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Memorandum

TO: Policy Advisory Council Equity & Access Subcommittee

DATE: July 3, 2013

FR: Kristen Mazur, Drennen Shelton

W.I. 1518

RE: New Freedom Cycle 5 Proposed Framework

Background

The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Freedom Program provides grants for new capital and operating projects aimed at reducing transportation barriers faced by individuals with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

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 transportation services within those areas. (See attached Bay Area Urbanized Area Map.)

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 state's small UA and rural area funds.¹

According to federal requirements, projects selected for funding under the New Freedom program must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan ("Coordinated Plan"). The Bay Area's Coordinated Plan was updated in March 2013 (www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/pths/), and part of that effort involved identifying strategies to enhance coordination of service delivery in the region. One of the key strategies identified in the plan is to "strengthen mobility management in the Bay Area." The plan further recommends that future New Freedom funds be prioritized for implementing projects and activities consistent with the plan's strategies.

New Freedom Cycle 5 Proposed Framework & Roadmap Study

MTC has completed four cycles of New Freedom funding, and has approximately \$2.0 million in FY12 New Freedom large UA funds that will be programmed as part of the upcoming fifth grant cycle. Consistent with the updated Coordinated Plan, MTC staff is proposing to emphasize mobility management in Cycle 5.

Staff proposes that all activities that were eligible in the previous four New Freedom cycles continue to be eligible, including mobility management, operations and capital projects; however, there will be increased emphasis on mobility management and coordination. For

¹ Caltrans recently completed a call for projects for small UA and rural New Freedom funds. Additional information about the small UA and rural program can be found on the Caltrans website:
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/5317.html>

example, the scoring criteria may be adjusted to give more weight to mobility management projects, or additional points may be awarded for specific coordination activities that result in better utilization of and access to resources.

MTC staff is also proposing to set aside a portion of the Cycle 5 administrative funds to conduct a regional mobility management “Roadmap” study.²

Below is the proposed timeline for New Freedom Cycle 5:

- July-August 2013: Outreach to working groups and Policy Advisory Council
- September 2013: Cycle 5 Program Guidelines to PAC & Commission
- Sept.-Dec. 2013: Call for Projects
- January 2014: Project Selection
- February 2014: Program of Projects to working groups and Policy Advisory Council
- March 2014: Program of Projects to PAC & Commission

Next Steps

Staff will be at this month’s subcommittee meeting to solicit feedback on the proposed approach for Cycle 5 (mobility management emphasis) as well as the proposed “Roadmap” study.

The draft New Freedom Cycle 5 program guidelines will be presented in August to various working groups, including the Transit Finance Working Group. If requested by the Equity and Access Subcommittee, staff can distribute the draft Cycle 5 program guidelines to the Subcommittee members and/or meet again in August to continue the discussion from July. The program guidelines will be presented to the Programming and Allocations Committee for consideration at their September 11th meeting.

Please contact Kristen Mazur at kmazur@mtc.ca.gov or (510) 817-5789 with questions or comments.

² The federal New Freedom guidance allows MTC to use up to 10 percent of the total fiscal year New Freedom apportionment to fund program administration costs including administration, planning and technical assistance. In Cycle 5, MTC is proposing to set aside five percent for MTC program administration and an additional five percent for a mobility management “Roadmap” study.