

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Date: March 15, 2024

CAO File No. 0130-02153-0000

Council File No. None

Council District: All

To: The City Council

From: *for* Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer 

Subject: **RETROACTIVE AUTHORITY TO APPLY FOR THE 2024 SURFACE
TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT (STBG)**

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council, subject to approval of the Mayor:

1. Authorize the City Engineer, or designee, to prepare and submit grant applications for the proposal outlined in the Attachment 1;
2. Instruct the City Engineer, or designee, to report back if the City is awarded the grant, to request authority to accept the grant award, and identify a source for any additional required match and/or front funding; and,
3. Instruct the City Engineer to comply with the City Grant Ordinance and, as appropriate, seek approval of the Council and Mayor prior to applying for grants.

SUMMARY

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) administers the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program, a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) initiative designed to offer adaptable funding for transportation projects meeting regional criteria outlined in SCAG's STBG and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) guidelines. Tasked with project selection and administration, SCAG oversees the allocation of STBG funds within its jurisdictional bounds. Applications for the current grant cycle must be submitted no later than March 29, 2024, with grant awards expected to be announced by June 2024.

With approximately \$130 million in STBG apportionments allocated for the SCAG region covering Federal Fiscal Years 2023 through 2026, SCAG is initiating a call for project nominations to utilize these funds. The prioritization of projects aligns with the region's overarching strategy for enhancing transportation system efficiency, safety, and mobility, while also striving to meet Federal and State air quality standards by curbing transportation-related air pollution. Project categories span

highway enhancements, transit, rail and bus infrastructure, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, signal synchronization, intersection improvements, freeway ramps, non-motorized projects, as well as bicycle and pedestrian initiatives.

There is no limit on the number of applications that the City may submit. This Office has received one application from the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) for Council consideration:

- State Route 710 Valley Boulevard Multi Modal Transportation Improvements (\$10 million grant requested)

Retroactive authority is sought as BOE notified this Office on February 26, 2024 that they had submitted the project application on February 16, 2024 without approval of the Council and Mayor.

Matching Fund Requirement

STBG projects must include a minimum of 11.47% match in non federal funds. Toll credits are eligible as a match for STBG projects. Due to the limited availability of toll credits, project applicants should be prepared to provide a local match source if toll credits are not available for STBG projects.

Scoring Criteria (Attachment 2)

Applications will be evaluated according to the following scoring criteria:

SCORING CRITERIA	POSSIBLE POINTS
CTC Prioritization: Relative CTC project prioritization	50 Points
Regional Priorities: Project implements SCAG's adopted RTP/SCS, including future adopted Plan policies and strategies	20 Points
Performance Measures: Project demonstrates support for Connect SoCal Performance Measures (including but not limited to Federal Transportation Performance Management Goals): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location Efficiency, • Mobility and Accessibility, • Safety and Public Health, • Environmental Quality, • Economic Opportunity, • Investment Effectiveness, • Transportation System Sustainability, and • Environmental Justice 	20 Points
Equity: Project demonstrates direct and/or indirect benefit that positively impact Priority Equity Communities	10 Points
Air Quality Improvements: For CMAQ-eligible projects, expected criteria air pollutant (CAP) emissions reductions and relative cost effectiveness of projects in reducing CAP emissions in the SCAG region Air Basins	10 Points

The above table is extracted from the STBG/CMAQ Guidelines. CTC – County Transportation Commissions.

This Office convened meetings with BOE to assess whether the grant proposal aligns with the scoring criteria established for the grants. Upon evaluation, it has been determined that the projects satisfy the intended purposes, eligibility requirements, and the specified scoring criteria of the grant.

Project Cost and Funding

The overall cost of the State Route 710 Valley Boulevard Multi Modal Transportation Improvements Project is currently estimated at \$102 million. A summary of funding is as follows:

- \$34,100,000 was provided by the 710 Project Grant Awards. A required 11.47 percent match of \$3,911,270 is covered by Toll Credits;
- \$30,000,000 has been provided by Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority; and,
- BOE requested \$10 million in STBG funding. If awarded, this grant amount will require an additional 11.47 percent match of \$1,147,000.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

There is no fiscal impact of the recommendations in this report. If a grant award is provided, there may be a need to identify matching funds at that time.

FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT

The recommendation in this report complies with the City's Financial Policies.

MWS:JSL:06240061

ATTACHMENT 1 - PROPOSED GRANT PROJECT

Grant Administrator: The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

Name of Grants: The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program

NOFO Release Date: 1/4/2024

Due date: 3/29/2024

Award date: 6/1/2024

Minimum and Maximum Award: No floor or ceiling for the amount of award

Performance Period: To ensure the timely use of federal funds, SCAG will collaborate with Caltrans, County Transportation Commissions (CTCs), local jurisdictions, and transit operators to enhance Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) Guideline policies and procedures to ensure federal funding requirements and deadlines are met and funds are not lost to the region.

