

# Criteria for Establishing Green Means Go “Green Zones”

## What is Green Means Go

Green Means Go is a multi-year pilot program to lower greenhouse gas emissions in the six county Sacramento region by using three strategies: accelerating infill development, reducing vehicle trips, and promoting clean mobility options, in targeted areas, called Green Zones. Although the Green Means Go program includes all three strategies, the first, accelerate infill development, is a critical foundation for the other two strategies and is the focus of the first round of Green Means Go funding. The MTP/SCS assumes that over the next two decades, the region will attract roughly 168,000 new homes and 228,000 new jobs to infill areas in cities, suburbs, and towns across the region. This is about 64 percent of new housing and 84 percent of the new jobs expected in the region by 2040. Accommodating future housing and employment alongside existing jobs and services and leveraging the transportation system already in place in existing communities is not only an efficient use of existing infrastructure and space but is critical for achieving air and climate goals. Prioritizing and incentivizing infill development is one of the most important actions government agencies can take to reduce the amount and distance that people need to drive, manage congestion, foster economic development, and reduce tailpipe emissions that affect air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. The Green Means Go effort is intended to help pay for infrastructure upgrades to catalyze infill development envisioned in local land use plans. Establishing the Green Zones is an important first step to develop the Green Means Go program.

## What is a Green Zone

For Green Means Go, local jurisdictions will nominate Green Zones, which are areas where they will promote infill, reduce regulatory and economic barriers to infill, and support new transportation options. For Green Means Go to be most effective, the Green Zones need to be places where significant new growth is planned so that the efforts to accelerate infill, accelerate travel choice, and accelerate vehicle electrification all have potential to be complimentary strategies.

## Eligible Areas:

There are two primary requirements for nominated Green Zones: (1) Green Zones must be within infill areas, defined by the 2020 MTP/SCS Community Type map as Center and Corridor Communities or Established Communities ([which can be found in the MTP/SCS Chapter 3, page 19](#)) and (2) Green Zones must be planned for growth and supported by local policies and actions that support increased development or redevelopment in the area. Examples of these policies and actions could include: a specific plan, higher density zoning, public investment, nexus studies to facilitate fee reductions, economic development studies or plans, willingness to implement fee reductions and/or process streamlining for the area upon receiving funding for infrastructure improvements.

Listed below are several additional factors that should be considered when evaluating which areas to nominate as Green Zones. There are no limitations on how many areas a jurisdiction can nominate. There are no size requirements.

Additional MTP/SCS factors to consider when evaluating which areas to nominate as Green Zones:

- located within an average or lower than average VMT area today, or in 2040, as shown in the 2020 MTP/SCS
- access to transit and/or other transportation choices
- helping jobs/housing balance
- located in an Environmental Justice or disadvantaged community
- access to high opportunity areas
- access to jobs, education, services, transit

## Eligible Applicants

Because Green Zones must be planned for growth and supported by local policies, cities and counties are the primary applicants. However, partnerships are strongly encouraged. Particularly, water agencies, sewer and sanitation districts, transit agencies, air districts, and utility providers all have a role to play in future project implementation in Green Zones. Cities and counties should work with these partners during the nomination process as well as community groups. These partnerships will be critical to understanding the project needs and required implementation steps for Green Zones.

## How to Apply

Local agencies should submit Green Zone applications to SACOG program staff. The application process will be collaborative and iterative: local jurisdictions are encouraged to collaborate internally and externally as extensively as needed to identify and prioritize infill areas. SACOG staff are available for questions and collaboration prior to applying as well. SACOG will review applications as they are received and work with local agencies to finalize the [Green Zones](#). In cases of new Green Zones, local agencies may need to adopt by action of their city council or board of supervisors. SACOG program staff can execute revisions to existing Green Zones through a letter agreement (though local agency staff should assess if any proposed changes need to go before their board/council). Program staff can execute minor revisions administratively.