

Date: May 22, 2024

W.I.: 1621

Referred by: RNM

Attachment A

Resolution No. 4647

Bus Accelerated Infrastructure Delivery (BusAID)

Program Guidelines

Program Overview & Purpose

In September 2021, the Commission adopted the [Transit Transformation Action Plan](#) (TAP), which identified near-term actions to improve the region's transit system. The BusAID program is a TAP initiative to reduce transit travel times and improve transit reliability for the most people as quickly as possible while centering on populations that depend on transit the most. BusAID emphasizes near-term, quick-build solutions to address problem "hotspot" locations.

Eligible Applicants & Projects

BusAID focuses on transit priority projects that address hotspot locations with transit travel time or reliability issues, identified by transit operators or right-of-way agencies (i.e., cities, counties, Caltrans). Projects may include elements that address the specific types of delay that a transit vehicle experiences at a hotspot, such as:

- **Transit Lanes or Queue Jump Lanes:** for transit vehicles and high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs) to bypass traffic queues during times with traffic congestion.
- **Transit Signal Priority (TSP):** modified traffic signal timing so transit vehicles encounter a green light or reduced wait times at intersections with traffic signals.
- **Transit Stop Placement & Spacing:** locations for transit stops that minimize delay and optimize stop frequency (to balance convenient stop access with efficient operations).
- **Transit Stop Design:** constructing boarding islands or bus bulbs to eliminate the delays caused by buses pulling in and out of traffic while accessing transit stops.

If a project is selected for BusAID funding, the project may be sponsored and/or implemented by either a Bay Area transit operator and/or a right-of-way agency.

Evaluation Process

The BusAID program is focused on addressing hotspot locations with transit travel time or reliability issues that have been identified by transit operators and right-of-way agencies. In 2023, MTC conducted a solicitation for projects and developed an inventory of projects to be considered for BusAID funding recommendations, informed by a two-stage screening process (Table 1).

Stage 1: Hotspot Project Analysis & Scoring

In Stage 1, hotspot projects are analyzed and scored based on criteria related to transit service characteristics, equity considerations, and Plan Bay Area 2050 Priority Development Areas. Criteria are focused on characteristics of the transit routes that pass through the hotspot location, as opposed to the hotspot location itself. For example, the equity criterion evaluates the demographics of riders on routes passing through the hotspot and whether routes passing through the hotspot provide service to Equity Priority Communities.

The hotspot score threshold to advance to the second stage was set differently for higher-ridership and lower-ridership operators to advance projects from operators of different sizes throughout the Bay Area. The operator ridership threshold was 500,000 riders per month. Higher-ridership operators are those with more than 500,000 riders per month, and lower-ridership operators are those with fewer than 500,000 riders per month.

Stage 2: Feasibility/Readiness Assessment

Stage 2 is a feasibility/readiness assessment and scored by an evaluation panel comprised of MTC staff and external agency staff. This assessment evaluates whether a high-scoring hotspot project is appropriate for BusAID funding, given the program's emphasis on near-term implementation within 18 to 24 months of funding awards (this implementation target window does not include the post-implementation evaluation phase).

If the feasibility/readiness assessment process determines that a project is appropriate for BusAID funding, funding recommendations are presented through the MTC Regional Network Management bodies for program approval and the MTC Programming & Allocations Committee for funding source approvals as appropriate.

Table 1: BusAID Two-Stage Project Screening Process

<p>Stage 1: Analysis & Scoring</p>	<p>Initial analysis and review based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit Service (60%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Total ridership through project location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weekday and weekend average loads at hotspot location. ▪ Weekday and weekend number of trips at hotspot location. ○ Potential delay reduction from project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Estimated delay reduction based on proposed transit priority treatment types and quantities (TCRP values). ▪ Total potential reduction in average person-delay calculated by multiplying ridership and delay reduction figures. • Equity (30%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rider demographics data (race, income, English proficiency, zero-vehicle households, age, people with disabilities, single parent families, rent-burdened households) for census tracts served by routes passing through hotspot location. ○ Presence of Equity Priority Community (EPC) census tracts served by routes passing through hotspot location, as a proportion of all census tracts served by routes passing through hotspot location. • Priority Development Areas (10%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of routes passing through hotspot location that serve one or more Plan Bay Area 2050 Priority Development Areas, as a proportion of all routes passing through hotspot location.
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Stage 2: Feasibility/ Readiness Assessment	Assessment of the projects based on the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project cost • current project phase • quick-build potential • schedule risk • project scalability • agency support and coordination • project sponsor and delivery agency • types of assistance needed
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Funding Availability & Targets

