

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: March 19-20, 2026

From: TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

Reference Number: 4.15, Information

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Subject: Hearing on the 2025 Program of Projects for Small Urban and Rural Areas in the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program

Summary:

The purpose of this public hearing is to take final comments on the 2025 Program of Projects for Small Urban and Rural Areas in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (FTA Section 5310 Program) prior to the California Transportation Commission's (Commission) adoption under Reference Number 4.16.

The FTA Section 5310 Program provides annual grants of federal funding to purchase transit capital equipment to meet the specialized needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities for whom mass transportation services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate. This aligns with the Commission's 2025-27 Strategic Plan objective to invest in projects that expand accessibility and mobility options, including for individuals with disabilities.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 14055 et seq., the Commission is responsible for adopting the Program of Projects for Small Urban and Rural Areas in the FTA Section 5310 Program. The Commission must also establish an appeals process and hold at least one public hearing prior to adopting the final Program of Projects.

The 2025 FTA Section 5310 Program grant cycle provides \$22,377,730 to eligible Small Urban and Rural agencies. Caltrans received 89 applications for 166 projects, totaling \$47,117,947 for the 2025 FTA Section 5310 Program cycle. Of the 166 projects, 110 projects were selected for funding as follows:

- \$12,918,670 to 67 projects for the Traditional Small Urban Program
- \$3,726,660 to 23 projects for the Traditional Rural Program
- \$3,022,100 to 9 projects for the Expanded Small Urban Program
- \$2,710,300 to 11 projects for the Expanded Rural Program

The 2025 Program of Projects also includes a contingency list of projects should funding become available through project savings or cancellations. The contingency list includes \$3,002,000 for 17 Traditional Small Urban projects; \$2,745,000 for 17 Traditional Rural projects; \$512,744 for three Expanded Small Urban projects; and \$750,000 for two Expanded Rural projects. Adopted projects will be supplemented if the contingency lists are exhausted.

The Draft 2025 Program of Projects for Small Urban and Rural Areas in the FTA Section 5310 Program was presented to the Commission at the January Commission meeting. One appeal hearing was requested from the Palo Verde Valley Transit Agency (Agency). The appealing agency was required to use documentation from its original application to demonstrate that the evaluation criteria was not properly applied to its application.

Staff from the Commission and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) heard the appeal on February 10, 2026. At the appeal hearing, the Agency successfully demonstrated that in one section, they should have received an additional three points. Therefore, the appeal was granted, and three points were added to their final score. With the additional three points applied, however, the Agency still falls below the funding line and will only move up within the contingency list. There were no changes to the projects above the funding line.

The 2025 Program of Projects for Small Urban and Rural Areas in the FTA Section 5310 Program is included in Attachment B under Book Item 4.16. Two of the agency's vehicle projects within the original application were moved up within the Traditional Projects contingency list based on the appeal described above. There are no changes to the 110 projects selected for funding on the draft list presented at the January Commission meeting.

Background:

The FTA Section 5310 Program was established in 1975 and has been administered by Caltrans since its inception. The FTA Section 5310 Program serves a variety of client groups and programs, ranging from small agencies with specific clientele (e.g., dialysis, AIDS patients, and social services support) to paratransit providers serving entire communities. Funds are awarded to non-profit organizations or public agencies where non-profit organizations are not readily available to provide these specialized services.

In 1996, Assembly Bill 772 assigned the Commission oversight responsibility of the FTA Section 5310 Program. Since then, the Commission has adopted the FTA Section 5310 Program and established an appeals process. For each funding cycle, the Commission holds at least one public hearing prior to adopting the Program of Projects and directs Caltrans to allocate funding. In January 1997, the Commission approved procedures for the FTA Section 5310 Program, the criteria for project scoring, and established a State Review Committee. The current State Review Committee includes advocates and representatives from the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee, the California Department of Aging, and Caltrans.

Traditional Projects:

Traditional projects of the FTA Section 5310 Program include, but are not limited to, the procurement of buses and vans; wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices; transit-related information technology systems, including scheduling, routing, and one-call systems; mobility management programs; and acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangements. Per FTA rules, no less than 55 percent of the total funding must be awarded to Traditional projects.

Expanded Projects:

Expanded projects of the FTA Section 5310 Program include operating assistance and mobility management projects. These types of projects include, but are not limited to, travel training, one-stop call center scheduling, volunteer driver programs, the cost of providing same-day or door-to-door service, taxi vouchers, ride-sharing, and vanpooling programs. Per FTA rules, up to 45 percent of total program funding may be awarded to "nontraditional" or Expanded projects.

Project Selection Process and Adoption:

In accordance with the Commission's adopted procedures, the Regional Transportation Planning Agency and Metropolitan Planning Organization, or its designated Regional Evaluation Committee, reviews and scores the projects within its jurisdiction utilizing the Commission's adopted project scoring criteria and forwards a scored project list to Caltrans.

The State Review Committee, consisting of FTA Section 5310 Program advocates and representatives from the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee, the California Department of Aging, and Caltrans, re-scores the projects to verify the scores given at the regional level. Caltrans then creates a statewide prioritized Program of Projects list. The Regional Transportation Planning Agency and Metropolitan Planning Organization notify the applicants of their project scores and provide information about the appeals process.

On January 9, 2026, project applicants, as well as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency and Metropolitan Planning Organization, were notified via email of the results of their application and the instructions for appealing.

The Draft Program of Projects is presented to the Commission prior to the appeals hearing. Following the appeals hearing, the Program of Projects is revised as necessary. As mandated, the Commission holds a public hearing at a Commission meeting to discuss the final Program of Projects. Upon conclusion of the public hearing, the final Program of Projects is presented to the Commission for consideration of adoption. Historically, the Commission has adopted a Program of Projects that includes a contingency list to allow for the addition or replacement of projects should funding become available through project savings or cancellations.