

Green Means Go 2022 Funding Program

DRAFT GUIDELINES

PLEASE SUBMIT COMMENTS BY FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2022, TO
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Guidelines Summary

This document contains the draft guidelines for the 2022 Green Means Go funding program of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG).

The Green Means Go funding program is SACOG's newest funding program. The program will award roughly \$34 million in one-time funding through planning and capital infrastructure investments for non-transportation projects in locally-adopted Green Zones. The primary fund source for Green Means Go is the state-wide REAP 2.0 program, which includes federal and state funds.

The broader Green Means Go effort, informed by the past two years of stakeholder engagement and board direction, provides the policy foundation for this funding program. In June 2021 the SACOG board directed that SACOG use the one-time statewide revenues in a new program that funds infrastructure and other investments that create more infill housing opportunities.

Program Objectives

The 2022 Green Means Go program has five objectives:

- Increase infill housing
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Foster inclusive communities
- Deliver cost effective projects
- Leverage partnerships and spur policy match

Program Categories

The 2022 Green Means Go funding program has three categories:



These program guidelines explain each of the three categories, as well as provide more information on schedule, eligibility and evaluation criteria.

Contact

Please direct any questions regarding the 2022 Green Means Go funding program or the application process to:

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Schedule

Please note all dates are subject to change. To view the most recent information please go to:

<https://www.sacog.org/reap-2-green-means-go>

Ongoing:

Pre application consultation- SACOG strongly encourages sponsors to meet with Green Means Go program staff to discuss potential applications. See the pre-application consultation section later in this document for more detail. Consultations are available up to the application deadline.

Green Zone revisions- Through the 2022 Green Means Go funding program, project sponsors can update their local [Green Zones](#). See the Green Zone revision section later in this document for more detail.

Guidelines (all categories)

April 28, 2022 Draft program guidelines released

May 20, 2022 Deadline for comments on draft guidelines

June 16, 2022 SACOG board acts on final program guidelines

Category A: Early Activation projects

July 11, 2022 Call for projects in Early Activation category

August 15, 2022 Early Activation project applications due by 4:00 p.m.

September 29, 2022 Staff releases recommendation for Early Activation category

October 20, 2022 SACOG board acts on funding awards in Early Activation category

Categories B and C: Planning and Capital projects

August 16, 2022 Call for projects in Planning and Capital categories

October 27, 2022 Project applications due by 4:00 p.m.

February 23, 2023 Staff releases funding recommendation for Planning and Capital categories

March 16, 2023 SACOG board acts on funding awards in Planning and Capital categories

Schedule Graphic

	Category A Early Activation Projects	Category B Planning Projects	Category C Capital Projects
Now thru App. Deadline	 Now - Fri., Aug. 12: Pre application consultations and Green Zone revisions	 Now - Wed., Oct. 26: Pre application consultations and Green Zone revisions	
2022	APR	 Thu., Apr. 28: Draft program guidelines released for all categories	
	MAY	 Fri., May 20: Deadline for comments on draft guidelines for all categories	
	JUN	 Thu., June 16: SACOG board acts on final program guidelines for all categories	
	JUL	 Mon., July 11: Call for projects	
	AUG	 Mon., Aug. 15: Project applications due by 4:00 p.m.	 Tue., Aug. 16: Call for projects
	SEP	 Thu., Sept. 29: Staff releases recommendations	
	OCT	 Thu., Oct. 20: SACOG board acts on funding awards	 Thu., Oct. 27: Project applications due by 4:00 p.m.
	NOV		
	2023	FEB	 Thu., Feb. 23: Staff releases recommendations
MAR		 Thu., Mar. 16: SACOG board acts on funding awards	

Available funding

The 2022 Green Means Go program will competitively award \$34,300,000 to projects that meaningfully contribute to the performance outcomes, overall policy, and evaluation criteria identified by the SACOG Board of Directors.

There are three revenue streams supporting the \$34.3 million Green Means Go program: federal and state revenues from the [Regional Early Action Planning Grants \(REAP 2.0\)](#) program and a grant to SACOG from the Strategic Growth Council (SGC). Most of the REAP 2.0 funds (\$500 million of the \$600 million available statewide) come from the federal Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds of 2021 (SLFRF), with the remainder from the State General Fund. In short, the three revenues streams (federal funds within REAP 2.0, state funds within REAP 2.0 and the separate state SGC grant) each have their own slightly different eligibility requirements and deadlines for use, which are accounted for in these Green Means Go program guidelines (and part of the reason for the three program categories).