Lead Department	Project Name	Project Description	Total Project (Budget)	Total Grant Request	Planned Completion Date
Bureau of Engineering (BOE)	State Route 710 Valley Blvd. Multi Modal Transportation Improvements	The project is located along a 4.5-mile corridor through the Lincoln Heights, Boyle Heights, and El Sereno communities, connecting the I-710 freeway to Union Station via Valley Blvd, Mission Road, and Cesar Chavez Ave. The project has been designed to include: Dedicated Bus Lane during Peak Periods, New Class IV Bike Facility, Local Public Park Expansions, Standard Width Sidewalks, Raised Medians with Green Space, On-Street Parking, Railroad Quiet Zone, Curb Modifications and New Street Lighting.	\$ 101,951,704	\$ 10,000,000	June 2029

ATTACHMENT 2 - PROJECT SCORING CRITERIA

Scoring Criteria	State Route 710 Valley Blvd. Multi Modal Transportation Improvements
CTC Prioritization	The project is 5th in the County Transportation Commissions (CTC) Prioritization List.
Regional Priorities	<p>This project aligns with the following regional priorities:</p> <p><u>Complete Streets:</u> The project is in alignment with the core vision of Complete Streets outlined in Connect SoCal. By focusing on enhancing user mobility, accessibility, and community safety, it naturally contributes to the transformation of local streets into complete streets. The inclusion of features such as dedicated bus lanes, a Class IV Bike Facility, and expanded public parks underscores the commitment to creating comprehensive and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.</p> <p><u>Safety:</u> The project adopts a comprehensive approach to create a safer environment for all users in the corridor. Dedicated bike facilities and protected lanes enhance bicyclist safety. Measures such as enhanced visibility pedestrian crossings, new street lighting, and new pedestrian lighting focus on improving pedestrian safety. Addressing intersections, curb modifications aim to make them safer, and a dedicated bus lane during peak periods contributes to reducing aggressive driving and speeding.</p> <p><u>15-Minute Communities:</u> The project contributes to the creation of a 15-minute community by strategically improving accessibility and connectivity within the 4.5-mile corridor. By incorporating features such as dedicated bus lanes, Class IV Bike Facilities, and local public park expansions, the project enhances multimodal transportation options, allowing residents to access essential services and amenities within a 15-minute walk, bike, or roll from their homes.</p> <p><u>Transportation Demand Management:</u> The project seeks to alleviate peak-time traffic by constructing a dedicated bus lane, providing an alternative for drivers to opt for bus transportation rather than contributing to road congestion.</p> <p><u>Clean Transportation/ Air Quality:</u> By implementing a dedicated bus lane, creating a two-way cycle track, and incorporating vision zero elements, the project promotes sustainable modes of transportation and pedestrian safety. Additionally, the inclusion of green spaces and energy-efficient lighting contributes to an overall environmentally friendly and healthier community. These measures collectively aim to reduce vehicular emissions, encourage public transportation use, and create a more sustainable urban environment.</p>

ATTACHMENT 2 - PROJECT SCORING CRITERIA (CONT)

Scoring Criteria	State Route 710 Valley Blvd. Multi Modal Transportation Improvements
Performance Measures	The project enhances the Federal Transportation Performance Management goals of location efficiency, mobility and accessibility, safety and public health, environmental quality, economic opportunity, investment effectiveness, transportation system sustainability and environmental justice by using the following designs: Dedicated Bus Lane during Peak Periods, New Class IV Bike Facility, Local Public Park Expansions, Standard Width Sidewalks, Raised Medians with Green Space, On-Street Parking, Railroad Quiet Zone, Curb Modifications and New Street Lighting.
Equity	The connectivity between the I-710 freeway and Union Station serves as a critical link for commuters and travelers, enhancing overall transportation efficiency in the region. It is also a gateway to numerous essential destinations that are integral to the Los Angeles, such as the California State University - Los Angeles campus, Lincoln and Ascot Hills Parks, USC Medical Center, and the USC Health Science campus. This project will streamline trips to these destinations, promoting accessibility, safety, and efficiency throughout the region. Improved access to major destinations, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities contributes to the overall well-being and quality of life for residents.
Air Quality Improvements	By implementing a dedicated bus lane, creating a two-way cycle track, and incorporating vision zero elements, the project promotes sustainable modes of transportation and pedestrian safety. Additionally, the inclusion of green spaces and energy-efficient lighting contributes to an overall environmentally friendly and healthier community. These measures collectively aim to reduce vehicular emissions, encourage public transportation use, and create a more sustainable urban environment.