

2018 REGIONAL PROGRAM: SACRAMENTO, SUTTER, YOLO, YUBA COUNTIES

The merged Regional Program is SACOG's largest competitive program. It combines into a single program the Regional/Local and Bicycle & Pedestrian funding programs of the 2015 cycle. The emphasis of the program is to fund cost-effective transportation projects that realize the performance benefits of the MTP/SCS. The program seeks to promote effective and efficient use of limited state and federal funding resources to both develop and maintain the regional transportation network and provide regional benefits. This is accomplished through the funding of capital and lump-sum category projects included in the 2016 MTP/SCS.

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Through prior funding cycles the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Board of Directors has approved the policy considerations that form the basis of the Regional Program. The 2018 Funding Round continues these foundational elements while incorporating Board, project sponsor, and stakeholder feedback focused on augmented and transparent data use and application streamlining. The goals of the 2018 Regional Program are to:

1. EMPHASIZE COST-EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING DECISIONS

Longstanding Board direction places a programmatic emphasis on making the most cost-effective funding decisions, which is achieved by maximizing performance outcomes and minimizing project costs. Priority will be given to projects for which the sponsor has already funded initial phases with its own resources (i.e., planning, environmental, design and/or right-of-way).

2. LEVERAGE REGIONAL FUNDS FOR NEAR-TERM PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Funding from broader competitive programs often require “shelf-ready” capital projects that are deliverable, and thereby ready to utilize funding. In the Regional Program, a relatively small but strategically allocated portion of the total revenue may go to early project development efforts for projects included within the next 10 years of the 2016 MTP/SCS.

3. TARGET PROJECTS WITH DEMONSTRATED PERFORMANCE BENEFITS

SACOG's Regional Program uses seven performance outcomes as part of the evaluation criteria. The 2018 Funding Round operationalizes, by performance outcome, a wide array of regional data into a robust series of performance measures for individual transportation projects, providing a consistent, uniform, and transparent data series. Project sponsors are invited to complement this baseline series with additional data or analysis that would support the application.

4. MANAGE ASSETS AND MAINTAIN A STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

The 2018 Regional Program will continue to include regional support for fix-it-first projects that address:

- Managing transportation assets and maintaining a state of good repair.
- Complete streets/corridor elements that serve an existing or forecasted demand.
- Innovative cost-effective practices to extend the life of existing assets, such as the use of recycled asphalt or rolling stock rehabilitation.

5. TARGET ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS

Joining the prior Bicycle & Pedestrian and Regional/Local programs serves to mainstream active transportation investments in SACOG's largest funding program. To ensure the solidity of the merger, the 2018 Regional Program includes a minimum funding target for active transportation investments, set to the proportion of the 2015 Bicycle & Pedestrian program to the overall 2015 funding round.

6. FOCUS ON SMALL OR MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECTS

SACOG's Regional Program is an important source of funding for capital and state of good repair projects. A challenge for this policy priority is the limited number of projects that can be funded. For the federal and state

funds that are available, the program emphasis will be on small- and medium-sized projects. Project performance outcomes will be assessed relative to the funding request amount.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

Projects applying to the Regional Program must fall within the four-county (Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, Yuba) region, and be listed in the 2016 MTP/SCS or fit within a lump-sum project category. Further, projects must be eligible for CMAQ, RSTP or STIP funds.

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

Completed application: For a project to be considered for funding, the project sponsor must submit a complete application by the program deadline. Among other elements, the program guidelines require the sponsor to use the project performance assessment (PPA) tool as part of the application.

Performance review: The Regional Program evaluates submitted applications across a series of related performance assessments. First, a group of engineers and other technical professionals reviews each project scope with a focus on cost-effectiveness, deliverability and eligibility. This group consists of professionals drawn from outside of SACOG. Next, each project receives a quantitative evaluation of outcome measures provided through the project performance assessment (PPA) tool.

SACOG convenes a working group comprised of both SACOG and outside agency staff. After individually reviewing and evaluating applications, the working group meets to rank and prioritize submitted projects according to an iterative process that considers the engineering cost/feasibility analysis, PPA outcomes, narrative responses, and application as a whole.

SACOG staff and management will then review all working group recommendations across the various funding programs to recommend a full project list to the SACOG Board for funding.

SCREENING PROJECTS OUT

All of the following conditions must be met for a project to proceed in the evaluation process. Failure to meet

each screening consideration will eliminate the project from further consideration.

1. The project must be currently listed in the MTP/SCS or fit within a lump-sum project category. Non-exempt projects must align with SACOG's air quality conformity and greenhouse gas objectives. Non-exempt refers to any project not listed by the EPA as an approved exemption from regional air quality analysis.
2. Projects must provide a minimum of 11.47% match in non-federal funds towards the total project cost, as is required for all federal aid funding projects. In other words, for every \$100,000 of total project cost (grant and match combined), the program will pay up to \$88,530 for every \$11,470 of match provided by the project sponsor.
3. The project must be eligible for appropriate funding sources (i.e., CMAQ, RSTP, STIP).
4. The project must be scheduled to begin construction no later than FFY 202X, with preliminary engineering and environmental analysis scheduled within three years.
5. A request for construction funding must demonstrate that environmental, engineering, and right-of-way will be ready by the time funds are requested, and that the agency has the financial capacity for ongoing operations and maintenance.