GREEN MEANS GO CATEGORIES

	Category A Early Activation Projects 	Category B Planning Projects 	Category C Capital Projects 
Description	Flexible category for projects that accelerate infill in near term	Rezoning, environmental and infrastructure planning	Non-transportation infrastructure
Funding Available (\$34.3 million total)	\$3 million	\$5 to \$10 million	\$21.3 to \$26.3 million
Deadline to Submit Application	Aug. 15, 2022	Oct. 27, 2022	
Deadline to Expend Funding	Oct. 23, 2023	Obligate by June 2024 Spend by June 2026	
Underlying Revenue Source	SGC Grant (state revenue)	REAP 2.0 (federal and state revenues)	REAP 2.0 (federal revenue)

The final total within the Planning and Capital categories will be based on submitted applications' alignment with program objectives (i.e., the Planning category will award at least \$5 million and the Capital category will award at least \$21.3 million).

The eligibility section that follows gives more detail on the types of uses funded by each category.

General Eligibility (Categories A, B, and C)

- The 2022 Green Means Go funding program will award projects located within the six-county SACOG region of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties.
- Awarded projects must be in an adopted [Green Zone](#) within this six-county region. In other words, projects that fall outside of an adopted Green Zone will not be eligible in this program or any of its categories (a sponsor can update its Green Zone through the pre-application period, as described in the Green Zone section below).
- Eligible project sponsors (i.e., lead applicants) will be the 22 cities and 6 counties within the SACOG region (El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties). Partnerships between lead agencies and other public agencies or community groups are encouraged. The program application will provide space to identify, when applicable, if the lead applicant (city or county) differs from the implementing agency (city/county, special district, community group, etc.).
- Each proposed use must be supportive of increasing residential infill development within Green Zones. Mixed-use developments/corridors meet this requirement, as long as the applicant can make the case that housing is a predominant use. SACOG has asked the state partners for any further guidance in defining predominant use (i.e., if there is a threshold of housing to other uses). The final Green Means Go guidelines will incorporate any final feedback from the state, but the guidance SACOG has received to date is that mixed-use projects/corridors are eligible if they are housing supportive.
- The program will fund non-transportation infrastructure and planning that accelerates infill housing. In other words, transportation projects are not eligible in the 2022 Green Means Go programs; instead, transportation projects in Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties seeking regionally-administered transportation funds are encouraged to apply in SACOG's [Regional Transportation funding round](#) (El Dorado and Placer counties have their own transportation funding programs).
- Projects receiving Green Means Go funding must commit to reporting requirements (this will likely be annual reporting. The reporting requirement will be updated in the final guidelines once more information becomes available from the state).
- Projects that receive an award through Green Means Go must submit a signed one-page letter following the award. The letter serves as a commitment to follow the state/federal reporting requirements, as well as the ability to manage the received funds within the established timeline. SACOG will provide the letter template (i.e., all that is needed is the signature). This brief additional step is to meet the requirement of the underlying funding sources.

Category A: Early Activation - Additional Eligibility and Uses

The \$3 million Early Activation category is designed to be the most flexible of the three Green Means Go categories. This category will fund either planning or implementation activities that accelerate infill housing in the near-term, including site-specific activities. In addition to the general eligibility requirements above, the Early Activation category includes the following additional eligibility screen:

- Projects funded in the Early Activation category must fully spend the grant award by October 2023. As awards will be made in October 2022, this represents a quick timeframe for spending the grant funds, so readiness and deliverability will be an important evaluation criteria.

Category B: Planning - Additional Eligibility and Uses

The guidelines for the statewide REAP 2.0 funding establish eligible planning uses in the Green Means Go program:

1. Rezoning and updating planning documents and zoning ordinances, including community and specific plans, that lead to more infill housing. Note that per REAP 2.0, all uses that include the creation of planning documents must be accompanied by a commitment to adopt and implement. Further, the effort must target a Green Zone (see final bullet of this section for more detail on the link between planning and Green Zones)
2. Eliminating the need for project-specific review for infill development through program level environmental clearance
3. Conducting infrastructure plans and studies, such as for upgrading sewer, water, and dry utility systems in Green Zones that would support more residential development
4. Revamping local planning processes through other efforts that accelerate infill development that facilitates housing supply, choice and affordability (see note below for limitations on this use).

