



Joint Regional Planning Partnership/Planners Committee

March 24, 2016

Draft Regional Active Transportation Program Policy Framework

Issue: Staff issued a briefing on the Active Transportation Program Cycle 3 Draft Policy Framework to highlight proposed changes to the program and process, in advance of a May 2016 action approving the Final Framework for submittal to California Transportation Commission.

Recommendation: None; this item is for information.

Discussion:

Pursuant to the passage of Senate Bill 99 and Assembly Bill 101, the Active Transportation Program (ATP) was created and is being administered by Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission (CTC). The ATP combines many federal and state funding streams previously used for bicycle, pedestrian, safety, and other related purposes into one funding stream with broad eligibilities. All ATP funds are distributed competitively, with 50 percent of the funds channeled through a statewide competitive program, 10 percent through small urban and rural regions with populations of 200,000 or less, and the final 40 percent being distributed through metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in urban areas with populations greater than 200,000, such as the SACOG six-county region. The statutory goals of the ATP include:

- 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 and SB 391;
- Enhance public health, including reduction of childhood obesity; and
- Provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of active transportation users.

The State ATP is a highly competitive program with over \$1 billion requested through Cycle 2 and a funding recommendation success rate of only 14% (87 of 617 project submittals). Applicants are encouraged to use available data when determining which projects would be most competitive to submit to the ATP and to confer with regional transportation planning agency staff prior to submitting applications to the State ATP. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply to the State ATP to maximize the region's competitiveness in the statewide competition. Technical assistance is available to applicants for the State ATP, which will help the applicants increase the quality of information in the subsequent application to the Regional ATP.

Regional ATP Customization

The six-county Regional ATP is in its third cycle, and is based on the State ATP. The State ATP Guidelines adopted by the CTC on March 17th outline the options for MPO adjustments of the

ATP to reflect regional needs and priorities:

- Use different project selection criteria or weighting,
- Use different minimum project size,
- Use different match requirement,
- Use different definition of disadvantaged communities, and
- Hold a supplemental MPO call for projects.

In the proposed Cycle 3 Regional ATP Policy Framework (Attachment A), staff built off the regional customization from Cycles 1 and 2 and incorporated feedback and insights gained from Cycle 2 to strengthen the process for Cycle 3. The policy framework established in Cycles 1 and 2 proposed different selection criteria and weighting, different match requirements, and holding a supplemental call for projects. New to cycle 3 is the proposal to specify a regional definition of disadvantaged communities in addition to the State ATP-identified definitions.

Identical to Cycle 2, the proposed Cycle 3 policy framework includes:

- scoring criteria for a project's potential for supporting greenhouse gas reduction goals through reducing or shortening vehicle trips;
- requiring a local match for the project in place of awarding points for leveraging non-ATP funds, in line with SACOG's past practice of requiring, not incentivizing, matching funds; and
- the same process as Cycle 2 to include points related to disadvantaged communities in the event that the 25% threshold is not attained though performance-driven scores.

The policy framework also proposes adding the definitions for low-income and minority communities used in the environmental justice analysis for the 2016 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy as a disadvantaged community definition, and clarifies the inclusion of stakeholder support as a screening criteria.

Specific to the evaluation process, the policy framework proposes to reduce the number of working group members from 11 to 7 in recognition of the multiple areas of expertise an evaluator is encouraged to represent in discussion and ranking of competing projects. The policy framework also includes a clarification of contact methods in the event the working group identifies questions that could impact a project's ranking.

Timing Overview

The six-county Regional ATP policy framework must first be acted upon by the SACOG Board and then be approved by the CTC. For this reason, the SACOG Board will take action on the policy framework in May followed by the CTC in June. It will be necessary for the Board to delegate to SACOG's CEO the authority to respond to any CTC changes and to release the six-county Regional ATP call for projects to allow for timely application development.