EVALUATING PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The application includes seven outcomes for determining whether a project will be recommended for funding:

1. Reduce regional vehicle miles travelled (VMT) per capita;
2. Reduce regional congested VMT per capita;
3. Increase multi-modal travel/ alternative travel/ choice of transportation options;
4. Provide long-term economic benefit within the region, recognizing the importance of sustaining both urban and rural economies;
5. Improve goods movement, including farm-to-market travel, in and through the region;

6. Significantly improve safety and security;
7. Demonstrate “state of good repair” benefits that maintain and improve the existing transportation system.

Of the seven performance outcomes, applicants choose the three that best fit their project. Projects are evaluated on the three outcomes selected.

These performance criteria support project evaluation across a breadth of size, scope, location and context, where:

- Performance indicators are relative, so that project performance outcomes are assessed relative to project size.
- The project performance assessment compares projects to those of similar place types, following the direction of the MTP/SCS.

The review will also include the project’s cost effectiveness, deliverability, and context sensitivity. Project costs and schedule estimates for environmental, engineering, right-of-way (ROW) and start-up construction must be believable, based on standards for similar projects. The project sponsor must have a track record that demonstrates technical capacity and reliability for similar projects. Further, the applicant must demonstrate how the project is appropriate for the surrounding community’s current and expected land uses and transportation needs, and considers complete streets and the range of current and future users.

2018 COMMUNITY DESIGN FUNDING PROGRAM (ROUND 8):

SACRAMENTO, SUTTER, YOLO, AND YUBA COUNTIES

The Community Design Program was established in 2003 by the SACOG Board of Directors to provide financial assistance to implement physical placemaking development of the Blueprint Project Principals: mixed land uses, transportation options, housing choice, compact development, use of existing assets, quality design, and natural resource protection. The program offers funding for transportation projects in public right-of-ways by local public agencies that lead to physical development of the Blueprint principles in Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties.

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Projects must conform to some of the seven regional Blueprint Principles (more detail on SACOG’s website at <https://www.sacog.org/publication/better-ways-grow>

1. transportation choices;
2. housing diversity;
3. compact development;
4. mixed land uses;
5. use of existing assets;
6. natural resource protection; and
7. quality design.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

All projects in the competitive categories must be federal aid eligible and primarily lead to or include construction. Projects must be eligible for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Regional Surface Transportation Plan (RSTP), or State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds (unless the project is submitted in the non-competitive category, which would receive SACOG-managed funds).

Generally speaking, federal aid eligible projects are those that significantly contain transportation infrastructure in public right-of-ways. Activities or tasks within the project must be categorized as “construction,” “environmental,” “design,” or “right-of way.” Pure planning activities are generally not considered an eligible use for the

Community Design Program (exception: planning is allowed in the non-competitive funding category). The following are examples of projects that are generally considered federal aid eligible:

- Transportation infrastructure – e.g., roadway improvements that promote, bike/pedestrian/transit usage and are directly connected to a land development project, land use plan, or in an existing “Blueprint friendly” community;
- Street corridor revitalization towards more pedestrian-oriented activities;
- Bicycle and pedestrian paths, tunnels, and bridges, or on-street bike lanes;
- Pedestrian improvements in public right-of-ways;
- Streetscaping such as median landscaping, street trees, lighting, and furniture;
- Traffic calming (but not interfering with public transit, bicycling, or walking);
- Transit stop amenities such as shelters, restrooms, and benches.

One critical distinction is that federal aid projects must be for project elements that are considered “over and above” those that are standard requirements if there is a development associated with the project. For instance, if a private development is going in, and the project seeks Community Design funds for street improvements, the improvements must go beyond the jurisdiction’s “standard” requirements for that associated development. The private developer may be required to put in sidewalks and crosswalks, but federal aid could pay for textured crosswalks, landscaped medians, and other elements that enhance the pedestrian experience but are not standard conditions of approval.

Project Selection Process

The application process remains the same as in prior rounds. Two committees will be involved in the review and selection process: the SACOG/Caltrans Review Team and the Community Design Working Group (Working Group). The SACOG/Caltrans Review Team is composed of SACOG and Caltrans staff, and possibly staff from other agencies who are familiar with federal transportation funding requirements. The Working Group is comprised of staff and appointed representatives from geographically diverse areas of the region recruited through SACOG’s staff-level regional advisory committees (e.g., Planners Committee, etc.).

Community Design Working Group Composition

Expertise	Number
Land Use Planners	3-5
Project Engineers	1-2
Bicycle/ Pedestrian Planning	1
Air Quality	1
Urban Design	1
Transit	1
Community Groups Transportation Demand Management	1
Total	10-13

SACOG staff encourages potential applicants to discuss possible projects. Applicants must submit a pre-submittal letter to SACOG describing the project, and the SACOG/Caltrans Review Team will reply with a letter stating whether the project is eligible and any foreseeable concerns the project is raising. If the project is determined to be eligible, a full application can then be submitted. The Working Group then reviews eligible applications and recommends a prioritized project list to SACOG staff based on the criteria stated in these guidelines. Applicants may be contacted during the

project selection process and requested to provide up to one written email page to clarify questions of the Working Group or the SACOG/Caltrans Review Team.