Note on Category B Planning fund uses

The first three planning uses above (rezoning, program environmental clearance, and technical infrastructure planning) are all eligible for any of the underlying Green Means Go funds. However, the final planning use (revamping other planning efforts beyond the three explicitly identified) is only eligible for a portion of the underlying funds (the state funds portion of REAP 2.0). As such, SACOG only has access to a limited amount of funding (approximately \$2-3 million, depending on final state guidelines) to support Green Zone planning activities beyond the three explicit uses defined above. In other words, if every sponsor came forward with a planning use in the fourth (broader) bullet, there would not be enough eligible REAP 2.0 funds.

Instead of prohibiting applications in the broader fourth use, SACOG will work with sponsors through the pre-application period to identify any planning needs beyond rezoning, program-level environmental clearance, or technical infrastructure planning. Based on preliminary discussions, we believe the planning needs will fall across all the uses (i.e., that there will be enough eligible funds for the final use category). If through the pre-application period it appears instead that most sponsors will be pursuing the fourth use, SACOG will update all sponsors so they are aware of the possible limitation in available funds.

Other eligibility criteria

The Planning category includes the following additional eligibility criteria:

- The maximum funding request in this category is \$500,000 per project (though sponsors can apply for multiple projects)
- As for all projects in any category, the project must be within a locally adopted Green Zone. In other words, the rezoning, environmental clearance, infrastructure planning or other planning use must be within a Green Zone. If a sponsor feels it has a more widespread planning activity that fits the objectives of Green Means Go, the sponsor must reach out to the Green Means Go program manager prior to the application submittal for a pre-application review to determine eligibility. In rare cases the use can be eligible if the sponsor can demonstrate the primary benefit is to the locally-adopted Green Zone and meets the objectives of the Green Means Go program.
- Sponsors must encumber the award by June 2024 and spend by June 2026 (though earlier use of the funds is preferred).

Category C: Capital - Additional Eligibility and Uses

The largest category of the Green Means Go funding program will fund non-transportation infrastructure that accelerates infill housing. Non-transportation infrastructure can consist of:

- Water
- Sewer
- Stormwater
- Electricity
- Broadband

The capital category aims to fund corridor-level infrastructure investments that help unlock an area for increasing residential development. In other words, the category does not aim to award site-specific activities unless the site is at sufficient scale (in recognition of the local context) to meet the objectives of Green Means Go.

Sponsors can use the award to fully complete the project. For example, a sewer project that opens up a roadway to upgrade the underground sewer line can repave the roadway facility once the sewer is upgraded. But no costs for added transportation features beyond existing conditions can be included as part of the 2022 Green Means Go funding program project scope/cost (though these costs can be covered through other funding sources). As part of the leverage and cost effectiveness criteria (covered below in the evaluation criteria), sponsors are encouraged to discuss if the Green Means Go project will be paired with a transportation or other corridor investment. This can be one way a sponsor demonstrates leverage.

The capital program draws on the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds of 2021. As such, federal funding requirements are applicable in Green Means Go awards in this category, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for relevant projects.

Finally, sponsors must encumber the award by June 2024 and spend by June 2026.

Green Zone Revisions and Pre-application Consultation

Pre-application Consultation

SACOG strongly encourages sponsors to meet with Green Means Go program staff to discuss potential applications (this is not required as part of the application process but is strongly encouraged). We find these conversations have most value before the sponsor has begun its application and is still considering concepts. The consultation can take place any time up to the deadline for project applications, though the earlier, the better (i.e., preferred spring 2022, but up to close of the application period).

If there is value, the sponsor can request multiple consultation meetings (such as a preliminary meeting to go over top-level concepts, a follow up meeting with more refined proposals, etc.). SACOG staff will make every effort to accommodate the need for multiple pre-application consultations from a single sponsor.

Finally, we have found the pre-application consultations are most productive when paired with an initial scan of project performance criteria. If requested, SACOG will provide any relevant information from SACOG's [Project Performance Assessment tool](#) as part of the pre-application consultation. The sponsor would need to request SACOG put together this analysis at least three business days before the consultation meeting.

Green Zone Revisions

Project sponsors can work with Green Means Go program staff to update their existing Green Zones as part of the 2022 program.

