



Agenda Item No. (4)

To: Governmental Affairs and Public Information Committee/Committee of the Whole
Meeting of December 15, 2023

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

Subject: **APPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISTRICT'S 2024
LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM**

Recommendation

The Governmental Affairs and Public Information Committee recommends that the Board of Directors approve the implementation of the 2024 Legislative Platform as attached to this report.

This matter will be presented to the Board at its December 15, 2023, meeting for appropriate action.

Summary

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) is looking ahead to the 2024 State and Federal Legislative sessions and is actively working with our legislative advocates to follow a variety of issues that affect or potentially could affect the operations of the District.

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 tolls and fares) in the Golden Gate Corridor. Most recently, staff from various California transit agencies worked to secure stopgap funding through fiscal year 2026 as part of Senate Bill 125 which is being distributed in the Bay Area by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The District is expected to receive \$41 million over several years to help keep our transit operation running. Bay Area transit agencies are working with key stakeholders and MTC pursuing a possible regional funding measure to sustain and enhance transit.

Funding for the final phase of the Seismic Retrofit Project of the Golden Gate Bridge is also still at the forefront of our legislative priorities. 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 competitive Bridge Investment Program. With this federal funding in place, District staff is working with the State to secure the remaining \$250 million necessary to complete the funding package for the Project.

During this past session, the District monitored a number of Brown Act bills but only Assembly Bill 557 was successful in making it through Committees and signed by the Governor. AB 557 indefinitely extended the existing authorization for local legislative bodies with a majority vote to hold remote meetings if a proclaimed state of emergency exists and also changed the requirement to reauthorize the use of remote meetings from every 30 days to every 45 days.

In the upcoming 2024 California State legislative session, scheduled to return on January 3, 2024, District staff will continue to monitor and weigh-in on potential legislation affecting the District and our partners. Staff and legislative advocates will pay particular attention to legislative bills that could have a funding or operational impact on the District's overall operations. As mentioned earlier, staff will continue to be involved in discussions surrounding the future of any regional transit funding effort.

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

To appropriately respond to issues and bills that arise, staff is proposing approval of the attached 2023 Legislative Platform that will set forth the principles to guide the District's State and Federal advocacy efforts through the first year of the 2024-25 State Legislative session and the 118th United States Congress (January 3, 2023 – January 3, 2025). 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. District staff will continue to work strategically with legislative advocates to best plan the 2024 State and Federal meetings.

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 2024 Legislative Platform

FEDERAL	
Priorities	Strategy
Transportation Funding	Continue pursuing funding opportunities, possible reauthorization and earmark efforts, and seek the delegation's assistance in funding District needs. This includes efforts to seek Department of Transportation (DOT) grant funding opportunities when they become available. Remain flexible to 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.

State Transportation Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue pursuing funding opportunities with state officials to complete the funding package for the final phase of the Seismic Retrofit 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.
Transit Operations, Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate and advocate with MTC and other ferry operators regarding potential further amendments to the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) regulations for Commercial Harbor Craft to ensure that amendments are implemented in a manner that is feasible and ensures no disruption in ferry operations. • 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 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.