The State ATP's selection of projects to be funded will inform the selection and recommendations of the six-county Regional ATP. Results of the statewide ATP competition will be announced on October 28th. The six-county Regional ATP must consider all projects not selected through the Statewide ATP competition, and any regional-only applications, and provide a Board-approved recommendation to the CTC by January 28, 2017. Staff will provide

Joint Regional Planning Partnership/Planners Committee **3**

the preliminary ranked draft recommendation for all submitted projects during the October 2016 committee cycle, followed by a final recommendation for approval in December 2016.

Attachment B shows milestone dates derived from the approved State ATP Guidelines and anticipated dates for the Regional ATP milestones.

Funding Estimate

The ATP Fund Estimate for Cycle 3 is derived from state and federal sources with program capacities based on Senate Bill 99 and Assembly Bill 101, and guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, CTC, and California State Transportation Agency. Funds will be available in FY 2019/20 through 2020/21. A fund estimate will be released by CTC staff in May and adopted at the May 18th CTC meeting. It is anticipated that roughly two thirds of the amount of funds distributed through past ATP cycles will be available in Cycle 3, or approximately \$6 million for the six-county region.

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2016 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 regularly for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects benefitting active transportation in the region. ATP funds from the State of California provide an important funding source for active transportation projects.

PROGRAM GOALS

California Senate Bill (SB) 99 establishes California's ATP with 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

The infrastructure projects eligible for this funding program are largely derived from the SACOG Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan (Master Plan) that is amended every odd year. The Master Plan provides a set of policies and projects for regional bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts across the six-county SACOG region, and was developed through a working group and approved by the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and SACOG Board of Directors. Additionally, bicycle and pedestrian projects included in the Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) for EDCTC or PCTPA are also eligible. Federal funds may be used for construction, preliminary engineering, environmental work and design, and/or right-of-way. Projects must support the performance outcomes identified in the sections below.

Non-infrastructure projects eligible for funding must meet at least one of two criteria: (1) Encourage biking and walking through public information, education, training, and awareness; and/or (2) Perform studies and develop plans that support one or more of the project performance outcomes identified in the section below. Projects include bike/ped planning, education, information, and marketing efforts.

The ATP is a State of California identified program implemented by the California Transportation Commission and comprised of state and federal funding. The majority of projects will need to meet the requirements of the federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). Projects must also meet eligibility requirements specific to the ATP funding source provided.

INELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

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 are ineligible for ATP funds.

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

The application process will be specific to the Regional ATP. In administering the Regional ATP, SACOG will consider projects not selected for programming in the statewide competition. Project applicants are encouraged to discuss potential Regional ATP projects with regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) staff, and may elect to identify a reduced scope version of their state-submitted project for the Regional ATP competition.

A Regional ATP Team comprised of representatives from the three RTPAs in the region (EDCTC, PCTPA, and SACOG) will screen applications for eligibility. Applications will be removed from the competitive process if found ineligible based on these guidelines. Projects not selected for programming in the statewide ATP competition, but deemed eligible for the state program will be considered; to compete in the regional program, applicants will be required to submit a supplemental application. The Regional ATP Team will forward the eligible applications to the Active Transportation Working Group, comprised of seven experts from 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 Working Group will be recruited from standing advisory committees, multidisciplinary and represent a diverse geography across the region. The Working Group is required to review, evaluate, and score the applications according to its own process, and will not discard any applications submitted to the Regional ATP. Working Group members will not vote or comment on applications from their own organizations. The Working Group prioritizes and ranks the projects, according to an iterative process that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. The Working Group and/or SACOG staff reserves the right to contact applicants during this project selection process for additional information. The applicant may be provided the opportunity to address the Working Group either by phone, email, or during a meeting to address questions related to the scope of work, budget, timeline, and performance considerations. After collectively evaluating the projects, the Working Group members will submit re-evaluated application

scores to the Regional ATP Team at the conclusion of the Working Group review period.