First, sponsors should review SACOG's existing [Green Zone](#) map for accuracy. If there are minor administrative changes (such as missing parcels, etc.), SACOG staff can make those updates at the administrative level.

If a sponsor wants to make larger changes to its existing Green Zone, the sponsor needs to make a written request to SACOG Green Means Go staff. SACOG will review the request using the [same criteria](#) as the original process (in an infill area, local housing supportive policies/plans in place or in process, and potential for VMT reduction). If accepted, the changes can be approved by SACOG's Executive Director (i.e., no need for a resolution, though local staff should assess whether the change needs to go before their own board/council). Requests for new Green Zones will follow the same process, though SACOG may require a resolution.

SACOG strongly prefers any suggested Green Zone revisions are addressed as part of the pre-application period (i.e., spring, and early summer 2022). All Green Zone revisions must be completed by the time applications are due (August 15 for Category A. Early Activation, and October 27 for Category B. Planning and Category C. Capital). Once the application period closes, SACOG will not be able to make any Green Zone revisions until the close of the funding program and project awards are announced (in March 2023).

Project Evaluation Criteria

The 2022 Green Means Go program will evaluate projects on five criteria. Three of the criteria (increase infill housing, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and foster inclusive communities) relate to project benefits/performance outcomes, while the other two gauge the project’s feasibility and ability to impact other complementary efforts in the Green Zone. These guidelines give an overview of the five criteria. The category applications themselves will include more detail on evaluation guidance including quantitative data and qualitative narrative factors.

Evaluation Criteria

Project benefit

- Increase infill housing
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Foster inclusive communities

Other factors

- Deliverability/cost effectiveness
- Leverage

The Early Activation and Capital categories weigh each of these five criteria equally. The Planning category only uses the three performance outcome criteria (as part of a proposed planning application may be to determine project deliverability, cost, or partnerships).

WEIGHTS OF EVALUATION CRITERIA BY PROGRAM CATEGORY

Evaluation Criteria	Category A: Early Activation	Category B: Planning	Category C: Capital
Accelerate Infill	10	10	10
Reduce VMT	10	10	10
Inclusive Communities	10	10	10
Deliverability/Cost Effectiveness	10	-	10
Leverage	10	-	10

Description of the 5 evaluation criteria

Increase Infill Housing

The overarching objective of Green Means Go funding is to accelerate infill housing in Green Zones. Sponsors will be asked to demonstrate how the proposed activity increases housing supply, choice and affordability.

Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

Proposed activities will need to demonstrate how the housing-supportive investment helps complement VMT-reducing elements in the broader corridor. For example, does the accelerated infill housing help support a better jobs/housing balance or fit? Does it serve an area with a diversity of land uses, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, or transit service? Is the housing situated in an area with high accessibility to neighborhood services that can be met through short vehicle trips or active modes?

Foster Inclusive Communities

Green Means Go aims not only to accelerate infill housing, but to accelerate infill housing that is attainable and affordable across all incomes, including lower and moderate income. Applications will be evaluated on their potential to meet meaningful, inclusive, and equitable housing outcomes within the Green Zone.

There are two key components in this criterion:

- Affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH)
- Considering economic and racial equity and inclusion

The state framework for the broader REAP 2.0 program defines AFFH as meaningful actions to address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns and transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity. Projects in high-resource areas should include affordability components that open the area's opportunity to a broader set of participants. Projects in disadvantaged communities should include community revitalization, anti-displacement, or other place-based strategies.

Together, the projects funded through Green Means Go must make the connection of how the planning or infrastructure investment unlocks a Green Zone with strong planned or actual housing affordability components that serve low and moderate-income households. Guidance from the state partners supporting REAP 2.0 define low income as 40% of AMI (Area Median Income) and moderate income as 65% of AMI. One way to meet this objective is through densities that support housing at those income levels. Other examples of ways to support this objective include housing supportive ordinances, streamlined processes for infill product types, incentives for affordable developers, planned affordable unit production, preservation of existing affordable housing, anti-displacement or inclusion programming, rental assistance approaches, or other efforts in the broader Green Zone corridor that remove barriers to housing choice, supply, and affordability.

Finally, projects within the Green Means Go program will also be evaluated on their ability to advance racial equity and inclusion. While connected to AFFH, the SACOG board added this explicit reference to racial equity and inclusion. Many of the strategies mentioned above that meet the objectives of AFFH will also serve in meeting this objective.

