



Item #17-8-10

## Land Use & Natural Resources Committee Receive & File

July 27, 2017

### New Caltrans FY 2017/18 Grant Program Guidelines

**Issue:** Caltrans recently released draft guidelines for FY 2017/18 Adaption Planning and Sustainable Communities Grant Programs.

**Recommendation:** None, this is for information only

**Discussion:** In mid-July, as part of the implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 1, Caltrans released draft guidelines for a new \$7 million Adaptation Planning Grant program for FY 2017/18, and for augmented FY 2017/18 funding for Caltrans' Sustainable Communities grant program: \$12.5 million for additional competitive grants, and \$12.5 million for Formula Funding grants to MPOs, including \$774,991 for SACOG.

Attachment A are the SACOG staff comments provided on July 25. Caltrans plans to address comments received, and post final draft guidelines in early August for a 30-day comment period. Caltrans anticipates releasing the final guidelines and call for applications in early September, with a short turnaround for competitive grant applications that are due by October 20, 2017 for both programs.

Staff emailed the attached memo (Attachment B) to city and county planning and public works staff, and SACOG's Regional Planning Partnership, Transit Coordinating Committee, and Transportation Demand Management Task Force, informing them of the draft program guidelines and key provisions, as well as staff contacts for recommended coordination on Adaption Planning grants, and questions on the Sustainable Communities program. Attachment C contains guideline excerpts further summarizing the two programs.

With the timing of the final guidelines and call for projects slated for September, SACOG staff anticipates bringing any SACOG-led grant applications through the October cycle for Committee recommendation and Board approval.

Approved by:

James Corless  
Chief Executive Officer

JC:SS:ck

Attachments

Key Staff:      Kirk E. Trost, Chief Operating Officer/General Counsel, (916) 340-6210  
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                    Raef Porter, Senior Analyst, (916) 340-6261  
                    Sharon Sprowls, Senior Program Specialist, (916) 340-6235  
                    Barbara VaughanBechtold, Associate Planner, (916) 340-6226



July 25, 2017

Mr. Malcolm Dougherty, Director  
California Department of Transportation  
Attn: Chris Schmidt, Division Chief  
Division of Transportation Planning MS-32  
P.O. Box 942874  
Sacramento, CA 94274-0001

**RE: Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program Comments**

Dear Mr. Dougherty:

We appreciate the efforts by Caltrans to shape new guidelines for the transportation planning grant program that will support planning efforts across the state. In our region comprised of six counties, 28 local governments, and 2.4 million residents, the planning grants will help advance transportation priorities that implement our local plans and our region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). We are providing the following comments and questions for Caltrans to consider in the next iteration of the program guidelines:

**Eligible Activities**

SACOG recommends that the eligible activities be expanded to include the various technical and public engagement activities that support SB 375 implementation efforts at the mega-region scale. Examples of value include shared data and technical analysis tools, mega-region freight and passenger rail plans, and the development of economic development strategies that also offer affordable housing and environmental benefits.

**Formula Grant Program**

SACOG appreciates the proposal to offer a formula component to the program. Guaranteed funding will help us plan ahead work program activities that implement our local and regional plans. We recommend the following clarifications and refinements:

- **Consider an increase in the share of the formula funds to be 75% of the total program.** Integrated planning responsibilities for MPOs and RTPAs, such as SACOG, have steadily increased over time. With policy boards that bring together elected officials from local governments, our agencies are best positioned to identify the planning needs within our regions that advance the

Auburn  
Citrus Heights  
Colfax  
Davis  
El Dorado County  
Elk Grove  
Folsom  
Galt  
Isleton  
Live Oak  
Lincoln  
Loomis  
Marysville  
Placer County  
Placerville  
Rancho Cordova  
Rocklin  
Roseville  
Sacramento  
Sacramento County  
Sutter County  
West Sacramento  
Wheatland  
Winters  
Woodland  
Yolo County  
Yuba City  
Yuba County

implementation of local plans and our regional RTP and SCS plans. Also, the convening roles regional agencies take on can lead to efficiencies in the coordination and execution of planning and analysis work activities.

