



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.

As of spring 2024, \$30 million dollars has been set aside for the program, comprised of \$15 million in local State Transit Assistance (STA) Exchange funds and \$15 million of federal One Bay Area Grant 3 (OBAG 3) program Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) or Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds.

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.

After screening, 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

Once hotspot locations with transit travel time or reliability issues have been identified by transit operators and right-of-way agencies, BusAID funding recommendations are 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

The second stage is a feasibility/readiness assessment conducted by a 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 (i.e., targeted project completion within 18 to 24 months of funding awards).

If the feasibility/readiness assessment panel determines that a project is appropriate for BusAID funding, funding recommendations are routed through the MTC Regional Network Management bodies for official funding approval and the MTC Programming & Allocations Committee for funding disbursement.

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
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	<p>families, rent-burdened households) for census tracts served by routes passing through hotspot location.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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.
<p>Stage 2: Feasibility/ Readiness Assessment</p>	<p>Assessment of the projects based on the following criteria:</p> <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

Funding Targets

The BusAID program has the following targets/goals, though actual apportionments are subject to change, depending on hotspot submissions and the results of the two-stage screening process.

- **Near-term Implementation:** At least 80% of awarded funds allocated to projects at the implementation/construction phase which can be completed within 18-24 months (i.e., quick-build projects), with the 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:** Up to 20% 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. This ensures funds are dedicated to projects that benefit lower-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:** Award funds to projects throughout the Bay Area to ensure funds benefit transit riders throughout the region.

BusAID Requirements

If awarded funding, a project sponsor must follow BusAID project requirements and approval processes. Note that requirements and processes differ based on the funding source awarded.

- **Provide 11.47% minimum local funding match**
- Develop BusAID supplement to MTC/agency master funding agreement
- **Federally-Funded Projects (e.g., OBAG 3 STP/CMAQ) only:**
 - Enter project into MTC's [Fund Management System \(FMS\)](#)
 - Secure [Resolution of Local Support](#)
 - *Add project to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*
 - Submit [Request for Authorization \(RFA\) for an E-76 \(Obligation\)](#) to Caltrans
 - *Approve E-76*
- **Establish project single point of contact**
- Attend a project kick-off meeting
- **Develop regular progress reports and/or** attend regular check-in meetings
- **Perform pre-/post-implementation data collection and analysis to determine project effectiveness**
- **Adhere to funding expiration dates set by MTC/OBAG**
- **Adhere to standard OBAG funding requirements**

Key:

Project Sponsor action

Project Sponsor & MTC action

*MTC and/or Caltrans & FHWA
action*

Future Funding Cycles and Opportunities

BusAID recommends funding \$18.3M of projects in the 2024 BusAID cycle. Staff anticipates future BusAID funding cycles utilizing the remaining \$11.7M of the \$30M currently set aside, and/or any additional funds identified for the program.