



Approve 2023 Regional Active Transportation Program Policy Framework

Consent

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Attachments: Yes

Approved by: James Corless

Referring Committee: Transportation

1. Issue:

SACOG competitively awards Regional Active Transportation Program (ATP) funds to projects that will increase biking and walking in the six-county region. The California Transportation Commission will adopt or reject our final 2023 Regional Active Transportation Program policy framework at their June 29, 2022, meeting.

2. Recommendation:

The Transportation Committee unanimously recommends that the board: (1) approve the 2023 Regional ATP Policy Framework for the six-county Regional ATP; (2) authorize staff to submit the Regional ATP Policy Framework to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for approval; (3) upon action of the CTC on the Regional ATP Policy Framework, delegate authority to the Executive Director to issue the final Regional ATP Guidelines and Call for Projects; and (4) in the event that substantive changes are requested by the CTC, delegate authority to the Executive Director, after consultation with the chairs and vice chairs of the SACOG board and Transportation Committee, to address the CTC requests and issue the final Regional ATP Guidelines and Call for Projects.

3. Background/Analysis:

The ATP was created by Senate Bill (SB) 99 in 2013, with the first competitive program in 2014. The ATP combines several smaller active transportation funding sources into one larger program with broader eligibilities. The primary goal of the ATP is to increase use of active modes, and SB 99 requires that a minimum of 25 percent of ATP funds must benefit disadvantaged communities. The ATP is a highly competitive program jointly managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Transportation Commission (CTC). ATP funds are distributed competitively across the state through three programs: a statewide program distributes 50 percent of the funds; a small urban/rural program operated by Caltrans distributes 10 percent of the funds; and the final 40 percent of funds are distributed by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in urban areas with populations greater than 200,000.

The ATP has a sequential selection process split between a statewide competition followed by regional competitions, like the SACOG Regional ATP in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties. During the first selection process, the CTC develops a list of projects recommended for funding in the statewide ATP based on score, eligibility, and deliverability. Projects that are unsuccessful in the statewide ATP are then eligible to compete for funding in the Regional ATP, allowing for a second opportunity to

compete for funding. The sequential selection process is important because it allows local agencies to bring more funding into our region to implement needed active transportation projects and offers streamlining opportunities for funding programs with similar emphases. Staff works with El Dorado County Transportation Commission and Placer County Transportation Planning Agency to develop and implement the Regional ATP.

The statewide ATP Guidelines place restrictions on how regions can distribute funds, but MPOs can submit specific changes to the CTC for approval to use in regional processes. CTC identified the areas an MPO can propose changes to when implementing a regional program—scoring criteria and weighting, minimum project sizes, match requirements, definitions of disadvantaged communities, and using a supplemental call for projects and applications.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

The CTC adopted the 2023 ATP Guidelines at the March 16, CTC meeting, initiating the State ATP call for projects. The CTC also adopted a fund estimate identifying \$325 million for the statewide competition across the state fiscal years 2023-2024, 2024- 2025, 2025-2026, and 2026-2027. Applications for the State ATP are due to CTC staff by June 15. It is strongly recommended that agencies apply first to the statewide ATP prior to competing for Regional ATP funds. Staff will provide technical assistance to agencies in our region applying for statewide ATP grants, focusing on draft application review. Agencies are encouraged to also work with Caltrans District 3 Local Assistance for a project delivery-focused review.

The CTC-adopted fund estimate identifies \$17,350,000 for the SACOG Regional ATP. To competitively distribute this funding, the Final 2023 Regional ATP Policy Framework (Attachment A) heavily emphasizes how the investment will increase biking and walking by building safe, comfortable active transportation networks that connect people to desirable destinations. In response to committee discussion in March, projects will be evaluated based on their potential contributions to the regional active modes network and increasing access to destinations as a most of a project's potential to increase biking and walking. The final policy framework leverages ATP funding to support regional planning efforts such as Green Means Go under the greenhouse gas reduction scoring criterion, using the 2020 MTP/SCS Environmental Justice areas as a disadvantaged community definition, and supporting the regional trail network implementation. Maps of these regional efforts are included in Attachment B.

The policy framework identifies a regional investment minimum of 40 percent of available funding—\$6,940,000—to go toward projects that provide a meaningful benefit to disadvantaged community residents. The policy framework also identifies a regional target of 60 percent investment—\$10,410,000 of the available funding—to provide meaningful benefit to disadvantaged community residents. The scoring criterion “disadvantaged community benefit” focuses on the demonstrated need and support for the project among residents. The 40 percent investment floor and 60 percent regional target will use the established scoring process that does not automatically add in the up-to-ten points for disadvantaged community benefit to the total project score. The up-to-ten points are only added to the total project score if the Regional ATP funding recommendation is less than the 40 percent disadvantaged community investment threshold.

Staff developed a Regional ATP calendar that will meet the CTC-identified deadlines for regional programming recommendations (Attachment C). To balance application streamlining with a thorough evaluation of projects, the Regional ATP will use a single application for all competing projects that will effectively use information developed for the statewide ATP application. Project evaluation will involve external partners with expertise in planning, engineering, and other areas related to ATP goals. RTPA members will screen competing projects for eligibility and evaluate criteria related to regional trail plan implementation.

Unlike other funds managed by SACOG, Regional ATP project savings and projects that lose their funding are not returned to SACOG for later programming in the six counties. Regional ATP evaluation criteria and process emphasize the importance of keeping funds in our region by including criteria about project deliverability and past grant performance, and by including local project engineers in the evaluation process.

Attachments

A: Final 2023 Regional Active Transportation Program Policy Framework

B: Maps of Regional Planning Efforts

C: Regional ATP Milestones

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

This item has no fiscal impact to the agency's operating budget, other than already budgeted staff time.

6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Objectives:

Goal 1 : Advance Economic Prosperity

Objective 1: Invest in and protect the transportation infrastructure needed to implement the region's economic prosperity plan.

Objective 3: Improve people's ability to get to jobs, schools, and other economic opportunities.

Objective 5: Begin sustained effort to address the racial inequities related to economic prosperity indicators associated with housing, transportation, and opportunity.

Goal 2 : Connected Communities

Objective 1: Develop more sustainable sources of future transportation funding while winning new competitive state and federal transportation grants.

Objective 3: Prioritize cost-effective transportation investments that enhance mobility while improving safety, air quality, and the condition of transportation infrastructure and assets.