Draft 2021 Regional Active Transportation Program Policy Framework

Information

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Attachments: Yes

1. Issue:
Staff developed a six-county regional policy framework to outline how SACOG will competitively distribute $11,771,000 of Active Transportation Program (ATP) funding to increase biking and walking. The California Transportation Commission will adopt or reject our final policy framework at their May 13, 2020, meeting.

2. Recommendation:
Staff requests input on the draft evaluation criteria and process to distribute Regional Active Transportation Program funds. The final policy framework will be presented to the board in April for approval.

3. Background/Analysis:
The Active Transportation Program was created by Senate Bill 99 in 2013, with the first competitive program in 2014. The ATP combines several smaller active transportation funding sources into one larger program with broader eligibilities. The primary goal of the ATP is to increase use of active modes. The ATP is a highly competitive program jointly managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Transportation Commission (CTC). ATP funds are distributed competitively across the state through three programs: a statewide program distributes 50 percent of the funds; a small urban/rural program operated by Caltrans distributes 10 percent of the funds; and the final 40 percent of funds are distributed by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in urban areas with populations greater than 200,000. A minimum of 25 percent of ATP funds must benefit disadvantaged communities.

The ATP has a sequential selection process split between a statewide competition followed by regional competitions, like the SACOG Regional ATP in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties. During the first selection process, the CTC develops a list of projects recommended for funding in the statewide ATP based on score, eligibility, and deliverability. Projects that are unsuccessful in the statewide ATP are then eligible to compete for funding in the Regional ATP, allowing for a second opportunity to compete for funding. The sequential selection process is important because it allows local agencies to bring more funding into our region to implement needed active transportation projects and offers streamlining opportunities for funding programs with similar emphases. Staff works with El Dorado County Transportation Commission and Placer County Transportation Planning Agency to develop and implement the Regional ATP.

The draft funding estimate for the State and Regional ATP identifies $221,780,000 for the statewide competition and $11,771,000 for the regional competition. The statewide and regional programs have funds
available across four years: state fiscal years 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025. The final fund estimate for the statewide and regional competitions will be adopted at the March 25, CTC meeting.

4. Discussion/Analysis:
CTC staff launched development of the 2021 ATP Guidelines last November. The 2021 ATP Guidelines are expected to be finalized and adopted at the March 25, CTC meeting. Through feedback gathered from regions, local agencies, advocacy groups, and other interested stakeholders, CTC staff is proposing minimal changes and refinements to how the statewide ATP competition is conducted. The draft 2021 ATP Guidelines include some notable changes from the last ATP cycle: identifying how ATP investments align transportation spending, programming, and mitigation with the state’s climate goals; establishing a quick-build pilot program that may award up to $5,000,000 to interim capital projects; requiring performance metric reporting for awarded projects; and removing the requirement of applying to the statewide ATP in order to compete in a regional ATP competition. The statewide ATP call for projects will be released by March 26, with applications due to CTC staff by June 15.

Staff will continue to provide technical assistance to agencies in our region applying for statewide ATP grants. Technical assistance typically includes data to strengthen the discussion of project benefits, project scoping assistance, draft application review, and (Caltrans resources permitting) coordinated review with Caltrans District 3 Local Assistance focused on project deliverability and related concerns.

2021 Regional ATP Evaluation Criteria and Process
The statewide ATP Guidelines place restrictions on how regions can distribute funds, but MPOs can submit specific changes to the CTC for approval to use in regional processes. CTC identified the areas an MPO can propose changes to when implementing a regional program—scoring criteria and weighting, minimum project sizes, match requirements, definitions of disadvantaged communities, and using a supplement call for projects and applications. Staff proposes continuing to use all available options to adapt the ATP to our regional needs, outlined in the policy framework (Attachment A).

