



## Joint Regional Planning Partnership/Planners Committee

January 26, 2015

### Active Transportation Program Briefing

**Recommendation:** None, this item is for information sharing and discussion.

**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. Cycle 1 distributed almost \$184 million through a statewide competition (State ATP) and \$9.8 million through the SACOG Six-County Regional ATP. Following the release of the State ATP funding recommendations in August 2014, members of the Board expressed interest in learning what made some projects more competitive in the State ATP as a way to improve our region's performance for Cycle 2.

Consistent with statute, the State ATP Guidelines identified focus areas of safe routes to school and ensuring that disadvantaged communities share in the benefits of the program. These emphases were implemented through the identification of a minimum funding amount for safe routes to school projects (\$24 million), and a minimum funding threshold for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities (25% of the funds distributed through the ATP). As a metropolitan planning area approaching this program, our region would hope to receive at least an amount comparable to the population of our region in the statewide context, or roughly 6.2% of the competitive funds. However, our region was successful in obtaining only \$6.5 million from the State ATP—almost \$5 million (43%) shy of the \$11.4 million anticipated. SACOG staff has analyzed data provided by the state, applications of successful State ATP projects, and submissions from our region to identify common themes related to applicant success. Factors influencing application success include proposed projects' responsiveness to the ATP Guidelines' implied project preferences and thresholds of significance, as well as the direct emphasis of this information in the application.

#### *Successful Statewide ATP projects*

Within the State ATP, just over \$101 million dollars (around 55% of available funds) was awarded to projects which could claim safe routes to school benefits, well exceeding the minimum of \$24 million identified in the Guidelines. More significantly, almost \$161 million of the \$184 million was awarded to projects that benefited disadvantaged communities (87%), far outstripping the minimum threshold of 25% identified in the ATP Guidelines.

A focused look at the ten top-scoring applications funded through the state also provides helpful insight on what supporting information the successful applications typically included. Successful statewide ATP applications were data rich, especially when discussing the safety implications of a proposed project. Collision reports, recorded fatalities, and photos illustrating current unsafe conditions better positioned applicants to garner the maximum points (25% of the total application score) under this category of reducing fatalities and injuries. Similarly, reports documenting the current volumes of bicyclists and pedestrians (i.e., bike/ped counts), the estimated increase in users as a result of the project, maps showing potential biking and walking destinations for users, and descriptions of the methodology that would be used to document future increases in active transportation use, supported statements that a project would increase biking and walking, claiming 30% of the total application score. This supporting documentation was universally included in the

top-scoring State ATP grant applications.

### ***Regional Performance in Cycle 1***

Regionally, 45 applications from cities, counties, regional transportation planning agencies, and other eligible entities were submitted to the State ATP, requesting \$48 million of funds. Of the seven successful applications in the region, six were able to claim safe routes to school benefits, and five were able to claim benefits for a disadvantaged community, reflecting the priorities highlighted by the State ATP project selection (Attachment A).

Staff also coordinated with Caltrans to obtain the State ATP scoring breakdowns in an effort to pinpoint which application questions presented the greatest challenges for project sponsors in our region (Attachment B). Generally speaking, project sponsors in our region forfeited the most points under the safety criteria for reducing the number or rate of pedestrian or bicyclist fatalities and injuries. In some instances, regional applicants discussed the qualitative benefits of a project but did not support their claims with available data, such as the accident information available through the Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS) or Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS). More points could likely have been captured by collecting information about existing levels of bicycle and pedestrian activity (i.e., bike/ped counts) and using maps and photos to illustrate the potential for increased biking and walking. By shifting to a more data-driven approach for selecting and documenting project applications for Cycle 2—such as assessing and representing collisions in a project area, and the potential for increased biking and walking trips—and tailoring project submittals to reflect priorities and emphases identified in the ATP Guidelines, project sponsors could potentially increase their competitiveness in Cycle 2 of the State ATP.

