

**Metro**Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation AuthorityOne Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-291**REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 24, 2009****SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE  
ADVOCACY SERVICES****ACTION: CANCELLATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PS09713039 AND  
INITIATE A PROCUREMENT PROCESS TO SECURE FEDERAL  
LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY TEAM****RECOMMENDATION**

The Federal Advocacy Ad-Hoc Interview Panel recommends that the Chief Executive Officer immediately cancel Request for Proposal PS09713039 and initiate a new selection process to secure a lead federal legislative advocacy team for our agency.

**RATIONALE**

As a public agency, we are required to utilize a variety of means to ensure that Los Angeles County's transportation interests are advanced and championed in Washington, D.C. Political advocates greatly enhance our ability to communicate legislative goals and program objectives and help to secure the County's fair share of federal transportation funding.

Contract lobbyists provide depth to the agency's coverage of legislative issues to key congressional leaders. They play a critical role in providing technical expertise as well as political guidance in navigating through the complexities of the legislative process and positioning the agency for successful policy and budgetary outcomes. Moreover, given the high level of fiscal uncertainty in Washington, D.C. fueled in large part by the economic downturn as well as ongoing turmoil in the financial markets, combined with anticipated significant movement on the transportation policy front over the next two years, the role of contract lobbyists is more important than ever.

In order to be successful, we, along with our political advocates must present a clear and coherent message to elected and appointed officials in Washington, D.C. This is especially true as Congress prepares to chart a new course on surface transportation policy when it reauthorizes the "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users" (SAFETEA-LU) later this year. The reauthorization

effort is likely to break new ground on both policy and finance, and as such, it is essential that our advocates are prepared to embark on aggressive lobbying efforts during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress to champion our needs before key players on Capitol Hill and to ensure that our interests are appropriately addressed.

Consistent with our board adopted legislative program, a cornerstone of our federal advocate's agenda will be leveraging Measure R funds. It is essential to bring additional federal resources to bolster local dollars entrusted to us by Los Angeles County taxpayers for the worthwhile highway and transit projects outlined in Measure R's expenditure plan.

In addition, climate change legislation is expected to play a prominent role in the coming months. There is a strong desire on the part of the Administration as well as Democratic leadership in Congress to advance an ambitious plan that will position the United States as a global leader in the effort to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Towards this end, transit may stand to benefit from any new revenue streams created by a cap and trade system, but this is far from certain and the transit industry's ongoing lobbying campaign – with significant participation from Metro – will need to intensify in the months ahead. Finally, many other critical priorities on Metro's legislative agenda will require a relentless, well-coordinated approach that relies on substantive knowledge, creativity and access to influential policymakers.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The funding for federal lobbying services is included in the FY10 budget in Cost Center 7130, Government Relations under project number 100002 General Overhead. Since this would be a multi-year contract, the cost center manager and Chief Executive Officer will be accountable for budgeting the cost in future years, including any option exercised. In FY08, \$594,999.90 was expended on federal lobbying services.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Board decided on November 20, 2008 not renew the contract for the firm that had led our federal legislative advocacy team since May 1, 2004. In December 2008, the Board directed the CEO to initiate an RFP for federal legislative advocacy services. In response to the RFP released on January 29, 2009, eight firms submitted proposals. A Source Selection Committee was established to review and evaluate proposals, interview candidate firms and render a recommendation for award. The Source Selection Committee consisted of Metro's outside legal counsel as well as representatives from the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles and two Metro government relations staff. The external participants were asked to serve on the basis of their previous experience in screening and selecting lobbying firms for their respective organizations.

After reviewing the evaluations of the Source Selection Committee, the CEO suggested that the Board might wish to engage in its own independent evaluation to make an

informed decision as to which proposer the Board deems most appropriate to effectively represent Metro's interests in Washington, D.C. On June 12, 2009 the then-Chairman of our agency, Director Villaraigosa, appointed five Directors (Directors Don Knabe, Richard Katz, Ara Najarian, Pam O'Connor and Zev Yaroslavsky) to serve on an interview panel to review and advise the Board on which firm, among those who had submitted proposals to our agency based on our existing RFP, would be most effective in advocating our federal legislative program.

This Federal Advocacy Ad-Hoc Interview Panel, which excluded those Directors who were conflicted, met on July 22, 2009 to interview the interested firms. After conducting interviews, carefully evaluating the relative merits of each proposal and meeting again on September 2, 2009 and September 15, 2009, the Panel concluded that the Board of Directors should initiate a new selection process to secure our federal legislative advocacy team. Because the federal legislative advocacy team will report directly to the Board and be charged with championing and advancing the Board's vision and interests in Washington, D.C., it is crucial that the Board be confident in its advocates' abilities to successfully carryout that charge. Accordingly, the Board is anticipated to assume an active role in the selection process.

Given our plan to aggressively compete for federal funds in the coming years, the Request for Proposal issued by our agency, shall place an emphasis on securing a federal legislative advocacy team with the following attributes;

- 1.) Demonstrated success in transportation advocacy on behalf of public agencies;
- 2.) Possess superior technical/subject matter expertise and thorough mastery of federal highway and transit programs and federal requirements;
- 3.) Longstanding familiarity with and understanding of the congressional authorization and appropriations process;
- 4.) Significant experience, stature, credibility and proven know-how in leveraging local transportation funds, like Proposition A, C and Measure R, to secure robust federal funding for a wide variety of mobility projects and programs;
- 5.) Deep and extensive bipartisan relationships with members of the California Congressional Delegation and other key figures in the House and Senate, along with strong ties to the Executive Branch, specifically the U.S. Department of Transportation.

  
Ara Najarian  
Chair, Board of Directors