



## SACOG Board of Directors

Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 9:30 AM  
SACOG Board Room, 1415 L Street, Suite 300, Sacramento, CA 95814

*The Board may take up any agenda item at any time, regardless of the order listed. Public comment will be taken on the item at the time that it is taken up by the Board. We ask that members of the public complete a request to speak form, submit it to the Clerk of the Board, and keep their remarks brief. If several persons wish to address the board on a single item, the chair may impose a time limit on individual remarks at the beginning of the discussion. Action may be taken on any item on this agenda.*

**Note: Time durations are estimates only.**

10. Adopt Community Design Policy Framework () (Est. Time: )



## Adopt Community Design Policy Framework

Action

**Prepared by:** Gregory Chew

**Approved by:** James Corless

**Attachments:** Yes

### **1. Issue:**

SACOG's Community Design Program funds projects in Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba Counties that promote placemaking and implement SACOG Blueprint principles. The policy framework for Round 9 of the Program will be used as the basis for the application guidelines to be prepared and released by early November.

### **2. Recommendation:**

The Transportation Committee unanimously recommends that the SACOG Board of Directors approve the Community Design Program policy framework and authorize staff to develop and release the application guidelines that are based on it.

### **3. Background/Analysis:**

The Community Design Program was established in 2003 by the SACOG Board of Directors as part of the overall Regional Funding Program to provide financial assistance on projects that help create placemaking in local communities. Placemaking projects improve the livability of a community by creating spaces that people want to spend time in, congregate in, or make the experience of the place more enjoyable. The awarded funding will help towards the implementation of Blueprint project principles: mixed land uses, transportation options, housing choice, compact development, use existing assets, quality design, and natural resource protection. The program offers funding for transportation projects sponsored by eligible agencies to implement these principles.

The Community Design Program has been available to the cities and counties within Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties; Placer and El Dorado counties have their own funding programs. Community Design is normally released every two years and has competitive and non-competitive categories. The projects typically need to be federal-aid eligible and limited to improvements within the public right-of-way of a transportation corridor. Types of projects that often receive funding are streetscape improvements, plaza or public space improvements, transit facilities, and active transportation improvements.

### **4. Discussion/Analysis:**

Round 9 of the Community Design Program has two categories and a total of \$18.3 million available for funding awards. The Competitive category is for those sponsors seeking support for housing-related efforts or for larger capital project awards. The Non-Competitive category offers guaranteed funding within a minimum/maximum

range for smaller planning studies or project development efforts. Program details are described in the policy framework document (Attachment A).

There are three notable changes to Round 9 of the Community Design Program:

(a) Streamlined application process: the information requested in the application and the process has been shortened. This reflects the request from local agencies to simplify the amount of time and resources to apply.

(b) Increased Non-Competitive funding awards: The amount of funding in the Non-Competitive category has been increased to better meet the needs of projects in pre-construction phases. The minimum award amounts in this category are based on a sliding scale, depending on a jurisdiction's share of the 2040 growth identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS), and the share of low and very low-income housing unit allocation in the 2021-2029 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). In addition, applicants can receive more than the minimum amount depending on how well their project aligns with other planning factors that include Green Zone implementation, housing considerations, funding leverage, and project deliverability.

(c) New REAP Competitive housing category: SACOG is receiving funds from the State's Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) grant category, of which the SACOG board approved setting \$1.7 million aside for a REAP Competitive category. The REAP Competitive category is under the umbrella of the Community Design Program. More details on this program category will be provided separately before a call-for-projects is announced.

#### **5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:**

The budget for staff efforts to administer Round 9 of the Community Design Program is already included in the board-adopted Overall Work Program for Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

