



**METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION**

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Memorandum

TO: Partnership Technical Advisory Committee

DATE: April 21, 2008

FR: Christina Atienza

RE: MTC's Proposed FY 07-09 New Freedom Programming Guidelines

Background

SAFETEA established the New Freedom Program to address the transportation needs of disabled persons through the provision of new services and facility improvements that go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Funds are apportioned by formula to large urbanized areas (UAs), small UAs, and rural areas based on the population of persons with disabilities. Funds are required to be spent on projects that provide services within those areas.

Designated recipients of the funds are responsible for conducting a competitive selection process to determine which projects should receive funding. MTC is the designated recipient for the Bay Area's large UA funds. Caltrans is the designated recipient for the Bay Area's small UA funds and for the State's rural area funds; however, MTC may, at its discretion, conduct the competitive selection process on behalf of Caltrans for the Bay Area's small UA funds.

In February 2008, MTC adopted an interim program for the FY 2006 large UA funds, in order to ensure the timely use of those funds and inform the programming priorities for the remaining three years of funding. For the small UA and rural funds, Caltrans on January 31, 2008 issued two calls for projects: an accelerated one for the FY 2006 funds, and another, proceeding in a more typical schedule, for the FY 2007-2009 funds. The available funding is summarized below.

Area Type (Designated Recipient)	Actual FY 2007	Actual FY 2008	Estimated FY 2009	Total
Bay Area Large Urbanized Areas (MTC)	\$1,612,117	\$1,741,484	\$1,840,998	\$5,194,599
Antioch, CA	\$60,601	\$65,464	\$69,205	\$195,270
Concord, CA	\$121,779	\$131,551	\$139,069	\$392,399
San Francisco-Oakland	\$950,208	\$1,026,459	\$1,085,114	\$3,061,781
San Jose, CA	\$399,440	\$431,494	\$456,151	\$1,287,084
Santa Rosa, CA	\$80,089	\$86,516	\$91,460	\$258,065
Bay Area Small Urbanized Area (Caltrans)*	\$429,544	\$464,014	\$490,529	\$1,384,087
Fairfield	\$72,185	\$77,977	\$82,433	\$232,595
Gilroy-Morgan Hill	\$36,766	\$39,717	\$41,986	\$118,470
Livermore	\$42,802	\$46,237	\$48,879	\$137,918
Napa	\$53,582	\$57,882	\$61,189	\$172,654
Petaluma	\$32,056	\$34,628	\$36,607	\$103,291
Vacaville	\$55,900	\$60,386	\$63,837	\$180,123
Vallejo	\$136,253	\$147,187	\$155,598	\$439,038
California Rural Areas (Caltrans)**	\$681,111	\$735,768	\$777,812	\$2,194,691

* Amounts shown are target programming amounts, estimated from those provided by Caltrans for FY 2006.

** Amounts shown are total for the State. No target programming amount will be set.

Note: The names given to the UAs correspond to the most populated city/cities within the area, but the areas are actually larger.

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Minimum Program Requirements

Eligible Activities. Projects must be intended to assist individuals with disabilities in accessing transportation services, and must expand transportation mobility options beyond the requirements of ADA. Projects must not have been operational on August 10, 2005, and must not have had an identified funding source as of August 10, 2005. Funds can be used for capital and operating expenses. Examples of eligible projects include paratransit enhancements, feeder services, travel training, accessibility enhancements, purchase of vehicles with wheelchair accommodations for vanpooling, administration of voucher programs, administration of volunteer driver programs, and mobility management. Further, all projects in the Bay Area are required to be derived from the Coordinated Human Services-Public Transit Transportation Plan (“Coordinated Plan”).

Eligible Applicants. Include private non-profit organizations; local governmental authorities; and operators of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services.

Match Requirements. The federal share of the total eligible cost can be no more than 80 percent for capital projects and 50 percent for operating projects. The local share must be provided from sources other than federal transportation funds.