The Working Group prioritizes and ranks the applications, according to an iterative process that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. For projects recommended by the Working Group to be on the prioritized list, applicants will meet with the SACOG/Caltrans Review Team to ensure the project’s scope of work, budget and timeline meet program requirements. The Working Group and SACOG/Caltrans Review Team recommendations are then provided to the SACOG executive team.

PROJECT SCREENING

Not all projects can be easily determined for eligibility. In all cases, SACOG and Caltrans District 3 Local Assistance staff will work directly with each applicant on eligibility. For each potential application, an applicant must submit a pre-application letter describing the project, and the SACOG/Caltrans Review Team will provide a written response addressing issues relating to eligibility.

Capacity to manage a federal-aid project

In addition, all applicants must have a staff person who is trained in federal aid funding management. In most cases, the staff is found in the Public Works Departments. Public agencies (cities, counties, and other public agencies, such as transit agencies and air quality management districts with master funding agreements with Caltrans to manage state or federal transportation funds) in Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties are the eligible applicants.

For those sponsoring jurisdictions that do not have internal staff who can manage federal transportation funds, they will be required to team up with a local agency or hire a qualified consultant in this area.

Requested project amounts fall into the following ranges: \$300,000 to \$4 million for conventional construction projects; \$150,000 to \$500,000 for conventional pre-construction (design, engineering, environmental, or right-of-way activities) projects; \$1.0 million to \$4.0 million for construction of Complete Streets projects; and

\$100,000 or less for non-competitive projects. Applying for a non-competitive project precludes the applicant from applying competitively within the Community Design Program and is limited to SACOG member agencies. Only city and counties may apply for non-competitive funding, and may only apply once per funding cycle.

Required local match

Projects in the competitive categories of the program (above \$150,000 in funding request) must provide a minimum of 11.47% match in non-federal funds, i.e., for every \$100,000 of total project cost (grant and match combined), the program will pay up to \$88,530 for every \$11,470 of match provided by the project sponsor. Projects in the non-competitive category (funding requests of \$100,000 or less) have a 10% local match requirement.

EVALUATING PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The Working Group prioritizes and ranks the projects, according to an iterative process that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. There are two general evaluation criteria used by the Working Group and SACOG/Caltrans Review Team to determine whether a project will be recommended for funding. The two review committees will consider the projects based on the two criteria stated below. Additionally, in this funding cycle, an increased emphasis (new Criterion #3) will be placed on the applicant's ability to demonstrate that the land use changes claimed by the project will be reliable.

Criterion #1: How well does the proposed project promote the seven regional Blueprint Project Principles?

- transportation choices – encouraging people to walk, ride bicycles, carpool or ride the bus, light rail, or train.
- housing diversity- providing a variety of places where people can live – apartments condominiums, townhouses, and single family detached houses.
- compact development – creating environments that are more compactly built and use space in an efficient but more aesthetic manner that can

encourage more walking, biking and public transit use.

- mixed land uses – building homes near or with other uses, such as business or commercial areas that create active, vital neighborhoods.
- use of existing assets – focusing development in communities with vacant land or intensifying development of underutilized land that can make better use of public infrastructure, including roads.
- natural resource protection – preserving and maintaining open spaces and natural places and agricultural lands by encouraging energy-efficient design and land use, water conservation and storm water management.
- quality design – how the built environment is developed, the relationship to the street, and how buildings are oriented, which all contribute to a community's attractiveness and how likely residents are to walk, bike or have a sense of community pride.

Criterion #2: How realistic is this project to be implemented within the program timeline?

Although these criteria have a high degree of subjectivity, the evaluation committee is comprised of peer professionals who are experienced in evaluating project performance and deliverability. SACOG staff will review the recommendations from the review committees of all three programs and take them into account for the full recommendation package sent to the board.

Criterion #3: What is the projected project performance relative to the Blueprint Principles?

An increased emphasis is placed in Round 8 on demonstrating that the proposed project will lead to indicators that promote Blueprint implementation. These include factors such as an increase in bicycle and walking modes of travel, increased residential densities, or development of lands that mix land uses. The applicant will need to demonstrate the performance of

the proposed project relative to the Blueprint Principles. The applicant can draw on SACOG’s project performance assessment data as part of this criterion. Projects that received funding in prior Community Design Funding rounds have a higher threshold to demonstrate performance.

FUNDING RECIPIENT REQUIREMENTS:

All program fund recipients in Round 8 must expend the project funds within three years if programming funds are available in the 2018-19 fiscal year and later. If not, use of program funds is extended to match available programming capacity.

Recipients must submit a quarterly update on all projects receiving funding during the 2018 SACOG Programming Cycle. Failure to do so could result in negative impacts for future funding rounds.

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