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

##### **Goal 3 : Vibrant Places**

**Objective 3:** Encourage development patterns that promote walkable neighborhoods.

# 2020/21 Community Design Program Guidelines (Round 9) – Program Framework

Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, Yuba Counties

## Overview

- The objective of 2020/21 Community Design Program is to provide grants to local government agencies in Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba Counties and their partners to implement placemaking activities in support of the SACOG Blueprint Principles.
- The program provides grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$4,000,000. Projects above \$100,000 must be “federal aid eligible” meaning they must meet federal and/or state transportation funding requirements. Projects that are \$100,000 or less only need to meet more flexible SACOG requirements.
- The core program has two funding categories. The **Competitive** category is for applicants competing for up to \$4 million per project for a federal aid eligible grant. The **Non-Competitive** category does not require the sponsor to compete for an award. Awards in the Non-Competitive category range from \$100,000 to \$500,000 depending on two regional growth factors and related planning factors. A city or county may request one Non-Competitive project but thereby waives the ability to compete in the Competitive category. Applicants in the Competitive category may apply for as many projects as they wish.
- A budget of \$16.5 million for the two Community Design capital program categories will be available to project sponsors. Each program category has unique eligibility, application process and selection criteria.
- Projects must fall within the four-county region, and either be listed in the 2020 MTP/SCS or fit within a lump-sum project category. Further, projects in the Competitive category must be eligible for federal (CMAQ, STBG) or state (STIP) funds.
- Awarded funds must be expended three years from the date of the SACOG Board action approving the project in the spring of 2021. The deadline is extended if programmed funds are not available at the time the project is ready to utilize the funding.
- In addition to the Competitive and Non-Competitive capital program funding categories, the Community Design Program will also include a third funding category: the six-county Regional Early Action Plan (REAP) competitive category which will require a separate application and selection process for housing-specific planning activities.

## Community Design Program Goal and Objectives

- The SACOG Board of Directors established the Community Design Program in 2003 to provide financial assistance on projects that help create placemaking in local communities.
- Placemaking projects improve the livability of a community by creating spaces that people want to spend time in, congregate in, or make the experience of the place more enjoyable.
- The awarded funding will help towards the implementation Blueprint Project Principles: mixed land uses, transportation options, housing choice, compact development, use existing assets, quality design, and natural resource protection. The program offers funding to local jurisdictions and other project sponsors for transportation projects that implement these principles.

## Competitive Category: Application and Selection Process

The Competitive category process in Community Design is simpler and more streamlined than prior funding rounds, with the intent to reduce the time and resources required from project sponsors.

**Eligible applicants:** Member agencies, Caltrans District 3, and transit districts can independently submit their application as long as they have master agreements with Caltrans to manage federal aid transportation funds. Other special districts and public agencies (e.g., air districts, JPAs, transportation management agencies) are eligible to be a co-applicant with a SACOG member agency.

**Eligible projects:** All projects must be located within Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo or Yuba counties and must consist of federal aid eligible activities that will primarily lead to or include construction. Generally speaking, federal aid eligible projects are those that significantly contain transportation infrastructure in public right-of-way. Activities or tasks within the project must be either categorized as “construction,” “environmental,” “design” or “right-of way.” Pure planning activities are generally not considered an eligible use in the Competitive category.

**Project Types:** The following are examples of projects that are considered federal aid eligible:

- Transportation infrastructure directly connected to a land development project, land use plan, or in an existing “Blueprint friendly” community
- Bicycle and pedestrian paths, tunnels, and bridges
- On-street bike lanes
- Pedestrian plazas in public rights-of-way and public property
- Pedestrian street crossings
- Streetscaping such as median landscaping, street trees, lighting, and furniture
- Traffic calming (but not interfering with public transit, bicycling or walking)
- Transit stop amenities such as shelters, and benches
- Transit transfer centers
- Electric vehicle charging stations and other support infrastructure within community gathering environments

**Project Consultation:** Upon request, SACOG staff will meet individually with interested sponsors in the competitive category to review their transportation investment needs for a two to five-year period.

- Consultation will focus on the sponsor’s planning documents (eg. capital improvement program, pavement management system), as well as outreach efforts (including activities to engage underserved communities), in the context of the funding round policy framework.
- SACOG will also engage with potential new project sponsors, including disadvantaged communities, who were underrepresented in previous funding rounds. A focus of these meetings will be technical assistance that offers capacity building benefits towards application development.

**Project Performance Assessment (PPA):** Projects in the Competitive category will be quantitatively evaluated using SACOG’s PPA tool. SACOG input on the performance benefits and competitiveness of potential applications will be discussed and technical assistance offered through the consultation phase. SACOG staff will run the project performance assessment tool, a required part of the application, for any

sponsor that so wishes. The output from the PPA will be considered when the Community Design Advisory Committee evaluates projects.