After the 2019 Regional ATP, staff reached out to project sponsors and the active transportation working group to gather feedback on the application, tools, and outcomes of the regional process and application. We used this feedback to refine the ATP policy framework and application materials. The Draft 2021 Regional ATP Policy Framework establishes a competitive funding program that heavily emphasizes how the investment will increase biking and walking by building safe, comfortable active transportation networks that connect people to desirable destinations. The Regional ATP also evaluates how each project supports regional priorities of supporting economic prosperity strategies and balancing cost effectiveness with project performance. To best consider how the investments benefit our region’s disadvantaged residents, the Regional ATP would formalize use of the 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) definition of Environmental Justice Areas (Attachment B).

The Regional ATP policy framework also looks toward how we can fulfill ATP and state-identified goals to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets. This evaluation criterion has the potential to more closely align with the larger Green Means Go effort, the multi-year pilot program to lower greenhouse gas emissions in the six-county Sacramento region by accelerating infill development, reducing vehicle trips, and electrifying remaining trips.

Unlike other funds managed by SACOG, Regional ATP project savings and projects that lose their funding are not returned to SACOG for later programming in the six counties. Regional ATP evaluation criteria and process
emphasize the importance of keeping funds in our region by including criteria about project deliverability and past grant performance, and by including local project engineers in the evaluation process. To date, no Regional ATP funds have been lost due to a project not being able to complete the improvements outlined in their original ATP application.

The schedule proposed by the CTC limits the amount of usable time to evaluate Regional ATP projects (Attachment C). To balance application streamlining with a thorough evaluation of projects, staff proposes using a single application for all competing Regional ATP projects that will effectively use information developed for the statewide ATP application. Project evaluation is proposed to continue to draw on partners with expertise in planning, engineering, and other areas related to ATP goals.

Attachment A: Draft 2021 Regional Active Transportation Program Policy Framework
Attachment B: MTP/SCS 2020 Environmental Justice Areas Map
Attachment C: Statewide and Regional ATP Calendar

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:
This item has no fiscal impact to the agency’s operating budget, other than already budgeted staff time.

6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Objectives:

Goal 1: Advance Economic Prosperity
   Objective 1: Invest in and protect the transportation infrastructure needed to implement the region’s economic prosperity plan.
   Objective 3: Improve people’s ability to get to jobs, schools, and other economic opportunities.

Goal 2: Connected Communities
   Objective 1: Develop more sustainable sources of future transportation funding while winning new competitive state and federal transportation grants.
   Objective 3: Prioritize cost-effective transportation investments that enhance mobility while improving safety, air quality, and the condition of transportation infrastructure and assets.
# 2021 REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

EL DORADO, PLACER, SACRAMENTO, SUTTER, YOLO, AND YUBA COUNTIES

The purpose of this funding program is to increase and attract active transportation users and provide facilities for walking and biking in urban, suburban, and rural portions of the region and to provide connections between them. Projects and programs funded through this program are consistent with the vision of the Blueprint and support the implementation of the long-range transportation plans for the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC), the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA), and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG).

EDCTC, PCTPA, and SACOG invest regional funds in infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects benefitting active transportation. ATP funds from the State of California provide an important additional funding source for active transportation projects.

## Program Goals

California Senate Bill (SB) 99 establishes six program goals that provide a foundation for the state and regional programs:

- Increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking;
- Increase the safety and mobility of non-motorized users;
- Advance the active transportation efforts of regional agencies to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals as established pursuant to SB 375 (C728, §2008) and SB 391 (C585, §2009);
- Enhance public health, including reduction of childhood obesity, through the use of programs including, but not limited to, projects eligible for Safe Routes to School Program funding;
- Ensure that disadvantaged communities fully share in the benefits of the program; and
- Provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of active transportation users.

## Eligible Project Types

Eligible projects must demonstrate consistency with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) that is amended every four years. Specific bicycle and pedestrian projects included in the Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) for EDCTC or PCTPA are also eligible. Eligible projects must meet the requirements established in the State ATP Guidelines.

Regional ATP funds may be used for construction, preliminary engineering, environmental work and design, and/or right-of-way. Funds may also be used for non-infrastructure programs or projects, and community-serving plans. Selected projects must support the performance outcomes identified in the sections below.

