



Green Means Go - Funding Recommendations in Early Activation Category

Action

Prepared by: Garrett Ballard-Rosa

Attachments: Yes

Approved by: James Corless

Referring Committee: Land Use & Natural Resources

1. Issue:

Staff has prepared a recommendation for project funding awards in the Early Activation category of the 2022 Green Means Go funding round.

2. Recommendation:

The Land Use and Natural Resources Committee recommends the SACOG board approve the 2022 Early Activation funding category recommendation. The recommendation includes three related actions:

- (1) Approve the updated category budget
- (2) Approve the programming recommendations, which consist of project scopes, funding amounts, and conditions
- (3) Authorize the executive director to execute any necessary memoranda of understanding with project sponsors, and delegate authority to the executive director to program any residual balance in the category.

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.

2022 Green Means Go Funding Program Categories



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

Applications for the remainder of the inaugural Green Means Go funding round (the separate Planning and Capital categories) were due to SACOG on October 27, 2022. The 2023 LUNR committee and SACOG board will consider staff’s funding recommendation in those categories for the roughly \$31 million available. As discussed in the October 2022 staff item, many jurisdictions are working to get their Green Zone(s) ready for capital investment and development, while others are ready for capital investment to activate housing in their Green Zone corridor.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

Early Activation Category Revised Budget

Awards in the Early Activation category are funded through a grant to SACOG from the Strategic Growth Council (SGC). That grant has multiple objectives centered on implementing the region’s Sustainable Communities Strategy. In other words, Early Activation is just one of the grant’s eight tasks. Other Green Means Go activities covered by the grant include technical assistance (in partnership with the Urban Land Institute), impact fee research and convening, and lessons learned workshop and reporting to the state.

Program staff’s original budget targeted \$3 million from the SGC grant for awards in the Early Activation category. Many of the other tasks in the grant involve first standing up, and then institutionalizing, the new Green Means Go program (i.e., not just the funding component, but the broader program including policy, data/analysis and technical assistance). With nearly a year of Green Means Go project work to date, staff has reassessed the original budget in relation to the work accomplished. Most notably, staff has been able to implement the new funding program without needing all the resources anticipated in the original budget, while also making substantial progress within the grant’s broader tasks (such as green zone analysis and revisions). Finally, staff has been able to buttress the program’s technical assistance budget through a small residual amount from the REAP 1 program.

Staff recommends increasing the programming budget of the Early Activation category from \$3 million to \$3.2 million. Given the progress made over the last year, staff believes it will still meet the broader objectives of the grant (Green Means Go funding, but also Green Means Go program implementation) with this shift in costs between tasks. As explained in Attachment B, the project funded with the additional Early Activation programming balance would be subject to a conditional award, pending a revised grant scope approved by the funder.

Review Process

Drawing on the revisions and lessons learned from the 2021 transportation funding round, SACOG held a pre-application consultation for the 2022 Green Means Go funding round. Through these pre-application

meetings project sponsors discussed their needs, objectives, priorities, Green Zones, and proposed projects for the upcoming funding cycle. SACOG staff weighed in on those projects' alignment within the board-adopted objectives for Green Means Go, as well as which of the program's three categories would be best suited based on the information provided.

After the pre-application period SACOG released an open call for projects. SACOG received 8 applications in the Early Activation category of the 2022 Green Means Go funding round that requested over \$5 million; this request exceeds the budget available to the category even with updated budget. While the Early Activation category does not have sufficient funding to meet the needs of all submitted applications, during the Early Activation pre-application consult meetings with local agencies, SACOG staff identified projects that would be eligible for the larger Planning and Capital categories should the Early Activation category be oversubscribed. Pending the final board action on the staff recommendation, staff has reached out to remind local staff with eligible projects that this is an option. Local agencies do not need to submit an entirely new application but instead could send a request to SACOG's Green Means Go Program Manager, Garrett Ballard-Rosa, expressing their interest in advancing their project to either the Planning or Capital categories of the larger funding program.

Following an orientation meeting, each member of the evaluation working group independently reviewed and assessed applications based on their merit within the program's evaluation criteria:

- 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

The working group then convened to discuss and evaluate submitted projects in a review that considered the various inputs of the performance evaluation, including both qualitative and quantitative indicators. SACOG management staff compiled the working group findings into a final recommendation within funding availability.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends a funding award of \$3.2 million through the 2022 Early Activation Category. **Attachment A** is the summary table of the recommended awards. **Attachment B** provides a summary of the working group's review of the submitted applications, as well as lists project scope and conditions, including a contingent award pending funder approval of the revised budget. Finally, **Attachment C** is the board-adopted guidelines for the full Green Means Go funding round (including Early Activation as well as the Planning and Capital categories).

Board action in November of 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 (including the revised category budget) is funded by a grant to SACOG from the Strategic Growth Council.

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.