**Competitive Category Application and selection process – 3 Step Process:**

- **Step 1: Abbreviated Application:** Applicants submit an abbreviated application (compared to prior rounds) with no more than 3 pages of narrative content, 5 pages for graphics, and required forms. The submittal provides essential basic information about the project location, proposed activities, and reasons why the project meets the program objectives and performance outcomes. SACOG performs the Project Performance Assessment (PPA) described above. The project advisory committee reviews the application and PPA results in terms of meeting program objectives (described below) and makes a short list of projects eligible to continue in Step 2.
- **Step 2: Additional Written Information (Optional):** SACOG staff provides feedback to the applicant based on the advisory committee’s application review. The feedback highlights areas to focus and provide more detail for the next steps. Short-listed projects notified of an interview (Step 3) are given an optional opportunity to provide an additional 4 pages to address specific questions/comments provided in feedback.
- **Step 3: Interview:** SACOG and advisory committee members conduct 30-minute interviews with short-listed applicants. After all interviews are complete, the advisory committee makes recommendations to SACOG staff for funding.

**Community Design Advisory Committee:** The committee is comprised of staff and appointed representatives from geographically diverse areas of the region recruited through SACOG’s staff-level regional advisory committees. They represent broad fields such as land use, bicycle/pedestrian planning, transit, engineering, and related subjects.

**Selection Criteria:** There are two general evaluation criteria used by the advisory committee and SACOG staff to determine funding recommendations:

**Criterion #1: How well does the proposed project promote the Blueprint Principles?** This is the most fundamental question each project will be evaluated against by the Advisory Committee. The Community Design Program’s purpose is to assist local agencies with placemaking – making environments that improve the livability of communities that they serve. Projects must have some component of the seven Blueprint Principles: mixed land uses, transportation options, housing choice, compact development, use existing assets, quality design, and natural resource protection. The Project Performance Assessment tool provides quantitative indicators within the Blueprint Principles. Reviewers look for context-sensitive projects that will promote pedestrian/transit friendly, compact mixed-use communities. Reviewers will also ask how the investment will act as a catalyst or support near-term land use change in the corridor. For example, is there evidence that private investment is occurring in the corridor? If not, what about the proposed transportation investment makes private investment more likely?

**Criterion #2: How realistic is this project to be implemented within the program timeline?** Successful applicants will be able to provide evidence that the project has been well-thought through and that the

project is likely be implemented within the next three years. The Advisory Committee will consider how soon the applicant can deliver the project, if the applicant completed the required steps such as CEQA/NEPA review, the public review and decision-making process, secured public support, secured right-of-way, etc.

## **Non-Competitive Category: Application, Selection Process and Funding Amounts**

The Non-Competitive category is intended for jurisdictions that do not have a Community Design capital project ready to compete this cycle. Non-Competitive awards respond to key jurisdictional needs and can help projects progress through technical milestones to then compete for larger amounts in future funding opportunities.

**Funding:** awards fall within a sliding scale of \$100,000 to \$500,000 depending on each jurisdiction's growth and planning factors, described below. Any city/county jurisdiction will receive at least a minimum of \$100,000 in funding for eligible scope work if they waive the right to apply in the Competitive category of the program.

**Match:** \$100k awards have no matching requirement; awards above \$100k will be provided federal funds so sponsors must provide a standard 11.47% match requirement.

**Project Eligibility:** Projects receiving \$100,000 or less are eligible for the flexible (non-federal) SACOG Managed Funds (SMF), but forego any federal/state transportation or housing funds above that amount. Projects receiving SMF still must show how the award promotes placemaking or the Blueprint principles.

For grant awards above \$100,000, the sponsor must have project scope activities that are eligible for one or all of the following revenue sources: CMAQ, STIP or STBG (aka RSTP in California) funds for federal-aid eligible efforts that are generally limited to project development activities (environmental, right of way, engineering/design) or construction work.

**Sponsor Eligibility:** The Non-Competitive category is only open to city and county jurisdictions in Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties.