The ATP is a competitive State of California program implemented by the California Transportation Commission to distribute state and federal funding. Projects likely to receive federal funding will need to meet the requirements of the federal Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act).

## Ineligible Project Types

Projects ineligible for ATP funds include: projects in new developments that are considered “good practices” according to FHWA guidelines, long-term staff positions, transit operations, law enforcement, and bicycle racks for carpools, vanpools, or private vehicles.

## Project Selection

### Roles in Project Selection
Applicants are the sponsoring agencies for any project competing for Regional ATP funding. To compete in the regional program, applicants are responsible for submitting a regional application to address Regional ATP criteria and emphases, using information derived from their State ATP application whenever possible. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit an application for each competing project to the State ATP prior to competing in the Regional ATP. Applicants are encouraged to discuss potential ATP projects with RTPA staff and may elect to identify a reduced scope version of their state- submitted project for the Regional ATP competition.

The Regional ATP Team is responsible for ensuring the final Regional ATP funding recommendation to the SACOG Board of Directors and CTC addresses all funding source requirements. Representatives from the three regional transportation planning agencies (RTPAs) in the region (EDCTC, PCTPA, and SACOG) form the Regional ATP Team.

The Active Transportation Working Group is responsible for reviewing, evaluating, and scoring the applications submitted to the Regional ATP. It is comprised of seven members with expertise in the areas of land use planning, bike/ped planning, project engineering, first-mile/last-mile access to transit, health and equity, and the impact of transportation infrastructure on greenhouse gas emissions. The multidisciplinary Working Group will be recruited from partner organizations and stakeholder groups from across the region.

Project Screening
A Regional ATP Team will screen applications for eligibility. Applications will be removed from the competitive process if they fail to meet these criteria:

1. Project is one of the eligible types of non-infrastructure, infrastructure, or a combination of infrastructure and non-infrastructure as identified under “Eligible Project Types”.

2. Project is consistent with the MTP/SCS or the Regional Transportation Plan of EDCTC or PCTPA.

3. Project must be ready for inclusion in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program, with project scope and cost. The project application may include the cost of preparing environmental documents. When project design, right-of-way, or construction are programmed before the implementing agency completes the environmental process, updated cost estimates, updated analysis of the project’s cost effectiveness, and updated analysis of the project’s ability to further the goals of the program must be submitted to the appropriate RTPA (EDCTC, PCTPA, or SACOG) for re-evaluation following completion of the environmental process.

4. Project is eligible for ATP funding.

5. Project meets the minimum dollaramount for an infrastructure or non-infrastructure project and includes at least 11.47% of non-ATP funding as leverage. Leveraged funds may be from previously completed project phases.
   a. Infrastructure project minimum is $282,390 ($250,000 funding request + $32,390 leverage).
   b. Non-Infrastructure project minimum is $56,478 ($50,000 funding request + $6,478 leverage).

6. Public Participation & Planning. The applicant must demonstrate stakeholder support and how a community-based public participation process resulted in the identification and prioritization of the proposed project.

7. Partnering with Community Conservation Corps. The applicant must demonstrate that the California Conservation Corps, or a qualified community conservation corps, was sought out to participate as a partner to undertake the project; or provide demonstration of the cost-effectiveness clause 23 CFR 635.204 and provide the relevant documentation.

Evaluation Process
Following the Project Screening process, the Regional ATP Team will forward all eligible projects to the Working Group for evaluation. The Regional ATP Team will also remove any projects recommended for funds through the statewide competition from further consideration for the Regional ATP once recommendations for statewide ATP awards are released.

The Working Group will prioritize and rank projects using the scoring outlined in the Project Scoring section, with the exception of criteria scored by the Regional ATP Team. Working Group members will not vote or comment on applications from their own organizations or organizations with which they are affiliated. The Working Group and/or SACOG staff reserves the right to contact applicants by phone, email, or during a meeting during the evaluation process for additional information to address questions related to the scope of work, budget, timeline, and performance considerations. The Working Group will use all information available to develop a draft ranked list.

