COVID-19 Infrastructure Program #015: Transit Partnership

Regional Transportation Council
March 11, 2021
BACKGROUND

- Due to the recent COVID-19 outbreak, transit ridership has declined significantly.
- In response, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) approved $25,000,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds for investments in transit in the COVID-19 Round 3 Infrastructure Program in November 2020.
- Since then, discussions have occurred regarding how the funding should be allocated at the project level.
TRANSIT IMPACTS

Weekday Ridership

Passenger Decrease: 2019 vs 2020

Mar: -27%
Apr: -59%
May: -55%
June: -54%
Jul: -55%
Aug: -57%
Sep: -57%
Oct: -56%
Nov: -50%
Dec: -49%

Source: DART, DCTA, and Trinity Metro
• Scope: Specific scopes to be determined, but will focus on these areas:
  • Response to COVID-19 impacts
  • Insurance for passenger rail integration onto freight lines
  • Engineering funds for passenger rail/roadway interfaces
  • Next generation high-intensity bus expansion
  • Review of bus stop amenities
  • Partnership(s) with Class 1 Railroads on passenger rail corridors
• RTC Policies/Federal Performance Measures Addressed: Transit, Air Quality, Freight
REGIONAL TRANSIT EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROGRAM

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, transit ridership has remained approximately 50% of what it was for the same period in 2019.
- Bringing riders back to the system will require targeted outreach.
- A two-phased education campaign is proposed:
  - Phase 1 - focus on growing consumer confidence
  - Phase 2 - focus on increasing ridership
- Program involves seeking out partnerships in the business community and local news networks.
- $1,000,000 CMAQ/STBG funds proposed for the program (to be matched with Regional Transportation Development Credits (TDC))
- In order to expedite funding, this program may be implemented by a funding exchange with the transit agencies.

Source: DCTA
INSURANCE FOR PASSENGER RAIL INTEGRATION

- Transit authorities are required to have insurance for passenger operations on freight rail lines.
- Agencies in our region have previously had sufficient revenue for annual premiums, but revenue decreases have presented an issue.
- Additionally, premiums in the industry have increased dramatically.
- $5,000,000 STBG funds are proposed to assist transit authorities in securing insurance until premiums level out.
- The funds would be matched with Regional TDCs.
REGIONAL RAILROAD DESIGN REVIEW

- In recent months, a need has been identified to facilitate the review of engineering plans for transportation projects crossing or utilizing Class 1 railroad lines.

- Proposed project/program involves:
  - Funding professional engineering agreements with railroads (e.g., Union Pacific, BNSF Railway, Fort Worth and Western Railroad, Kansas City Southern Railroad)
  - Agreements to expedite the design review of regionally significant projects throughout the region
  - $7,000,000 of STBG funds (to be matched with Regional TDCs)
REGIONAL BUS STOPS

- Many bus stops leave transit riders waiting in the grass and dirt.

- Proposed project involves:
  - Funding concrete foundations and/or overhead shelters
  - $1,000,000 STBG funds (to be matched with Regional TDCs) for bus stops in the Trinity Metro service area with specific locations to be identified by NCTCOG and Trinity Metro
  - Stops in the DCTA and DART service areas to be identified for future improvement
NEXT STEPS

- Add projects to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Statewide TIP
- Identify potential projects for the remaining $11,000,000 of funding
- Bring proposals back to STTC and RTC for consideration
REQUESTED ACTION

• RTC approval of:
  • The proposed COVID-19 Infrastructure Program: Transit Partnership investments
  • Administratively amending the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and amending other planning/administrative documents to incorporate these projects.
CONTACT/QUESTIONS?

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