Arroyo Verdugo Communities Joint Powers Authority

ITEM# VIII.B

DATE: August 1, 2024

TO: Governing Board

FROM: **David Kriske, AVCJPA Representative, Metro Technical Advisory Committee**

SUBJECT: Metro Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Update

RECOMMENDATION

Note and File.

BACKGROUND

The Metro TAC meets monthly to provide input on Metro programs and projects, and to hear updates on various Metro programs that affect the cities, subregions, and Councils of Government in Los Angeles County. The following summarizes the major projects or programs recently discussed at TAC.

DISCUSSION

Metro Call for Projects Deobligation Appeals

Metro TAC reviewed several Metro Call for Projects grants distributed to various cities that were subject to deobligation due to project sponsors not meeting grant funding deadlines. For these projects, project sponsors can appeal Metro staff's decision to deobligate funds, and the TAC hears these appeals and recommends whether to grant time extensions for these projects. For this appeal cycle, no Arroyo Verdugo Communities JPA agencies had projects that were subject to lapsing. Metro TAC made recommendations for all projects to receive extensions and required some projects to report back with updates. The Metro Board of Directors makes the final decision whether to grant project extensions.

Metro Active Transport, Transit, and First/Last Mile Cycle 2 Grant Cycle

Metro staff provided an update on Cycle 2 of the Metro Active Transport, Transit, and First/Last Mile grant cycle. The purpose is to provide grant funds to agencies that can implement projects identified in the Metro Active Transportation Strategic Plan (ATSP). Metro will make $75 million available for projects, which must be implemented between 2026 and 2030. The Grant application will be released in August 2024 and will allow three project types to be funded: 1) regional bikeway projects, 2) first/last mile projects, and 3) pedestrian district projects. Metro also offers the ability to assist agencies by leading early project phases. Metro plans to conduct outreach on the grant opportunity ahead of the August release. Projects that are awarded funds would enter into grant agreements between January and June 2025.

Metro Zero Emission Bus Program Overview

Metro staff provided an overview of the agency's Zero Emission Bus Program, which aims to convert Metro's bus 1,888 buses to zero emission and is necessary to meet California Air Resources Board regulations that require all new buses be zero emission starting in 2029. Metro discussed its plan to procure battery electric buses and to install terminal and in-line chargers throughout the network, as well as a discussion of upcoming BRT projects that will be zero emission, including the NoHo to Pasadena BRT project. Metro also indicated it plans to solicit for up to 1,560 battery electric buses and up to 420 hydrogen buses, which would be the largest purchase of zero emission buses in US history. Metro also discussed several challenges to implement zero emission buses, including range, reliability, maintainability, obsolescence, electric grid capacity issues, and market availability. Also, zero emission buses are at least 50 percent more expensive than CNG buses and battery electric infrastructure costs are 10 times greater than CNG. Finally, most federal funding for zero emission buses expires in 2027, which will hamper future procurements. Solutions to these challenges include procuring more "standard" vehicles, ensuring vendors offer long warranties on the battery systems, and working with utilities to manage how buses are charged. As part of the presentation, Metro indicated that other public agencies would be able to "piggyback" off of Metro's FTA-approved procurements to assist in securing zero emission buses for smaller municipal agencies.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no Fiscal Impact to receive this TAC update.