



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR
December 11, 2007

To: PK Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: PK Phil Kamlarz, City Manager

Submitted by: Claudette Ford, Director, Public Works

Subject: Grant Application: New Freedom Program for Ed Roberts Campus

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit an application to the New Freedom Program administered by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for funds in an amount not to exceed \$735,200 for transportation and accessibility enhancements related to the Ed Roberts Campus at the Ashby BART Station accept the grant, and execute any resultant agreements and amendments.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The City must provide a 20 percent local match of \$183,800. The local match must be from sources other than federal Department of Transportation funds, such as state or local appropriations, and private donations.

The \$183,800 local match for this application will be provided by private donations to the Ed Roberts Campus. This match provision will be governed by funding agreements between the Ed Roberts Campus and the City currently being developed by the City Manager's Office.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

On November 9, 2007, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) released a Call for Projects for the New Freedom Program. Successful applicants will receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding to support new public transportation services and/or alternatives beyond those required by the Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

The current Call for Projects involves only the FY 2006 apportionment to ensure that these funds are used in a timely manner. A Call for Projects for the 2007, 2008 and 2009 years of apportionment will be issued at a later time.

The available FY 2006 funding is \$885,254 for the San Francisco-Oakland Urbanized Area, with lesser amounts for Antioch (\$56,232), San Jose (\$404,370), Concord (\$127,429), and Santa Rosa (\$71,947.)

The New Freedom Program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing transportation barriers facing Americans with disabilities who are seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society. Projects must assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services; and must expand the transportation mobility options of disabled individuals beyond the requirements of ADA.

Accessibility improvements to transit and inter-modal stations are an eligible project category.

BACKGROUND

The New Freedom Program is authorized under the provisions set forth in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, (SAFETEA-LU), enacted on August 10, 2005. The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society.

Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities. The 2000 Census showed that only 60 percent of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with disabilities are employed. The New Freedom formula grant program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the ADA of 1990.

The construction of the Ed Roberts Campus (ERC) at the Ashby BART Station in South Berkeley will provide the region with a universally designed, accessible transit-oriented community center serving people with disabilities with vital services and programs. The ERC will include office space for non-profit organizations, a fully accessible fitness center, child development center, community meeting rooms, computer labs and a café.

The City proposed requesting New Freedom funds to pay for the construction costs of vertical access via an iconic helical ramp, universally-designed elevators and elevator lobby. These elements will provide essential vertical access for BART riders and people with disabilities linking the below-grade BART station with the street and interior of the Ed Roberts Campus.

The helical ramp winds upward to the second floor, permitting easy access and safe evacuation. It is seven feet wide, allowing wheelchair users to easily pass one another going up and down. The elevators will provide essential vertical access from the Ashby BART Station, which is below Adeline Street, to the ERC, which will be located level with Adeline atop a portion of a new eastern BART parking lot. This will enable BART riders and people with disabilities to have safe, direct access from the BART concourse to the ERC's services and facilities.

The universally designed elevators go far beyond ADA requirements: (they are oversized at 5'8" x 8'5"), spacious enough to accommodate several wheelchairs. They also have redundant controls including "kick buttons," they are designed to be "drive through" which allows people using wheelchairs to avoid constricted and potentially awkward U-turns; they are "smart" elevators that can be controlled with card keys or electronic fobs; their durable stainless steel finish is designed to handle heavy use; and they are well lit to serve people with low-vision.

The elevator lobby adjacent to BART is also universally designed. It is spacious and can accommodate a reception area for large events. The related directional signage is intuitive and designed for all users. It is designed for safety with glass security doors that will control temperature, noise and odors, and it is located with direct sight lines from BART.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

This Call for Projects is slated to proceed on a fast track because grants must be awarded by FTA no later than September 30, 2008, and MTC would like to use the results of this solicitation to inform future New Freedom programming. For these reasons, eligible projects are limited to those that can be underway by FY 2009, and eligible recipients are limited to local government authorities and public transportation operators. Non-profit agencies were encouraged to partner with public agency sponsors.

The Ed Roberts Campus is a priority project for the City of Berkeley. The ERC has secured over \$44 million of its \$46 million budget in public and private grants and loans. New Freedom funds, along with other funding sources that are expected to soon become available, would help close the remaining financial gap and allow the project to start construction in 2008, as all of the permits and environmental approvals are complete. It is essential to close the budget gap this year to avoid escalation costs that might be caused by further delay.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Phil Kamlarz, City Manager, 981-7000

Matt Nichols, Principal Planner, Department of Public Works, 981-7068

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. N.S.

SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (MTC) NEW FREEDOM PROGRAM FOR TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY ENHANCEMENTS RELATED TO THE ED ROBERTS CAMPUS AT THE ASHBY BART STATION

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley supports the development of the Ed Roberts Campus (ERC), a center dedicated to opportunity and equality for people with disabilities that will provide numerous programs and services for people with disabilities under one roof, easily accessible by public transportation; and

WHEREAS, the ERC will be a nationally recognized transit oriented development to be located at the Ashby BART Station in south Berkeley, an intermodal station that connects riders to AC Transit fixed route bus service, paratransit, taxis, trains, and the Oakland and San Francisco International airports; and

WHEREAS, the City, on behalf of the ERC, is requesting up to \$735,200 in New Freedom grant funds to support the construction of significant transportation enhancements which will improve access to people with disabilities to the Ashby BART Station beyond ADA; and

WHEREAS, the ERC will be responsible for meeting the 20% matching requirement for this New Freedom grant program from private sources; and

WHEREAS, the Transportation Division of the City's Public Works Department has participated in the project planning and is prepared to carry out the project.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Berkeley authorizes the City Manager to submit a grant application to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) New Freedom Program for funds not to exceed \$735,200 for transportation and accessibility enhancements related to the Ed Roberts Campus at the Ashby BART Station; and accept the grant, and execute any resultant agreements and amendments.