Following the announcement of the statewide ATP awards, the Regional ATP Team will remove any projects successful in securing funds through the statewide competition from further consideration for the Regional ATP. The Regional ATP Team will then use the re-evaluated application scores to finalize the funding recommendation, and will confirm that a minimum 25% of available ATP funds are dedicated to projects and programs benefiting Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) as identified in the State Guidelines, and/or the definitions for low-income and minority communities used in the environmental justice analysis for the 2016 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. In the event the minimum DAC threshold is not obtained, the DAC points (0-10) will be applied to the entire project list and the projects re-ranked. Discretion will be placed on the Working Group and Regional ATP Team to select a comprehensive package of projects.

PROJECT SCREENING

To be selected for funding, a project or program must meet the following screening 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. Infrastructure Project is a planned project included in the SACOG Master Plan or the Regional Transportation Plan of EDCTC or PCTPA.** Only under special circumstances will an application be considered for a project that is not listed in one of these sources.
- 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 appropriate funding sources** (i.e., TAP, HSIP, State Highway Account funds, State SRTS).
5. **Project meets the minimum dollar amount for an infrastructure or non-infrastructure project and includes at least an 11.47% local match; application is to all project categories.**
 - a. Infrastructure project minimum is \$282,390 (\$250,000 funding request + \$32,390 local match).
 - b. Non-Infrastructure project minimum is \$56,478 (\$50,000 funding request + \$6,478 local match).
 - c. Public agencies applying for funding for smaller projects may want to consider combining projects to meet the project minimum thresholds, or consider a larger, multi-year program or project.
6. **Public Participation & Planning.** The project 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 project 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.

8. **Project is not part of developer-funded basic good practices.** The project applicant must demonstrate the project complies with the policy statement and design guidance adopted by FHWA to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel.

In addition to how projects address the program goals discussed above, the following scoring criteria considerations will be used by the Active Transportation Working Group to make funding recommendations to the Regional ATP Team.

PROJECT SCORING

Projects will be scored based on the criteria described in the State ATP guidelines with minor modifications as described below.

Project Performance Outcomes (0-90 points)

1. Project has potential to increase walking and bicycling through targeted strategies: increasing access to transit services, increasing access to schools, eliminating gaps or removing barriers in the bicycle/pedestrian network, and completing facilities. **0-35 points**
2. Project has the potential to reduce the number and/or rate of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and injuries. **0-25 points**
3. Project improves public health through the targeting of populations with high risk factors for obesity, physical inactivity, asthma or other health issues. **0-10 points**
4. Project demonstrates cost effectiveness, which is achieved by minimizing projected capital and operating expenditures while offering strong performance benefits. **0-10 points**
5. Project advances active transportation efforts to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals through reducing or shortening vehicle trips today and over time, as established pursuant to SB 375 and SB 391, and demonstrates potential for placemaking. **0-10 points**

Other Considerations (up to 20 points)

1. Project sponsor demonstrates good performance on past grants and/or federal aid projects or programs. **0-5 points**
2. Project sponsor 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**
3. Project provides benefit for a disadvantaged community. **0-10 points will be applied in the event the 25 percent minimum is not met.** (Please reference the project selection process section.)

FUNDING RECIPIENT REQUIREMENTS

Recipients must submit a quarterly update on all projects receiving funding during the 2016 Regional ATP Cycle. Failure to do so could result in negative impacts for future funding rounds.

Draft Calendar for the Six-County Regional ATP, Cycle 3

Attachment B

Draft Regional ATP Policy Framework Circulated	April 2016
Regional ATP Policy Framework Approved by SACOG Board	May 19, 2016
Advance release of Regional ATP Application materials	May 23, 2016
CTC adoption of Regional Policy Framework	June 29-30, 2016
Regional ATP applications due	July 8, 2016
Release of the preliminary ranked draft Regional ATP project list	September 28, 2016
Release of State ATP funding recommendations	October 28, 2016
Release of Regional ATP funding recommendations	November 16, 2016
CTC adoption of State ATP funding recommendations	December 7-8, 2016
SACOG Board approval of Regional ATP funding recommendations	December 15, 2016
CTC adoption of Regional ATP funding recommendations	March 2017