As of spring 2024, \$30 million dollars has been set aside for the program. This includes \$15 million in federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP) funds, which were set aside by the Commission for arterial transit priority in June 2022 through the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG 3) program (MTC Resolution No. 4505), and \$15 million in local State Transit Assistance (STA) Revenue-Based Exchange funds, which were programmed through MTC Resolution No. 4519 (adopts the Blue Ribbon Transit Transformation Action Plan Funding Framework and the Blue Ribbon Program of Projects) in May 2024.

Approvals of BusAID Round 1 funding recommendations are anticipated in May 2024. Not all BusAID funding is expected to be expended in Round 1; remaining funds will be expended in future funding rounds to be conducted using the same two-stage project screening process outlined previously. Projects identified and prioritized through the BusAID program may be funded through other funding programs such as Cap and Trade Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds.

The BusAID program aims to fund near-term projects, and has the following targets/goals, though actual awards are subject to change, depending on hotspot submissions and the results of the two-stage screening process:

- **Near-term Implementation:** Focus on projects in the implementation/construction phase which can be completed within 18-24 months (i.e., quick-build projects), with any remaining funds allocated to projects at the implementation/construction phase which cannot be completed within 18-24 months (i.e., non-quick-build projects) and/or projects at earlier phases of delivery. This ensures a majority of project funding is dedicated to quick-build projects that provide rider benefits sooner.
- **Operator & Sponsor Diversity:** A minimum of 10% of awarded funds allocated to projects at locations primarily served by lower-ridership operators, with the remaining funds allocated to projects at locations primarily served by high-ridership operators. Funding awards to any given project and/or sponsor are capped at a maximum of \$5 million and/or two projects.
- **Regional Diversity:** Aim to award funds to projects throughout the Bay Area to distribute fund benefits to transit riders throughout the region.

Projects that do not receive funding immediately may be placed on an eligibility list, in case one or more approved projects cannot be pursued within the established timeframe or has funding source eligibility issues.

BusAID Requirements

If awarded funding, a project sponsor must comply with the BusAID project requirements and approval processes, as follows.

- Provide 11.47% minimum local funding match.
- Establish a project single point of contact.

- Secure a Board-approved Resolution of Local Support (e.g. transit agency board, city council, etc.) consistent with the guidelines of the funding source.
 - [Include project scope of work, schedule, and budget – developed in coordination with MTC – as attachments.](#)
 - Include a task in the scope of work to prepare a Project Evaluation Plan, which will include reporting metrics and required data collection to measure project effectiveness. Prepare Before/After Evaluation Report within 6 to 12 months of project completion.
- Attend a project kick-off meeting.
- Prepare, at a minimum, quarterly progress reports and/or check-in meetings. A higher reporting/meeting frequency may be required.
- Comply with all applicable federal, state, or regional requirements of the funding source, noting that the requirements and processes differ based on the funding source awarded.
 - For example, projects awarded OBAG 3 STP/CMAQ funds are subject to being added to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), obtaining a Caltrans E-76, meeting requirements listed in [MTC Resolution No. 4505](#), and providing a [Complete Streets Checklist](#) (if applicable). Further, projects eligible for CMAQ funds must provide [air quality improvements calculation inputs](#).
 - Projects awarded BusAID Round 1 grants are scheduled to be added into the TIP via an Administrative Modification in May 2024. The project must be able to obligate funds promptly thereafter.
- Adhere to project delivery milestones, invoice deadlines, funding expiration deadlines, or other requirements of the funding received. Funding expiration dates are set by MTC. Should priorities or conditions change, or if a project is not ready to advance, funds may be reassigned to another project.