- **Clarify the process for budgeting formula funds in the OWP.** The grant guidelines are not completely clear as to what steps in the grant application process apply to the formula and/or the competitive programs. For work to commence in January 2018, it would be helpful to have the process flexible and streamlined as long as the work activities are deemed eligible through the consultation with Caltrans staff.

### Competitive Grant Program

SACOG also recommends modifications and clarifications to the competitive grant program:

- **Clarify the role of MPOs and RTPAs in the facilitation of “a fair and open competitive application and outreach process.”** SACOG supports a strong project selection role by Caltrans on the proposed 25% share that would go towards a competitive grant program to advance statewide planning priorities. In prior cycles, SACOG took an active role in working with local agencies. Technical assistance efforts included reviewing and providing suggestions for strengthening initial concepts and final applications, suggesting partnerships, and providing support letters. Applicants in our region have expressed appreciation for SACOG’s assistance so we want to make sure future assistance efforts are deliberate and align with the objectives Caltrans has for the new planning grant programs. As such, it would be helpful to have the MPO and RTPA technical support and involvement role clarified in the next iteration of the guidelines.
- **Clarify the relationship between grant program considerations and grant specific objectives.** It is unclear if a proposal would not score as well because it did not integrate *every* grant program consideration on page 3, nor is it clear as to how the grant considerations will be evaluated.
- **Consider a flexible approach in evaluating how the 50% minimum threshold for disadvantaged community benefits can be met.** It’s not clear if the threshold will be met through targeting a geographic location, or whether a planning effort not targeting a specific geography can demonstrate benefits to a disadvantaged community. Many of our member agencies have raised concerns with target geography requirements and the increasing thresholds being used in state programs for disadvantaged communities due to the funding constraints they face for completing planning priorities.
- **Clarify how the completion of related planning efforts will be evaluated as a “special consideration.”** It would be helpful to provide more clarity on what the different “special considerations” mean and how they would be applied and scored. Six different items are listed as receiving special consideration, but it is not clear whether each item will receive an additional score, or whether meeting one provides the applicant with “special consideration.” It is also unclear how these special considerations would apply to a lead applicant that is an MPO, RTPA, transit agency, or Native American Tribal Government, and not a city or county with general plan and land use authority, and responsibility for most of the named plans/policies.

Specific comments on the identified plans or policies that are mentioned in the “special consideration” section:

- Vision Zero Plan – Vision Zero is a particular approach to planning for safety. Many communities may have a safety plan or engage in safety planning work but it is not specifically labeled “Vision Zero.” If special consideration is considered warranted, a more generic reference to safety planning seems more appropriate than such a specific reference.
- Anti-displacement strategy – Some transportation investments may ultimately have the consequence of helping to gentrify neighborhoods, but many do not, or are in communities where displacement is not an issue. We suggest it makes more sense to require the applicant to address potential gentrification impacts of their study or plan as part of their application, rather than providing a blanket special consideration.
- Climate Action Plan – Many small agencies have not had the resources to develop a specific climate action plan, and they are suggested but not required under current general plan guidelines. This consideration seems to have the potential for disadvantaging applicant jurisdictions with fewer resources.

Thank you for your consideration of SACOG’s comments on the Caltrans Planning Grant programs. Please let me know if you have questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Matthew Carpenter  
Director of Transportation Services

July 24, 2017

To: City/County Planning and Public Works Departments, Transit Coordinating Committee, Regional Planning Partnership, TDM Task Force

From: SACOG Staff

Re: FY 2017/18 Additional Caltrans Grants

To help implement Senate Bill 1, Caltrans recently issued draft guidelines for two additional grant programs for FY 2017/18: Adaptation Planning and Sustainable Communities. While final guidance is not expected to be released until early September, applications for both programs will be due on October 20, 2017. Under both programs, selected grantees would be able to start work on approved grants in April 2018, with all reimbursable work completed by February 28, 2020. MPOs and RTPAs with Master Fund Transfer Agreements with Caltrans could begin work earlier, in January 2018.

