Allocation Package Narrative Explanation
Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG)

B. Allocation Package Narrative Explanation

Kern COG published a short-range transit development plan for Kern County's rural transit operators entitled *Kern County Rural Alternative Transportation Plan* in 2020. The Plan was prepared as an aid to assist the Kern region's public transit services transition from gasoline/diesel fueled transit fleets to zero-emission fleets. The Plan also provided financial sources such as Caltrans Low Carbon Transit Operators Program (LCTOP) and State of Good Repair as well as the federal Low or No Emission grant program. The Plan provided ideas regarding the purchase and installation of zero-emission vehicle charging infrastructure. Kern COG staff recommended its member agencies use the *Alternative Transportation Plan* as a starting point in creating TIRCP/ZETCP capital projects.

i. An explanation of what funding and service actions are being taken within the region that utilize resources other than SB 125 funding

The Kern regional rural public transit strategy was published in the Caltrans funded study entitled *Kern County Rural Alternative Transportation Plan 2020.* The intent of the plan was to identify the best practices to transition existing public transit fleets from gasoline/diesel fueled to electric or hydrogen fueled fleets using the funding streams available to rural operators (including the Transportation Development Act (TDA), Caltrans' Low Carbon Transit Operators Program (LCTOP) and State of Good Repair (SGR), and the federal Low or No Emission granting program).

The SB 125 Transit funds will be used to add to existing region-wide State funding programs such as Caltrans Transportation Development Act funds (including Local Transit Funds (LTF) and State Transit Assistance funds (STA). Additionally, the SB 125 Transit funds will also support existing capital and operational funding begun using Caltrans Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) and Caltrans State of Good Repair (SGR). Finally, SB 125 Transit funds will be used to operational and capital projects identified in the Kern County Rural Alternative Transportation Plan (2020). The Kern County Rural Alternative Transportation Plan provides strategies to convert rural transit fleets from gasoline/diesel fueled vehicles to low or no emission vehicles. Golden Empire Transit District (GET) Kern County’s large, urbanized area (LZA) transit operator and Delano Transit Kern County’s small, urbanized area (SZA) transit operators have published long-term transportation plans that include strategies to convert their services from gasoline/diesel fueled vehicles to low or no emission vehicles.

Kern COG's use of TIRCP and ZETCP funds will be in accordance with the CalSTA Objectives:

1. Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases
2. Expand and improve transit service to increase ridership.
3. Integrate the rail service of the state’s various rail operations, including integration with the high-speed rail system.
4. Improve transit safety.

The SB 125 Transit funds will be used to add to existing region-wide Federal funding programs such as FTA Section 5307 (Large and Small urbanized area operators), Section 5339 (Maintenance Projects), and Section 5311 (Rural Transit Operators). The federal funds are used to support operations expenses and, in some cases, maintenance and capital projects. The SB 125 Transit funds will also be supported by Caltrans annual funding programs such as Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds, Low Carbon Transit Operators Program (LCTOP), and State of Good Repair.

Kern COG is applying for a Kern County Transit Climate Adaptation Plan through Caltrans' Sustainable Communities grant program for FY 2024-25. If awarded, one of the tasks will be to provide the rural transit operators in Kern County with a five-to-seven-year short-range transportation development plan. The short-range plan will use data from the climate adaptation plan to feed into the short-range transit development plans countywide. This plan will also focus on the County's Kern Transit service which provides intercity service from Bakersfield to Lancaster (terminating at the Lancaster Metrolink station) and from Bakersfield to Santa Clarita (terminating at the Santa Clarita Metrolink station). Both routes also include stops at the downtown Bakersfield Amtrak station which provides convenient rail connections.

ii. A description and justification of the RTPA strategy to use SB 125 funding to construct capital projects and fund operating expenses that lead to improved outcomes in its jurisdiction

Using published short-range transit plans and Transit Asset Management Plans, Kern COG will be supporting operating and capital projects that prevent reduction of existing transit service caused by the Covid 19 budget impacts and transitioning transit fleets from gasoline and diesel fueled vehicles to electric and hydrogen fueled vehicles and supporting zero-emission infrastructure. Kern COG staff has prepared individual reports for its member agencies to identify specific uses of the SB 125 funds toward eligible operating and capital expenditures. Each member agency's SB 125 Transit expenditures are listed in "four-year financial reports" and incorporated into Appendixes (A through k) to illustrate reports by agency name. The four-year reports begin in the fiscal year 2023-24 and conclude with fiscal year 2027-28.

Capital Projects

The capital projects identified by the operators range from the purchase of zero-emission vans and buses (all electric), the purchase and installation of electric vehicle chargers, batteries to store solar panel produced electricity, and safety equipment for drivers and passengers. Other capital investments include connecting pedestrian walkways to transit bus stops, bus stop shelter improvements, and equipment to maintain and operate ne zero-emission vehicles. Three cities are building new transit structures for administrative purposes, maintenance bays, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Finally, one city is building a structure to house its new electric vehicles strictly for security purposes. Several operators will be adding security cameras aboard its vans and buses.

