



▶ FTA Innovative Coordinated
Access and Mobility Grant

FY2021





SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT
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2021

December 3, 2021

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US Department of Transportation
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RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM)
Grant Application

Dear Administrator Fernandez,

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) respectfully submits to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) our request for \$500,000 in **Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM) Grant** program funds to provide alternatives to passengers through the elevator service advisory system and the official BART App when out of service elevators block access to BART stations.

All BART stations require passengers to change levels between the station entrance and the platform, and therefore an elevator is a necessary segment of travel for those who are unable to use the stairs or escalators. For those passengers who require an elevator to access the BART system, an out of service elevator prevents them from entering or exiting a station. This proposal will provide information to passengers through the official BART app and the elevator service advisory system of accessible alternatives when an elevator is out of service. Making this information readily available when people need it dramatically improves the customer experience and meets the intent of the grant “to improve coordination to enhance access and mobility for older adults, people with disabilities, and people of low income.”

BART is prepared to implement this project, after making the investment to individually map out the options for all 86 station elevators at all levels and in all directions. BART also has engaged in extensive public stakeholder outreach, including its work on this subject as the recipient of FTA’s “Mobility On Demand On-Ramp” program in 2019. Lastly, BART is committed to provide the identified matching funds detailed in the grant application.

BART is grateful for this opportunity and remains focused on its mission of providing safe, reliable, clean, quality transit service for all our riders. We appreciate your consideration of our grant application.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Powers
General Manager



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I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

1. About BART

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) is a heavy-rail public transit system that connects the San Francisco Peninsula with communities in the East Bay and South Bay. BART service currently extends as far as Millbrae, San Francisco International Airport, Richmond, Antioch, Dublin/Pleasanton, and Berryessa/North San José. BART operates in five counties (San Francisco, San Mateo, Alameda, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara) with 131 route-miles of track and 50 stations, carrying approximately 405,000 trips on an average weekday (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic).

For more than 45 years BART has provided fast, reliable transportation to downtown offices, shopping centers, airports, tourist attractions, entertainment venues, universities and other destinations for Bay Area residents and visitors alike.

BART is a special purpose transit district that was formed in 1957 and opened for service in 1972. [Read more about BART's history and system facts.](#)

BART's vision is to support a sustainable and prosperous Bay Area by connecting communities with seamless mobility.

BART's mission is to provide safe, reliable, clean, quality transit service for riders.

2. Project Description

BART is submitting this application for \$500,000 in *Fiscal Year 2021 Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility* grant funds to provide information about alternatives to passengers who require elevators to access transit stations when an out of service elevator blocks access into or out of a station.

Since all BART stations require passengers to change levels between the station entrance and the train platform, elevators are a necessary segment of a trip for those who are unable to use stairs or escalators. For these passengers, an out of service elevator prevents them from either entering or exiting a station. Currently, when BART passengers come upon an out of service elevator, they must rely upon their personal knowledge to navigate around this blockage or find available agency personnel to assist them. Additionally, people may not know of all the alternatives available.

This proposal will provide passengers with detailed trip planning information for all accessible alternatives during an elevator outage. There are currently 86 station elevators in 50 BART stations. BART staff has mapped out in the attached document ("*BART Elevator Outage Guide*") all the outage alternatives for these station elevators at all station levels and for all directions of travel. If this grant is awarded to BART, BART would make this information easily accessible to passengers through two existing systems.



The first channel of information is through BART’s opt-in elevator advisory system, which sends out alert messages on-line, via text, by phone and by email when an elevator goes into or out of service. For out of service messages, a new link will be attached to the message with mapped out alternatives and instructions, as well as links to pre-populated origin and destination fields in trip planners for public transit routes to adjacent stations, in case that is the best option for a passenger.

The second system is BART’s trip planner (on BART’s website and on the official BART app), which would post an advisory that a segment of a queried trip is obstructed, linking to the same information as noted in the previous paragraph.

BART station agents would be able to easily access this same information to assist passengers without smart phones. This information would also be made available to the trip planning engine on a regional level provided by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the metropolitan planning organization in the San Francisco Bay Area. Additionally, this information would be provided to BART’s partner agency, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), who shares four stations and elevators with BART along the Market Street corridor in downtown San Francisco.