For both programs, the draft guidelines and comment form (initial comments are due July 25) are at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/grants.html>. Caltrans expects to issue final guidelines for a 30-day comment period in August. Some notable features in the initial guidelines for each program are below:

### **Adaptation Planning**

Guidelines were released for a new competitive program of Adaptation Planning grants, totaling \$7 million in FY 2017/18. Grant requests can be for \$150,000 to \$1 million, with a local match of 11.47%. Eligible applicants are MPOs, RTPAs, transit agencies, cities, counties, Native American Tribal Governments, local and regional agencies, and special districts.

The guidelines encourage sub-applicants and RTPAs to work far in advance of the application deadline with the appropriate MPO to coordinate application development, ensure proposed studies align with the MTP/SCS, and do not duplicate efforts. **If you are considering submitting an application as a lead or sub-applicant, please contact SACOG by August 15, 2017, to provide ample time for this coordination:**

### **SACOG Staff Contact:**

Raef Porter, Senior Analyst  
[rporter@sacog.org](mailto:rporter@sacog.org)  
(916) 340-6261

### **Sustainable Communities**

The draft guidelines provide additional FY 2017/18 funds totaling \$12.5 million for competitive grants under Caltrans' Sustainable Communities program. Requests may range from \$50,000 to \$1 million, with an 11.47% local match. Eligible applicants are Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) with a sub-recipient(s), Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), cities and counties, transit agencies, and Native American Tribal Governments.

The draft guidelines (see p. 12) state that a minimum of 50% of the funds are anticipated to benefit Disadvantaged Communities, and "special consideration will go to jurisdictions that have or are preparing" the following:

- A Housing element deemed to be compliant by HCD; and the jurisdiction (including charter cities) has submitted by October 20, 2017 their Annual Progress Reports for calendar years 2013 through 2016.
- Environmental Justice Element in compliance with Senate Bill 1000 (Leyva, Statutes of 2016) upon making significant changes to the General Plan
- Vision Zero Plan
- Complete Streets Policy
- Anti-displacement Strategy
- Climate Action Plan

The guidelines also establish a new FY 2017/18 Sustainable Communities Formula Grant Program to provide \$12.5 million in to MPOs across the state, using the distribution formula for Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Metropolitan Planning PL funds. Caltrans' stated intent for the Formula Program is for MPOs to "carry out the objectives of the region's RTP SCS and the RTP Guidelines Appendices K & L." Formula grant work would be agreed upon with Caltrans and formalized through an amendment to the MPO's Overall Work Program.

Under the current draft guidelines, MPO and RTPA pre-screening of applications is considered "contrary to state administration of this grant program" so we may not be able to provide review and technical assistance with application concepts and drafts as in prior years. SACOG will provide an update if this provision is revised in the final guidelines to accompany the call for applications. In the meantime, for any questions on the draft Sustainable Communities program:

**SACOG Staff Contact:**

Sharon Spowls, Senior Program Specialist  
916-340-6235  
[sspowls@sacog.org](mailto:sspowls@sacog.org)

## Adaptation Planning Grant Funding

The Adaptation Planning grants are funded by the State Highway Account (SHA). The fiscal year 2017-2018 funding amount is seven million dollars, and will be entirely be competitively funded. The minimum application amount is \$150,000 and the maximum application amount is \$1,000,000. The required local match is 11.47%.