Operation Expenses

Transit operators that have experienced budget deficit expenses and will be using TIRCP funding to offset ridership fare loses during the previous two-year period caused by Covid 19 related ridership loss. Using fiscal year 2022 National Transit Database, Transit Asset Management Plans*, Kern County Rural Transit Alternatives Transportation Plan (2020)*, and internal short-range planning documents. Additionally, as agencies replace gasoline/diesel fueled vehicles with zero-emission vehicles (electric/hydrogen) TIRCP and ZETCP funds will be used as operation projects to train staff mechanics and drivers on how to operate and maintain the new technology. Golden Empire Transit District (GET) is providing its two consecutive fiscal years of TIRCP funds to provide zero or near zero fares to build its ridership. GET went from its peak ridership of nearly 8 million riders down to its low of just under 3 million riders in FY 2020-21 (because of the Covid-19 pandemic). GET has experimented with Caltrans LCTOP funds to provide free bus fares that yielded a 35% increase in ridership. Offering free to nearly free fares for two consecutive fiscal years accomplishes more than just increase ridership, it allows a greater number of residents to experience electric and hydrogen fueled buses. Ultimately, the experiment is bound to reduce GHG emissions and as a bonus, increase public awareness of the system and positive public relations.

Projects by Agency

City of Arvin (See Appendix A)

The proposed projects for Arvin are two-fold. The first project is to provide matching funds to purchase its sixth ZEV bus to complete its 100% ZEV by 2025 plan.

The city also proposes to expand operations and programs that reduce GHGs,
and to improve its transit facilities by using a portion of the funds to construct a microgrid, improve facilities, and maintain its vehicles in a good state of repair.

The City of Arvin will use the TIRCP and ZECTP to procure a new ZEV bus, improve transit facilities and infrastructure, and expand its operations by including new transit stops and offering a free rides program to increase ridership to overcome the impacts of COVID-19 ridership losses over the last three years, and plans to expand of its operation service times. To expand the hours of service and frequency of routes, the city is seeking funding for additional staff. The city is kicking off a renewable microgrid project, which will likely need additional funding due to unforeseen price increases in construction materials.

Future TIRCP Funding

Arvin's chosen projects are eligible for future TIRCP funding. Kern COG staff recommended that Arvin submit a FY 2023 TIRCP application for the next cycle due available in December 2023. Arvin is interested in acquiring more electric over-the-road coaches to offer its residents affordable travel between Arvin and Bakersfield (forty miles north) for employment, medical appointments, and recreation.

City of California City (See Appendix B)

A prefabricated metal building for current Dial-a-Ride Buses, future electric passenger vans, and charging stations. Located at 7800 Moss Avenue: California City.

California City will use TIRCP and ZECTP funds to construct a new prefabricated metal building for current Dial-a-Ride Buses and future electrical passenger vans. This new building will have electric charging infrastructure for the new zero-emission passenger vans.

Future TIRCP Funding

California City' projects are eligible for future TIRCP funding. Since California City has a very small fleet, future TIRCP funding may be limited to electric vehicle replacements, expansion of its solar panel infrastructure, and shared EV charging stations that allow for transit and other city vehicles to be zero-emission.

City of Delano (See Appendix (C)

The City of Delano will use TIRCP and ZETCP funds to construct a new Transit Operations Maintenance and Training Facility including the transit administration facility. This new transit facility will include electric charging infrastructure for the new zero-emission vans and cutaway buses for the City's Delano Area Public Transit (DART) service.

According to Delano staff, the estimated cost to construct this facility and to purchase electric vehicles. Is approximately $27,924,775. Additionally, Delano staff expects to receive money from Caltrans State of Good Repair (SGR), State Transit Assistance funds, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds and other state funds that will be dedicated to this project.

To comply with CARB's ICT regulations, Delano staff plans to use its four years of ZETCP funding towards a zero-emission vehicle capital project, particularly for the construction of an electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The ZETCP project aims to help Delano's transit service to transition to electric vehicles and cutaway buses.

Future TIRCP Funding

Delano's projects are all related to zero-emission vehicle use. Future TIRCP projects most likely be for extension of solar panel farm/infrastructure and replacement electric vehicles. At some point, Delano may invest in hydrogen technology, but the costs of hydrogen plants/vehicles will have to come down to justify the start-up cost.

Golden Empire Transit District (GET) - TIRCP Funds (See Appendix D)

Get staff will use TIRCP funds towards operation expenses for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 fiscal years. The TIRCP funds will be needed to replace GET's annual Transportation Development Act (TDA -Local Transit and State Transit Assistance) normally spent on operations that will instead have to be utilized in the purchasing a new transit facility to make room for the Bakersfield High-Speed Rail Station. GET staff believes that it will see a substantial increase in utilization and recognize that it will provide a substantial benefit to its transit dependent and economically challenged ridership by allowing them to not have to ration their transportation needs during this period.

Construction of GET's new operations, maintenance, and administration facility in anticipation of the displacement from GET's current facility by the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CAHSR). GET's current assumptions are that this facility will cost $105 million to construct and that GET will receive. $45 million from CHRSA for the current facility, necessitating $60 million of TDA funds to be dedicated to this capital project. These assumptions are presented in GET's Table 6.2, Capital Funding Sources and Projects (included in GET's spreadsheet Summary).

Table 6.1, Revenues and Expenses, then shows the TIRCP funds being applied to supplement operations along with whatever residual TDA funding is available after the capital project. These assumptions are presented in GET's Table 6.2, Capital Funding Sources and Projects. Table 6.1, Revenues and Expenses, shows the TIRCP funds being applied to supplement operations along with whatever residual TDA funding is available after the capital project. Table 6.1 also illustrates that GET staff is anticipating $0 revenue from GET's fixed-route operations for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 fiscal years. It is GET's intention to provide free fares on its fixed-route system (and complementary paratransit service) for the two years that GET is applying TIRCP funding in line with the SB 125 recommendation to use funding to restore ridership. GET's system has declined from 6 million annual rides (pre-pandemic) to an annual low of 2.7 million rides during 2020-21. GET has gradually increased to 3.1 million rides in 2022-23 but is far short of recovery. GET has implemented short-term free rides in the past using Caltrans Low Carbon Transit Operators Program (LCTOP) funds and experienced an increase in ridership of approximately 40%.

