



## Board Report

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Agenda Number:

### AD HOC SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE JANUARY 20, 2016

**SUBJECT: CAP-AND-TRADE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM STRATEGY**

**ACTION: APPROVE ADOPTION OF PROGRAM STRATEGY**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve Proposed Strategy for Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, including:

- policy framework prompting local resolutions as a prerequisite for all partnership and support;
- authorization for staff to include Metro-specific components as described in individual project applications;
- direction to staff on various activities supporting capacity building and planning for AHSC competitiveness.

#### **ISSUE**

One of eleven programs in the California Cap-and-Trade portfolio, the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program provides opportunities to fund affordable housing along with mobility and urban greening improvements intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The 2016 program will allocate \$400 million statewide. The program seeks to incentivize the inclusion of active transportation and transit access investments in multi-component collaborative projects. The creation of a cohesive Metro framework and strategy will prompt project applications consistent with Metro's priorities and will allow for Los Angeles County projects to compete more successfully for funding.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The AHSC program is one of 11 programs funded through cap-and-trade revenues. It was created by the Legislature (SB 862- 2014), and receives an on-going allocation of 20% of cap-and-trade funds (\$400 million for 2016). As administered by the California Strategic Growth Council, the program is intended to fund affordable housing along with transportation infrastructure, amenities and programming with the intent of reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles. The program is also intended to implement regional Sustainable Communities Strategies, and as such, has been of on-going interest to the Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee.

Metro has worked extensively on positioning the agency and Los Angeles County for the AHSC program since its inception in 2014. The Sustainability Committee has received regular updates on these activities. The first year of the program (2014-15) funded 8 housing-focused projects in Los Angeles County. Active transportation improvements were focused on relatively easy to implement additions to housing, such as on-site bicycle parking.

At the October meeting of the Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee staff provided a status report and preliminary strategy for Metro's participation in the AHSC program, and was directed to return to the committee with a fully elaborated strategy informed by updated program guidelines.

### **Recent Guidelines changes/Metro comments**

As of December 17, 2015, the Strategic Growth Council will have adopted revised AHSC program guidelines. The current set of draft guidelines, released September 17, 2015, seek to address issues observed in the first year of the program, including comments raised at various junctures by Metro. Of note the new program guidelines:

- Favor projects that align with the program's policy objectives and show consistency with established policy at the regional level;
- Include point-based incentives for meaningful collaboration between the housing and transportation sectors;
- Incentivize the inclusion of active transportation infrastructure in program applications;
- Incentivize the inclusion of water, energy and urban greening components.

Metro submitted comments on the most recent draft guidelines in October 2015. Those comments are attached.

### **Objectives**

The purpose of this strategy is to further Metro's objectives for this important new state funding source. Those objectives, as proposed here, are:

- Assure competitiveness of applications from Los Angeles County and increasing the county's share of funding awards;
- Promote high quality projects that invest in Metro's priorities including first/last mile connectivity, active transportation, affordable housing near stations, and urban greening;
- Improve the overall capacity within the County to plan, seek funding, and deliver projects;
- Reinforce the State's program goals calling for meaningful collaboration across sectors.

### **AHSC strategy components**

- Policy framework

The revised program guidelines provide competitive points for projects that align themselves

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with established policies and plans intended to reduce transportation related greenhouse gasses and vehicle miles traveled. While Metro has a substantial body of such policies, including the Countywide Sustainability Planning Policy, it will be more clear and efficient for applicants for Metro to create a specific policy framework for the AHSC program. The purpose of Metro policy for AHSC is to clearly communicate Metro's preferences for development and local transportation infrastructure in areas surrounding Metro transit stations, to prompt project applications with the greatest regional benefit, and to allow communities a clear way to position projects for competitive advantage. To that end, staff is proposing adopting a policy statement as follows:

AHSC requires multi-component project applications that include affordable housing, transportation infrastructure, transportation amenities, transportation programming, urban greening and other investments. Metro supports project applications in Los Angeles County that:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing near transit particularly at the lowest income levels feasible;
- Implement Metro's First/Last Mile Strategic Plan and Planning Guidelines, improving accessibility and safety for transit passengers;
- Include transportation infrastructure improvements in the public right-of-way;
- Utilize Metro's Urban Greening Plan and Toolkit;
- Include creative partnerships to achieve community development objectives identified through a community engagement process;
- Where feasible, fund implementation of Metro Bikeshare stations, Metro Bike Hubs, or other Metro infrastructure;
- Where feasible, provide Metro Transit Passes to housing project residents .

