**Metropolitan Transportation Commission**
**Programming and Allocations Committee**

**May 13, 2026** **Agenda Item 2e-26-0464**

# MTC Resolution No. 4604, Revised. MTC Community Action Resource and Empowerment – Participatory Budgeting and Implementation

**Subject:**

Revisions to MTC Resolution No. 4604, the MTC Community Action Resource and Empowerment (CARE) program. Staff recommend updates to the Participatory Budgeting and Implementation component of CARE, including to establish county-level and regional funding amounts, and updates to the program guidelines.

**Background:**

MTC's CARE Program, the successor to MTC's Lifeline Transportation Program (the agency's first program focused on improving social equity outcomes), was established in November 2023. CARE supports three program categories: (1) transportation-based community capacity power-building and engagement (Pb+E), (2) community-based transportation plan project development technical assistance (CBTP TA), and (3) participatory budgeting and implementation (PBI). Together, these three program categories support the Bay Area's Equity Priority Communities — census tracts identified by MTC and ABAG as having a higher concentration of underserved populations, such as households with low incomes and people of color —and similar locally-designated geographies in the nine-county Bay Area region.

CARE is rooted in MTC/ABAG's commitment to build a future valuing all--one rooted in dignity, belonging, and collective well-being. At the foundation of CARE is Power-building and Engagement (Pb+E), which seeks to build leadership and capacity among community-based organizations (CBOs) and local governments to foster authentic community engagement and strengthen trusted multi-sector partnerships. Through Pb+E's capacity-building grants and Learning Lab, CBOs will be positioned to engage in the planning and project implementation phases of CARE, including advocating for local priorities, partnering in facilitating participatory budgeting processes, and involvement in other regional initiatives.

For the Pb+E component, grants have been issued and projects are underway. For the CBTP TA component, guidelines were adopted in February and project nominations are due in October

2026. This month, staff is proposing to program $12.4 million for the PBI category, and to revise the CARE Program (MTC Resolution No. 4604) guidelines to advance PBI as detailed below.

**Participatory Budgeting and Implementation (PBI) Overview:**

The primary objective of the PBI program is to deliver smaller-scale neighborhood projects that have undergone a robust community-driven process. Projects may originate from community-driven planning efforts, such as a recent CBTP or Participatory Budgeting (PB) process. The PBI component also provides flexible funding to support CBTP planning and facilitation of PB processes across the region. The goal of the CBTP planning flexibility and PB process funding is to encourage continued planning and community engagement to identify future projects for prioritization.

PB is a community-centered process that allows residents to directly influence how public funds are spent by aligning community-identified needs and priorities with investment decisions. PB is typically a multi-step process guided by a steering committee made up of community representatives who help shape and oversee the work. Residents are involved in developing project ideas and voting on priorities, with engagement taking place in a variety of ways depending on the community. Through this collective decision-making, the projects that receive the most support are ultimately selected for implementation by the local jurisdiction.

This category builds directly on two 2018 PB pilot processes funded through CARE's predecessor program, Lifeline Cycle 5, which identified and funded community priorities from the Bayview community in San Francisco and the City of Vallejo, such as increased bus service, bus shelters, crosswalks, and wayfinding. It also builds on the foundation provided by MTC's longstanding CBTP program. Established in 2002, CBTPs are community driven plans that are developed with a focus on engaging residents of EPCs and community-based organizations that serve them, with the goal of identifying needs and recommending mobility improvements. These efforts have surfaced a wide range of priority projects within EPCs, which CARE seeks to now advance through the CBTP TA program and implement through the PBI program.

**PBI Framework and Guidelines:**

Staff propose to implement the PBI program in a streamlined and flexible way, allowing counties to use PBI funding to implement the projects that are highest priority and most beneficial to their communities while prioritizing equity and robust community engagement. To support this approach, staff recommend the following revisions to MTC Resolution No. 4604, Revised:

- Partner with County Transportation Agencies (CTAs) who will nominate a prioritized project list, propose project teams, and administer county-level project nominations. MTC staff will screen projects and help facilitate participatory budgeting process implementation as needed.
- Establish CARE PBI guidelines detailing eligible activities, funding availability, evaluation criteria, and requirements for demonstrating meaningful community support.
- Establish county funding targets by distributing 30% of total funds equally across counties, with the remaining 70% assigned based on each county's regional low-income (<200% FPL) population share. CTAs may use a portion of their PBI funding for CBTP planning (funding cap applies, as detailed in Attachment A). This methodology is consistent with that of the CBTP TA program, which the Commission approved in February 2026.
- Establish a regional set-aside of funding for PB process facilitation of $400,000 available to counties on an opt-in basis. Prior to PB processes beginning, MTC will develop PB best practices resources, incorporating lessons learned from the 2018 PB pilots.
- Provide flexibility for CTAs to adjust CBTP TA funding by up to +/-30 percent, with corresponding equal and opposite adjustments to future PBI funding target amounts.

**Issues:**

None.

**Recommendations:**

Refer MTC Resolution No. 4604, Revised to the Commission for approval.

**Attachments:**

- MTC Resolution No. 4604, Revised

- Attachment A - Community Action Resource and Empowerment (CARE) Program Cycle 1 Guidelines
  - Appendix 1: Community Action Resource and Empowerment (CARE) Program Cycle 1 Funding Source Information
  - Appendix 2: CARE Program Cycle 1 Standard Evaluation Criteria
  - Appendix 3: CBTP Technical Assistance Program Guidelines (*includes minor technical corrections*)
  - Appendix 4: Participatory Budgeting and Implementation Program Guidelines

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