



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GRANTS

Fiscal Year 2027-28

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE

Sustainable Communities &
Strategic Partnerships

Grant Application Deadline:

Friday, October 9, 2026 by 5 p.m.

[Application Submittal](#)

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1. GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant (STPG) Program was created to support the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Mission: Improving lives and communities through transportation.

The California Legislature passed, and Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed into law, Senate Bill 1 (SB 1, Beall, Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017) The Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, a transportation funding bill that provides a reliable fund source to maintain and integrate the State's multimodal transportation system. In addition to the \$10 million in traditional State and federal grants, approximately \$25 million in SB 1 funds for Sustainable Communities Grants is available annually.

State-funded Sustainable Communities grants are intended to support and implement Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Sustainable Communities Strategies/Alternative Planning Strategies (SCS/APS) (where applicable) and to ultimately achieve the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target of 40 and 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 2045, respectively.

Federal-funded Strategic Partnerships and Strategic Partnership Transit grants support Federal Planning Factors and address State highway/transit issues of regional, interregional, and/or statewide significance, in partnership with Caltrans.

Eligible planning projects must have a transportation nexus per Article XIX, Sections 2 and 3 of the California Constitution. Successful planning projects are expected to directly benefit the multimodal transportation system while also improving public health, social equity, environmental justice, the environment, and providing other important community benefits. Grant fund availability spans over three Fiscal Years (FYs) and grantees will have approximately 32 months to complete grant activities upon execution of the grant agreement and Caltrans issuance of a Notice to Proceed letter.

1.1 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Summary Chart

	Fund Source	Purpose	Who May Apply	Local Match
Sustainable Communities Competitive	Budget State funds: Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (RMRA) State Highway Account (SHA) Approx. \$17.9 million Approx. \$3 million set-aside for technical projects Up to \$2 million set-aside for Native American Tribal Governments Goal: 50% of grants should benefit Under-Resourced Communities*** Grant Minimum \$50,000 for Under-Resourced Communities, including Native American Tribal Governments and rural communities; \$100,000 for all others Grant Maximum \$700,000	Funds local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further the region's RTP SCS/APS (where applicable), contribute to the State's GHG reduction targets, address the needs of under-resourced communities, and assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives (See Chapter 1.2).	The following are eligible to apply as a primary applicant: • MPOs with sub-applicants • RTPAs • Transit Agencies • Cities and Counties with compliant Housing Elements and completed Annual Progress Reports • Native American Tribal Governments • Other Public Transportation Planning Entities The following are eligible to apply as a sub-applicant: • MPOs/RTPAs • Transit Agencies • Universities and Community Colleges • Native American Tribal Governments • Cities and Counties with compliant Housing Elements and completed Annual Progress Reports • Community-Based Organizations • Non-Profit Organizations (501.C.3) • Other Public Entities**	11.47% minimum* (in cash or an in-kind contribution); not required for Native American Tribal Governments
	Budget State funds: RMRA \$12.5 million			
Sustainable Communities Formula	Budget State funds: RMRA \$12.5 million	Funds local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further the region's RTP SCS/APS (where applicable), contribute to the State's GHG reduction targets, and assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives (See Chapter 1.2).	The following are eligible to apply as a primary applicant: • MPOs	11.47% minimum* (in cash or an in-kind contribution)

* For local match requirements, refer to Chapter 5.4 of this Guide.

** Public entities include state agencies, the Regents of the University of California, district, public authority, public agency, and any other political subdivision or public corporation in the State (Government Code Section 811.2).

*** For purposes of this grant program, under-resourced communities are the most vulnerable places that are facing disproportionate rates of economic, environmental, and health burdens, and are defined according to the tools in Appendix A.