Future TIRCP Funding

GET is transitioning from gasoline/diesel fueled vans to zero-emission vans. GET may be using future TIRCP funds to purchase electric vans hydrogen fueled vans. GET's fixed-route buses are already CNG fueled, Electric, or Hydrogen fueled. With this programs' ZETCP funds, GET will be expanding its hydrogen fueling capacity.

Kern Transit (See Appendix E)

Kern Transit currently operates a fleet of 63 buses, which serve 13 fixed-routes and 6 demand-response services that dispatch from five different locations throughout Kern County: Bakersfield (Central), Mojave, Lake Isabella, Frazer Park, and Tehachapi. Kern County encompasses a variety of different regions and terrains, including mountain ranges, valley areas, and desert regions which make Kern Transit's zero-emission transition challenging.

As the Kern regional public transit service, Kern Transit buses climb two mountain ranges with elevation gains of more than 4,000 feet over hundreds of miles in one direction, and over twenty-times per day. Due to the significant elevation gains on several Kern Transit routes, Kern Transit's conventional fueled (gasoline/diesel) buses will not be able to be replaced with zero-emission buses at a 1:1 ratio because of the current range limitations of zero-emission bus technology. Therefore, Kern Transit must identify, purchase, and construct a new central transit facility in Bakersfield to accommodate the increased number of buses which are expected to be required to complete this transition.

By the fiscal year 2026-27, it is estimated that Kern Transit may exceed the size and electrical capacity of its current central bus yard in Bakersfield. As such, Kern Transit is actively identifying potential properties for future operation to move to Bakersfield to support the transition and is currently designing a second Eastern Kern maintenance and transit center hub in Mojave, which will also be equipped with charging infrastructure to support zero-emission fleet transition.

Future TIRCP Funding

Kern Transit is limited in its ability to replace all its gasoline/diesel fueled vans and cutaways due to the terrain performance. Kern Transit must travel up steep mountain grades to service three of its communities. Additionally, Kern Transit serves two long-distance routes (Bakersfield to Lancaster and Bakersfield to Santa Clarita) that exceed range maximums of current electric over=the-road coaches. However, Kern Transit also operates within the flat lands of Kern County and can expand its current gasoline/diesel fueled fleet to include electric vehicles. Future TIRCP funds may also allow Kern Transit to construct EV charging stations on the easter side of the mountains that allow EV vans to operate without returning to the other side of the mountain range to charge.

City of McFarland (See Appendix F)

Finish construction of a transit station that will provide a passenger waiting area and contain a space for minor mechanical work and an EV charging infrastructure. Several years of investments from Caltrans' Low Carbon Transit Operators Program (LCTOP) and State of Good Repair (SGR), have been dedicated to this project. TIRCP and ZETCP funds will be used to complete and deliver the project.

Future TIRCP Funding

McFarland, like California City, is a very small transit operator using two vans per day. Future TIRCP funds may be used to replace electric vans or charging infrastructure.

City of Ridgecrest (See Appendix G)

The City of Ridgecrest operates a fixed-route and demand-response (complementary paratransit) public transit system that connects to Kern County's Kern Transit that provides intercity service throughout the county. The City of Ridgecrest is transitioning its fleet from gasoline/diesel fueled vans and cutaways to electric powered vehicles.

The TIRCP funds will be used to replace 6 cutaway buses with electric vans. The remaining second year funds will be used to build a transit stop at the intersection of Norma St. and West Felspar Ave.

The ZETCP funds will be used to purchase maintenance management software, shop upgrades, and mechanic training for electric vehicles.

Future TIRCP Funding

Since Ridgecrest's current TIRCP funding will go toward the purchase of new EV vans to replace gasoline/diesel fueled vans, future TIRCP funds may be directed toward zero-emission vehicle replacements, solar panel expansions, or other zero-emission vehicle accessories.

City of Shafter (See Appendix H)

On-Demand Transit Service Enhancements including a new bus storage shelter with solar panels and battery storage and an associated operations office, the purchasing of two new transit vehicles, a free ridership fare program for two consecutive years., Saturday service expansion, transit vehicle security improvements, and a new ticketing a payment solution. This project aligns with the grant's goals of supporting transit operations while reducing environmental impact, improving accessibility, and promoting ridership.

Future TIRCP Funding

Since Shafter is already on its way to a full zero-emission fleet, future TIRCP funds may be sought for replacing or expansion of its zero-emission charging infrastructure. Deferring TDA funds to operations spending may also allow Shafter to use future TIRCP funds strictly for capital projects.

