

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 2/22/2023

Staff Report No. 23-134

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Application for FY23 FTA Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

ACTION ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST: ☐

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider authorizing the General Manager or his designee to file and execute grant applications and funding agreements with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Areas of Persistent Poverty Program.

Staff Contact:
Chris Andrichak, Chief Financial Officer

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Financial Stability and Resiliency
Initiative - Financial Efficiency and Revenue Maximization

This application will allow the District to conduct community engagement and create a plan to develop future transit priority infrastructure and possible service changes along Foothill Boulevard in East Oakland.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

The District is applying for approximately \$500,000 to conduct community engagement and develop a plan for Foothill Boulevard in East Oakland. The total project cost is estimated to be \$1,500,000. If awarded, the District will need to provide a 10% match with either District or other funding or in-kind via staff hours.

Staff has also applied for Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Transit Performance Initiative - Investment (TPI) grant funds for the project. Grant awards have not been announced for TPI as of yet and the funding is scalable. Applying for additional funding can assist in filling potential financial gaps for this project

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

The FTA issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity of \$20 million for the FY23 cycle of the Areas of Persistent Poverty Program to provide funds to develop planning, engineering, or development of technical or financing plans for projects that assist areas of persistent poverty. Eligible projects must have their locations in a census tract with a poverty rate of at least 20% as measured by the 2014-2018 five-year data series available from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Staff proposes to apply for funding for a planning study of the Foothill Corridor, which will cover operations analysis, alternative analysis, capital and operational cost estimates, as well as comprehensive stakeholder and public engagement.

The plan will cover Foothill Boulevard and parts of East 15th Street between 1st and 73rd Avenues. It will identify potential service improvements and transit priority infrastructure alternatives that would improve travel speeds and service reliability to better serve customers and improve access to employment and community resources. The public outreach effort in support of the plan development will include community meetings and events and the use of various multilingual channels of communication to engage the community and ensure meaningful public input and feedback.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Staff cannot identify any disadvantages to applying for the funds. There are few funding opportunities for planning studies and public outreach. Not applying would result in the District looking for other sources of funding or use of District funds at a future date. It would also hinder further planning or engagement on this corridor.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

Staff considered several alternate corridors such as 23rd Street in Richmond and Fruitvale Avenue in Oakland. Foothill Boulevard is a high ridership corridor which was evaluated as part of the Major Corridors Study, while 23rd Street has only a moderate level of ridership. Fruitvale Avenue is an eligible crosstown street. However, its short length and narrow right-of-way width would pose challenges in developing robust transit improvements and would not provide the same level of benefits.

Foothill Boulevard is one of the highest ridership routes in the District but experiences long travel times to downtown Oakland and through the Fruitvale District. This project is therefore one of the highest priorities for the District in terms of corridor improvement.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

SR 16-056b - Final Major Corridors Study Report

SR 21- 378: Application for FY21 FTA Areas of Persistent Poverty Program

SR 22-582: FY22-23 Transit Performance (TPI) Investment Application

ATTACHMENTS:

None

Prepared by:

Michelle Ruan, Senior Capital Planning Specialist

In Collaboration with:

Evelyn Ng, Capital Planning and Grants Manager

Nathan Landau, Senior Transportation Planner

Jim Cunradi, Transportation Planning Manager

Approved/Reviewed by:

Chris Andrichak, Chief Financial Officer

Robert del Rosario, Director of Services Development and Planning

Richard Oslund, Director of Management & Budget

Jill A. Sprague, General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer