

INDEPENDENT TAXPAYER OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

February 14, 2018

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **10**

Action Requested: DISCUSSION

TransNet SENIOR MINI-GRANT PROGRAM: PREPARATION FOR CYCLE 10
CALL FOR PROJECTS

File Number 3320100

Introduction

The *TransNet* Extension Ordinance provides funding for a competitive grant program to support nonprofit organizations and local agencies in providing specialized transportation services for seniors. This program is known as the *TransNet* Senior Mini-Grant program and is one of two grant programs that comprise SANDAG's Specialized Transportation Grant Program (STGP) which seeks to expand mobility options for seniors and persons with disabilities.

SANDAG releases a call for projects for the STGP every two years. Beginning in 2008, *TransNet* Senior Mini-Grant funds have been distributed through five of the nine competitive grant cycles for the STGP, with the last award occurring in March 2017. Approximately \$14.6 million in *TransNet* funds have been awarded to support 69 projects through the *TransNet* Senior Mini-Grant program.

Prior to each competitive process, evaluation criteria and other program requirements are assessed and adjusted based on lessons learned and input from the Board of Directors, Transportation Committee, *TransNet* Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee (ITOC), the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), and other stakeholders. On January 19, 2018, the Transportation Committee reviewed and discussed the STGP draft goal and objectives and select program requirements. Similarly, today the ITOC is asked to review and discuss the draft goal and objectives, existing minimum and maximum grant request, and matching fund requirement as it specifically relates to the *TransNet* Senior Mini-Grant program.

Discussion

Feedback received from the Transportation Committee at its January 19, 2018, meeting supported the emphasis given to cost-efficiency in the draft objectives. Staff also was asked to explore the impact of lowering the maximum grant request amount of \$500,000 per applicant with the intent of spreading grant funding among a greater number of applicants and serving a broader number of individuals and types of trips. This suggestion comes as a response to comments received during the previous cycle that a select number of larger organizations received many of the grant awards. This comment and other stakeholder feedback are summarized in the attached staff report.

The ITOC may suggest modifications to the draft goal and objectives, the minimum and maximum grant amounts, and/or the matching fund requirement for the *TransNet* Senior Mini-Grant program. The result of this discussion will help shape potential changes to current eligibility and evaluation criteria.

Next Steps

Over the next several months, input will be sought from a group of current grantees and past applicants, in addition to input from SSTAC on the program requirements and evaluation criteria. Based upon the input, SANDAG staff will propose refinements to the STGP program goal and objectives, minimum and maximum grant request amounts, and *TransNet* Senior Mini-Grant match requirement.

The ITOC and Transportation Committee will be asked to review the refinements, discuss the evaluation criteria, and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors to release the call for projects in summer 2018.

Attachment: 1. January 19, 2018, Transportation Committee Agenda Item No. 8

Key Staff Contact: Audrey Porcella, (619) 699-1961, audrey.porcella@sandag.org



AGENDA ITEM NO. 18-01-8

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
JANUARY 19, 2018

ACTION REQUESTED: DISCUSSION

SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION GRANT PROGRAM: PREPARATION FOR CYCLE 10 CALL FOR PROJECTS

File Number 3320200

Introduction

The SANDAG Specialized Transportation Grant Program (STGP) funds projects and programs that expand mobility options for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Prior to each competitive process, released every two years, evaluation criteria and other program requirements are assessed and adjusted based on lessons learned and input from the Board of Directors, Transportation Committee, *TransNet* Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee (ITOC), the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), and other stakeholders. In preparation for the next call for projects, the Transportation Committee is asked to discuss the draft STGP goal and program objectives, existing minimum and maximum grant request amounts, and *TransNet* Senior Mini-Grant matching fund requirements. The result of this discussion will help shape potential changes to current eligibility and evaluation criteria.

Discussion

Background

SANDAG is responsible for distributing specialized transportation funds through the *TransNet* Senior Mini-Grant and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Grant Program. Since it began in 2006, the STGP distributed funds under two former FTA programs: Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom. In total, SANDAG has awarded over \$24 million in federal grant funds and \$14.6 million in *TransNet* funds through nine competitive grant cycles to support a total of 190 specialized transportation projects. SANDAG provides status updates on grantee performance on a quarterly basis to the Transportation Committee. The most recent update is included as Item No. 3 of today's agenda.

Attachment 1 provides a summary of the STGP including text from governing documents, eligible applicants, grant types, as well as the draft program goal and objectives, existing minimum and maximum grant request thresholds, and existing match requirements.

Draft Program Goal and Objectives

Based upon the *TransNet* Extension Ordinance language, FTA guidance, and eligibility and evaluation criteria adopted by the Transportation Committee and Board of Directors over the previous nine competitive funding cycles, staff has drafted the following STGP goal for Transportation Committee consideration:

Improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities throughout the region by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding transportation mobility options.

Similarly, staff has drafted the following STGP program objectives for Transportation Committee consideration which emphasize innovation, cost-efficiency, and alignment with priorities in the SANDAG Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan):

- *Fund projects that are derived from either the very-high priority or high priority strategies for addressing gaps in transportation service outlined in the Coordinated Plan.*
- *Fund innovative and flexible programs that provide transportation services specifically designed to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in the San Diego region.*
- *Provide incentives for the coordination among health and human service agencies, public, private, and non-profit transportation providers to create efficiencies in service delivery, reduce duplication of services, and address any gaps in service for seniors and individuals with disabilities.*
- *Encourage cost-efficient service provision through coordination, innovation, and the leveraging of matching funds.*

Existing Program Requirements

Neither of the governing documents (*TransNet* or FTA requirements) establish minimum or maximum grant amounts. SANDAG established minimum and maximum grant request amounts based upon input in previous funding cycles. Currently, the minimum is \$30,000 and maximum is \$200,000 for one year of project funding and up to \$400,000 for a two-year project. There is no limit to the number of projects that a single applicant can submit. However, an applicant cannot currently request more than \$500,000 per year or \$1 million over two years. The Transportation Committee may suggest modifications to existing minimum and maximum project grant amounts as well as the maximum request per applicant.

Regarding matching funds, per FTA guidelines, operating and mobility management projects funded under the Section 5310 grant program require a 50 percent match and capital projects require a 20 percent match. The *TransNet* Ordinance does not require a match for the Senior Mini-Grant Program. Based upon input in previous funding cycles, SANDAG established a 20 percent match for operating and mobility management projects and an 80 percent match for capital projects. The Transportation Committee may suggest modifications to the match requirements for the *TransNet* Senior Mini-Grant Program.

Stakeholder Feedback

Staff has compiled comments from the most recent competitive process and comments received in two specialized transportation workshops held with stakeholders in May and June of 2017, for Transportation Committee consideration in developing the STGP goal, program objectives, and other program requirements.

- Maximize number of seniors and individuals with disabilities served
- Provide maximum number of trips
- Maximize cost-effectiveness and benefit of dollars spent
- Promote the use of technology
- Provide service to seniors and individuals with disabilities with the greatest need, such as low income, underserved, isolated, and low mobility
- Encourage coordination and partnerships
- Fill gaps in areas where transit service is unavailable
- Prioritize trips that provide access to healthcare
- Ensure a broad geographic coverage of services
- Encourage increasing efficiencies in service provision over time
- Support a variety of organizations of varying sizes

Next Steps

In addition to seeking initial input today from the Transportation Committee, over the next several months, staff also will assemble a group of current grantees and past applicants as well as seek input from SSTAC and ITOC on the program requirements and evaluation criteria. Based upon the input, SANDAG staff will propose refinements to the STGP program goal and objectives, minimum-maximum grant request amounts, and *TransNet* Senior Mini-Grant match requirement.

In the summer, the Transportation Committee will be asked to review the refinements, discuss evaluation criteria, and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors. The call for projects is anticipated to be released in summer 2018.

CHARLES "MUGGS" STOLL

Director of Land Use and Transportation Planning

Attachment: 1. Specialized Transportation Grant Program Summary

Key Staff Contact: Audrey Porcella, (619) 699-1961, audrey.porcella@sandag.org



Specialized Transportation Grant Program (STGP) Summary

	TransNet Senior Mini-Grant	FTA Section 5310
Governing Documents	<p>TransNet Ordinance SECTION 4.C.2</p> <p><i>Three and one-fourth percent of the funds made available under Section 4(C) shall be used to support a competitive grant program for nonprofit organizations and local agencies. The funds shall be used to provide specialized transportation services for seniors focusing on innovative and cost-effective approaches to providing improved senior transportation, including, but not limited to, shared group services, special shuttle services using volunteer forces, and brokerage of multi-jurisdictional transportation services.</i></p>	<p>FTA Circular 9070.1G Chapter II, Section 1</p> <p><i>STATUTORY AUTHORITY. Title 49 U.S.C. 5310 authorizes the formula assistance program for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program and provides formula funding to states and designated recipients (recipients) to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>This program provides grant funds for capital and operating expenses to recipients for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable;</i> • <i>Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.);</i> • <i>Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit; and</i> • <i>Alternatives to public transportation projects that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities with transportation.</i>
Eligible Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private non-profits • Local governmental authorities • Public transportation operators • Social services agencies • Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) 	
Grant Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating • Mobility Management (MM) • Capital 	
Draft Program Goal	<p>Improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities throughout the region by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding transportation mobility options.</p>	
Draft Program Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund projects that are derived from either the very-high priority or high priority strategies for addressing gaps in transportation service outlined in the Coordinated Plan • Fund innovative and flexible programs that provide transportation services specifically designed to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in the San Diego region • Provide incentives for the coordination among health and human service agencies, public, private, and non-profit transportation providers to create efficiencies in service delivery, reduce duplication of services, and address any gaps in service for seniors and individuals with disabilities • Encourage cost-efficient service provision through coordination, innovation, and the leveraging of matching funds 	
Existing Min-Max Grant Requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Minimum - \$30,000 per year • Project Maximum - \$200,000 per year or \$400,000 for two-year period • Applicant Maximum (all project grant requests combined) per grant program - \$500,000 per year 	
Existing Match Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating / MM – 20% • Capital – 80% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating / MM – 50% • Capital – 20%