Compliance with Federal Requirements. Recipients will be required to enter into an agreement with the designated recipient (MTC for large UA funds, Caltrans for small UA and rural funds) and comply with all pertinent federal requirements, including quarterly reporting of project progress and annual reporting of project performance.

Proposed Programming Guidelines

The following outlines staff’s proposed programming guidelines for the \$6.6 million available from FY 2007-09 for the Bay Area’s urbanized areas. The proposed guidelines build upon the experience gained from developing the interim FY 2006 program.

Multi-Year Programming for Large UA Funds. Staff recommends programming the entire \$5.2 million in large UA funds from FY 2007 through 2009 in the upcoming call for projects, consistent with Caltrans’ call for projects for the small UA and rural funds. The actual amount of FY 2009 funds will not be known until later this year, so the program for FY 2009 funds would be estimated only and contingent upon MTC’s receipt of the actual apportionment amounts.

Timeline and Coordination with Caltrans Call for Projects. Staff recommends conducting a combined call for projects for the large and small UA funds. Combining the calls for projects would reduce confusion for the applicants, avoid duplication of effort for the evaluators, and streamline MTC’s certification for derivation from the Coordinated Plan. While this approach would require a one month extension of the due date to Caltrans for the small UA program of projects, it is not anticipated to adversely affect the timeline for the availability of funding.

The proposed timeline for the combined call for projects is:

Release Combined Call for Projects	mid-May 2008
Applications Due to MTC	July 31, 2008
Present Recommended Program of Projects to MTC Programming & Allocations Committee	September 10, 2008
MTC’s Adoption of Program of Projects	September 24, 2008
Submit Small UA Program of Projects to Caltrans	September 25, 2008

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Programming Priorities. Staff recommends the following prioritization of project types shown in priority order, and is seeking your feedback:

1. Mobility management projects. Mobility Management is the coordination of public and human service transportation in a cost-effective manner to enhance the level of service provided to transportation-disadvantaged populations. This could entail a broad range of activities, from inventorying current service providers, to dedicating staff positions, to developing centralized software systems. The Coordinated Plan lists mobility management as an effective strategy for enhancing service delivery, and there is a growing interest in these types of projects in the Bay Area and at the state and federal levels. Mobility management projects are considered eligible capital expenses under the New Freedom Program.
2. Other capital projects or discrete operational projects. This includes projects that do not require continuous funding. Examples of these types of projects are equipment purchases, travel training programs, and maintenance subsidies for retired vans.
3. Ongoing operational projects. This includes projects that require continuous funding. These types of projects would be considered for funding; however, there is no assurance that the New Freedom Program will continue beyond SAFETEA. Examples of these types of projects are expansion of current hours of operation of ADA paratransit services beyond those provided on fixed-route services, door-through-door services, and feeder services.

Evaluation Criteria for Large UA Applications. For the interim FY 2006 program, applications were evaluated based on qualitative criteria including: demonstration of need and benefits; evidence of coordination, partnership, and outreach efforts; and project readiness. The same three criteria are proposed for the FY 2007-2009 program; however, point values are assigned to reflect the recommended relative importance of each criterion, and additional considerations are added under each criterion to reflect the proposed program priorities discussed above and the lessons learned from the interim FY 2006 program. Staff proposes not to assign points for the considerations under each criterion, and instead enable evaluators to use their local knowledge to prioritize those considerations. Staff seeks your feedback on the proposed prioritization of the evaluation criteria and the completeness of the list of considerations under each criterion.