In order to provide support letters for individual projects, or for Metro to be involved as a partner applicant or participating entity, Metro will require a resolution from the local agency where any given project is located acknowledging and supporting these priorities.

It should be noted that this policy framework is closely related to the Metro's emerging work on Transit Oriented Communities. To that end, the Metro Board may wish to review and revise this policy periodically for consistency.

- Metro role in individual projects - The competitive framework established by the current guidelines creates a strong incentive for transportation agencies to be included as partner applicants. Metro generally views this program as an appropriate funding source for local transit supportive projects such as first/last mile improvements. In some cases Metro may be a direct partner/funding recipient, especially where bike share stations and bike hubs are appropriate. In all cases, Metro is seeking to catalyze partnerships that include transportation infrastructure investments with broad public benefits. Each potential project will be considered separately, with options to include:

1. Metro as a partner/co-applicant (where Metro receives funds for bike share, bike hubs,

or other Metro-specific activities such as stop or station improvements).

2. Metro as a participating entity, facilitating transportation infrastructure investment with a local city or the County of Los Angeles (e.g. first/last mile or active transportation project in a local right-of-way).
  3. As a supporter based on consistency with the policy framework proposed here.
- Outreach/training/technical assistance - Metro will collaborate with various entities in Los Angeles County to provide broad based capacity building, training and outreach for local agencies. Metro's activities will include communication on program basics (timelines, eligible projects, etc.) to all interested jurisdictions, presentations to subregional Council of Governments meetings, and coordination with other entities including SCAG to provide a basic level of knowledge about the program. Additionally, Metro is initiating a training program for local agencies around First/Last Mile. The purpose of the training is to orient local staff to the first/last mile planning methodology, and to prompt the creation of concept plans that are ready to compete for funding. Metro is currently working with partners and stakeholders to in Los Angeles County to establish a collaborative process that will address a broad range of technical assistance and capacity building needs for both the public sector and for private housing developers. These partners, convened by the LA THRIVES collaborative, include philanthropic foundations, local government agencies, housing, public health, transportation, and environmental experts, and community development financial institutions. The goals of this TA effort are to accelerate public-private partnerships and support high quality competitive applications - particularly integrated projects with both affordable housing and transportation infrastructure elements. Metro's aim leverage available resources in its targeted partnerships described above.
  - Plan development - The AHSC program requires that planning for projects be complete, or near complete, in order to compete for funding. That being the case, Metro will work with partners to introduce AHSC requirements and this policy framework into on-going planning programs (e.g. TOD Planning Grants if this program is continued by the Board, and the Joint Development TOC demonstration project.). Similarly, Metro will work with SCAG, as a function of the Joint Work Program to align SCAG Sustainability Program grants to creating funding-ready projects in Los Angeles County. Finally, a number of Metro's standalone planning efforts, such as an upcoming plan for First/Last Mile implementation for the Blue Line will be completed with AHSC implementation funding in mind.
  - Municipal level partnership/ pipeline development - As part of this overall strategy Metro is proposing to partner with a limited number of interested jurisdictions (6-8) in order to pilot planning and project delivery techniques geared to AHSC. This effort will involve a mapping exercise that will overlay potential housing projects, planned transportation improvements, and green infrastructure needs. Additionally, Metro will work with cities to compile lists of planned transportation infrastructure improvements (or improvements that can proceed with minimal planning and discretionary process) that can be readily attached to partnership applications. To this end, Metro has applied for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Planning Grant in partnership with the City of Los Angeles. If we are successful, the grant will support

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developing and refining planning techniques in Los Angeles and allow for the process to be replicated in other jurisdictions. Metro will select jurisdictions with which to work based on the following criteria (we are currently working with subregional COGs to identify potential partners):

