

TO: RTC Advisory Committees

FROM: Amy Naranjo, Transportation Planner

RE: *2023 Consolidated Grants and Regional Transportation Improvement Program Preliminary Recommendations*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission's Bicycle Committee, Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC), and Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) review and provide input on preliminary staff recommendations for programming approximately \$61.3 million in funds from various state and federal funding programs ([Attachment 1](#)) and make Committee recommendations to the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC).

BACKGROUND

As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Santa Cruz County, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is responsible for selecting projects to receive certain state and federal funds.

This summer the RTC issued a consolidated call for projects for the region's anticipated shares of funds including:

- Discretionary Funds (\$26.6 Million)
 - Surface Transportation Block Grant Program/Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (STBG/RSTPX): \$17.4 Million
 - State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP): \$8.6 Million
 - SB1 Local Partnership Program (LPP): \$629 Thousand
- SB 125 Transit Funds (\$34.7 Million)
 - Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP): \$27.6 Million
 - Zero Emission Transit Capital Program (ZETCP): \$7.1 Million

In total, approximately \$61.3 million is available for programming this cycle. Applications were due on October 25, 2023.

Collectively these funds can be used on a wide range of highway, local road, bridge, transit, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation projects and

programs that advance regional, state, and federal priorities and performance metrics. While some STBG/RSTPX, LPP, TIRCP, and ZETCP funds are available for use beginning in this fiscal year (FY2023/24), STIP funds are programmed over 5 years and might not be available until FY26/27-27/28, since most of the new statewide capacity is in the last two years of the 2024 STIP.

DISCUSSION

Project sponsors submitted 22 applications requesting over \$95 million. [Attachment 1](#) summarizes the projects and preliminary staff recommendations for anticipated funds. Project applications are posted on the RTC website <https://sccrtc.org/funding-planning/project-funding/23-24-rtip/>.

Project Evaluation

FHWA emphasizes that regions should follow a performance-based planning and programming process, with projects evaluated based on how well they advance performance metrics. A performance-based approach to transportation planning and programming aims to ensure the most efficient investment of transportation funds, support improved decision-making, and increase accountability and transparency.

Applications were evaluated based on how well they advance one or more measures, goals or targets identified in the *Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)*, *Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*, *California Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP)*, federal MAP-21 and FAST Act, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Guidelines, and other state and local plans. These include metrics related to safety, infrastructure condition, system performance, and reliability, sustainability, access for all, and/or health and equity. All the projects proposed for funding address at least one or more of the evaluation criteria and are not required to address all of them.

Transit Funds

In addition to the money from the funding sources that are regularly available for programming, for this cycle, the RTC is also responsible for programming one-time funds that can only be used for transit projects. For this programming cycle, there is \$34.7 million available for transit capital and operations projects through the SB125 Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and the Zero Emission Transit Capital Program (ZETCP). The amount of money available for TIRCP is about \$13.8 million per year in FY23/24 and FY24/25. The amount of money available for ZETCP is \$2.6 million in FY23/24 and about \$1.5 million per year in FY 24/25, FY25/26 and FY26/27.

Recommendations

Given that available funding is insufficient to fully fund all the proposed projects, staff recommend partial funding for many of the projects. The staff recommendation focuses funds on projects that are critical to maintain existing facilities, services, and access; fill gaps in the existing bicycle and pedestrian network; or serve the greatest number of people. For projects recommended for partial funding, agencies may reduce the project scope and implement a portion of the project, increase Measure D, local or other funds committed to the project, or work to secure other grants for the project. These funding recommendations include 5% of the region's new STIP shares (\$430,000 through FY28/29), which are set aside for regional planning, programming, and monitoring activities (PPM) performed by the RTC.

Staff recommends that RTC advisory committees provide input on preliminary staff recommendations and make recommendations to the RTC on which projects to fund with anticipated state and federal funds ([Attachment 1](#)).

Next Steps

RTC advisory committees are concurrently reviewing proposals for funds at their November 2023 meetings (BAC, EDTAC, ITAC). Staff will consider input from committees when developing final staff recommendations. The RTC board is scheduled to consider final staff recommendations, committee recommendations, and public input at its December 7, 2023, meeting.

Staff will work with project sponsors to determine the best funding source for each project, considering the project schedule, possible risks to delivery, and the agency's ability and capacity to meet the requirements for each funding source.

Approved projects are programmed in the RTC's *Regional Transportation Improvement Program* (RTIP) and/or RTC budget. Projects that add travel lanes, may affect air quality conformity, or are scheduled to receive federal funding are also included in the Federal/Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), which is prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). Projects approved by the RTC for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), or Local Partnership Program funds are subject to concurrence from the California Transportation Commission (CTC). The RTC's recommendations for STIP funds are due to the CTC on December 15, 2023, with CTC action on the STIP scheduled for March 2024.

SUMMARY

The RTC is responsible for selecting projects to receive certain state, federal, regional and local funds. Approximately \$26.6 million in State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Surface Transportation Block Grant Program/Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (STBG/RSTPX), and SB1 Local Partnership Program (LPP) funds are currently available for programming to projects in Santa Cruz County and another \$34.7 million in Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and Zero Emission Transit Capital Program (ZETCP) funds for transit capital and operations projects. RTC staff are asking advisory committees for input on projects proposed to receive these limited funds. The RTC will select projects at a public hearing in December 2023.

Attachment:

1. [Summary of Applications Received and Preliminary Staff Recommendations](#)

[https://rtcsc.sharepoint.com/sites/programming/shared documents/2023-next-rtip/staffreports/23-11 sr rtip prelim recs.docx](https://rtcsc.sharepoint.com/sites/programming/shared%20documents/2023-next-rtip/staffreports/23-11%20sr%20rtip%20prelim%20recs.docx)