	Fund Source	Purpose	Who May Apply	Local Match
Strategic Partnerships	Budget Federal funds: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) State Planning and Research (SP&R), Part I \$1.5 million Grant Minimum \$100,000 Grant Maximum \$700,000	Funds transportation planning studies in partnership with Caltrans that address the regional, interregional, and statewide needs of the State Highway System, and assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives (See Chapter 1.2).	The following are eligible to apply as a primary applicant: • MPOs • RTPAs The following are eligible to apply as a sub-applicant: • MPOs/RTPAs • Transit Agencies • Universities and Community Colleges • Native American Tribal Governments • Cities and Counties • Community-Based Organizations • Non-Profit Organizations (501.C.3) • Other Public Entities**	20% minimum* (in non-federal funds or an in-kind contribution)
	Budget Federal funds: Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5304 \$3 million Grant Minimum \$75,000 for RTPAs and transit agencies; \$100,000 for MPOs Grant Maximum \$700,000	Funds multimodal planning studies, with a focus on transit, in partnership with Caltrans, of regional, interregional and statewide significance, and assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives (See Chapter 1.2)	The following are eligible to apply as a primary applicant: • MPOs • RTPAs • Transit Agencies The following are eligible to apply as a sub-applicant: • MPOs/RTPAs • Transit Agencies • Universities and Community Colleges • Native American Tribal Governments • Cities and Counties • Community-Based Organizations • Non-Profit Organizations (501.C.3) • Other Public Entities**	11.47% minimum* (in non-federal funds or an in-kind contribution)
* For local match requirements, refer to Chapter 5.4 of this Guide. ** Public entities include state agencies, the Regents of the University of California, district, public authority, public agency, and any other political subdivision or public corporation in the State (Government Code Section 811.2).				

1.2 Grant Program Objectives and Considerations

Successful grant applications address and articulate how the project relates to the Caltrans Mission, Grant Program Objectives, and Grant Program Considerations. The Grant Specific Objectives identified in Chapters 2.1, 3.1, and 4.1 indicate the specific purpose of the Sustainable Communities and Strategic Partnerships transportation planning grants, respectively, and must be considered when preparing an application.

Grant Program Objectives

The following Grant Program Objectives focus on achieving the Caltrans Mission and are intended to inform application development, including:

Objective	Description
Safety	Prioritize the elimination of fatal and serious injury crashes and enhance safe use of our roadways through the Safe System approach to realize a vision of zero road fatalities and serious injuries on all California roads by 2050.
Sustainability	Promote reliable and efficient mobility for people, goods, and services, while meeting the State's GHG emission reduction goals, preserving the State's natural and working lands, and preserving the unique character and livability of California's communities.
Preservation	Preserve the transportation system through protecting and/or enhancing the environment, promoting energy conservation, improving the quality of life, and/or promoting consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planning growth and economic development patterns.
Accessibility	Increase the accessibility of the system and mobility of people, inclusive of older adults, those with disabilities, and freight.
Innovation	Promote the use of technology and innovative designs to improve the performance and social equity of our transportation system and provide sustainable transportation options.
Economy	Support the economic vitality of the area (i.e., enables global competitiveness, enables increased productivity, improves efficiency, increases economic equity by enabling robust economic opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment and for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), etc.).
Health	Decrease exposure to local pollution sources, reduce serious injuries and fatalities on the transportation system, and promote physical activity across the lifespan, inclusive of those with disabilities, especially through transportation means.
Social Equity	Promote transportation solutions that focus on and prioritize the needs of under-resourced communities most affected by poverty, infrastructure barriers, air pollution and climate change, and promote solutions that integrate community values with transportation safety and performance while encouraging meaningful public involvement in the transportation decision making process.

Grant Program Considerations

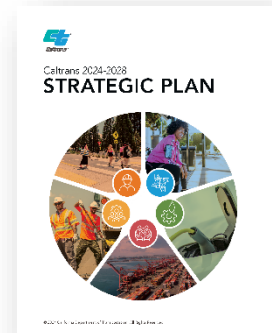
The STPG Program supports related State and federal mandated initiatives. The Plans and Programs listed below should be considered during grant application development. Definitions and links to these resources can be found in Appendix A.