Options to by-pass an elevator would include the following:

- **Use of an alternate elevator**, if a duplicative elevator is provided at the same station.
- **Backtracking** - instructions to using another elevator to the wrong platform at the same station, which allows access into the system. From there, the passenger can take a train in the opposite direction for one stop, go across the platform, and then board a train in the right direction.
- **Travel on a local bus** offered by another public transit agency.
- **“Mitigation Trip”**: A shuttle ride arranged with a BART station agent for a trip on an accessible vehicle to or from an adjacent station.
- **“Mitigation Shuttle”**: Similar to the mitigation trip option, but with a vehicle on standby, staged at the location of an out of service elevator.
- **Other**: (this program could be easily scalable to add new options.)





II. DEMONSTRATE NEED

An out of service elevator, whether planned or unplanned, is extremely disruptive for those passengers who rely upon elevators to use the BART system. Very little information is currently provided about what to do during the outage, other than to contact a station agent. Even station personnel, who often rotate between stations, may not be familiar with all the options for a particular scenario. Understanding options involve many factors, including traffic conditions and bus routes with variable headways, depending upon the day of week and time of day. Sometimes elevator mitigation rides offered by the station agent to transport a passenger to an adjacent station may take upwards of two hours, depending upon traffic conditions and vehicle dispatch location. An elevator mitigation ride is often easiest to communicate (compared to a local bus ride with variable headways and operating hours), but it is not always the fastest or preferred option for a passenger.

This is a recurring, complicated issue for passengers - to figure out what are the options and what is the best alternative for them. To demonstrate this complexity, BART staff and a hired consultant engaged in a year-long study ("*BART Elevator Outage Guide*," attached) to figure out what to do for all scenarios when an elevator goes out of service. Now that these alternatives are documented, BART needs to present this information where it is needed and in a fashion that is easily accessible and understandable.





III. DEMONSTRATE BENEFIT

The intent of this project is to improve the public transportation experience for passengers who need an elevator to access the BART system by doing the following:

- Increase passengers' confidence in taking public transportation. Coming upon an unplanned elevator outage is a very frustrating experience for passengers. During the course of the study of documenting alternatives for various scenarios, recommended options change according to traffic conditions, headways, hours of operations and location within the BART system. Even experienced riders may not be aware of this. So by providing a list of all options available in real time and expected travel times for each option, riders can view all options and decide what is best for them.
- Provide independence to passengers with the information that they need when they need it, without requiring them to locate a station agent for alternative information. This also gives the passenger more freedom in selecting a choice and more options from which to choose.
- Provide information equally to all passengers, regardless of their circumstance, age, income or ability.

BART's proposed new additional communication strategy would also provide information about publicly available options not usually shown in trip planners, such as local flex shuttle programs, hospital shuttles, and business improvement district's circular routes. This will benefit all riders equally by providing information about more alternatives servicing transit hubs.

From an agency point of view, this program would lead to greater transit coordination.

- SFMTA passengers would also benefit, as they face identical issues, using the same elevators as BART riders at its four downtown San Francisco stations (they just enter or exit on a different underground platform level).
- Allows for a coordinated response between agencies, so the BART agency can direct passengers to a local bus route, an existing resource that is in many cases the best option for the passenger, instead of providing a more cumbersome elevator mitigation trip, which is usually slower (and dramatically more expensive to provide) if there are other alternatives available.
- Aside from sharing this information with passengers, BART would also make this information consumable by other trip planners, as not everyone traveling on BART uses BART's internal trip planner.



IV. PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS

This project will involve all public transit agencies in the Bay Area that connect with BART. BART's trip planner on its official app also provides connecting transit options, which become the main alternative when there is an out of service elevator blocking access. Two of the larger bus agencies in the Bay Area, SFMTA and Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) have signed support letters for this proposal, which are attached.

The project also has extensively relied upon the input from the BART Accessibility Task Force (BATF), an 18 member civilian advisory committee providing input to BART on accessibility issues.

Key Leaders who would be implementing the project:

Bob Franklin

Bob Franklin is the Director of Customer Access and Accessibility has worked at BART for the past 22 years. He previously served for 8 years as member and one term as President of the BART Board of Directors. He also served as Chairperson for the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, an operator of intercity rail service between San Jose and Sacramento.

He wrote and conceived the proposal for the FTA's Mobility On-Demand Sandbox grant for BART's Integrated Carpool to Transit Project with Scoop Technologies and served as the initial project manager. He conceived, wrote and has managed for BART the implementation for the FTA's Mobility On Demand On-Ramp project for a shared use, on-demand wheelchair accessible vehicle with an accessible trip planner. As Director of Customer Access and Accessibility, he combines Customer Access and Accessibility in this grant application. Previously he worked for 3 years as a Forest Fire Fighter for the United States Forest Service. He is a graduate of Stanford University with a major in English.

