

# STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** One Voice® Regional Projects Criteria

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Discussion Only

## **DISCUSSION:**

In 2019, the SJCOG Board adopted seven projects as regional priorities for the One Voice® effort in Washington D.C. The effort was not easy, and the board expressed before and after the trip dissatisfaction with the results. A small group of board members was convened and laid out several principles that they would like to see implemented in the 2020 process. These principles were broadly expressed. They indicated the following:

They wanted to limit the number of regional projects to no more than three  
They wanted projects to be regional in nature  
They wanted a premium placed on project readiness  
They wanted projects to be eligible to receive federal funding

The seven projects that were adopted for the 2019 One Voice® trip were:

### **Aviation:**

- Stockton Metro Airport Terminal Modernization/Expansion (County)

### **Bus/Rail:**

- Stockton Diamond Grade Separation (SJRRRC)
- Valley Link Commuter Rail Project (Tracy)
- Shared Autonomous Vehicle (SAV) Demonstration Project (RTD)

### **Roadway:**

- Central Valley Gateway Project (Tracy)
- SR 99/120 Interchange Improvements (Manteca)
- Grant Line Road Improvements (County)

Several of these projects generated a good deal of discussion. The Shared Autonomous Vehicle demonstration grant project was questioned as to whether it was truly regional in nature. The Stockton Metropolitan Airport Terminal modernization was questioned as to its readiness. The Valley Link project was questioned as to its ability to be eligible for federal funding. In the end, the SJCOG staff and eventually the Board chose the path of least resistance and adopted all projects.

This experience along with some of the challenges of having seven priorities on the One Voice® trip itself have caused some of the Board to ask for more definitive criteria. There are tradeoffs in doing so.

As an example; a project like the Stockton Diamond Grade Separation has no environmental document. The Stockton Diamond was asking only for environmental funding. Environmental only requests are not all that attractive at the federal level for discretionary funding. From a project readiness perspective, the Stockton Diamond is years away from construction. As another example; the Valley Link project has a draft CEQA document but not a federal NEPA document. The Valley Link project was asking for construction funding but is an extensive and complex project with a long timeline which makes project readiness tougher to demonstrate if looking at criteria of shovel ready. While construction projects are attractive to the feds if they are not federally eligible what is the point of asking for funding.

How do all these factor in when considering the relative value of a project that may fall short on specific criteria but whose impact is substantial? SJCOG staff is suggesting that we take the month of January to discuss these tradeoffs and that we move forward in February with specific criteria around the principles articulated earlier in this staff report.

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