Caltrans Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is a declaration of the Caltrans vision and mission, core values, and five (5) goals to deliver a thriving and connected California for one of the nation's most populous, innovative, and diverse states:

- Safety
- Equity
- Climate Action
- Prosperity
- Employee Excellence

The Strategic Plan guides and informs the development of the STPG Program. Competitive applications will articulate how they will assist in achieving the Caltrans vision, mission, and the five (5) strategic goals above.



California Transportation Plan 2050

The California Transportation Plan (CTP) 2050 is a long-range transportation plan, updated every five years pursuant to State and federal law, and is statutorily required to be fiscally unconstrained:

- Defines a vision for the future transportation system, establishes new statewide priorities, and guides Caltrans and partner agencies in implementing its recommendations
- Identifies strategies and policies that are required to make transparent and transformational transportation decisions
- Recognizes the unique transportation needs and interests of urban, suburban, rural, and tribal communities
- Guides transportation decision makers at all levels of government, while emphasizing the importance of shared responsibility in meeting our transportation needs



The CTP does not contain projects, but policies and strategies required to close the gap between what the RTPs aim to achieve and how much more is required to meet 2050 goals. Competitive applications will discuss how proposed projects will assist in achieving the CTP 2050 vision, goals, recommendations, and the modal plans that support it.

Modal Plans that Support the California Transportation Plan

The CTP is the umbrella plan that informs and pulls together the State's long-range modal plans listed below, to envision the future system:

- Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan
- California Freight Mobility Plan
- California State Rail Plan
- California State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Statewide Transit Plan

- California Aviation System Plan

Strategic Highway Safety Plan

The Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) is a statewide, coordinated traffic safety plan that provides a comprehensive framework for reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries on California's public roads. This plan represents the fourth update of California's initial 2005 SHSP and uses the latest crash data and insights from safety partners across the state to inform the SHSP's development. Working in conjunction with other statewide safety plans such as the Highway Safety Improvement Program, the Highway Safety Plan, and the Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan, the SHSP provides guidance that will influence the development of goals, strategies, and performance measures for stakeholders working to improve traffic safety throughout California.



The latest California SHSP effort focuses on strategies with the greatest potential to reduce fatalities, serious injuries, and overall crashes. To ensure that decision-making is consistent, the SHSP is anchored by a clear Vision, Mission, and Goal. The vision represents what the SHSP aims to accomplish, while the mission is the means of getting there. Fulfilling these statements affords the state, under guidance of the SHSP, the best opportunity to reach its goal: Zero Fatalities and Serious Injuries by 2050.

Title VI and Environmental Justice

Title VI of the U.S. Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. A similar prohibition applies to recipients of state funds under California Government Code section 11135, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, as well as ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, or disability.

Caltrans integrates Title VI as well as environmental justice in all activities. In the past, low-income and minority communities disproportionately bore many of the negative impacts of transportation projects and continue to feel the consequences today. The goal of environmental justice is to ensure that when transportation decisions are made, low-income and minority communities have a full opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and receive an equitable distribution of benefits and not a disproportionate share of burdens, which contributes to poor health outcomes.

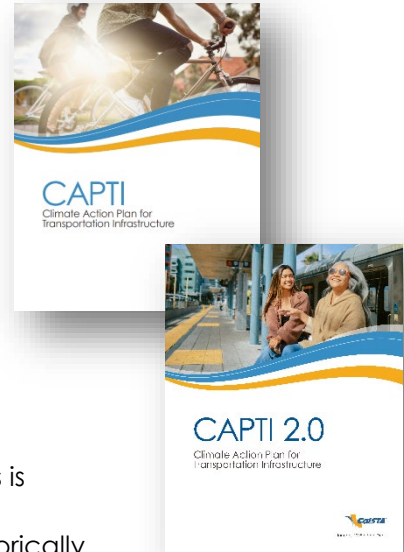
More information about non-discrimination requirements can be found in Chapter 5.5.

