



TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

www.tamcmonterey.org

HIGHLIGHTS

December 6, 2023

TAMC Board Approves Allocating 50/50 Split of Senate Bill 125 Transit and Intercity Rail and Zero Emission Funding Between Bus and Rail Transit Projects

After a comprehensive and candid Board discussion, which Supervisor Lopez said was a rare opportunity to fund transformative investments that would bring long-term change for the region's low-income communities and communities of color, the TAMC Board of Directors approved a 50/50 split of Senate Bill 125 transit and intercity rail and zero emission funding between bus and rail transit projects. The vote came after a staff presentation on project candidates for state transit and intercity rail and zero emission funding and the intent of Senate Bill 125. The Board directed staff to annually evaluate and recommend any changes to SB 125 programming when updating the Integrated Funding Strategy. The Board also approved increasing Measure X funding allocation to the SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit project by \$9.2 million to fully fund construction.

On July 10, 2023, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill (SB) 125 into law, which included new formula funding through the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and created a new Zero-Emission Transit Capital Program (ZETCP). TAMC is slated to receive \$44.5 million over two years in TIRCP formula funds and \$8 million over four years for the ZETCP.

The legislative intent of the funding via SB 125 and its precursor legislation, SB 198 (2022) and Assembly Bill (AB) 180 (2021), covers a range of goals including: funding high-priority bus and rail transit capital projects, providing transit operations bridge funding for transit operators to address operational costs until long-term transit sustainability solutions are identified, assisting transit operators in preventing service cuts and increasing ridership, prioritizing the availability of transit for riders who are transit dependent, and prioritizing transit agencies representing a significant percentage of the region's ridership.

As approved by the TAMC Executive Committee on November 1 and supported by the Transportation Agency's Rail Policy Committee on November 6, the proposed funding distribution would take 1% off the top for administration expenses and allocate 50% of the remaining funds to MST bus projects and

50% to TAMC rail projects, with additional Measure X funding covering the current estimate for SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit project construction costs. This Measure X augmentation effectively increases MST's funding allocation to 67% of their funding request; and provides the opportunity to leverage the Measure X and SB 125 funds to fund important regional rail projects. The regional rail projects are the Pajaro/Watsonville Multimodal Station project design; the Monterey County Rail Extension Project construction, including Positive Train Control; and the King City Station construction.

The preliminary project list with narrative explanations and a short-range transit plan is due to the California State Transportation Agency by December 31, 2023.

TAMC Staff Selects the “Participatory Budgeting” Team as the Agency’s Employees of the Quarter

TAMC selected the Participatory Budgeting team as Employees of the Quarter for July 1 – September 30, 2023. The team comprised of Aaron Hernandez, Ariadne Sambrano, Ariana Green, and Janneke Strause were recognized for their exemplary service in developing the Salinas Valley Safe Routes to School Plan for 22 schools in the Cities of Greenfield, Soledad, Gonzales, and King City.

Their work included developing community steering committees and gathering input from parents, teachers, students, and school administrators to develop projects that would make it safer and more comfortable for children to get to and from schools in each city.

About the Salinas Valley Safe Routes to School Plan & Participatory Budgeting

The Salinas Valley Safe Routes to School Plan, developed by the Transportation Agency, Monterey County Health Department, Ecology Action, and the cities in South County, will identify barriers to safe access to all K-12 public schools in South County cities and recommend infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements.

An important component of the Plan is the participatory budgeting process that is designed to fast-track funding and implementation of safe routes to school projects that are meaningful to community members. Through this participatory budgeting process, the community helped determine how to spend \$250,000 allocated for program safety improvements through the Transportation Agency’s Safe Routes to School Program.

The Salinas Valley Safe Routes to School Plan was funded through a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant (\$64,127) and Measure X Safe Routes to School fund (\$126,501).