City of Taft (See Appendix I)

The City of Taft will use TIRCP funds for capital projects through the procurement of EV Star ADA Accessible Zero-Emission Transit Vans. The TIRCP funds will be needed to replace the (6) gasoline powered vans currently in use for Taft's on-demand transit service. Taft has received previous funding to build solar powered charging facilities that are currently being installed. However, alternate funding for van conversions to ZEVs has not been successful. All six vehicles are ready to be replaced due to age and mileage, making an ideal time to convert the entire fleet to zero-emission vehicles. This expenditure has been planned to pay for three vans in FY 2023-24 and the other three in FY 2024-25

Taft staff anticipates using ZETCP funds to convert their on-demand transit fleet to ZEVs that utilize their on-site solar generation and charging infrastructure currently under construction. This would include helping to fund the acquisition of six (6) EV Star ADA Accessible Zero-Emission Transit Vans by supplementing TIRCP funds with the remaining funds used for training staff to drive and provide daily-level maintenance on the new vans. This expenditure has been planned to pay for three vans in FY 2023-24, the other three in FY 2024-25, and undertake driver training in FY 2025-26, when the vans are anticipated to be deployed with additional daily maintenance and high efficiency driving training in FY 2026-27.

Future TIRCP Funding

Like other rural transit operators in Kern County, Taft Transit is a very small operator (four to six total vehicles). Taft will most likely use future TIRCP funds to replace zero-emission transit vehicles, solar panels/batteries, and other zero-emission infrastructure.

City of Tehachapi (See Appendix J)

The City of Tehachapi does not operate a public transit system but does contract with Kern County's Kern Transit to provide intercity service and local demand-response service. The City of Tehachapi will rehabilitate and improve the pedestrian path on the north side of Tehachapi Blvd. leading to the Downtown Park & Ride Transit Center. This includes the gap infill which trails from Mountain View Avenue. At the Park and Ride Transit Center the City will install security upgrades which provide safety for transit passengers waiting for service and encourage non-system riders to try the service.

Future TIRCP Funding

Tehachapi is unique among Kern's rural transit operators as it contracts its service to Kern County's Kern Transit. However, there may be an opportunity for Tehachapi to invest in its very successful downtown park and ride facility. As Kern Transit's service increases in ridership, more pedestrian projects may be needed to increase safety and security for intercity passengers traveling west to Bakersfield or east to Lancaster.

City of Wasco (See Appendix K)

The City of Wasco will use TIRCP and ZETCP funds to construct a new operations, maintenance, and transit administration facility. The new transit facility will have CNG fueling and electric charging infrastructure for the new zero-emission vans and cutaway buses.

According to Wasco staff estimates, the cost to construct this facility will be $4,126,707. Additionally, Wasco staff expects to receive $1,000,000 from TDA funds or other state funds that will be dedicated to this capital project.

The TIRCP and ZETCP capital projects were chosen to comply with CARB's ICT regulations. Wasco staff plans to use its four years of ZETCP funding towards a zero-emission capital project, particularly for the construction of electric charging infrastructure. This project aims to help Wasco Transit transition to electric vans and cutaway buses.

Future TIRCP Funding

Like other rural transit operators in Kern County, Wasco may only consider capital projects for zero-emission vehicles, charging equipment, solar panels, or other related equipment.

iii. A detailed breakdown and justification for how the funding is proposed to be distributed between transit operators and among projects, consistent with the legislative intent described in SB 125.

Kern COG is apportioning SB 125 funds in the method prescribed by the legislation and from workshops provided by CalSTA staff, by population. Kern COG staff will notify its member agencies when SB 125 funds are received by Kern COG administration so that projects may begin in a uniform process. Kern COG will carefully monitor problems member agencies' experience with projects funded by SB 125 funds and suggest solutions. If a project is determined to be undeliverable, Kern COG will seek the member agency's permission to reapportion unused BB 125 funds to another eligible member agency to ensure the funds are spent within Kern County.

Table 1. TIRCP

Agency	2023-24	2024-25	TIRCP Total
Arvin	$1,108,563	$1,118,595	$2,227,158
California City	$711,044	$717,478	$1,428,522
Delano	$2,571,742	$2,595,015	$5, 166,757
GET	$27,834,889	$28,086,784	$55,921,673
McFarland	$707,216	$713,616	$1, 420,832
Ridgecrest	$1,490,120	$1,503,605	$2,993,725
Shafter	$1,029,704	$1,039,022	$2,068,726
Taft	$359,651	$362.907	$722,558
Tehachapi	$604,689	$610,162	$1,214,851
Wasco	$1,350,328	$1,362,548	$2, 712,876
Kern Transit	$8,210,741	$8,285,045	$16,495,786
Kern COG	$300,000	$TBD	$300,000
Regional Total	$46,278,687	$46,394,777	$92,673,464

Table 2. ZETCP

Agency	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	ZET Total
Arvin	$120,575	$68,316	$68,316	$68,316	$325,523
California City	$77,338	$43,819	$43,819	$43,819	$208,795
Delano	$279,721	$158,486	$158,486	$156,486	$755,179
GET	$3,027,524	$1,715,347	$1,715,347	$1,715,347	$8,173,565
McFarland	$76,922	$43,583	$43,583	$43,583	$207,671
Ridgecrest	$162,076	$91,830	$91,830	$91,830	$437,566
Shafter	$111,998	$63,456	$63,456	$63,456	$302,366
Taft	$39,119	$22,164	$22,164	$22,164	$105,611
Tehachapi	$65,771	$37,264	$37,264	$37,264	$177,563
Wasco	$146,871	$83,215	$83,215	$83,215	$396,516
Kern Transit	$893,059	$505,993	$505,993	$505,993	$2,411,038
Kern COG	$50,000	$TBD	$TBD	$TBD	$50,000
Regional Total	**$5,050,974**	**$2,833,473**	**$2,833,473**	**$2,833,473**	**$13,551,393**

If an unforeseen eligible SB 125 project would benefit a regional interest, Kern COG staff will discuss its proposal with our Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and solicit a recommendation from the TAC to our Board for resolution.

