



METROPOLITAN  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION

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## *Memorandum*

TO: Bay Area Partnership Board

DATE: October 3, 2005

FR: Steve Heminger, MTC

W.I.: 1311

RE: **Lifeline Transportation Program**

This is to provide you with a status report on the Lifeline Transportation Program, and to seek your endorsement of staff's proposed modifications to the program budget and timelines for transitioning it from MTC to the local (county) level.

### **Background**

In April, the Commission adopted MTC Resolution 3699, which resulted in the following:

- Commission concurrence to dedicate \$15 million in CMAQ and STA funds for the Lifeline Transportation Program for three years (FY 2005-06 through FY 2007-08). The Commission action was contingent upon adoption of 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle STP/CMAQ programming prior to finalizing funding for the third year of the program;
- Subvention of the Lifeline Transportation Program to the county level, with program oversight delegated to the local Congestion Management Agency (CMA) or other designated countywide entity; and
- Adoption of Lifeline Transportation Program guidelines

Staff requested that each county notify MTC in writing by September 30 of its intent to provide program oversight. To date, we have received such documentation from seven of the nine counties. The CMA has agreed to assume oversight in seven counties; in Alameda County the CMA and the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority will jointly oversee the program, and the CMA and Santa Clara County will jointly oversee the program in that county.

### **Proposed Budget Revision**

The Commission action to dedicate \$15 million for an interim Lifeline Program was contingent upon adoption of 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle STP/CMAQ funds. Subsequently, the passage of SAFETEA has resulted in changes to how the federal Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program will be administered. Most significantly, JARC funds will be distributed by formula to designated recipients based on population, and the formula also considers that jurisdiction's poverty level. Previously, JARC funds had been provided solely on a discretionary (earmark) basis.

MTC is the designated recipient of the urbanized portion of JARC funds. We propose that the JARC funds be incorporated into the Lifeline Transportation Program in lieu of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle CMAQ funds. Program guidelines for the use of JARC funds are entirely consistent with the goals of the Lifeline Program, and in fact offer more flexibility than do CMAQ funds in the types of projects that can be funded. Since the JARC funds are greater than the prior Third

Cycle CMAQ funds, the Lifeline Program three-year interim budget would be increased by \$4.5 million.

Some JARC funds (estimated at \$500,000 for FY 2005-06) will also be made available to both small and to non-urbanized areas. We intend to seek, through Caltrans, direct delegation of those funds (consistent with the agreement reached for Section 5307 funds) by MTC. In turn, these funds would be integrated into the Lifeline Transportation Program rather than the subject of a separate solicitation.

### **Proposed Revised Lifeline Transportation Budget FY 2005-06 through FY 2007-08**

<b>Interim Lifeline Transportation Program Fund Source</b>	<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Amount</b>
First and Second Cycle CMAQ Funding	Funds originally programmed to the Regional Express Bus Program (now funded through RM2)	4,045,000
FY 2005-06 STA Regional Discretionary Program	1) Excess Generations from FY 2004-05; 2) Funds originally slated for TransLink® (now funded through RM2)	5,569,862
FY 2006-07 and FY 2007-08 STA Regional Discretionary Program	Funds set-aside to fund the LIFT program – now shifted to Lifeline Transportation initiative.	2,000,000
Urbanized-Area JARC funds FY 2005-06- 07-08*	New JARC funds through SAFETEA-LU; MTC designated recipient for urbanized area funding	6,618,094
Small and non-urbanized JARC funds FY 2005-06-07-08 **	JARC funds for small and non-urbanized areas; Caltrans designated recipient	1,346,441
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$19,579,397</b>

\* Projected funding, and assumes FTA's concurrence for MTC to administer JARC funds as part of the Lifeline Transportation Program.

\*\* Projected funding, and assumes Caltrans' concurrence for MTC to serve as recipient for small and non-urbanized program funds.

SAFETEA requires that, as of FY 2006-07, a condition for receiving funds under three FTA programs (New Freedom Initiative, JARC, Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities), proposed projects must be derived from a locally developed public transportation-human services transportation plan. Additional guidance regarding this new planning requirement is expected from FTA within the next few months. MTC staff is currently seeking clarification from FTA regarding our proposed approach for interim use of JARC funds pending completion of such a planning document.

### **Proposed Revised Schedule for Programming Lifeline Transportation Program Funds**

Over the past few months, MTC has met several times with CMA directors to further define steps and establish timelines to ensure a smooth transition. The directors agreed to use a standardized Call for Projects to solicit new projects to be funded with the Lifeline Transportation Program funds. A draft document, based on MTC's Call for Projects used to solicit projects for the Low Income Flexible Transportation (LIFT) Program was distributed for

comments to CMA staff, MTC's Minority Citizens Advisory Committee, and to the Regional Welfare-to-Work Transportation Working Group.

Originally, the timeframe called for CMAs to issue the Call for Projects in November, with the goal of programming new federally funded projects into the TIP by March 2006. At this time, we suggest postponing solicitation of new projects by four months in order to make adjustments to the program budget and seek Commission endorsement of the points mentioned above, and to allow for the completion of additional community-based transportation plans.

The purpose of the Community-Based Transportation Program is to conduct planning in 25 low-income communities within the Bay Area in order to identify and address transportation gaps specific to those neighborhoods. To date, five such plans have been completed, and another five plans are currently underway. The new Lifeline Transportation Program funds are intended to fund solutions emerging from those local planning efforts. Solutions for those plans in progress will be identified in early 2006. For this reason, some CMAs and other stakeholders involved in these plans have asked that the solicitation of new projects be deferred until the plans are completed, or nearing completion.

#### **Staff Recommendation**

- (1) Assuming concurrence from FTA, incorporate new federal JARC funds for which MTC is recipient into the Lifeline Transportation Program, to be distributed to counties consistent with other program fund sources.
- (2) Lifeline Program sponsors solicit and select new projects according to the following schedule:

March 1, 2006:	Issue Call for Projects
April 28, 2006:	Project Applications Due
June 30, 2006:	Project lists to MTC
July-September 2006:	Allocation of STA funds (as applicable), execution of funding agreements, programming of federal funds into TIP.

MTC staff will attend your upcoming meeting to receive any comments you may have on this item.

SH:CS