

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Programming and Allocations Committee

November 8, 2023

Agenda Item 3b - 23-1324

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Regional Grant Strategy

Subject:

Proposed revisions to the Bay Area Regional Priority Project List for the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)-administered Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) grant programs.

Background:

In 2022, MTC adopted a Regional Endorsement List for certain categories within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This list was last updated in June 2022 and is intended to be updated periodically based on regional funding priorities and opportunities and corresponding project funding needs. The list is part of the Bay Area Infrastructure Grants Strategy, a collaborative effort aimed at helping the Bay Area take full advantage of this incredible influx in federal grant opportunities. When the Bay Area transportation community is united, we empower our elected officials and transportation stakeholders to champion the region's top priorities. Thus, the Commission endorsed a short list of regionally significant projects – developed in coordination with Bay Area transportation partners, for a subset of those USDOT grant programs focused on larger-scale, regional and national significant projects. MTC's BIL grant strategy is bearing fruit; nearly 45 percent of California's grant awards for our target grant programs were awarded to our regional priority projects.

Proposed Updates to Project List

At the October 2023 PAC meeting, the Committee directed staff to reevaluate the list based on recent awards, applications, and evolving funding opportunities and challenges for regional priority projects. Staff sent a letter to the Bay Area Partnership Board requesting candidate projects and received the following submittals:

Agency	Project	Project Cost	BIL Categories
Caltrain	San Francisco Creek Bridge	\$145 Million	INFRA – Nationally Significant Freight
SamTrans	Dumbarton Corridor Transitway	\$65 Million	INFRA – Nationally Significant Freight and CIG Small Starts
San Mateo County Transportation Authority	SM 101/Woodside Road Interchange and Port Access Project	\$318 Million	INFRA – Nationally Significant Freight and Port Infrastructure
Transbay Joint Powers Authority	The Portal	\$8.2 Billion	MEGA – National Infrastructure Project Assistance and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements

Staff continues to recommend a strategy that identifies a short list of regionally significant projects as the best tool to maximize awards in these competitive national programs and notes the early BIL award trends suggest that certain regions may do well in a funding cycle and then not be awarded the next year.

Based on the submittals, staff recommends adding the Transbay Joint Powers Authority, The Portal for the MEGA – National Infrastructure Project Assistance category. In the current 2023 funding round, the region does not have an active MEGA application and staff sees an opportunity for the TJPA to further solidify their funding plan as they prepare to enter the next phase of the Federal Transit Administration’s Capital Investment Program and a MEGA award would signal federal confidence in the project.

Staff does not recommend further changes to the list based on the three other submitted projects.

- The Caltrain San Francisquito Creek project is essential to Caltrain service and does provide goods movement in the corridor. However, the freight volumes, relative to other California and national freight corridors, suggest the project would be more competitive in categories focused on passenger rail.
- The SamTrans Dumbarton Corridor Transitway project is not in MTC's adopted Plan Bay Area (PBA) 2050. Staff recommends that the sponsor consider submitting the project for inclusion in the PBA 2050+ update scheduled for adoption in 2025.
- The Port of Redwood City freight volume is significantly lower than the four major ports in California and others throughout the country. Based on freight volume and FY2022 INFRA award project profiles, staff does not see the SM 101/Woodside Road Interchange and Port Access Project being competitive in this BIL category. In the next calendar year, staff intends to seek Commission direction on updating the region's Goods Movement strategy. Staff recommends working with the San Mateo County Transportation Authority and considering including the SM 101/Woodside Road Interchange and Port Access Project as part of that process to identify regional priorities.

Recommendation:

MTC Commission Approval of Bay Area Regional Priority – Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – Regional Endorsement Lists

Attachments:

- Bay Area Regional Priority – Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – Regional Endorsement List



Andrew B. Fremier