



Approve 2025 Regional Active Transportation Program Policy Framework

Consent

**Author:** Summer Lopez

**Attachments:** Yes

**Approved by:** James Corless

**Referring Committee:** Transportation

**Issue:**

This item recommends approval of the 2025 Regional Active Transportation Program (ATP) Policy Framework.

**Recommendation:**

The Transportation Committee unanimously recommended that the Board of Directors adopt the 2025 Regional ATP Policy Framework (Attachment A).

**Background/Analysis:**

The ATP is a highly competitive program jointly managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Transportation Commission (CTC). The ATP has a sequential selection process of a statewide competition followed by regional competitions, each with their own funds. Projects that are unsuccessful in the statewide ATP can then compete for funding in the Regional ATP.

The CTC adopted the 2025 Statewide ATP Guidelines at its March 22, 2024, meeting, which has initiated the statewide call for projects. The CTC estimates that there will be \$568 million of ATP funding for the statewide ATP and \$15.9 million for SACOG's Regional ATP. Project applications for the statewide competition will be due to CTC staff by June 17, 2024. Staff works with El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC) and Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCPTA) to develop and implement the Regional ATP. As in previous cycles, SACOG staff will provide necessary technical assistance to agencies applying within our region.

At the March 7, 2024, Transportation Committee meeting staff provided an informational item on the Regional ATP Policy Framework seeking input and direction for the Final 2025 Framework. Staff presented two potential scoring changes for discussion. The first was for trails implementation points, and the second was consideration for allowing disadvantaged communities to be a part of the initial scoring process (see Attachment C for scoring flowchart). One board member expressed interest in keeping the distribution of points for projects that connect to the Regional Trail Network as it currently stands in the 2023 Regional ATP Policy Framework. Two board members expressed a desire for the evaluation of disadvantaged communities to remain as it was in Cycle 6. Staff received questions regarding disadvantaged communities metrics and the statewide scoring process. Since the Transportation Committee meeting, staff have continued to engage with board members, PCTPA, and EDCTC to finalize the 2025 Regional ATP Policy Framework.

### Discussion/Analysis:

The 2025 Regional ATP Policy Framework includes two categories of changes - administrative changes and scoring changes (Attachment B).

The administrative changes align the Regional Policy Framework with the CTC's Cycle 7 ATP Guidelines. Those updates are:

1. Carried over program schedule and project type information from the Statewide ATP Guidelines for clarity and consistency. This schedule is reflective of statewide and regional milestones and also includes a Region Four-Year Funding Estimate Table for the programming years FY 2025-FY 2029.
2. Included a list of all eligible project types for clarity and consistency.
3. Carried over definitions and details for disadvantaged communities from the Statewide ATP Guidelines for clarity and consistency. These include Median Household Income, CalEnviroScreen, National School Lunch Program, Healthy Places Index, Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, USDOT Equitable Transportation Community Explorer, Native American Tribal Lands, and Regional Definition.

The scoring change only affects the point value for trails implementation projects, which historically received an additional five points on top of the originally scored 95-points if the project connected to or represented a trail project.

1. **Trails Implementation Scoring Update:** Based on feedback received from partners, the (up-to) five-point gap created between projects that connect to the regional trail network and otherwise high performing non-trail projects was quite significant. Because of this, staff are recommending a reduction in points regarding trails implementation scoring. In Cycle 6 of the Regional ATP, projects were initially scored out of a 95-point total without any points considered for trails implementation or disadvantaged communities (see Attachment A for details on "Evaluating Project Performance" and Attachment C for a flowchart that outlines the scoring process). The past scoring method provided an opportunity for up to five additional points to be awarded to projects that addressed the regional trail network. Staff recommend reducing the number of points for regional trail network implementation projects from five points to three points. Staff recognize the feedback from the Transportation Committee and the importance of keeping some points dedicated to projects that connect to the Regional Trail Network. The proposed changes will still give connecting projects some points but would decrease the overall gap in scores from otherwise high performing projects.
2. **Disadvantaged Communities – No Changes for Cycle 7:** In Cycle 6, after the initial 95-point scoring, projects were then evaluated to see if a minimum of 40 percent benefited a disadvantaged community. Historically, the region has always met or exceeded 40 percent, so this additional evaluation has never been performed. Based on feedback received from board members as well as other conversations occurring around disadvantaged community scoring and evaluation in other regional funding programs, staff are not recommending that any changes be made for scoring disadvantaged communities for Cycle 7 of the Regional ATP. SACOG is facilitating broader discussions regarding equity and disadvantaged communities' scoring and definitions, including with the board Funding Round Working Group. Staff recommends that the Regional ATP's scoring be re-evaluated in Cycle 8 with the potential to align disadvantaged communities' criteria with decisions made for other regional funding programs.

This was an action item at the April 4, 2024 Transportation Committee and received unanimous approval.

**Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:**

The staff time costs for this program are included in SACOG's adopted Budget and Overall Work Program (Budget/OWP) for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 and proposed Budget/OWP for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.