



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER

File #: 20-149

Board Meeting Date: 3/24/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Michael Callagy, County Manager/Clerk of the Board

Subject: Letter of Support to include the Dumbarton Rail Project in Plan Bay Area 2050

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing the President of the Board of Supervisors to sign the proposed Letter of Support to include the Dumbarton Rail Project in Plan Bay Area 2050.

BACKGROUND:

The Dumbarton Rail Bridge was built in 1910 by a “paper subsidiary” of Southern Pacific, and was the first bridge to be built across San Francisco Bay. In 1982, the use of the rail bridge was discontinued. Then in 1994, San Mateo County acquired the rail bridge and the rail right of way from Southern Pacific for future use. Parts of the rail line approaching the bridge are still used today for freight rail.

With relocation to the city of Menlo Park, Facebook identified restoring the Dumbarton rail corridor as a mobility option for its employees and the region. In 2015 Facebook took the initiative to restart the Dumbarton Corridor project by contributing \$1 million to SamTrans for a study on all transit options on the Dumbarton Corridor. Working collaboratively with project partners, including Facebook, the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA), Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC), and AC Transit, the study evaluated a variety of transportation alternatives on the Dumbarton Bridge (Highway 84) and its approaches, as well as examined how to rehabilitate and repurpose the Dumbarton rail bridge for transit purposes. On December 6, 2017 the SamTrans Board of Directors approved the Final Dumbarton Transportation Corridor Study.

In August 2018, the San Mateo County Transit District (District) began partnering with Cross Bay Transit Partners (CBTP), a joint venture between Facebook and Plenary Group, which is an investor, developer and manager of major public infrastructure projects, to explore options to enhance mobility along the Dumbarton rail corridor. Plenary Group is an independent investor, developer and manager of public infrastructure who will lead the development of the transit components of the project. Facebook will be a co-developer of the project.

In November 2018, the voters of the nine Bay Area counties passed Regional Measure 3 (RM3), a toll increase on local bridges to generate \$4.45 billion over the 25 years to fund 35 transportation projects in the Bay Area. The measure included the Dumbarton Corridor improvements on the list of projects to receive \$130 million for planning, environmental review, design and construction of improvements in the Dumbarton Bridge and rail corridor in Alameda and San Mateo counties.

In 2018, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) conducted a long-range planning process known as Horizon over a two-year period. Through the lens of three distinct and divergent futures, the Horizon initiative explored how a suite of transportation, housing, economic and environmental strategies could put the Bay Area on a more resilient and equitable path for the next 30 years.

DISCUSSION:

With increasing traffic in and around the Dumbarton Corridor, the need for transformative solutions to congestion in the area is greater than ever. Coupled with new funding opportunities locally and regionally, including interest from the private sector, the Dumbarton Corridor Initiative is now an even more effective opportunity to provide increased transit options serving multiple counties in the Bay Area region.

The Horizon initiative, in coordination with the upcoming Plan Bay Area 2050 process, included an assessment of the region's major transportation investments to evaluate their impacts on the Bay Area. This effort, known as the Project Performance Assessment, evaluated over 90 projects, including those submitted by public agencies, non-government organizations and the general public. The Dumbarton Rail Project was submitted by the San Mateo County Transit District and the City and County Association of Governments (C/CAG) to the Project Performance Assessment, but did not achieve top scores. The modeling used to rank projects did not take into account potential partnership funding from the private sector or other major employers that would benefit from the bridge's activation. Additionally, the project did not perform well under the cost-benefit analysis and the equity score. However, the project team is currently working in partnership with MTC and ABAG staff to improve the projects' deficiencies in both these categories to improve its performance.

The attached letter encourages MTC and ABAG to reconsider the scoring for the Dumbarton Corridor to fully take into account the full scope of funding the project can leverage, as well as the equity improvements to the project that are currently underway. Approval and signature of the letter by your board would signal the County's strong support for the Dumbarton Corridor project's inclusion in Plan Bay Area 2050 Transportation Project List as a top priority to solving the region's transportation challenges and setting the Bay Area on a path towards increased resilience.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No Net County Cost.