

Metropolitan Transportation Commission

MTC Legislation Committee

October 11, 2019

Agenda Item 4a

2020 Federal Advocacy Representation

Subject: Overview of staff's proposal to transition our federal representation via a competitive procurement.

Overview: MTC depends on a strong federal partnership to support the Bay Area's transportation needs. In addition to MTC's federally-designated planning responsibilities, MTC distributes approximately \$625 million annually in flexible federal highway and transit formula funding. MTC also works with the Bay Area's transit operators to establish regional Capital Investment Grant (CIG) project priorities and advocate for grant awards. An on-the-ground advocate in Washington, D.C. is important for MTC to forge close relationships with key members of Congress and their staff, members of the Administration as well as other national partners.

MTC's longtime federal lobbyist Tom Bulger, whose current contract expires on October 31, 2019, pioneered, established and fulfilled this role for more than three decades, and was instrumental in MTC emerging as a national leader and one of the most respected metropolitan planning organizations in the nation. After his many years of excellent service in Washington, Tom has indicated that he would like to begin a new chapter in his life requiring that MTC transition to a new federal lobbyist. Staff is recommending a two-pronged approach:

- 1) Seek new federal representation via a competitive procurement, effective spring 2020 (summary and draft schedule below); and
- 2) Extend Mr. Bulger's contract for one year, through October 2020.

This approach will allow us to thoroughly research alternatives while also ensuring a seamless changeover. Importantly, this timeframe would also allow the 2020 March Washington D.C. visit and reception, which require significant lead time, to proceed while providing for new representation well in advance of the expiration of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

A Competitive Procurement

We recommend MTC issue a request for proposals for full federal lobbying services for a three-year term with an option to extend for an additional three years. Our goal is to find a stable fit similar to the ones we have enjoyed for many years both in Washington and in Sacramento. The scope of services should include representing MTC with key Congressional offices, committee staff, Administration officials and federal agency staff; organizing MTC's annual Washington, D.C. trip; securing meetings as needed and supporting visiting MTC Staff and Commissioners; and coordinating with MTC's partners in Washington, D.C., as needed. Qualifications should include strong relationships with the Bay Area delegation and United States Department of Transportation staff and familiarity with federal transportation policy. MTC's advocate should play a *complementary and additive* role to the advocacy portfolios of the region's many transportation agencies. Importantly, MTC's advocate should seek to ensure that

federal policy and programs benefit the entire Bay Area, and the individual/firm should not hold contracts with other Bay Area transportation agencies to avoid potential conflicts of interest where multiple agencies are competing for funds.

Federal Lobbying Contract Schedule

A draft schedule for implementing this proposal follows.

Federal Lobbying Contract Schedule	
October 2019	Tom Bulger contract renewal (one year) MTC Administration Committee
December 2019	Post request for qualifications for new federal lobbyist
January-February 2020	Proposal submittal deadline; interviews held
Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MTC Legislation Committee and MTC Administration Committee approval of new contract• New federal advocacy contract begins
Summer 2020	Tom Bulger's contract expires

We look forward to hearing your feedback.

Attachments: None


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