1. Address operational costs until long-term transit sustainability solutions are identified.

Kern COG has seen through annual reports and required reporting to Sacramento, a promising rebound from the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on TDA Triennial Performance Audits and National Transit Database records, Kern COG has seen indicators from its largest operators (GET, Kern Transit, and Delano) that ridership is on a steady rise. If this trend continues, Kern public transit services should reach pre-Covid-19 pandemic levels by fiscal year 2025-26. The TIRCP and ZETCP investments will free up TDA Article IV funds for operational sending rather than a combination of capital and operational spending. The SB 125 funds may also reduce service cuts due to rising costs and employee downsizing for the same reason.

2. Assist transit operators in preventing service cuts and increasing ridership.

The SB 125 funding will allow GET the ability to expand its successful On-Demand demand-response service to new areas of metro-Bakersfield and maybe further to eventually cover all of GET's jurisdiction. Shafter transit is also taking advantage of SB 125 funds to expand its demand-response service by adding Saturday service. Neither service would have been possible using the traditional funding sources.

3. Prioritize the availability of transit for riders who are transit dependent.

The SB 125 funds will be directed toward the rural transit agencies where elderly, disabled, and transit dependent populations reside. Using CalEnviroScreen 4.0 software, staff have prepared maps of every transit operator in Appendixes A through K to demonstrate the amount of disadvantaged population resides within the service area. GET, as the metro-Bakersfield Large Urbanized Area provider, transports the greatest population of transit dependent residents in Kern County. GET provides several transportation services within its operational banner: namely, its Get-A-lift paratransit service for riders that qualify for ADA service, Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) for qualifying social services relate transportation, and On-Demand a micro-transit service for all passengers including transit dependent riders.

4. Prioritize transit agencies representing a significant percentage of the region's ridership.

GET represents a little over 60% of Kern County's population and since the apportionment schedule is based purely by population, will receive 60% of the regional apportionment. Kern Transit comes in as the second highest ridership and Delano as the third. Respectively, Kern Transit will receive an estimated 17% of the regional apportionment and Delano will receive 5% of regional apportionment.

Since there are no new TIRCP projects from the GET, Kern Transit, or Delano, the capital projects may be justified as follows:

GET is purchasing and installing a backup system for its newly constructed and operational hydrogen fueling station. The backup system will allow hydrogen fueling when the main hydrogen plant is shut down for maintenance or repairs. This project allows GET to ensure its recently acquired hydrogen buses are always in use and reduces GHG gases in metro-Bakersfield. The move to hydrogen also introduces and demonstrates hydrogen powered vehicles to the public.
Kern Transit is purchasing electric vans and supporting charging infrastructure for service areas that allow for zero-emission vehicles. Kern Transit is limited to service areas that are flat and avoid mountain climbs within the service area. Kern operates its service in Mojave and Rosamond both with flat land and desert conditions. Kern Transit will also be constructing parking lots and EV charging stations to allow for transit service in the Lake Issabella communities in the high mountains of eastern Kern/ The vehicles will be parked and charged overnight in the Lake Isabella area and will not be required to drive back to Bakersfield except for possible repair work. Kern Transit staff are researching to see if hydrogen buses will be able to meet the range of its Bakersfield to Lancaster and Bakersfield to Santa Clarita routes. Since electric buses are unable to meet the demand of distance and mountainous climbs, CNG and Clean Diesel will be used until technology catches up.

Delano will use SB 125 funds to combine with FTA Section 5307 funds to construct a new transit office that includes administrative space, mechanic space, and vehicle charging and storage space. After the facility is completed, Delano will begin purchasing electric buses for their fleet using traditional funding sources such as TDA Article IV, LCTOP, and SGR.

C. Allocation Package Detailed Project Description

TIRCP Capital/Operational Projects and ZETCP Capital and Operational Projects

City of Arvin - See Appendix A
City of California City - See Appendix B
City of Delano - See Appendix C
Golden Empire Transit District - See Appendix D
Kern Transit - See Appendix E
City of McFarland - See Appendix F
City of Ridgecrest - See Appendix G
City of Shafter - See Appendix H
City of Taft - See Appendix I
City of Tehachapi - See Appendix J
City of Wasco - See Appendix K

ii. A description and justification of the RTPA strategy to use SB 125 funding to construct capital projects and fund operating expense that lead to improved outcomes in its jurisdiction.

Kern COG began a transition strategy over four years ago to first inform transit operators in its jurisdiction of the benefits of transitioning from gasoline/diesel fueled fleets to electric powered fleets. Annually, Kern COG staff provided a seminar and invited transit operators, elected officials, and vendors from electric van/bus companies and vendors of electric recharging infrastructure as well as hydrogen fuel products. Additionally, Kern COG was awarded a Caltrans Sustainable Communities grant to prepare a plan for rural transit operators to transition from gasoline/diesel fueled fleets to electric or hydrogen fueled fleets.

Kern COG recognizes that the smaller transit operators (two-van service) will most likely use apportioned TIRCP/ZETCP funds to purchase electric vans and the required supporting infrastructure. Kern COG fully supports this type of capital use as it presents an opportunity for our smaller operators to transition to electric van fleets within two fiscal years which would have taken four or more years using traditional funding sources such as Caltrans Low Carbon Transit Operators Program (LCTOP) and State of Good Repair (SGR). Using TIRCP/ZETCP funds for capital purposes also allows for the public to enjoy cleaner air in their communities sooner.

