, the application scored highly and feedback received from USDOT provided clear guidance for areas to improve. Shifting to SACOG as a lead aligns with our understanding that regional applications for federal grants are more competitive than individual ones, as evidenced by the success of several other MPOs across the country in prior rounds for multi-agency applications.

To build on the previous effort and with the completion of SACOG's RTN, partners have specifically identified near-term improvement corridors from the RTN to include in the SMART grant, thereby advancing the implementation of that key regional strategy as well as the broader Next Gen Transit strategies. Moreover, as the 2025 Blueprint continues to develop, there is a great opportunity to align the SMART grant project with related Blueprint policy goals to aid in implementation.

The regional application would be a Stage 1 grant, which as noted above is for up to \$2 million. While details on the scope are still being worked out, previous efforts have requested \$1.8 million in grant funding. It is assumed that a similar request would be made from the program in the next application. This grant program has no local match requirement. In-kind activities from agencies in the ITS Partnership, as well as SACOG staff time, would likely be used for the development of the grant application as well as augment grant funds in the implementation of the grant. As the lead applicant, SACOG would receive and administer the funds from the grant, if awarded. The ITS Partnership is scheduled to meet May 1, 2024, to further strategize on scope.

#### **5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:**

If awarded, the Stage 1 grant funds come with no local match requirement. Development of the grant application, as well as ongoing staff time, is within the scope of the adopted FY 2024-2025 budget and Overall Work Program.