Director's Policy DP 28-R2 (Title VI Implementation Plan: Federal Fiscal Year 2024, Appendix B):

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/civil-rights/documents/title-vi/2024caltranstitleviimplementationplan9823a11y.pdf>

Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure

The Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) and the subsequent CAPTI 2.0 (published in January 2025) detail how the State recommends shifting and investing billions of discretionary transportation dollars annually to aggressively combat and adapt to climate change while supporting public health, safety and equity. CAPTI builds on executive orders (signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in 2019 and 2020) that target reducing GHG emissions in transportation, that account for more than 40 percent of all emissions, to reach the State's ambitious climate goals. Competitive grant applications will discuss how proposed projects will assist in implementing the CAPTI Investment Framework, Guiding Principles, and align with the Implementation Strategies and Key Actions. Through CAPTI Caltrans is committed to intentional engagement and partnership with tribal governments and community-based organizations representing historically marginalized voices.



California Climate Adaptation Strategy

The California Climate Adaptation Strategy, mandated by Assembly Bill 1482 (Gordon, 2015), links the State's current and planned climate adaptation efforts, showing how they fit together to achieve California's six climate resilience priorities. The Strategy is organized around outcome-based priorities, promoting a coordinated and integrated approach to building climate resilience. It outlines how the State's efforts align to deliver on six priorities for climate resilience action in California:

- Strengthen Protections for Climate Vulnerable Communities
- Bolster Public Health and Safety to Protect Against Increasing Climate Risks
- Make Decisions Based on the Best Available Climate Science
- Build a Climate Resilient Economy
- Accelerate Nature-Based Climate Solutions and Strengthen Climate Resilience of Natural Systems
- Partner and Collaborate to Leverage Resources

The California Climate Adaptation Strategy also aims to further integrate California Native American tribal priorities into California climate policies and programs and support tribal partnership and collaboration through funding tribal climate projects. Competitive grant applications will discuss how proposed projects consider climate resilience and align with the California Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Master Plan for Aging

The Master Plan for Aging is a blueprint for aging across the lifespan, not simply a plan for today's older adults. California's over-60 population is projected to diversify and grow faster than any other age group. In response, the Master Plan calls on all California communities to build a California for All Ages: for older Californians currently living through the many different stages of the second half of life; for younger generations who can expect to live longer lives than their elders; for communities of all ages – family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and caregivers – surrounding older adults. Competitive grant applications will discuss specific connections and help achieve the Master Plan's five goals and twenty-three strategies to build a California for All Ages by 2030.

Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards Program

The Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards Pilot Program (RC:H2B) was established in response to the adoption of Streets & Highways Code 104.3 to support the conversion of key underutilized highways in the State into multi-modal corridors to reconnect communities divided by transportation infrastructure. This effort aims to reconnect underserved communities harmed by transportation infrastructure through community-supported planning activities that are championed by those communities.

Pursuant to the statute, the intent of RC:H2B is to achieve the following goals:

- (1) Restore community connectivity through the removal, retrofit, mitigation, or replacement of eligible transportation infrastructure facilities that create barriers to mobility, access, or economic development.
- (2) Provide matching funding for potential federal grant funds.
- (3) Advance health and equity outcomes for underserved communities by removing health, safety, and access barriers associated with transportation infrastructure within communities.
- (4) Improve access to opportunity by improving travel options and reducing combined household transportation and housing costs for underserved communities.
- (5) Create opportunities for implementation of affordable housing and affirmatively furthering fair housing.
- (6) Avoid or minimize direct and indirect displacement effects from project implementation.
- (7) Advance community-based or community-driven transportation planning.

2. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES COMPETITIVE AND TECHNICAL

Approximately \$12.4 million in State Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (RMRA) funds and \$5.5 million in State Highway Account (SHA) funds, for a combined total of approximately \$17.9 million, will be distributed through a competitive program to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) with a sub-applicant(s), Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), cities and counties, transit agencies, and Native American Tribal Governments. **MPOs must have a sub-applicant to be eligible for Sustainable Communities Competitive and Technical grants.**

\$3 million is set aside for a technical project sub-category.

