

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 9/8/2021

Staff Report No. 21-382

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: MTC Mobility Hub Grant Update

BRIEFING ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving an update on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Mobility Hub Pilot Program and the Oakland Mobility Transportation Demand Management Program. [Requested by Director Shaw - 4/14/2021 and 5/12/2021]

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service

Initiative - Financial Efficiency and Revenue Maximization

The Mobility Hub Pilot Program can improve the environment where passengers transfer between buses and other transportation modes including micro-mobility devices. The Oakland Mobility Transportation Demand Management Program (OakMob TDM) can help support equity and build ridership by providing pre-paid transit debit cards to residents of East Oakland.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

These projects currently do not have a budgetary or fiscal impact to the District. However, there would likely be a cost if the District advanced a mobility hub project in the future. This would not occur without board feedback and approval.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Mobility Hub Grant

In May 2021, MTC initiated the Mobility Hubs Pilot Program and offered \$10 million funding for the design and construction of two types of projects: quick build facilities and permanent projects. Staff investigated possible projects but determined that there were none suitable in this pilot project.

The Mobility Hub Program is part of the Climate Initiative Strategies from Plan Bay Area. The purported goal of the Program is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) through a reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by making it easier to make trips by transit, biking, walking, scooter, or other mobility devices. Mobility hubs are essentially small-scale intermodal terminals that provide space and customer amenities primarily for

micro-mobility devices like shared scooters and bicycles. They also can support public transit by providing a pleasant space for people to switch between modes or make transit transfers.

MTC identified 25 locations for pilot projects. Inclusion on the list was a requirement of the grant. The pilot program's location analysis was based on weighting three objectives (Connected Mobility, Climate Action, Equitable mobility). The weights were assigned based on input from partner agencies through the workshops. The weights prioritized locations that have:

- The greatest number of interregional transit connections and mobility services
- Significant walking and bicycling connectivity
- Proximity to major trip generators (e.g. stadiums, universities and employer campuses)
- Location in an Equity Priority Community (formally Community of Concern)

Each potential project sponsor was only permitted one application in this round. Potential projects that were not included in the initial 25 locations could be funded but would require independent justification by applicants. Further complicating the grant application was the quick turn-around for the grant which meant that only applicants that were sufficiently far along in the development and approval process would likely succeed.

The following locations were on MTC's list and within the AC Transit service area:

- 12th Street BART
- 19th Street BART
- Fruitvale BART
- Downtown Berkeley BART
- MacArthur BART
- Lake Merritt BART
- Fremont BART
- Berkeley, Bancroft & Ellsworth
- El Cerrito del Norte BART
- Richmond BART
- Oakland, Fruitvale & Montana
- Hilltop Drive (Park & Ride)
- Richmond Parkway Transit Center (Park & Ride)

To meet the requirements of the grant and the short timeline, staff determined that the District could not apply independently but would need to partner with agencies that controlled the site where a project is proposed. Staff then held discussions with colleagues at BART, Berkeley, Fremont, and Oakland to gauge their

interest in applying. None of the cities nor BART were prepared to apply in this funding round for any of the priority locations identified by MTC. Staff did not consider Hilltop Drive Park & Ride because it is owned by Caltrans and would require complex negotiations prior to application.

Staff also considered the Richmond Parkway Transit Center and two locations not on the MTC list but important to the District, Ardenwood Park & Ride and Eastmont Transit Center. These were also determined to be infeasible due to the time constraints and potential controversy about including many features not central to transit service (e.g., micro-mobility, ride hailing, etc.).

Oakland Mobility Transportation Demand Management (OakMob TDM)

The OakMob TDM Project is intended to support use of Tempo BRT and reduce the number of single-occupancy car trips by offering subsidized transit passes and discounted ways to pay for other mobility options like scooters or car share. The 2-year pilot program may evolve into a City-wide permanent, equitable Universal Basic Mobility program. The program has a goal to reach 50% of residents and business owners within the program area. Oakland submitted the project to the Alameda County Transportation Commission's Comprehensive Investment Plan in 2016 and on July 6, 2021, contract award was unanimously passed by the city council.

Oakland has contracted with Usio, which is part of Mastercard's City Possible Network. The company specializes in prepaid debit cards that are often used by public agencies for financial assistance programs. The program will provide 500 participants with restricted prepaid cards that are each loaded with up to \$300.00 of grant funds. The cards can be used over a 3-month period to purchase transit trip passes or trips on shared mobility devices. Pre-paid debit cards were chosen because they can provide participants with options for travel including familiar modes like bus and BART, and new ones like car share or scooter rentals.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

The advantage of pursuing an MTC Mobility Hubs Pilot grant is that funds could enable the District to develop new transit centers or update existing ones. The disadvantage is that the District could have ongoing responsibilities for infrastructure that mainly supports micro-mobility devices along with the components that support transit.

From a staff perspective, another disadvantage is the absence of Board policies on mobility alternatives and what potential role they could play in providing first and last mile connections. Staff believes there could be advantages to transportation partnerships where the District's network coverage is sparser such as central and southern Alameda County and West Contra Costa County. However, staff also acknowledges there are tradeoffs such as unprecedented public/private partnerships with companies that could be viewed as competitive to transit, especially in the urban core. Pursuing these partnerships will require feedback and direction from the board, and subsequent research and analysis by staff before moving forward.

The advantage of a Universal Basic Mobility program like OakMob TDM is that it could foster equity and assist the unbanked in paying for transit. There are no disadvantage to this program other than cost.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

For the Mobility Hubs Pilot program, staff considered partnering with other agencies as a primary strategy. As

an alternative, staff also considered pursuing the grant for sites that the District could develop on its own. Neither alternative could meet the terms of the grant program.

The OakMob TDM project was led by the City of Oakland and no alternatives were considered.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

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