



Transportation Committee

Meeting Date: February 2, 2023

Agenda Item No. 3

Authorize Submittal of Proposed Strategic Partnership Planning Grants

Consent

Prepared by: Victoria Cacciatore

Attachments: Yes

Approved by: Kristina Svensk

Referring Committee: Not Applicable

1. Issue:

Caltrans released the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Guidelines in January, outlining stronger connections between transportation planning grants with climate goals and identifying a one-time \$50,000,000 program for climate adaptation projects. Planning grant applications must be submitted using SmartSheet by March 9, 2023, 5 p.m.

2. Recommendation:

That the Transportation Committee recommend that the board authorize the Executive Direct to submit two proposed Strategic Partnership grant applications.

3. Background/Analysis:

Caltrans administers the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant program, an annual statewide discretionary transportation planning grant program to further their mission of providing a safe, sustainable, integrated, and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability. Caltrans envisions these planning projects will improve public health, social equity, environmental justice, the environment, and provide other important community benefits. Regionally, these grants also provide an important opportunity to implement the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). Eligible planning projects must have a transportation nexus.

Caltrans released the FY 2023-2024 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Application Guide in January. The grant programs are summarized in Attachment A. The guidelines continue to prioritize investing in disadvantaged communities with a minimum investment level of 50 percent. They also identify a set-aside for tribal governments—ten percent of the climate adaptation planning funding and three percent of the Sustainable Communities program. The guidelines also connect to the integration of housing, land use, and transportation planning—project sponsors must have a compliant Housing Element to apply for funding, and five points are awarded to project sponsors that have received the Prohousing Designation from the Department of Housing and Community Development. Lastly, the grant programs request a stronger alignment between local and regional transportation planning and the state's climate adaptation work.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

Cities, counties, transit operators, Native American tribal governments, and other public transportation planning entities are eligible to apply as primary applicants for Sustainable Communities grants. Project

sponsors use this \$17 million grant program to plan for the next generation of transportation projects that will benefit the multimodal transportation system. A one-time \$50 million adaptation planning grant program will support local and regional identification of transportation-related climate vulnerabilities and project-level adaptation planning. Metropolitan planning organizations and regional transportation planning agencies are eligible to apply to the \$4.5 million Strategic Partnership grant program to collaborate with Caltrans on regional, interregional, and statewide transportation needs.

The Transportation Committee received two proposed SACOG-led planning concepts in November for the Strategic Partnership grant program which are now recommended for submittal (Attachment B). Both projects align with the grant program objectives, SACOG work plan objectives, and requests from cities, counties, and other planning partners. No SACOG-led proposals are recommended for the one-time adaptation grant program or the competitive Sustainable Communities program. Staff is sharing information from prior regional analysis on system vulnerabilities and climate change threats to the region's transportation system as part of the technical assistance offered to project sponsors.

Attachments

- A. Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Summary
- B. Recommended SACOG-led Strategic Partnership Proposals

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

There is no impact to SACOG's operating budget to apply for Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants. Successful SACOG-led project concepts would require an in-kind or cash contribution as early as FY 2023-2024—match requirements are 11.47 percent of the total project cost for Strategic Partnerships – Transit grants and 20 percent of the total project cost for Strategic Partnership grants.