Golden Empire Transit District, the only Large Urbanized Operator for Kern County, chose to use its TIRCP funds to offer a zero to low-fare for its fixed-route buses and supporting paratransit service to reverse its falling ridership. The monthly ridership has rebounded well from the days of Covid-19 epidemic but has not yet returned to its peak ridership. Golden Empire Transit District (GET) is in the final stages of its long-range plan (twenty years) which should allow for plan recommendation to be implemented immediately. GET is also planning on expanding its successful On-Demand micro-transit service to new areas of metro-Bakersfield. The City of Shafter is also using TIRCP funds to add Saturday service as a new pilot program to determine if Saturday service is sustainable. A side benefit of using TIRCP/ZETCP funds allows some of our smaller operators like McFarland and California City (both two-van operators) to use annual LCTOP funds for free or low-cost transit fares to encourage ridership.

Kern COG has promoted rural operators to transition to electronic fare collection methods such as online applications that provide electronic cash transactions. To date, only GET, Kern Transit, and Delano have been able to make the transition to electronic pay systems. Shafter and Wasco may move to electronic systems sometime soon.

Golden Empire Transit District - ZETCP Funds

GET staff anticipates using ZETCP funds for zero-emission capital projects. Table 6.2 shows the ZETCP funds as a capital source on the top half of the schedule and has specific projects listed on the bottom half. The applicable projects include a portable fueling infrastructure (produces hydrogen from methanol as a fuel source for buses and produces electricity for EV charging) in 2024-25 and electric vans for GET's On-Demand service in all years beginning with 2024-25 to convert that portion of GET's fleet towards compliance with CARB's ICT regulations.

The City of Tehachapi does not operate a public transit system but does contract with Kern County's Kern Transit to provide intercity service and local demand-response service. The City of Tehachapi will use TIRCP funds to rehabilitate and improve the pedestrian path on the north side of Tehachapi Blvd. leading to the Downtown Park & Ride Transit Center. This includes the gap infill which trails from Mountain View

Avenue. At the Park & Ride Transit Center, the city will install security upgrades which provide safety for transit passengers waiting for bus service and encourage non-system riders to try the service.

The City will use ZETCP funds to install EV charging stations at the Downtown Park & Ride Transit Center. These charging stations may encourage residents and visiting travelers to use electric vehicles. The charging stations will also serve Kern Transit vehicles. The City of Tehachapi intends to include faster charging power options and encourage greater usage opportunity with access to downtown during charge times.

ii. A description and justification of the RTPA strategy to use SB 125 funding to construct capital projects and fund operating expenses that lead to improved outcomes in its jurisdiction.

According to the SB 125 Transit Final Guideline, SB 125 authorizes Kern COG serving as the Kern Region RTPA, to use the moneys for high-priority transit projects consistent with the uses allowed in Cycle 6 of the TIRCP, which includes existing projects that are seeking to maintain or obtain federal or local funding commitments, project development for major projects that are seeking to enter or have already entered project development with federal partners, or for new TIRCP projects.

In 2020, Kern COG published the Kern County Rural Transit Alternative Transportation Plan. The purpose of the Plan was to provide recommendations for our rural transit operators to transition from gasoline/diesel fueled fleets to electric/hydrogen fueled fleets using federal, state, and other appropriate granting program funds. SB 125 Transit funds fit perfectly into the capital and operations recommendations from the Plan and will greatly assist our public transit agencies throughout Kern County achieve their transition goals. Kern County has always suffered from air pollution and has a large population of disadvantaged communities. The SB 125 capital projects will improve air quality in Kern and the operations project will provide opportunities for senior citizen residents on fixed incomes, low-income residents, disabled residents, and non-riding residents to try public transit through reduce and no fare programs. SB 125 operations funding will also be used to train mechanics and drivers on how to use electric/hydrogen powered vehicles at maximum efficiency.

City of Arvin

Using federal Low and No Emission grant funds, the City of Arvin purchased electric buses and charging infrastructure to transport residents to and from the Tejon Industrial site located approximately 20 miles south of the City of Arvin. The Tejon Industrial site offers Arvin and nearby Lamont residents retail, and warehouse employment opportunities. Arvin, a city of approximately thirty thousand, is slowly transitioning its transit service from gasoline/diesel fueled buses and vans to electric buses and vans. Additionally, Arvin is creating a electric vehicle charging infrastructure that includes solar panels and batteries to recharge its new electric fleet and offering residents electric charging off the same grid thereby encouraging electric vehicle ownership within the public. Arvin staff will use SB 125 Transit funds to speed up the transition to zero-emission vehicle use within the community.

City of California City

California City is a small rural community of approximately fifteen thousand. California City will use its SB 125 Transit funds to supplement Caltrans State of Good Repair (SGR) and Low Carbon Transit Operators Program (LCTOP) funds to speed up its transition from using gasoline fueled transit vans to electric vans - including purchase and installation of electric vehicle charging stations and solar panels. California City, like the City of McFarland, has a unique opportunity to immediately benefit from SB 125 Transit funds in that the transition from gasoline fueled vans to electric vans may occur in as little as two consecutive fiscal years. In future years, California City may use Caltrans LCTOP funds to reduce or eliminate public transit fares to invite residents to try the City's new electric public transit fleet. Future Caltrans SGR funds may be used to ensure the new electric fleet has the proper support, maintenance equipment and properly trained mechanics.