□ **Need and Benefits** (maximum 40 points)

Extent to which project address critical needs for disabled individuals as identified in the Coordinated Plan

Effectiveness at mitigating or eliminating transportation barriers for disabled individuals

Project type: mobility management, discrete capital or operational project, or ongoing operational project

Extent to which project promotes integration of disabled individuals into the work force and their full participation in society

Competitiveness for other federal or state funding sources

Additional benefits

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□ **Coordination, Partnership, & Outreach** (maximum 30 points)

Extent of coordination with other affected transportation systems, providers, and services, and with related social service programs

Advancing the development and implementation of coordinated transportation services

Extent of community support

Plan for marketing the project to beneficiaries

□ **Project Readiness** (maximum 30 points)

Reasonableness and completeness of funding plan

Project sustainability beyond the grant period

Thoroughness of implementation plan and reasonableness of project schedule

Ability to use grant for leveraging additional resources

Sponsor's experience in managing services for disabled individuals

How project fits into a larger program with well-defined goals, objectives, and performance standards

Sponsor's institutional capacity to manage the project

Sponsor's history of managing federal transportation funds

The proposed criteria above will not apply to projects competing for small UA and rural funds. Those will be evaluated based on criteria that have been adopted by Caltrans, which are similar to the above, but do not reflect the proposed regional priorities. A copy of Caltrans' criteria is attached.

The proposed guidelines have been discussed with the Transit Finance Working Group and the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee meeting, and will be discussed with the Partnership Accessibility Committee at their April 14 meeting. Staff will provide a briefing of the feedback received from these groups at your meeting.

Next Steps

The proposed guidelines will be revised as appropriate based on the stakeholders' comments. The detailed draft final guidelines will be presented to the Programming and Allocations Committee for approval at their May 14 meeting.

Attachment
Caltrans Evaluation Criteria for Small Urbanized and Rural Areas

A. Does the project meet the New Freedom Program Goals and Objectives? (20 total points)

1. An applicant must be consistent with the overall New Freedom program goals and objectives. (10 points maximum)
2. Applicant demonstrates how project activities directly address transportation gaps and/or barriers identified through the locally developed human services transportation planning process within their communities. (10 points maximum)

B. Operational/Implementation Plan? (20 points)

3. Applicant provides a well-defined operations plan with defined routes, schedules, current/projected ridership, key personnel, and marketing strategies with supporting documentation for carrying out the project. For Capital and Mobility Management projects, applicant provides an implementation plan that includes project tasks, timeframes, benchmarks, key milestones, key personnel, deliverables and estimated completion date with supporting documentation. Both the operations and implementation plans must identify key personnel assigned to this project and their qualifications, including resumes and certifications as supporting documentation. Applicants must demonstrate their institutional capability to carry out the service delivery aspect of the project.

C. Describe the Program Effectiveness and Performance Indicators (20 total points):

4. Applicant identifies clear measurable outcome-based performance measures and indicators to track the effectiveness of the project. Applicant states the number of persons to be served, trip purpose(s), and the number of trips. Additional measurable units of service can also be used. Applicant must describe the outcome (impact) that the project will have on individuals with disabilities. (10 points maximum)
5. Applicant describes a process that details the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project or service, including methodologies and desired outcomes based upon the performance objectives identified above in Question 4. (10 points maximum)

D. Communication and Outreach (20 total points):

6. Stakeholder list should include, but not be limited to, Health and Human Services Agencies, public/private sector, non-profit agencies, transportation providers, and members of the public representing individuals with disabilities. Applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to coordinate with other community transportation and/or social service resources. (10 points maximum)
7. Applicants must keep stakeholders involved and informed of project activities throughout the project timeline. Applicant must also describe how they would promote public awareness of the project. Three (3) letters of support from stakeholders must be attached to the grant application. (One of the three support letters may come from a client of the proposed project.) (10 points maximum)

E. Provide the Applicant's Project Budget (0 or 20 points):

8. Please provide your budget information on the form(s) supplied. A complete listing of budgetary information will be necessary to receive the full 20-point value. *Failure to provide all of the required information will result in 0 points for this question.* Applicants must submit a clearly defined project budget, indicating anticipated project expenditures and revenues, including documentation of matching funds.