

SBCAG STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: 2022 Unmet Transit Needs Direction

MEETING DATE: September 16, 2021

AGENDA ITEM: 7

STAFF CONTACT: Jared Carvalho

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Direct SBCAG staff to carry out the 2022 Unmet Transit Needs Process consistent with the expectation that no associated Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding will be allocated for non-transit purposes, such as for streets and roads, OR
- B. Direct SBCAG staff to carry out the 2022 Unmet Transit Needs Process consistent with the expectation that TDA funding may be allocated for non-transit purposes, such as for streets and roads.

DISCUSSION:

The Transportation Development Act (TDA) provides funding for transit services in Santa Barbara County and throughout California. The Local Transportation Fund (LTF) portion of TDA allows claimants to use funding for non-transit purposes, typically for streets and roads, so long as certain conditions are met. Those conditions are analyzed consistent with Public Utilities Code (PUC) sections 99401.5 and 99401.6, and ultimately result in the SBCAG Board making a finding related to unmet transit needs and reasonableness to meet. In the 2019 Unmet Transit Needs cycle the SBCAG Board, though not through a formal action, expressed an interest in not enabling the use of TDA funds for non-transit purposes, such as streets and roads. It was established in 2019 that in future years staff would seek direction from the SBCAG Board prior to beginning the Unmet Transit Needs process. In the 2020 and 2021 cycles, the SBCAG Board directed this process be carried out with the expectation that no associated TDA funds would be used for non-transit purposes (option A). Prior to beginning the 2022 cycle, staff is seeking the Board's direction on how the process be undertaken.

PUC section 99238.5 (Attachment A) is applicable regardless of whether the SBCAG Board would allow for TDA funds to be used for non-transit purposes or not. This requirement stipulates that at least one public hearing is conducted and community members are provided an opportunity to supply comments related to transit. PUC section 99238.5 also requires SBCAG to "consider other methods of obtaining public feedback on public transportation needs." Assuming this is the only process undertaken for the 2022 cycle, all public input would be documented in a memorandum.

PUC sections 99401.5 and 99401.6 (Attachments B and C) describe the process that must be undertaken should the Board direct staff to proceed with the expectation that TDA funds be allocated for non-transit purposes (option B). This, in addition to the PUC section 99238.5 requirements defines what has historically been conducted by SBCAG and results in a report and the Board making a finding.

Should the Board reverse course in the spring of 2022, when jurisdictions are submitting claims, SBCAG staff could complete the process to enable funding for streets and roads; however, there may be a one or two month delay in the process.

The above recommended actions are not a "Project" under the California Environmental Quality (CEQA) Act under CEQA Guidelines section 15378.

COMMITTEE REVIEW:

Staff sought recommendations from both the Santa Barbara County Transit Advisory Committee (SBCTAC) as well as the Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC). Both committees unanimously recommended the SBCAG Board complete this year's process with the expectation that no associated TDA funds will be allocated for purposes other than transit (option A). TTAC members voiced their interest in having the option available to keep the TDA funding option available in future years.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. PUC 99238.5
- B. PUC 99401.5
- C. PUC 99401.6