- Interest;
  - Policy alignment (e.g. adoption of local resolution as described above), as well as other policies required by the AHSC program such as, but not limited to, local land use and transportation plans, anti-displacement policies, and climate action plans;
  - Presence of at least one Disadvantaged Communities census tract;
  - Ability to catalogue housing, transportation and greening projects, within the jurisdiction that are eligible to compete for funding;
  - Staff time and capacity to participate in strategy development, mapping exercise, and subsequent planning;
  - Active affordable housing programs
- Menu of Metro components- Metro's primary objective in any given project application is roadway improvements for first/last mile and active transportation. The program also creates opportunities for lower cost, less process-intensive investments such as bike hubs, bike share stations, and improvements to Metro stops and stations. Metro staff will develop a concise menu describing how each of these components can be included in project applications. Preliminary versions of these component menus are attached.

Support for projects - given SGC's new emphasis on policy consistency, we believe that Metro support for projects will be valuable in the competitive process. That being the case, we propose to establish clear criteria for Metro support for applications, including: a local resolution as described above, the inclusion of a priority component (transportation infrastructure in the public right of way, implementation of first/last mile, implementation of urban greening, inclusion of affordable housing in accordance with Metro policies), and where appropriate the funding of Metro-specific facilities as part of the project.

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

The recommended action will not have a negative impact on safety. The activities associated with this report may result in successful grant applications addressing first/last mile connectivity to transit as well as other improvements for active transportation. These projects would tend to improve safety for Metro customers along with other cyclists and pedestrians in Los Angeles County.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Adoption of the proposed AHSC Strategy would not have direct financial impact to the agency. The strategy directs staff activity consistent with previously adopted policies, including the Countywide Sustainability Planning Policy and the First/Last Mile Strategic Plan. Indirect positive financial impact could result from successful grant applications through the AHSC program.

### Impact to Budget

Staff activity related to the recommended action is currently accommodated within the Metro budget for FY 15-16 at project 450005 task 01.01 (Countywide Sustainability Plan). Activity for future years is subject to budget approval.

### ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may consider no action. Under this scenario, applicants may proceed without an established Metro policy framework, but would encounter substantial additional difficulty in compiling competitive applications with full points awarded for collaboration, policy consistency, and inclusion of active transportation components.

The Board may further consider adopting a policy framework, but without describing specific Metro components (bike share stations, bike hubs, bus station or stop amenities). As per above, this course of action would make it more difficult to craft competitive applications.

### NEXT STEPS

Pending consideration of this item by the Committee and the Metro Board, staff will:

- Provide broad outreach to jurisdictions regarding the policy framework and opportunities for collaboration;
- Select pilot jurisdictions with which to work on pre-planning and application development;
- Collaborate with other regional entities on technical assistance efforts;
- Participate at varying levels as described on individual applications;
- Provide on-going updates to the Committee.

### ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - October 30, 2015 comment letter on draft 2015-16 program guidelines

Attachment B - Preliminary component menus

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October 30, 2015

Randall Winston  
Acting Executive Director  
California Strategic Growth Council**COMMENTS ON DRAFT 2015-2016 AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

Dear Mr. Winston:

We appreciate and thank you for your effort to continue to evolve this important program. In particular, we and our partners in the transportation community and the Los Angeles region have raised several areas for improvement in the program that you have addressed through the latest round of guideline revisions, including providing a clear incentive for the inclusion of meaningful active transportation improvements in project applications.

Our interest in this program is in assuring that resources are invested in high value transportation investments that complement the growing transit system in our County, and that foster the type of collaboration and comprehensive community-scale investment that the program envisions. As you know, we are working closely with our partners and stakeholders to develop a strategy that will foster high quality project applications and realize the objectives of this program in Los Angeles County. Our comments at this time are geared toward assuring that this shared vision for the program is realized.