**Application Process:** Sponsors that pursue the Non-Competitive program category need to contact the SACOG Community Design Program Manager during the open call for projects to discuss their jurisdiction's idea. After the two parties agree in concept on a project, the jurisdiction will be asked to submit a scope of work describing what the jurisdiction would accomplish with the award. If the jurisdiction seeks more than the minimum award amount, it will have to justify the request by addressing the four additional factors (described below). Final amounts in the Non-Competitive category will be made as part of the funding round staff recommendation.

### **Sliding Scale: Growth and Housing Factors (see tables at end):**

Two factors are used to determine the minimum amount each city and county in the four-county region are eligible for in the Non-Competitive category:

- (1) each jurisdiction's share of the 4-county 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy growth projection, broken out into four categories (Table 1); and

(2) each jurisdiction’s share of the 4-county affordable housing allocation in the 2021-29 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), broken into four categories (Table 2).

**Potential for Additional Non-Competitive Funding – 4 Additional Factors:** Additional funds, above the minimum amount described above, are available to non-competitive project sponsors. A sponsor is most likely to receive above the minimum amount if their project budget and scope is also supportive of multiple planning factors, as follows:

- **Project Deliverability:** The project sponsor has demonstrated technical capacity to successfully complete scope activities by the end of FY 2023.
- **Leverage:** A higher than required local match is being offered by the project sponsor.
- **Green Zone implementation:** Scope activities include planning or project development work in the jurisdiction’s identified Green Zones.
- **Affordable Housing Support:** The sponsor’s scope includes scope activities that are supportive of affordable housing production in their jurisdiction.

**Table 1:** Point breakdown by jurisdiction’s percentage share of 4-county 2040 growth projection:

% Share of MTP 2040 growth (4 county)	Points
0 to 1%	1
2-5%	2
6-10%	3
10+%	4

**Table 2:** Point breakdown by jurisdiction’s percentage share of 4-county low/very low income housing units in 2021-29 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA):

% Share of Low/Very Low Income 2021-29 RHNA (4 county)	Points
0 to 1.0%	1
1.1% to 5.0%	2
5.1% to 10.0%	3
10.1+%	4

**Table 3: Non-Competitive Community Design Program award range based on points from Tables 1 and 2:**

Total points	Non-competitive	Non-competitive
	MINIMUM Amount	MAXIMUM Amount based on 4 additional factors
2	\$100,000	\$250,000
3	\$125,000	\$275,000
4	\$150,000	\$300,000
5	\$175,000	\$350,000
6	\$200,000	\$450,000
7	\$225,000	\$450,000
8	\$250,000	\$500,000

**Table 4: Non-Competitive Category Minimum and Maximums Award Amounts by Jurisdiction**

	Pts - % Share MTP 2040 Growth (4 county)	Pts - % Share 2021-29 RHNA Affordable (4 counties)	Total Points	MINIMUM Award Amount	MAXIMUM based on 4 Additional Factors
Isleton	1	1	2	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000
Wheatland	1	1	2	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000
Winters	1	1	2	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000
Live Oak	1	1	2	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000
Marysville	1	1	2	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000
Sutter County	1	1	2	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000
Citrus Heights	1	1	2	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000
Galt	1	2	3	\$ 125,000	\$ 275,000
Yolo County	2	2	4	\$ 150,000	\$ 300,000
Yuba County	2	2	4	\$ 150,000	\$ 300,000
Woodland	2	2	4	\$ 150,000	\$ 300,000
Yuba City	2	2	4	\$ 150,000	\$ 300,000
Davis	2	2	4	\$ 150,000	\$ 300,000
West Sacramento	3	3	6	\$ 200,000	\$ 400,000
Rancho Cordova	3	3	6	\$ 200,000	\$ 400,000
Folsom	3	3	6	\$ 200,000	\$ 400,000
Elk Grove	3	3	6	\$ 200,000	\$ 400,000
Sacramento	4	4	8	\$ 250,000	\$ 500,000
Sacramento County	4	4	8	\$ 250,000	\$ 500,000

## **REAP Competitive Housing Funding Category**

**REAP Program:** SACOG is receiving funds from the State's Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) grant category, of which the SACOG Board approved setting \$1.7 million aside for a REAP Competitive category. The REAP Competitive category is housed under the Community Design Program, but its application process and funding category are kept separate from the Community Design Competitive and Non-Competitive categories described above. More details on the REAP competitive housing program will be provided separately before the call-for-projects is announced.