Capital projects (Category C) should demonstrate community engagement. One way to demonstrate this support is through a completed planning process for the corridor. For planning projects (Category B), the

award could be used for community engagement, or the sponsor will need to show where engagement will be conducted in the project's timeline.

Deliver Cost Effective Projects

Longstanding SACOG board direction places an emphasis on making the most cost-effective funding decisions, which is achieved by selecting implementable projects that maximize performance outcomes and minimize project costs. Evaluation criteria for project delivery will recognize the difference between project types (i.e., that the sponsor can complete the project phase(s) within the timeframe of the Green Means Go funds)

Leverage, Partnerships and Policy Match

Green Means Go aims to catalyze infill development within the SACOG region. Yet the \$34.3 million the program will award is only a small portion of the amount needed to implement the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy. In the 5th program criteria, project applications within Green Means Go will be evaluated on leverage: what other resources (besides the Green Means Go award) the sponsor or its partner(s) are bringing to the corridor. The program will evaluate leverage through three aspects:

1. Other funding (local agency match)

There is no minimum match requirement for Green Means Go. But one way to demonstrate leverage is through a local agency investment, either on the project itself (e.g., the cost for the improvement is split between the Green Means Go award and local or other revenues) or another local investment in the Green Zone (including transportation, housing, or other infill-supporting projects). As described above, the sponsor could pair a transportation investment with a Green Means Go non-transportation capital improvement as a form of match (though the Green Means Go award could not be used to pay for any part of the transportation improvement).

The local match could come from a variety of sources (does not necessarily have to be locally-controlled revenues) but should be from the lead or implementing agency (i.e., other federal/state/regional grants could be used as match, as long as the grants are to the lead or implementing agency. Financial commitments from other agencies can be accounted for in the Partnerships aspect below).

2. Partnerships (partner match)

Green Means Go seeks evidence of supporting partnerships within the Green Zone corridor. First, applicants should show evidence of community support, or lay out what community outreach will be completed as part of the work. As mentioned above, one way to show community engagement is through the planning document completed for the corridor.

Next, sponsors are encouraged to reference, when applicable, any other activities, projects, or programs by partner groups in supporting the Green Zone investment. The below are just a few possible examples of partner match (i.e., the list is meant to give a couple ideas, not be exhaustive)-

- The transit district is improving service within the corridor
- The utility district has adjusted rates or put in charging infrastructure in the Green Zone
- An air district funds a shared electric vehicles program in the zone
- A financial commitment to the project (from a developer, community partner, etc).
- A recently completed community visioning or other neighborhood effort

3. Local policy commitments

Finally, sponsors will be asked to describe how the local policy environment facilitates or supports increased residential densities within the Green Zone. Sponsors can point to policies/planning/processes in place, or to work that will be done in removing barriers to new housing in infill communities. As a resource, SACOG's [Housing Policy Toolkit](#) gives a menu of many policy options and best practices in support of infill housing.

Leverage Criteria Summary

An application does not need to respond to all three of the leverage aspects (match, partnership, policy), though it should demonstrate a sufficient case to meet the program objective (in other words, if an application does not respond to one or two of the leverage aspects, it should be stronger in the other). At a minimum, the applicant should show how the local policy environment is supportive of residential infill development, either through the existing conditions or a commitment to new housing-supportive policy actions. This commitment to residential infill development is essential since the state and federal funding sources require a nexus to infill housing.

Project Review and Tiering

Each category's specific application will describe the evaluation criteria in more detail, as each category will have slightly different areas of emphasis within the five program objectives. Overall, both quantitative data and qualitative narrative factors are part of the evaluation in each category. SACOG aims to limit the data needs to readily-available sources (such as the Project Performance Assessment tool, existing HCD maps, or other locally available data/information).

SACOG will convene two technical working groups to evaluate the data and narrative components of the five criteria. One working group will evaluate the project benefit and leverage criteria. A second will focus on the project's deliverability and cost estimate.

A policy working group will complete the final evaluation by taking input from the technical project delivery working group and the performance outcomes-based working group. The policy working group integrates the projects into three tiers (high/medium/low) to develop the staff recommendation, using the evaluation input as well as a qualitative assessment that the REAP 2.0 objectives, as defined in the statewide guidelines (blend of planning and implementation, transformative approaches, recognition of difference between community types), are met by the final funding recommendations.