In that vein, we would like to make the following suggestions for revising and strengthening the current draft program guidelines:

**-Reinstate the requirement that TOD area applications include a transportation infrastructure component.** While we understand the desire to allow for more flexibility in crafting applications, we fear that leaving transportation infrastructure as optional will short-cut potentially fruitful partnerships, and we are not confident that the point based incentive for including transportation components will be sufficient. Further, we simply disagree with the assertion that areas served by high quality transit do not need additional investment. To the contrary, these areas often suffer from poor connectivity and multi-modal access. Emphasizing improvements in this area will have a profound effect on greenhouse gas emissions.

**-Clarify the distinction between transportation infrastructure and transportation amenities.** We appreciate the desire to create different levels of investment in transportation, but this component of the program could be strengthened through more clear definitions. In particular, full service bicycle hubs and bike share stations are designed and implemented by Metro as extensions of the transit system which will impact access and mode split. These should be clearly defined as transportation infrastructure.

**-Partnership and collaboration points.** We strongly support the notion that housing and transportation collaboration should be rewarded with points in the competitive process, as reflected by our comments on prior program guidelines. We also agree that a \$1 million threshold creates an aggressive goal for transportation investment. However, this approach

may prove to be too inflexible to reward meaningful collaboration in most instances. We are concerned that transportation agencies may not have a ready supply of planned and unfunded projects at that level. As an alternative we would suggest either awarding partial points at a \$500,000 threshold or rewarding collaboration points based on a more qualitative standard that would assess meaningful participation of the transportation partner.

**-CEQA.** We appreciate the improved language on project readiness for transportation projects and flexibility on project that will be CEQA exempt. We feel this provision can be strengthened further by clarifying how a project applicant can demonstrate the likelihood of a CEQA exemption (such as citing similar prior projects or submitting a statement from a third party expert). It should be clear to public sector entities involved in an application that representations on a project do not pre-judge their formal CEQA process, even if that process is likely to result in a Notice of Exemption or a Negative Declaration.

**-Urban Greening .** We applaud the new emphasis on greening components in the current draft guidelines. As you know, Metro has recently completed an SGC funded planning effort that establishes the importance of green infrastructure in a transit-supportive environment. This portion of the AHSC program, though, could be strengthened through additional definition and clarity. We would recommend a clear preference for greening components that are: a) on public property, b) permanent with maintenance commitments, and c) consistent with or based on a plan that considers larger scale hydrology, heat reduction, and other greening needs.

Thank you again for your consideration, and for the great progress that is being made on this important program. We urge you to view Metro as your partner in assuring the success of this program. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martha Welborne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martha Welborne, FAIA  
Chief Planning Officer

## **Attachment B – Metro Components Preliminary Draft Menu**

### **1. Metro Bike Hub**

#### **General Description**

Metro Bike Hubs are high-capacity bicycle parking facilities that provide secure bike parking in an enclosed room, such as a storefront space, building or a gated structure. The facility utilizes controlled access, CCTV provides security coverage, and a large quantity of bike racks are available and arranged in an efficient manner. Registered users lock their bike to an available bike rack with their own lock. Metro Bike Hubs can operate with attended services where staff performs registration support and assistance, provides retail sales for bike parts and repair services, and conducts other program activities such as bike education. They can also operate as unattended, self-serve facilities with controlled access, CCTV, and secure bike racks that are more space-efficient than bike lockers.

#### **Location consideration**

Metro Bike Hubs are recommended at Metro stations where frequent transit service and the need for first-last-mile transit access has been identified. Metro Bike Hubs at transit stations should be near main entrances or within a close proximity of 50 FT. Visibility and location should be intuitive upon approaches from the public realm. For a Metro Bike Hub that is anticipated to be located on a Metro parcel as part of a joint development site, coordination with Metro's Joint Development team will be required. Location siting within such developments should be well thought out so that the facility is easy to find and within 500 FT of the station.

Metro opened the El Monte Metro Bike Hub in September 2015. Other planned locations within the Metro system through 2018 include: Hollywood/Vine Red Line, Culver City Expo Line, Union Station, and North Hollywood Red/Orange Line. Future planned locations beyond 2018 include Willowbrook/ Rosa Parks and Airport Metro Connector.

