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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 18, 2013**

SUBJECT: OPEN STREETS PROGRAM

ACTION: APPROVE GRANT PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the competitive grant program framework to fund a series of regional Open Streets events in response to the June 27, 2013 Board directive (Motion 72).

ISSUE

In developing the program, as directed by the Board (Attachment A), staff used the following framework:

- Identify an eligible funding source to allocate annually up to \$2 million to support planning, coordination, promotion and other related organization costs;
- Report back at the September 2013 Board meeting with a recommended competitive process and program, working with the County Councils of Governments (COGs), and other interested cities, to implement and fund a series of regional "open streets" events throughout Los Angeles County; and
- Develop a technical process to collect data and evaluate the costs and benefits (e.g. transit use increases, reduction in air emissions, etc.) of these events.

Board approval of the competitive grant program framework is being requested.

DISCUSSION

Open streets or Ciclovía (Spanish for "bicycle path") initiatives are much more than one-day events that invite residents to reclaim their roadways. Even temporarily closing streets to automobiles encourages walking, bicycling and allows citizens to re-imagine their streets and how they travel through communities. Due to their car-free nature, the success of open street events is largely dependent on access to public transportation. These events not only encourage walking and biking, but they also serve as an opportunity for many to use the Metro system for the first time. These initiatives are also opportunities for economic development and the improvement of public health, since they get people out onto the street patronizing local businesses — all while exercising and interacting with their community.

Drawing from the lessons of successful City of Los Angeles CicLAvia events where over 100,000 Los Angeles County residents have participated along 6-15 miles of streets and 70+ other open street programs across the nation, we have set a framework to establish a competitive process to fund open street events throughout the County. The following outlines staff's approach:

Identify an Eligible Funding Source

A dedicated local funding source for the Open Street Program is critical to develop and sustain these initiatives throughout the county. As directed by the Board, staff recommends budgeting up to \$2 million annually for the program using an available eligible funding source. In terms of funding options, staff is working with Regional Programming, Budget and Local Programs and the Office of Financial Services to identify potential funding sources prior to returning to the board for approval of the first round of grants.

Recommend a Competitive Process and Program

Past successful City of Los Angeles CicLAvia events have been the result of the strong partnership between Metro, the City of Los Angeles, the nonprofit CicLAvia and event producer Community Arts Resources (CARS). Staff will encourage similar partnerships with the Open Street Program solicitation process.

Upon Board approval of the program framework, staff will draft and develop an application package. During the application development process, staff will conduct outreach to Metro's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and its Streets and Freeways Subcommittee and the COGs. The outreach process will culminate with an Open Streets Workshop that will utilize lessons learned from CicLAvia and other successful open street programs to assist agencies with their application and planning process. In order to ensure that the Open Streets program serves to increase multi-modal access, advance an active transportation agenda at local levels and encourage transit usage, staff will, at a minimum, address the following within the application. Attachment B includes a more inclusive list of application guidelines and Attachment C outlines the program's development timeline.

- Proposed route should demonstrate transit connectivity, encourage transit usage or employ other multi-modal approaches;
- Encourage partnerships with community organizations that promote health, bicycling, active transportation, etc.
- Support from the COG; and
- Reference general plan and other existing planning programs/projects that support and encourage active transportation modes.

Develop a Technical Process to Collect Data and Evaluate Costs and Benefits

Staff will conduct an evaluation of the costs and benefits (including air quality improvements and transit ridership) of the program utilizing grantee's post implementation reports and the 2012 Metro Countywide Sustainability Planning Policy & Implementation Plan Principals and Priorities. A report will be provided to the board in FY 15/16 (second program cycle).

Data regarding the program's benefits will be collected through the grantee post implementation report which will be required from grantees no later than three months after the event. An initial menu of measurements is included in the application guidelines and will be further refined with input from COGs, Metro's TAC and its Streets and Freeways Subcommittee prior to distribution to potential applicants in early 2014.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Approval of this program will have no impact on safety on our employees or patrons.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the FY14 budget. Funds will be requested during the FY15 budget process. As this is a multi-year program it will be the responsibility of the cost center manager and the Executive Director of Countywide Planning to budget funds in future years.

