



Agenda Item No. (4)

To: Governmental Affairs and Public Information Committee/Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 15, 2024

From: Amorette M. Ko-Wong, Secretary of the District
Denis J. Mulligan, General Manager

Subject: **APPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISTRICT'S 2025 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM**

Recommendation

The Governmental Affairs and Public Information Committee recommends that the Board of Directors approve the implementation of the 2025 Legislative Platform as attached to this report.

This matter will be presented to the Board at its November 15, 2024, meeting for appropriate action.

Summary

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) is looking ahead to the 2025 State and Federal Legislative sessions and is actively working with our legislative advocates to watch and/or advocate for a variety of issues that affect or potentially could affect the operations and finances of the District.

In December 2022, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration awarded \$400 million to the District from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's (BIL) competitive Bridge Investment Program for the Golden Gate Suspension Bridge Seismic Retrofit Construction Project (Seismic Project). In September 2024 the District was successful in securing from the State \$149 million of new money for the Seismic Project, for a total of \$200 million of State directed funding from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Local Highway Bridge Program (HBP) for the Seismic Project. The District continues to seek other regional, state and federal funding for the Seismic Project, so this is a focus of our legislative efforts.

The California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Commercial Harbor Craft Rule Amendments, effective January 1, 2023, necessitate that the District replace all of its ferry boats over the coming years. This is a considerable, necessary expense; so it is another priority for the District's legislative efforts.

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, the District has been navigating the financial challenges arising from the drop in travel (and associated drop in Bridge tolls and transit fares) in the Golden Gate Corridor which affects the District's ability to pay for bus and ferry service to meet customer demand.

The District was fortunate to have received \$287.5 million in one-time federal COVID relief funds to help us navigate the long tail of the pandemic, but that money has all been expensed. In November 2023 the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) approved an emergency transit operations funding plan using funds and authority provided by Senate Bill 125. This action included a multi-year commitment of \$41 million for the District. It is essential that the District continue to secure additional outside (federal, state or regional) funding to support its transit operations.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) convened a Transportation Revenue Measure (TRM) Select Committee to create regional consensus for a regional measure to address the fiscal cliff facing many Bay Area transit agencies, including the District. The TRM Select Committee completed their work on October 21, 2024 and forwarded several funding scenarios to the MTC Commission. In the coming months, MTC is likely to forward to the Legislature a legislative proposal to authorize a ballot measure to seek additional funding for transit operations and transportation capital projects.

Staff will continue to be involved in discussions surrounding the future of any regional transit funding effort. In the upcoming 2025 California State legislative session, District staff will also monitor and weigh-in on potential legislation affecting the District and our partners.

At a federal level, the federal BIL sunsets in September 2026, so discussions and negotiations on the federal transportation reauthorization will commence in 2025. It is vital that the District advocate for inclusion of its priorities in the new transportation authorization.

Advocacy efforts will also continue to align with the District's resolutions declaring a climate emergency and on racial equity and justice as we fulfill the mission of the District.

To appropriately respond to issues and bills that arise, staff is proposing approval of the attached 2025 Legislative Platform that will set forth the principles to guide the District's State and Federal advocacy. The recommended platform encompasses the many issues affecting the District that must be monitored but is flexible enough to allow District staff and its legislative advocates to react immediately as issues arise. Board approval of a legislative platform will provide staff with direction on important legislative and policy issues.

Fiscal Impact

The recommendation has no direct fiscal impact, but approval of this recommended platform will provide staff with the flexibility to pursue funding opportunities as they become available.

Attachment

Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District 2025 Legislative Platform

FEDERAL	
Priorities	Strategy
Transportation Funding	Advocate for increases in funding levels and program definitions in the transportation reauthorization that are beneficial to District. Continue pursuing funding opportunities via earmarks and discretionary grants. Work with partners to gather Congressional support for any transportation or infrastructure grants the District may be eligible for when opportunities arise. Seek funding for projects that support the District’s Climate Emergency Declaration. Support Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s (MTC) efforts to ensure that the Bay Area receives funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, or BIL. Continue to monitor ongoing issues that may affect the District’s transit grants due to a 2021 U.S. Department of Labor interpretation of “PEPRA” on federally guaranteed transit union collective bargaining rights.
Water Resources Development Act	Continue pursuing opportunities to federalize the Larkspur Ferry Channel where possible.
Security	Continue monitoring and working with officials on enhancing security measures affecting the District including issues such as deployment of autonomous vehicles, domestic and international terrorism, drone safety and disaster mitigation.

STATE	
Priorities	Strategy
Toll Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and implement any state-wide mandates for electronic tolling and support efforts by California Toll Operators Committee (CTOC) on state-wide initiatives related to toll operations. • Continue to keep watch over any legislation as it related to tolling and personal identifying information (PII.)
Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor legislation regarding the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, which includes any effects of new bills expanding or governing the use of electric-powered/-assisted bicycles, scooters, skateboards and other mobility devices on paths, sidewalks, bike ways and streets, including identifying funding opportunities available for Alexander Avenue; • Continue support of any legislation to assist the Vision Zero Programs in counties the District operates within.
Pension Reform	Closely monitor pension reforms at the State level affecting the District or its employees. Although this is at a state level, this includes monitoring and reacting to any Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) laws or filings at the federal level as well that may cause the region-wide grant to be withheld.

<p>State Transportation Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue pursuing additional funding for the Seismic Project. • Continue monitoring and support of MTC’s efforts to increase transportation funding under MTC’s implementation of Plan Bay Area 2050 and maximize the Bay Area’s share of revenues for transit operations. • Seek funding for projects that support the District’s Climate Emergency Declaration. • Support MTC’s pursuit of a regional transportation revenue measure and the region’s advocacy efforts to establish new sources of transportation funding. Continue support of MTC and California Transit Association’s (CTA) efforts to update California’s current TDA (Transportation Development Act) eligibility requirements. • Monitor and protect actions that may affect any State transportation funding (i.e. State Transit Assistance (STA), Transportation Development Act (TDA), Cap-and-Trade Program) including support of MTC’s efforts to advocate for additional Bay Area transportation funding.
<p>Transit Operations, Safety and Security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and support, when appropriate, legislation affecting bus and ferry transit operations as it pertains to fleet electrification, deployment of autonomous vehicles, emission standards including reduction of greenhouse gas emission (GHG), bus axle weights, security (including cyber), operator safety and training, roadways (including bus-on-shoulder efforts), transit stations/hubs, and transportation network/rideshare companies. • Support state advocacy efforts by MTC and CTA on the conversion of bus fleets to zero-emission in order to meet the state’s Innovative Clean Transit rule and support Transportation Development Act (TDA) reforms. Also, in relation to Executive Order No-79-20, support additional funding to help transit operators convert their bus fleets and ferries to zero-emissions. • Continue to support legislation to improve the performance of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and support the efforts to speed up transit through the use of transit signaling priority equipment onboard buses. • Monitor legislation regarding transit coordination, network management and transit agency governance. This includes any monitoring and supporting any potential changes to open meeting requirements and Brown Act rules that would allow long-term flexibility for the District to conduct meetings outside of emergency conditions as well as flexibility for the District’s passenger advisory committees. • Support consensus-based industry standards developed with input from stakeholders as well as best practices and/or industry standards developed by entities such as American Public Transportation Association or California Transit Association.