

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Board of Directors

FROM: Michael Harpool, Transit Planner
Tim Wilder, Planning Director

DATE: December 8, 2022

SUBJECT: Consideration of Approval of Funding for Two Local Projects Selected under WTA's Transit Access Fund (TAF)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Directors approve funding for two projects selected under WTA's new Transit Access Fund, including: 1) City of Nooksack Sidewalk Extension and Bus Stop Improvement Project costing an estimated \$177,190, with WTA providing funds up to \$210,000 to account for potential added costs; and 2) Lummi Nation Administration Center Bus and Bike Improvement Project costing \$33,855, with WTA providing funds up to \$28,670.

BACKGROUND

The 2022 WTA budget included \$300,000 for a new pilot program called the Transit Access Fund. The overall purpose was to enhance access to bus stops through partnerships by providing a source of funds for pedestrian improvements by local jurisdictions. While WTA is making progress to improve the condition at stops by constructing concrete landing pads, many stops do not adequately connect to the pedestrian network, thereby hampering access, especially for those who have mobility challenges. Over 170 miles of roadway surrounding WTA bus stops lack a sidewalk.

The recently created program provides up to \$100,000 for an individual project, unless fewer than three applications are received. Tribal, local, state government agencies are eligible to apply. To be eligible, projects must be within one-quarter mile of a bus stop or station and connect to existing infrastructure. Projects must include improvements for non-motorists, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, curb cuts, ramps, lighting, etc. Paint- and landscape-only improvements are not eligible.

WTA requires a 10% match and funding is provided as a reimbursement upon project completion. We also require regular status reports, and completed projects are subject to inspection.

In this first year of the program, WTA received two applications for TAF funding. WTA

staff evaluated the applications and deemed both to be eligible. Since fewer than three applications were submitted, the Nooksack project can receive more than the \$100,000 limit. Both projects are providing a minimum 10% match.

Nooksack Rd. Sidewalk Extension and Bus Stop Improvement Project

Estimated Project Costs: \$177,190. WTA contribution: \$159,500. Additional funding available for potential added costs. WTA contribution not to exceed \$210,000.

The City of Nooksack project will safely connect pedestrians to transit and a nearby park. Given the projects proximity to Nooksack Elementary, these improvements serve to support the goals of Safe Route to School Programs.

Lummi Nation Administration Center Bus and Bike Improvement Project

Estimated Project Costs: \$33,855. WTA contribution: \$28,670.

The Lummi Nation project will provide safe and reliable bike parking for employees and visitors of the administration center and improve the transit environment for non-motorists accessing essential tribal services.

FISCAL IMPACT

WTA's total cost for funding TAF projects will not exceed \$238,670.

BELLINGHAM AND MAKE THEM COMPLIANT WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA).

The motion was approved unanimously.

F.7 Consideration of Entering into an Interlocal Agreement with City of Bellingham to Receive Grant Funding for the High Frequency Transit Corridor Study

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Bellingham to receive grant funding for the High Frequency Transit Corridors Study.

Mr. Wilder gave an overview of this item. He stated that staff are calling this project the Rapid Transit Study.

MOTION BY KORTHUIS, SECONDED BY FLEETWOOD THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZE THE GENERAL MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM TO RECEIVE GRANT FUNDING FOR THE HIGH FREQUENCY TRANSIT CORRIDORS STUDY.

The motion passed unanimously.

Board member Fleetwood stated that he would like to meet with Mr. Reardanz about a Cascadia regional effort to look at high speed rail between Vancouver, BC and Portland, OR. Mr. Reardanz stated that he would contact the Mayor's assistant to schedule a meeting.

F.8 Consideration of Approval of Funding for Two Local Projects Selected under WTA's Transit Access Fund (TAF)

Recommendation: That the Board of Directors approve funding for two projects selected under WTA's new Transit Access Fund, including: 1) City of Nooksack Sidewalk Extension and Bus Stop Improvement Project costing an estimated \$177,190, with WTA providing funds up to \$210,000 to account for potential added costs; and 2) Lummi Nation Administration Center Bus and Bike Improvement Project costing \$33,855, with WTA providing funds up to \$28,670.

Michael Harpool, Transit Planner, gave a presentation on the Transit Access Fund and the two proposed projects. (Presentation copy available)

Board member Davidson asked about standards for improvements on sovereign land.

Mr. Harpool stated that the Lummi Nation Administration Center bus stop was on WTA's list for improvement. Mr. Wilder said he believes these are County Roads and they are WTA bus stops.

Mr. Reardanz stated that there is a 10% match, so WTA is not paying for the whole project. He said the TAF pilot project is a way to leverage funds across agencies and coordinate projects.

MOTION BY LAUTENBACH, SECOND BY DONOVAN THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE FUNDING FOR TWO PROJECTS SELECTED UNDER WTA'S NEW TRANSIT ACCESS FUND, INCLUDING: 1) CITY OF NOOKSACK SIDEWALK EXTENSION AND BUS STOP IMPROVEMENT PROJECT COSTING AN ESTIMATED \$177,190, WITH WTA PROVIDING FUNDS UP TO \$210,000 TO ACCOUNT FOR POTENTIAL ADDED COSTS; AND 2) LUMMI NATION ADMINISTRATION CENTER BUS AND BIKE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT COSTING \$33,855, WITH WTA PROVIDING FUNDS UP TO \$28,670.

The motion passed unanimously.

F.9 Consideration of Setting a Public Hearing at the January Board Meeting for Route 75

Mr. Wilder, Planning Director, made a verbal request to set a Public Hearing at the January 19th Board meeting on Flex service options for Route 75.

MOTION BY DAVIDSON, SECONDED BY FLEETWOOD THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS SET A PUBLIC HEARING AT THE JANUARY 19, 2023 BOARD MEETING ON FLEX SERVICE OPTIONS FOR ROUTE 75.

The motion passed unanimously.

G. BOARD ACTION - CONSENT AGENDA

G.1 Consideration of Approval of Minutes – November 10, 2022 Board Meeting

G.2 Consideration of Approval of Minutes – November 17, 2022 Board Meeting

G.3 Consideration of Approval of November 1-30, 2022 Expenditures

MOTION BY KORTHUIS, SECONDED BY DONOVAN THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA INCLUDING APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE NOVEMBER 10 AND 17, 2022 BOARD MEETINGS AND APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 2022 EXPENDITURES.

The motion was approved unanimously.