City of Delano

The City of Delano intends to use two consecutive years of TIRCP funding to assist in a multi-funding programs capital project to build a new transit and operations facility to house, recharge, maintain and administer the City's public transit service. Using FTA, TDA (LTF and STA), Caltrans SGR and LCTOP, in concert with TIRCP, the city will restructure an existing building to become an administrative office, a maintenance bay to maintain and repair electric vehicles, and an electric vehicle recharging station to service transit vehicle and potentially other city-owned vehicles overnight. The city will use ZETCP funds over the four-year apportionment period to focus on purchasing and installing the electric vehicle infrastructure to operate its new zero-emission fleet.

Golden Empire Transit District - TIRCP fund use

Golden Empire Transit District (GET) staff will use TIRCP funds towards operation expenses for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 fiscal years. The TIRCP funds will be needed to replace GET's annual Transportation Development Act (TDA -Local Transit and State Transit Assistance) normally spent on operations that will instead have to be utilized in the construction of GET's new operations, maintenance, and administration facility in anticipation of the displacement from GET's current facility by the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CAHSR).

Golden Empire Transit District - ZETCP use

GET staff anticipates using ZETCP funds for zero-emission capital projects. Table 6.2 shows the ZETCP funds as a capital source on the top half of the schedule and has specific projects listed on the bottom half. The applicable projects include a portable fueling infrastructure (produces hydrogen from methanol as a fuel source for buses and produces electricity for EV charging) in 2024-25 and electric vans for GET's On-Demand service in all years beginning with 2024-25 to convert that portion of GET's fleet towards compliance with CARB's ICT regulations.

Kern Transit

Kern Transit has a technology challenge when transitioning from gasoline/diesel fueled vans and buses to electric/hydrogen fuel-cell vans and buses. Specifically, the current electric and hydrogen fuel-cell vans and buses are unable to travel to some of Kern Transit's mountainous destinations: Frazier Park, Tehachapi, and Lake Isabella. However, Kern Transit staff still intend to transition to zero-emission vehicles where it makes sense. For example, Kern Transit is working to secure property in Mojave where it can launch public transit service to California City (Intercity - service), Mojave, and Rosamond (demand-response - service) without the need of the vehicle originating service from Bakersfield parking lots but Mojave parking lots. Additionally, property is being sought in Lake Isabella for the same reason as Mojave, eliminating the service originating in Bakersfield parking lots.

City of McFarland

Like California City, McFarland operates a small two-van public transit service for its residents. McFarland's small fleet allows for a transition from gasoline fueled vans to electric vans in two consecutive fiscal years. The city intends to use TIRCP funds to purchase the new electric vans and ZETCP funds to purchase, install, and train mechanics and drivers on the efficient use and maintenance of electric vans and the charging infrastructure. Like California City, the electric charging infrastructure allows McFarland the ability to purchase electric vehicles for use outside of its transit fleet. At some point in time, the infrastructure may be offered for public use and encourage the purchase of electric vehicles in the community,

City of Ridgecrest

The City of Ridgecrest has already been in transition from gasoline public transit vans to electric vans using Caltrans SGR and LCTOP funds. The TIRCP funds will be used to replace 6 cutaway buses with electric vans. The remaining second year funds will be used to build a transit stop at the intersection of Norma St. and West Felspar Ave. The ZETCP funds will be used to purchase maintenance management software, shop upgrades, and mechanic training for electric vehicles.

City of Shafter

The City of Shafter transitioned to an electric vehicle fleet several years ago. TIRCP and ZETCP funds will be used to enhance Shafter's On-Demand transit service, construct a new bus storage shelter (with solar panels and battery storage), construct an associated operations office, and purchase two new transit vehicles. Shafter also plans to add a multi-year free ridership program, expand service to include service on Saturdays, make transit vehicle security improvements, and create a new ticketing/payment system.

City of Taft

The City of Taft will use TIRCP and ZETCP funds in a capital capacity to replace gasoline fueled vans and cutaways for electric vans and cutaways. The ZETCP funds will be combined with existing Caltrans SGR and LCTOP funded projects to purchase and install an electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Like other similar Kern rural operators, the transition to a zero-emission fleet will mostly take part in the first two years of its four-year financial plan.

City of Tehachapi

The City of Tehachapi has constructed a park and ride in the downtown area. Besides serving Tehachapi residents, the park and ride is also used heavily by intercity travelers using the Kern Transit bus service. The park and ride also have pedestrian and cyclist connections to the Kern Transit service. TIRCP and ZETCP capital funds will be used to improve the pedestrian access to the park and ride, improve safety, and provide electric vehicle charging stations for the public and Kern Transit future electric vehicles for public transit service to residents.

City of Wasco

The City of Wasco intends to use its TIRCP and ZETCP funds for a capital project to construct a new facility that will encompass operations, maintenance, and transit administration. The new facility will allow Wasco transit to build an electric vehicle charging infrastructure to meet the need of its future electric vehicle fleet. Wasco will use capital funds from Transportation Development Act (TDA) LTF and STA annual funding, and annual funding from Caltrans' State of Good Repair (SGR) and Low Carbon Transit Operators Program (LCTOP) to purchase electric vans and cutaways.

RTPA TIRCP uses strategy - Operations
Kern COG, acting as the Kern County RTPA, will recommend using TIRCP funds to allow eligible member agencies to offer fare-free service to encourage current and potential system riders to increase ridership. Kern COG also recognizes the need for training mechanics and drivers on how best to use and care for EV vans and buses.

