

MEGAREGION GROUP APPROVED FRAMEWORK FOR MEGAREGION TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT STRATEGY (Approved at March 26, 2021 meeting)

Objective: To develop a set of “framing principles” that will guide potential shared interests in transportation investments among the megaregional partners.

Concept:

There are four (4) thematic areas that should shape a body of transportation investments across the megaregion.

- A. Interregional Functionality— There should be clear, targeted criteria that distinguishes interregional projects between the MTC, SACOG, and SJCOG regions. Two that rise to the top are:
 - Freight projects: Major freight movements by definition are interregional, and rail and truck movements have been a distinguishing shared mobility challenge for our megaregion. Thus improvements in freight corridors have benefits that reach well beyond the specific location of a particular project, that should be identified and elevated.
 - Interregional Passenger Rail: While each region struggles mightily to address long entrenched imbalances of housing and job location—and SB 375, among others, demand *intra*-regional strategies to address each region’s needs—it is undeniable that a certain level of cross-border travel will persist, and must be addressed. With GHG and other congestion mitigation issues at the forefront of planning, interregional passenger rail—i.e. the Capitol Corridor and ACE services—remain a key tool in the arsenal for addressing this mobility challenge.
- B. Improved Policy Alignment— While identifying individual *projects* for competitive/discretionary funding programs at the state and federal level remains an important and unique priority for individual regions, there is a significant opportunity to join forces in advancing policy and structural changes in those state and federal programs that would benefit megaregional projects sharing common policy goals. Two examples:
 - Advancing regulatory or other modifications to enhance regional capacity to support roadway pricing—from express lanes to all road tolling.
 - Pursuing modifications that allow regions to better implement operational changes to the existing transportation network, particularly enhanced integration of multi-modal capacities within road and highway right of way.
- C. Persuasive Leverage—Competition at the state and federal level is fierce, and promoting megaregional investments may well face additional headwinds alongside more local/parochial priorities. To best position any future advocacy

for megaregional projects, two factors will make them more competitive, and should be essential elements of any projects this megaregion would consider for inclusion in a transportation strategy:

- Readiness—projects should be poised for timely implementation. While staff doesn't yet have specific criteria in mind—and flexibility will be important—we should be able to make a consistent, credible case that we are not in the business of pursuing discretionary dollars to “bank them”-- rather we are in the business of putting them to work in a discrete time frame (1-5 years, for example)
- “Skin in the Game” – we should demonstrate that local elected officials throughout our three regions are bringing meaningful dollars to the table, as funding *partners* for state and federal dollars—not funding “grabbers”.

D. Strategic Investment Applications—to the extent that a combination of the above factors illustrates a ***discrete and limited*** set of projects with demonstrable mutual benefits in two or more member regions, joint megaregion funding applications could be considered for existing or new state and federal programs. Upcoming federal Reauthorization discussions may yield promising opportunities, as well as potential future rounds of SB 1 at the state level.

Finally, these principles may be easier to actualize within a specific geographic boundary, especially given the broad physical reach of the MTC and SACOG regions. The next item presents a “perimeter concept” that suggests a cordon area where investments within, or approaching contiguous borders may help define shared benefit.