Green Means Go- Early Activation Applications and Look Ahead

Receive and File
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Attachments: Yes

Approved by: James Corless
Referring Committee: Land Use & Natural Resources

1. Issue:

SACOG has received applications for the $3 million Early Activation category, the first program in the new Green Means Go funding round. The Land Use & Natural Resources (LUNR) committee will consider staff recommendations for awarding these funds at the November 2022, LUNR meeting.

2. Recommendation:

None; this item is for information only.

3. Background/Analysis:

Green Means Go is SACOG's newest funding program. A collective effort by the six-county region in support of Green Means Go has resulted in SACOG receiving approximately $34 million in one-time state funding. The SACOG board has directed this one-time revenue to the new Green Means Go funding program and adopted the program's funding guidelines.

The 2022 Green Means Go program aims to catalyze infill residential development and improve housing affordability in locally-adopted Green Zones through investments in non-transportation infrastructure and planning activities. To meet these objectives the 2022 Green Means Go funding round has moved forward with three related categories, shown below (with **Attachment A** giving more information about each category).

2022 Green Means Go Funding Program Categories

Category A
Early Activation Projects

Category B
Planning Projects

Category C
Capital Projects

Applications in the first of these categories— the $3 million **Early Activation**—were due to SACOG on September 15. SACOG received 8 applications in the category that collectively requested over $5 million in funding. **Attachment B** lists the applications received to the Early Activation category.

Applications for the remainder of the inaugural Green Means Go funding round (the separate Planning and

Capital categories) are due to SACOG on October 27, 2022. The 2023 LUNR committee will consider staff's recommendation for awards in the roughly $31 million available in those categories.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

Early Activation Category Emphasis

The $3 million Early Activation category is the more flexible of the three Green Means Go categories, but also the smallest. The category will fund either planning or implementation activities that accelerate infill housing that improves housing affordability in the immediate near-term, including site-specific activities (the other two categories, Planning and Capital, focus on corridor-level investments).

SACOG Green Means Go staff met with any interested project sponsor through a pre-application consult phase to discuss concepts, projects, and which of the three Green Means Go categories could be the best fit for each. Given the emphasis on the near-term outcomes (and smaller amount of available funding), staff expected a limited set of applications in this Early Activation category. Notably, many jurisdictions are working to get their Green Zone(s) ready for capital investment and development. Those types of project requests will likely come forward in the forthcoming Planning category. Likewise, several jurisdictions have larger, corridor-activation capital projects that, given their size and scope, will likely come forward in the larger Capital category.

Further, the $3 million in available funding for Early Activation comes from a Strategic Growth Council grant, which allows for more flexible uses compared to the other two categories, but a faster timeline in spending down the awards. Building on key input from project sponsors, SACOG was able to work with the state funder to extend the deadline on using Early Activation awards to late 2024 (from 2023). Sponsors have noted this extension greatly helps project deliverability and feasibility under the grant program guidelines. Still, this represents a quicker timeframe in utilizing the grant funds, especially for infrastructure projects. In short, the size, scope and timeline of the Early Activation category lends itself to demonstration projects in Green Means Go serving a clearly identified infrastructure/planning need along a corridor that more likely will be farther along the continuum of development readiness (given the category's criteria and timeline).

Review Process

The board-adopted Green Means Go funding program guidelines set the evaluation criteria for Early Activation and the other two Green Means Go categories. Evaluation criteria in Early Activation consist of the project's ability to:

- Accelerate infill residential development that improves housing affordability
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Foster inclusive communities and affirmatively further fair housing
- Deliver cost effective improvements
- Leverage partnerships and policy match
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SACOG has convened a review group to assess each application across the five criteria. The review group draws on staff with expertise across the varied Green Means Go objectives. The application includes both quantitative (i.e., numeric indicators) and qualitative (i.e., narrative response) information as well as two

simple attachments. The review will draw on the full application material (quantitative metrics, narrative response and supporting material) in evaluating the five criteria.

The LUNR committee is the referring committee for Green Means Go awards. SACOG staff will present the staff recommendation for Early Activation funding awards at the November 3, meeting of the LUNR committee, as an action item. If forwarded by the LUNR committee, the full SACOG board will act on funding awards at its November 10, meeting. Board action in November 2022, will enable SACOG to execute funding agreements this calendar year (allowing project work to move forward for projects with very near-term timelines).

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:
The Early Activation category is funded by a Strategic Growth Council grant to SACOG.

6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Objectives:
Goal 3 : Vibrant Places
Objective 1: Develop tools and funding to help revitalize older commercial and retail corridors throughout the region.

Objective 2: Identify incentives and help remove barriers to infill and affordable housing in cities, suburbs, and towns throughout the region.

Objective 3: Encourage development patterns that promote walkable neighborhoods.