GRANT	FUND SOURCE	PURPOSE	WHO MAY APPLY	LOCAL MATCH
Adaptation Planning	State Highway Account (SHA)  <b>Budget</b> State funds \$7,000,000  <b>Grant Min</b> \$150,000  <b>Grant Max</b> \$1,000,000	Support planning actions at local and regional levels that advance climate change adaptation efforts on the transportation system.	The following are eligible to apply as a primary applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPOs</li> <li>• RTPAs</li> <li>• Transit Agencies</li> <li>• Cities and Counties</li> <li>• Native American Tribal Governments</li> <li>• Local and Regional Agencies</li> <li>• Special Districts</li> </ul> The following are eligible to apply as a sub-applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transit Agencies</li> <li>• Universities and Community Colleges</li> <li>• Native American Tribal Governments</li> <li>• Cities and Counties</li> <li>• Community-Based Organizations</li> <li>• Non-Profit Organizations (501.c.3)</li> <li>• Other Public Entities**</li> </ul>	11.47% minimum (in cash or an in-kind* contribution). The entire minimum 11.47% local match may be in the form of an eligible in-kind contribution.

### Example Adaptation Planning Grant Project Types

- Resiliency studies
- Climate vulnerability assessments
- Adaptation plans
- Natural and green infrastructure adaptation plans
- Update of existing plans to incorporate adaptation

### Eligible Activities and Expenses

Eligible activities must have a transportation nexus per Article XIX Section 2 and 3. Please consult with Caltrans District staff for more information on whether costs are eligible for funding. Some examples of eligible costs include:

- Staff time
- Consultant time
- Conceptual drawings and design
- Community surveys, meetings, charrettes, focus groups
- Bilingual services for interpreting and/or translation services for meetings
- Community/stakeholder advisory groups



# Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Summary Chart

GRANT	FUND SOURCE	PURPOSE	WHO MAY APPLY	LOCAL MATCH
<p><b>Sustainable Communities Competitive</b></p>	<p>State Highway Account (SHA)</p> <p><b>Budget</b> State funds \$12.5 million</p> <p><b>Grant Min</b> \$50,000</p> <p><b>Grant Max</b> \$1,000,000</p>	<p>Funds local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further the region’s SCS (where applicable), contribute to the State’s greenhouse gas reduction targets, and also assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and program overarching objectives (see Page 3).</p>	<p><b>The following are eligible to apply as a primary applicant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPOs with sub applicants</li> <li>• RTPAs</li> <li>• Transit Agencies;</li> <li>• Cities and Counties;</li> <li>• Native American Tribal Governments</li> </ul> <p><b>The following are eligible to apply as a sub-applicant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPOs/RTPAs</li> <li>• Transit Agencies</li> <li>• Universities and Community Colleges</li> <li>• Native American Tribal Governments</li> <li>• Cities and Counties</li> <li>• Community-Based Organizations</li> <li>• Non-Profit Organizations (501.C.3)</li> <li>• Other Public Entities**</li> </ul>	<p>11.47% minimum (in cash or an in-kind* contribution). The entire minimum 11.47% local match may be in the form of an eligible in-kind contribution.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable Communities Formula</b></p>	<p>State Highway Account (SHA)</p> <p><b>Budget</b> State funds \$12.5 million</p>	<p>Funds local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further the region’s SCS (where applicable), contribute to the State’s greenhouse gas reduction targets, and also assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and program overarching objectives (see Page 3).</p>	<p><b>The following are eligible to apply as a primary applicant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPOS</li> </ul>	<p>11.47% minimum (in cash or an in-kind* contribution). The entire minimum 11.47% local match may be in the form of an eligible in-kind contribution.</p>

\* For in-kind contribution requirements, refer to Page 14 of this Guide.

\*\* Public entities include state agencies, the Regents of the University of California, district, public authority, public agency, and any other political subdivision or public corporation in the State (Government Code Section 811.2).