### ***SACOG Support for ATP Cycle 2***

In anticipation of Cycle 2, SACOG staff has been working with CTC staff to keep the definition of Disadvantaged Communities flexible, with the option to use either the CalEnviroScreen 2.0 ranking, the community's median income, the percentage of students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunches, or the option to quantify how a community qualifies as disadvantaged if it does not meet the metrics defined in the ATP Guidelines. Also, staff is currently updating the *Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan*, which includes revising the maps of all existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the region. The resulting GIS files are publicly available for all project sponsors to use when developing grant applications, or as a tool for other local planning efforts. For future ATP cycles and other funding opportunities, staff is also moving ahead with a regional bicycle and pedestrian data collection project to purchase and loan to local agencies automated active transportation counters. The data collection project also includes creating a free mobile app, Cycle Sac, to collect data from proactive bicycle riders in all six counties on existing cyclist travel patterns to help document current constraints, issues, and opportunities in the area.

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**State ATP Awards within the Six-County SACOG Region**

County	Applicant	Project Title	State ATP Score	SRTS Benefits?*	Disadvantaged Community Benefits?*	ATP Funding Awarded	Total Project Cost
Placer	City of Roseville	Downtown Roseville Class 1 Trail	85.5	No	No	\$1,236,000	\$2,547,000
Sacramento	City of Elk Grove	Lower Laguna Creek Open Space Preserve Trail	85.0	Yes	Yes	\$1,573,000	\$1,778,000
Sacramento	Sacramento County	Howe Ave Bike & Pedestrian Improvement Project	87.3	Yes	Yes	\$1,853,000	\$2,067,000
Sacramento	San Juan Unified School District	Safe Routes to School**	76.0	Yes	Yes	\$250,000	\$278,675
Yolo	City of Davis	Safe Routes to School Program	77.3	Yes	No	\$562,000	\$626,461
Yolo	City of Woodland	2014 Safe Routes to School**	72.5	Yes	Yes	\$539,000	\$539,000
Yuba	City of Marysville	Safe Routes to School Project & Programs	85.0	Yes	Yes	\$489,000	\$489,000
<b>Total Funding Awarded</b>						<b>\$6,502,000</b>	

\* As reported by the project sponsor in the grant application submitted to the State ATP competition.

\*\*These projects were funded to meet the State ATP Guidelines requirement to award a minimum of \$7,200,000 of Safe Routes to School non-infrastructure grants.

### ***Unfunded ATP Applications and Scoring***

For the State ATP, each application was reviewed and scored by three evaluators. The three scores were averaged to provide one final score, which was used to rank projects throughout the state. Projects were funded starting with the highest scoring projects and proceeding numerically through the ranked project list until all funds had been programmed. The breakpoint for infrastructure projects funded through Cycle 1 of the State ATP was 83.0 points. The following table summarizes unsuccessful applications and average scores for the region.

#### **UNSUCCESSFUL ATP APPLICATION SUMMARY, BY COUNTY**

<b>County</b>	<b>Number of unfunded applications</b>	<b>Average unfunded application score, countywide (out of 100 points)</b>
El Dorado	6	52.2
Placer	3	59.1
Sacramento	17	59.7
Sutter	4	70.7
Yolo	6	66.4
Yuba	2	68.0

SACOG staff coordinated with Caltrans to obtain the State ATP scoring breakdowns to pinpoint the application questions where the most points were forfeited. The table below shows the number of points forfeited per application question for unfunded projects, averaged across all applications submitted from each county from the three individual scores per application.

#### **AVERAGE POINTS FORFEITED PER SCORING CRITERIA, BY COUNTY**

<b>County</b>	<b>Increase walking &amp; biking</b>	<b>Reduce Fatalities &amp; Injuries</b>	<b>Public participation &amp; planning</b>	<b>Cost effective-ness</b>	<b>Improve public health</b>	<b>Benefit to disadvantaged communities</b>	<b>Total average points forfeited</b>
El Dorado	13.2	14.5	4.6	3.1	5.1	7.1	47.5
Placer	10.4	8.3	5.4	2.0	6.7	7.6	40.4
Sacramento	10.2	12.4	4.8	2.9	4.1	5.8	40.2
Sutter	7.9	10.3	3.2	3.5	2.1	0.8	27.7
Yolo	7.6	8.5	4.3	3.5	3.6	6.1	33.6
Yuba	7.5	13.0	3.3	0.3	4.0	3.3	31.3
<i>Total points possible</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>100</i>

Project sponsors (by county) forfeited 20-45% of the points available for increasing biking and walking, and 30-60% of the available points for increasing safety. This scoring deficit inhibited application success for several project sponsors in the region, but also highlights future opportunities for using available data to increase points garnered in the state evaluation process.