Impact to the Budget

There is no impact to the FY14 budget. Staff will work with Regional Programming, Budget and Local Programs and the Office of Financial Services to identify a funding source and will request funds through the FY15 budget process.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board has the option to not approve the program's framework. This alternative is not recommended. The framework proposed follows previous Board direction and will be further developed in cooperation with the COGs, TAC and Metro's Streets and Freeways Subcommittee.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, staff will provide outreach to the various stakeholders and develop and release an application package for the Open Streets program. Options to provide an easy to fill-out web-based application will be explored. It is anticipated that the application will be released in early 2014 and that Board approval of the first round of recommended Open Street grants will be sought in Spring 2014.

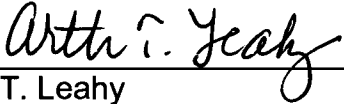
ATTACHMENTS

- A. June 27, 2013 Board Motion #72
- B. Open Streets Grant Application Guidelines
- C. Estimated Timeline for Open Streets Program Development

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Planning and Programming Committee
June 19, 2013

Los Angeles County “Open Streets” Program

Across the nation, cities have begun hosting “open streets” events, which seek to close down streets to vehicular traffic so that residents can gather, exercise, and participate in pedestrian, bicycling, skating and other related activities.

These events are modeled after the “Ciclovias” started in Bogota, Colombia over thirty years ago in response to congestion and pollution in the city.

In 2010, Los Angeles held its first “open streets” event, called CicLAvia.

After six very successful events, CicLAvia has become a signature event for the Los Angeles region.

With over 100,000 in attendance at each event, CicLAvia continues to successfully bring participants of all demographics out to the streets.

This event offers LA County residents an opportunity to experience active transportation in a safe and more protected environment, and familiarizes them with MTA transit options and destinations along routes that can be accessed without an automobile.

The event also takes thousands of cars off the streets, thereby decreasing carbon emissions.

Bicycling, as a mode share, has increased dramatically within LA County in the last years, boosted largely by the awareness brought about by these “open streets” programs.

Over the past decade, LA County has seen a 90% increase in all bicycle trips.

CONTINUED

In response to this growing demand, many local jurisdictions have begun implementing robust bike infrastructure and operational programs that enhance the safety and convenience of bicycling as a mode of travel.

Seeing the success of CicLAvia in Los Angeles, these jurisdictions have expressed a desire to pursue their own "open streets" events to increase awareness for active transportation and reduced reliance on the private automobile.

MTA should partner alongside a regional "open streets" type program in order to coordinate, assist, and promote transit related options.

These events will become a significant contributor to MTA's overall strategy to increase mobility and expand multi-modal infrastructure throughout the region.

They will also promote first-mile/last-mile solutions and fulfill the Sustainable Communities Strategy Plan, as proposed by the Southern California Association of Governments.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT the MTA Board of Directors direct the CEO to use the following framework in order to create an "open streets" program:

1. Identify an eligible source of funds to allocate annually up to \$2 million to support the planning, coordination, promotion and other related organizational costs.
2. Report back at the September 2013 Board meeting a recommended competitive process and program, working with the County Council of Governments and other interested cities, to implement and fund a series of regional "open streets" events throughout Los Angeles County.
3. Develop a technical process to collect data and evaluate the cost and benefits (e.g. transit use increases, reduction of air emissions, etc.) of these events.

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Open Street Application Guidelines

Application Questions/Requirements

- Provide the following grantee general information: grantee agency name, project manager contact name, phone #, e-mail, and address.
- Provide a description of the open street event, route and schedule.
- Provide the intersection for the start and end points and the route length.
- Provide a map of the proposed route. Include any alternate route being considered on the map using a different color or symbol to differentiate it from the main route (a digital map made in Google or ArcGIS is preferred).
- Are there any Metro funded pedestrian or bicycle projects along or adjacent to the route? List and describe.
- Coordinate with Metro and/or applicable municipal transit service operators to provide access to the event under one of these conditions:
 - Is the route within ½ mile Metro Rail or Metrolink station? List all the stations within a ½ mile radius. (Proximity to a transit station is a critical element of the open streets event success and the organizer should encourage and assist participants to take transit, walk or bike to the event)
 - If the route is not within ½ of a mile of a Metro Rail or Metrolink station, explain and specifically identify how you will transport people to the event from the nearest transit station using a combination of “bike trains” (groups of people who travel by bike together – www.labiket trains.com) and/or a special bike shuttle that carry a minimum of 10 bikes each (see Mammoth Bike Shuttle for an example of a shuttle service that accommodates 20-30 bikes).
- List and describe supportive activities (like fitness classes, cultural performances, pedestrian zones, and educational programs) that will be offered the day of the event.
- List and identify all community partners and provide letter(s) of support/commitment from each one.
- Describe the partner’s experience producing large city-wide or region-wide events related to transportation, athletics, cultural celebrations and/or public health. Include the number of people who were in attendance and any demographic information regarding the attendance.
- Provide an estimated budget (include matching funds or in-kind donation)
 - Provide a minimum 20% local match. Match may be in-kind services
 - Specify the individual costs of logistics planning, marketing, outreach and day-off staffing (police, fire department and traffic control) and staging.
- Describe how your cities general plan and other existing planning programs/projects are supportive of an Open Streets event. Include in