## Formula Funding

The grant specific objective, eligibility requirements, and performance considerations for the formula grants awarded to MPOs is consistent with the competitive component of the Grant Program. The intent of the Sustainable Communities Formula Grants is to carry out the objectives of the region’s RTP SCS and the RTP Guidelines Appendices K & L. In addition, MPOs are strongly encouraged to administer Sustainable Communities Formula funding in a transparent manner, consistent with the legislative intent of Senate Bill 1 – The Road Repair & Accountability Act of 2017. MPOs should meet the following minimum eligibility criteria to apply for formula funding:

- Consolidated Planning Grant Carryover is at or below the 100% threshold;
- Have an RTP SCS that meets the SB 375 greenhouse gas reduction targets; and,
- Meet civil rights and environmental justice obligations, as summarized in Section 4.2 of the RTP Guidelines.

If an MPO uses formula funds to administer a regional grant competitive program, the MPO must submit their grant program criteria to ensure it aligns with the Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grants. MPOs will also submit a list of awarded grants to the Caltrans Office of Regional Planning.

MPOs are responsible for drafting a formal amendment to the current Overall Work Program (OWP) and OWP Agreement (OWPA) for adding Sustainable Communities Formula funds that will serve as the grant application. The draft OWP/OWPA amendment process includes meaningful consultation with Caltrans District staff and Caltrans Office of Regional Planning. Once Caltrans concurs with the draft OWP/OWPA amendment, the MPO may seek board approval of the amendment. Caltrans District staff will issue formal approval of the OWP/OWPA amendment and Caltrans Office of Regional Planning will complete the programming process for these funds. For future years, Sustainable Communities Formula funding will be a part of the annual draft OWP approval process. The following funding table shows how formula funds will be distributed to each MPO.

MPO	Total Allocation
Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization	\$160,750
Madera County Transportation Commission	\$164,209
Kings County Association of Governments	\$162,943
Shasta Regional Transportation Agency	\$163,172
Butte County Association of Governments	\$180,569
Merced County Association of Governments	\$197,424
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments	\$195,962
Tulare County Association of Governments	\$246,944
Santa Barbara County Association of Governments	\$224,579
Stanislaus Council of Governments	\$291,053
San Joaquin Council of Governments	\$341,671
Kern Council of Governments	\$374,899
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments	\$315,267
Fresno Council of Governments	\$407,484
Sacramento Area Council of Governments	\$774,991
San Diego Association of Governments	\$1,021,553
Metropolitan Transportation Commission	\$2,106,140
Southern California Association of Governments	\$5,170,390
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,500,000</b>

## Example Sustainable Communities Grant Project Types

- Studies that advance a community's effort to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips and transportation related greenhouse gases
- Studies that assist transportation agencies in creating sustainable communities and transit oriented development
- Community to school studies or safe routes to school plans
- Studies that advance a community's effort to address the impacts of climate change and sea level rise
- Jobs and affordable housing proximity studies
- Context-sensitive streetscapes or town center plans
- Complete street plans
- Bike and pedestrian safety enhancement plans
- Traffic calming and safety enhancement plans
- Corridor enhancement studies
- Health equity transportation studies
- Climate change adaptation plans for transportation facilities
- Identification of policies, strategies, and programs to preserve transit facilities and optimize transit infrastructure
- Studies that evaluate accessibility and connectivity of the multimodal transportation network
- Social service improvement studies
- Studies that address environmental justice issues in a transportation related context
- Station area planning
- Student internships for rural agencies and/or disadvantaged communities
- First Mile/Last Mile project development planning
- Planning for zero or near zero emission vehicles
- Integration of transportation and environmental planning
- Shared mobility services planning studies
- Road or parking pricing studies
- Transportation Demand Management Studies

## Eligible Activities and Expenses

Eligible activities must have a transportation nexus per Article XIX Section 2 and 3. Please consult with Caltrans District staff for more information on whether costs are eligible for funding. Some examples of eligible costs include:

- Data gathering and analysis
- Planning consultants
- Conceptual drawings and design
- Community surveys, meetings, charrettes, focus groups
- Bilingual services for interpreting and/or translation services for meetings
- Community/stakeholder advisory groups