#### **Space considerations**

Space considerations for the size and capacity of a Metro Bike Hub will vary depending on anticipated demand and location context. Metro will provide design criteria and direction in identifying space needs through station ridership evaluation and formulating estimates for the number of bike parking spaces to be provided. Local municipal codes for bike parking will also need to be taken in to consideration. If an attended bike hub is anticipated, then operator-repair/retail space will be required in addition to the space for bike parking. Example space needs for a 24 bike- parking space in a self-serve facility could be approximately 400SF, and for a 200 bike-parking space attended facility, necessary space could be approximately 3000SF.

## **Cost considerations**

Depending on the location, capacity, design, staffing and operating hours, costs will vary significantly.

### **Estimated Metro Bike Hub Capital Costs**

- Unattended, self-serve: \$1,500 to \$5,000 per space
- Attended, full-serve: \$4,000 to \$10,000 per space

### **Estimated Metro Bike Hub Annual Operating Costs**

- Unattended, self-serve: \$10,000 to \$50,000 per location
- Attended, full-serve: \$60,000 to \$200,000 per location

Operating scenarios include unattended and attended. Unattended facilities may be suitable for locations with demand for secure bike parking that replaces bike lockers where space is limited. Attended Metro Bike Hubs should be considered where demand is high and the location is at a major transit station hub with multiple transit providers, bike share, mobility hub options, mixed land uses and other retail business and services. Demand for retail and/or repair services at some locations may justify providing this additional amenity.

## **Timing considerations**

Planning, implementation and development will require coordination with Metro and ample lead-time is necessary to account for bike hubs already in implementation and coordination with outside entities including local agencies and other stakeholders.

## **Process/steps involved**

As a Metro Bike Hub facility, the following process and steps shall be:

- Coordination with Metro Planning for development, review and evaluation of proposed location to identify needs, operational program and plan, funding sources, and etc.
- Design must meet Metro standards utilizing the Metro Bike Hub established branding, access technology requirements, equipment specifications and operational procedures.
- May require Metro Board approval for locations not on Metro property and/or not included in planned stations for bike parking improvements.
- Create or contribute to an escrow account for developer fees to provide capital funds and funding for at least three years of operational support.
- Identify station sponsorship opportunities.

## **2. Metro Bike Share Station Donation**

### **General Description**

The Metro Board has approved a bike share pilot in Downtown Los Angeles including up to 80 stations and 1,000 bicycles. Expansion implementation of future phases is dependent on Metro Board approval and available funding. Metro is seeking partners who wish to provide or enhance quality transportation for their employees, students, clients, tenants or visitors by donating a station. **A \$160,000 donation funds, capital, approvals, shipping, operations and maintenance (O&M), startup costs, and installation for one station.**

### **Location Consideration**

Proposed stations shall be within 1/4-1/2 mile (Federal Transit Administration defined transit walk-shed) of an existing or planned bike share station. Other locations will be considered on a case-by-case basis for compatibility with overall Metro Bike Share operations. Metro, and the local jurisdiction, reserve the right to deny a proposal for a station donation if the location is not feasible or compatible with the existing or proposed system network. Bike share systems are successful only as a network and stations cannot exist stand-alone. Expansion of the Metro Bike Share system is currently be considered for the following communities/cities:

- City of LA communities including: Boyle Heights, Exposition Park, University Park, Westlake/McArthur Park, Koreatown, East Hollywood, Hollywood, North Hollywood, and Venice
- Culver City
- LA County Unincorporated communities including: East LA and Marina del Rey
- Downey
- Huntington Park
- Pasadena
- Burbank
- Glendale
- San Fernando

### **Space Considerations**

Proposed locations must meet the following criteria:

- Unobstructed space (approximately 13' x 65' or 20' x 35') depending on station size and configuration
- Hard, smooth, flat substrate such as asphalt, concrete, brick or pavers
- Sufficient sunlight for solar operations; and

- Stations within the public right of way must be approved by governing jurisdiction prior to installation. Some locations may require additional approvals (e.g., by Metro for locations on Metro property)

### **Cost Considerations**

The cost per station is \$160,000 which includes capital, start-up, approvals, O&M costs . Long term the overall O&M costs will be offset by fares and potential sponsorship of the system.