The Regional ATP Team will identify high-ranking projects to nominate to the Working Group for full funding from the draft ranked list, and develop a recommendation of the next tier of high-ranking projects for further discussion and evaluation. The Working Group will develop the final funding recommendation, and the Regional ATP Team will confirm that a minimum 25% of available ATP funds are dedicated to projects and programs benefiting disadvantaged community residents. In the event the minimum investment threshold is not met, the disadvantaged community benefit points (0-10) will be applied to the entire project list and the projects will be re-ranked. Discretion will be placed on the Working Group and Regional ATP Team to select a complete package of projects.

An applicant may claim any definition of a disadvantaged community cited in the State ATP Guidelines. The region-specific definition of disadvantaged community is the definition used for the 2020 MTP/SCS environmental justice analysis.

**Evaluating Project Performance**

Projects will be scored 0 to 100 points by the Active Transportation Working group (unless otherwise noted) based on the criteria described below using quantitative and qualitative project information.

1. Project increases walking and bicycling by connecting people to destinations and strengthening the active transportation network with solutions designed for the intended users. **0-45 points**
2. Project has the potential to reduce the number and/or rate of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and injuries. **0-20 points**
3. Project demonstrates cost effectiveness while bringing value to the active transportation network. **0-10 points**
4. Project advances active transportation efforts to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals through reducing vehicle trips today and over time, as established pursuant to SB 375 and SB 391. **0-10 points**
5. Project supports economic prosperity goals and strategies in the project area. **0-10 points**
6. Project provides meaningful benefit for a disadvantaged community. **0-10 points will be applied in the event the 25 percent minimum is not met.** (Please refer to the Evaluation Process section.)
7. Applicant demonstrates readiness to move forward with the project on a timely schedule (i.e., application includes clear schedule, cost, and partnerships to deliver the project). **0-5 points**
8. Applicant demonstrates good performance on past grants and/or federal aid projects or programs. **0 or -3 points**

**Funding Recipient Requirements**

Recipients must adhere to statewide ATP reporting requirements for documenting project progress, final delivery, and

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1 Criterion scored by the Regional ATP Team.
performance metrics.
Disadvantaged Communities Measures

- **Low Income**: Areas where 40% or more of people are living at 200% or less of the federal poverty level.
- **Race/Ethnicity**: Areas where 70% or more of people are non-white and/or Hispanic.
- **Race/Ethnicity and Low Income**: Areas where there are concentrated older adults aged 75 or more, linguistically isolated households, single-parent households with children under the age of 18, low educational attainment, severely housing-cost burdened households, and persons with disabilities.

### Other Vulnerabilities

- Areas with concentrated older adults aged 75 or more, linguistically isolated households, single-parent households with children under the age of 18, low educational attainment, severely housing-cost burdened households, and persons with disabilities.

### Environment Justice Areas

- Rivers/Lakes
- City Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- MPO Boundary
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<th>Regional Active Transportation Program</th>
<th>State Active Transportation Program</th>
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<td>March</td>
<td>Board of Directors’ Committees provide input on the Draft Regional ATP Policy Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Board of Directors approves final Regional ATP Policy Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>CTC adopts SACOG Regional ATP Policy Framework</td>
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| Jun | Supplemental Regional ATP call for projects on June 1 | State ATP applications due June 15  
*All applicants are encouraged to apply to the State ATP* |
| Jul | | |
| Aug | | |
| Sep | Regional ATP Applications due September 10 | State ATP evaluators review and score State ATP applications |
| Oct | Regional Active Transportation Program working group evaluates Regional ATP projects; develops draft funding recommendation after successful State ATP projects are removed from Regional ATP competition | |
| Nov | | CTC releases draft staff State ATP funding recommendation by November 16 |
| Dec | | CTC adopts State ATP Funding Recommendation |
| Jan | | |
| Feb | SACOG releases Draft Regional ATP Funding Recommendation for Public Comment | |
| Mar | Transportation Committee recommends, Board of Directors approves Final Regional ATP Funding Recommendation | |
| Apr | | |
| May | CTC adopts SACOG Regional ATP Funding Recommendation | |