RTPA TIRCP use strategy - Capital
Kern COG will also recommend using TIRCP funds to purchase capital projects such as electric vehicles, solar panels, solar batteries, and other EV infrastructure to transition to a zero-emission fleet. Kern COG staff and member agencies will use data from the Kern County Rural Transit Alternative Plan (2020), Long-range and short-range transportation development plans, Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plans, and FY 2022 National Transit Database (NTD) reports for project implementation references. Additionally, TIRCP Capital funds will be used to supplement projects already in progress funded by Caltrans Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) and Caltrans State of Good Repair Program. Golden Empire Transit District (GET) the region's Large Urbanized Area property and Delano Transit the region's Small Urbanized Area property, may supplement projects identified in each agency's federal transportation improvement projects (FTIP) funded by federal 5307 and 5339 funding.

An Allocation Package Detailed Project Description, required of all agencies requesting an allocation, regardless of whether they are required to submit a short-term financial plan by the end of 2023. This detailed project description covers all projects that are recommended by the RTPA for SB 125 funding. It does not need to fully utilize all available funds, as this document may be updated on a rolling basis throughout the period covered by SB125 funding as part of an Updated Allocation Package submission. However, for timely distribution of FY23-24 funds, this portion of the Allocation Package must be submitted by December 31, 2023, and for timely distribution of FY24-25 funds, by December 31, 2024. The **detailed project description** described above must provide details about how the funding is proposed to be distributed between transit operators and among projects, both capital and operations. *This section shall be analyzed and reviewed for project eligibility and completeness.*
The list is divided into three sections, covering TIRCP Capital, ZETCP Capital and Operations Funding. Required contents for each are below.

Existing TIRCP Capital Projects
Wasco is the only known TIRCP award agency in Kern. (By agency) appendixes A through K

New TIRCP Capital Projects
(By agency) appendixes A through K

ZETCP Capital Projects
(By agency) appendixes A through K

Transit Operations Funding
(By agency) appendixes A through K

A Summary Excel table including the proposed uses of TIRCP and ZETCP funds by fiscal year of availability.
(By agency) appendixes A through K

i. Existing fleet and asset management plans by transit operators - TAM Plans and FY 2022 NTD Reports
(Displayed on Kern COG website - https://www.kerncog.org/category/docs/public-transit/)

ii. Revenue collection methods and annual costs involved in collecting revenue for each transit operator and regional transportation planning agency involved, by payment instrument.

Revenue collection methods are listed below:
Golden Empire Transit District, Kern Transit, Tehachapi, and Delano use electronic (online), and mechanical fareboxes.
Arvin, Ridgecrest, Shafter, and Wasco use mechanical fareboxes.
California City and McFarland use non-electronic or mechanical fareboxes.

Both Shafter and Wasco plan to switch to electronic (online) within a few fiscal years.

iii. A statement of existing service plan and planned service changes through the end of 2023-24, and schedule data in General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) format

Operators that report data using General Transit Feed Specifications (GTFS) are listed below:

Golden Empire Transit District
Kern Transit

iv. Expenditures on security and safety measures

Information on security and safety measures are listed in the long-range financial plans in appendixes A through K. Generally, Shafter and Tehachapi have added security cameras in their capital projects. Shafter intends to use the cameras aboard its transit vehicles whereas Tehachapi will add security cameras to its downtown park-and-ride/intercity transit station.
(By agency) appendixes A through K

v. Opportunities for service restructuring, eliminating service redundancies, and improving coordination amongst transit operators, including, but not limited to, consolidation of agencies or reevaluation of network management and governance structure

At the present time, Kern COG staff sees transit service throughout the region remaining mostly constant. However, the City of Delano and the City of Wasco are exploring options to transition some or all its demand-response services to micro-transit service. Golden Empire Transit District pioneered micro-transit service several years ago and had a very positive response from riders.

Kern Transit, the region's intercity transit service, coordinates well with the Golden Empire Transit District (sharing bus stops and linking rural communities to the metro-Bakersfield area). Kern Transit also coordinates with each rural transit operator to provide contracted service to rural areas immediately surrounding a contracted municipality. Finally, Kern Transit partners with the City of Arvin

and Golden Empire Transit District to provide intercity transit service from Bakersfield to the Santa Clarita Metrolink Station on the west side of the mountains and from Bakersfield to the Lancaster Metrolink Station on the eastside of the mountains. The western mountain route serves employees of the Tejon shopping and industrial park and will soon be serving the proposed Tejon Tribe Hard Rock Casino/Hotel. The eastern route serves mostly transit dependent riders on their way to medical appointments in the Los Angeles area.
There is an opportunity to consolidate the rural transit operators into one county-wide service. Consolidation has been discussed among one or two of the existing operators but has not risen to a high-enough level to perform a serious study. Currently, the City of Tehachapi is the only rural transit operator that contracts its city's services (Kern Transit is the contracted service provider).

In the current Caltrans Sustainable Communities grant cycle (2024), Kern COG is applying for a three-year study in the Climate Adaptation category. If awarded, the Climate Adaptation Plan will analyze climate impacts on the Kern Region as they apply to public transportation and provide recommendations on how best to mitigate the impacts. In the same Plan, the consultant will also provide a five-to-seven-year transportation development plan for all of Kern County's rural operators (including the County's Kern Transit service). Recommendations from the climate adaptation plan will be entered into the rural transit operators' transit development plans and may include a consolidation recommendation.