



November 21, 2019

To: Legislative and Communications Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Performance Evaluation of Federal Legislative Advocate,
Potomac Partners, DC

Overview

The firm Potomac Partners, DC provides federal legislative advocacy services for the Orange County Transportation Authority in Washington, DC. A staff evaluation of the services provided this session is presented to the Board of Directors for consideration and further comment.

Recommendation

Receive and file the staff evaluation as an information item and provide any additional comments.

Background

Since 2003, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has contracted with Potomac Partners, DC (PPDC) for federal legislative advocacy services. Through competitive procurements, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) awarded the federal advocacy contract to PPDC in 2002, 2007, 2010, 2014, and most recently in 2018. On October 22, 2018, the Board approved a contract with PPDC, to provide federal advocacy and consulting services for an initial term of two years through December 31, 2020, with two, two-year option terms.

The federal legislative advocacy and consulting services provided by PPDC are led by Richard Alcalde and Daniel Feliz. Through their work for OCTA, PPDC has developed significant long-term relationships with key members in Congress and worked on several priority policy issues and goals for OCTA including implementing Breaking Down Barriers, an OCTA-led project delivery streamlining effort; obtaining a Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan for the Interstate 405 Improvement Project and seeking Capital Investment Grant funding and receipt of a full funding grant agreement for the OC Streetcar.

Discussion

This is the first year OCTA staff is evaluating the services provided by the federal legislative advocate and is being done to mirror the process that has traditionally been undertaken for OCTA's state legislative advocate. The evaluation will cover major issues addressed and general services provided by PPDC. Staff's evaluation of the services provided by PPDC is included in Attachment A. The major issues and general services provided by PPDC have been evaluated based on effort and outcome using a rating of excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor.

Staff has rated PPDC's efforts overall as "very good" based on responsiveness, advancing OCTA's positions and policies, and assisting in building cooperative relationships with members of Congress and the Administration. Staff has rated PPDC's outcomes overall as "very good" based on the outcomes of the issues discussed.

Priorities for PPDC for next year will include advancement of OCTA's policy positions outlined in the 2019-2020 OCTA Federal Legislative Platform; actively engaging in policy discussions and decisions related to surface transportation reauthorization and associated funding proposals; positioning OCTA to be competitive for discretionary transportation funding; continuing pursuit of streamlining reforms to the TIFIA loan process and clarification related to the Federal Aviation Administration policy on use of revenues from local sales tax assessments on aviation fuel; and engagement in policy discussions pertaining to transit security, processing and approval of transit grants, and methods to incentivize zero-emission transit technology.

To assist the Board in fully evaluating PPDC, the federal legislative advocate's current scope of work is included as Attachment B.

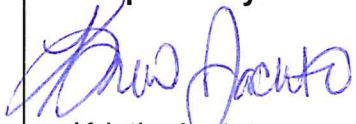
Summary

An evaluation of state legislative advocacy services performed by Potomac Partners, DC is presented to the Board for information and further comment.

Attachments

- A. Staff Evaluation of Services Provided by Potomac Partners, DC for 2019
- B. Scope of Work – Federal Legislative Advocates

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