Laura Timothy

Ms. Timothy is the BART's Manager of Access and Accessibility, responsible for the oversight and provision of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Paratransit service, as well as the implementation of fixed route projects, programs, and policies supporting accessibility.

She has over 20 years of experience in project planning, oversight and contract management. Her work has emphasized the customer experience with the goal of increasing mobility and transit usage with enhancements in station environment and connectivity, bus transit coordination, pedestrian and bicycle access, and wayfinding.

Angie West

Ms. West is Assistant Chief Information Officer, with over 20 years of Information Technology experience in leadership positions. She is the project manager for the official BART app, including the release of the BART trip planner and parking payment systems. Ms. West would be the lead for the technical portion of this project.



V. LOCAL FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

BART is seeking a total of \$500,000 in grant funds. It is broken down as follows:

- \$325,000 for software development to update the official BART app, the BART website, and the Elevator Service Advisory system. BART's third party vendor under contract, currently TranSight, Inc., would perform the programming for this initiative.
- \$75,000 for IT project management, to work internally with the third-party vendor
- \$50,000 for integration with external trip planners, to make sure the product is easily sharable.
- \$50,000 to convert aspects of the "BART Elevator Outage Guide" into information consumable by a trip planner.

BART's committed local match (\$150,000)

- \$100,000 in in-kind overall project management and administration support
- \$50,000 in annual operating and maintenance fees for hosting this new service and updating information.



VI. PROJECT READINESS

Stakeholder Outreach

BART Accessibility Task Force

This topic of elevator mitigation services was agendaized and discussed at the public committee meetings of the BART Accessibility Task Force on the following dates:

- January 25, 2018
- May 24, 2018
- June 27, 2019
- July 25, 2019
- January 28, 2021
- May 27, 2021

A letter from the Chair of the BART Accessibility Task Force is included in this application.

The FTA's Mobility on Demand On-Ramp grant

As a recipient of the FTA and the Shared Use Mobility Center's Mobility on Demand On-Ramp project, BART also engaged in extensive public outreach during the implementation of this grant opportunity. Providing alternatives when elevators were out of service was a key component to the grant. Over the two year period, the project developed a business plan ("BART On-Ramp Program Business Plan" is attached) and performed outreach with the following groups:

- The Center for Independent Living
- Community Resources for Independent Living
- City of Fremont
- City of Oakland
- City of Hayward
- Fellow On-ramp recipients
- BART Accessibility Task Force

Public Agency Partners

BART would achieve this program with the cooperation of its public agency partners. Two of these partners, the largest bus agencies in the Bay Area, the SFMTA and AC Transit, have provided letters of support for this grant request.

Additionally, outreach of how peer agencies handle this problem and other stakeholders may be found in the attached file, "Elevator Mitigation Stakeholder Notes."

Short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals for the project

The short-term goal will be to make the "BART Elevator Outage Guide" more accessible to passengers, to reduce the disruptive element of an out of service elevator. The mid-term goal will be to improve the response time of elevator mitigation trips and the long-term goal will be



to position accessible vehicles at the location of the elevator outage in a cost-effective manner for the fastest response time and least disruptive impact upon passengers.

Key Performance Measures

- Update data base of alternatives
- Create webpages for each out of service elevator scenario, including a tiny url associated with each.
- Create messaging for the official BART app, website, and Elevator Service Advisory System for each out of service elevator.
- Create a marketing plan, including passenger bulletins and social media posts, to notify passengers of the new service.
- Launch the program at a few select stations to test the program.
- Launch the program system-wide.
- Provide an easy link for passengers to offer suggestions, report issues and ask questions.

The time frame for the above is one year from receipt of funds.





VII. TECHNICAL, LEGAL, AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY

BART's FY21 balanced budget is \$2.42 billion. Additional details may be found on the following link: <https://www.bart.gov/about/financials>

BART's Legal staff of 22 attorneys provides services to review issues regarding the Board of Directors, Labor Relations, Human Resources and Procurement.

BART has the authority and technical capacity to implement a regional or statewide cost allocation pilot project and has no outstanding legal, technical, or financial issues that would make this a high-risk project.