### **Process/Steps Involved**

Metro Board and corresponding local jurisdiction approval must be secured for station donations prior to the implementation of a new bike share station. Prior to submitting a grant application for **AHSC funding, cities shall** seek the review of the local jurisdiction and Metro prior to submitting a grant. A license agreement will be required for stations on private property and a city permit or approval will be required for stations in public right-of-way. A 50% deposit is due at the time of commitment, and the remaining 50% is due upon receipt of station order.

### **Timing Considerations**

Installation lead-time varies between 6-9 months to account for equipment manufacture, planning and permitting.

### **Station Donation Benefits**

For a \$160,000 per station cost, your organization receives:

- Metro Bike Share station serving your organization or property, pending approval by the relevant agencies or property owners;
- Operation and maintenance of the station as part of the broader Metro Bike Share network;
- Recognition as a station donor on the Metro Bike Share website;
- Individualized recognition through Metro Bike Share social media at time of launch and at special events;
- If the station is on private property, recognition of donor support on the map panel of the donated station with a logo and following (or similar) text “Station donated by....”; and
- Potential opportunity to purchase advertising rights for that individual station based on availability and subject to local jurisdiction advertising policies and restrictions. Depending on station location (private vs. public ROW) policies and restrictions may apply.

### **3. General Tools and Guidance for Transportation Infrastructure, Transportation Amenities and Urban Greening**

- **First/Last Mile Strategic Plan**

Brief Description – The First/Last Mile Strategic Plan establishes a method for assessing conditions around any transit stop or station that results in the identification of a priority network that can be improved. The Strategic Plan also lays out a series of potential improvements for implementation including addition of active transportation infrastructure, right of way reconfiguration, signage and wayfinding, among others. The unifying concept of first/last mile implementation is the Metro PATH, a series of physical, visual, and information improvements that create an intuitive, seamless, and safe environment around transit.

Resources – The Strategic Plan and Planning Guidelines are available online here:

[http://media.metro.net/docs/First\\_Last\\_Mile\\_Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://media.metro.net/docs/First_Last_Mile_Strategic_Plan.pdf)

Additionally, Metro will be offering training for local agency staff during 2016. Dates, times and locations will be posted on the Metro Sustainability website, here:

<https://www.metro.net/projects/sustainability/>

- **Wayfinding signage –**

Brief Description – Wayfinding signage provides consistent, clear direction to assist riders in navigating to transit stations. Through a separate grant program, Metro coordinates local implementation of wayfinding signage for Metro stations. Applicants for AHSC funding may be able to include a request for wayfinding signage, consistent with criteria established for Metro's program. Metro will provide more detailed guidance on how wayfinding can be included as an AHSC component prior to the application deadline for 2016.

Resources – Program materials for the current Metro grant program are online here:

[https://www.metro.net/projects/call\\_projects/wayfinding-signage-grant/](https://www.metro.net/projects/call_projects/wayfinding-signage-grant/)

- **Active Transportation Strategic Plan (in progress, to be completed by Summer 2016) –**

Brief Description - The Active Transportation Strategic Plan provides an analysis of the needs for active transportation infrastructure in Los Angeles County, guidance on project planning, funding and implementation, and a preliminary existing conditions analysis around 650 transit stations and stops.

Resources – Project website with working documents, data:

<https://www.metro.net/projects/active-transportation/strategic-plan/>

- **Urban Greening Toolkit (Metro Green Places)**

Brief Description – Metro Green Places is a newly available toolkit that provides guidance on approximately 60 greening and placemaking strategies that can be implemented around transit infrastructure. Tools are for greening, water, energy, community events, education, and other topics.

Resources – Website will be available soon with a link from:

<https://www.metro.net/projects/sustainability/>

- **Station and stop improvement/amenities**

Brief Description – Metro may be able to include improvements to rail stations and bus stops (shelters, seating, information kiosks, etc.). Inclusion of these components can be considered on a case-by-case basis. General guidance information will be provided at a later date.