your description programs and projects that support and encourage the use of walking and biking for transportation purposes.

- Provide letters of support or resolutions from the lead city and partnering cities and agencies.

Application Evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

1. Project Feasibility

- Event readiness
(Funds will be required to be expended within 2 years of award)
- Agency/Partnership expertise
- Matching funds committed
- Community support
- Agency's existing active transportation programs and policies
- Transit accessibility

2. Route Setting

- Connections between multiple cities and/or central business districts
- Route is along existing bicycle infrastructure – Will the route be on or intersect any existing bicycle infrastructure? Has any of the infrastructure been funded by Metro (through the Call For Projects or by Measure R)?
- Topography. The grantee should select a route that minimizes hills (for example see San Francisco's "Wiggle" - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wiggle)
- Connections to cultural, architectural, and/or historical destinations and events
- Connecting neighborhoods and cities that have active transportation and/or transit facility gaps
- Activities for pedestrians (dance classes, yoga, concessions, information booths)
- Cost Effectiveness (cost/per mile and the value of connections & destinations)
- Proximity and access to commercial corridors.
- Proximity and access to transit

Grantee's Post Implementation Reporting Requirements

Grantee's are required to provide a post implementation report and enter participation counts online in Metro's Bike Count Clearinghouse at www.bikecounts.luskin.ucla.edu/ no later than three months after the event including the following:

1. Participation Counts of Pedestrians and Cyclists

Using at least one of the following count methods

- Install temporary electronic loop detection counters

- Conduct an “incomplete count” (a methodology from ecological studies) using visual or pictorial counts using crowdsourcing via Facebook, Twitter or Instagram

2. Personal Anecdotes

Provide personal stories from participants, business owners along the route or event volunteers describing how the open street event has positively affected their lives or community. The grantee shall engage in a dialogue with the community in person, via e-mail or through a social media platform like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram using (at least) one of the following questions:

- Participants & Volunteers
 - How has the open street event improved your neighborhood/community?
 - Has the open street event encouraged you to use active transportation or transit modes more often?
- Business owners
 - Has the open street event brought new or more patrons to you?
 - In light of the open street event, do you think that active transportation (pedestrian and bicycle) infrastructure improvements would improve your business opportunities?

3. Bike-Trains & Bike Bus Shuttles Ridership

If bike-trains or special bike shuttles were used to transport participants to the event, then report the ridership of these services on the day of. If municipal bus services were employed, report on ridership on the day of the event and provide a monthly average for the same day of the week since the event took place.

4. Local Economic Benefit

Provide at least one of the following:

- Report the sales tax receipts revenue for all businesses along the route and/or within ¼ mile of the route for the day of the open street event and a monthly average for that same day of the week for comparison.
- Report how the event affected sales at selected participating businesses along the route (a minimum of one business for every mile of the event). These businesses may have participated by providing discounts to pedestrians and cyclists or by having a sales display or dining tables on the sidewalk.

Estimated Timeline for Open Streets Program Development

Fall 2013

Draft Application Package

Fall 2013/Winter 2014

Outreach to Various Stakeholders and Hold Workshop

Winter 2014

Release Final Application Package

Spring 2014

Applications Due to Metro

Spring April 2014

Applications Evaluations

Early Summer 2014

Board Approval of Recommended Events

Summer 2014

Execute Agreements for FY15