Up to \$2 million is set aside for Native American Tribal Governments.

A maximum of two applications for Sustainable Communities, including Sustainable Communities Technical, may be submitted by each applicant. Funding distribution for the competitive program will depend on the quality and quantity of applications received.

2.1 Purpose and Specific Objectives

The purpose of the Sustainable Communities grants is to fund local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further a region's RTP SCS/APS (where applicable), contribute to the State's GHG reduction targets, and assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives, which must be considered when preparing the grant application.

A minimum threshold of 50 percent of Sustainable Communities Competitive and Technical Grants has been identified for projects that benefit under-resourced communities, which includes Native American Tribal Governments and rural communities. For transportation planning purposes, rural is defined as all areas of the state that are not included in urbanized areas of 50,000 in population or greater; refer to Appendix C, *Caltrans/Regional Agency Boundaries Map*. For purposes of the grant program, acceptable under-resourced communities definitions are described in Appendix A and include:

- Rural communities of 50,000 or less and outside of urbanized areas
- Native American Tribal Governments
- Regionally/locally defined under-resourced communities
- At or below 80% Assembly Bill 1550 (Gomez, Statutes of 2016)
- At or above 75% California Department of Education, Free or Reduced Priced Meals Data
- At or above 75% CalEnviroScreen Version 4.0
- At or below 25% California Healthy Places Index (HPI)

Sustainable Communities Competitive and Technical applicants must demonstrate how the project fits the following Specific Objectives, as appropriate for the applicant and project type:

- Encourage local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning that furthers the region's RTP SCS/APS (where applicable)
 - For applicants not in an MPO region, address how the project encourages local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning that advances sustainability
- Contribute to the State's GHG reduction targets and other State goals, including but not limited to, the goals and best practices cited in the 2024 RTP Guidelines

- Address the needs of under-resourced communities through robust public engagement
- Assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives (See Chapter 1.2)

Sustainable Communities Technical project types do not require extensive public engagement due to the technical nature, but applications will explain and demonstrate:

- How the public will be involved at later stages of the planning process
- Efforts to collaborate with and involve appropriate stakeholders with technical expertise to review and validate quantification assumptions and methods
- How stakeholders will be involved in the Scope of Work

Technical project applications are scored under the same criteria as all other project types and are grouped and compete with other technical projects (refer to Chapter 2.2 for Example Technical Project Types). Applicants should contact their Caltrans District listed in Appendix D to help decide which grant category is the best fit for their project.

Below is a list of Appendix A Guidance, Tools, and Resources to assist applicants in preparing a competitive grant application that is consistent with the Grant Program Objectives, Grant Program Considerations, and Specific Objectives.

- Advance Transportation Related GHG Reduction Project Types/Strategies
- Addressing the Needs of Under-Resourced Communities
- Public Health Resources
- Active Community Engagement
- Integrated Housing, Land Use and Transportation Planning
- Promote the Region's RTP SCS/APS (where applicable) and State Planning Priorities, and Climate Adaptation Goals
- Climate-Ready Transportation

2.2 Example Project Types

Active Transportation

- Active transportation plans, including bicycle, pedestrian, and trail master plans
- Plans for bike parking facilities
- Rural planning studies or plans that provide rural counties the ability to develop active transportation plans with a rural context-sensitive focus and allow for rural regions to contribute to the State's GHG reduction targets
- Studies or plans that include a temporary built environment demonstration, e.g., tactical urbanism

Climate Adaptation

- Studies, plans or planning methods that advance a community's effort to address the impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise, flooding, wildfires, and mudslides, which may include the use of natural infrastructure to reduce the impacts of climate change
- Climate adaptation plans for transportation facilities

Complete Streets

- Complete Streets Plans

- Planning efforts that assess, remove, or reduce barriers created by transportation infrastructure such as highways, overpasses and underpasses, that create disconnected communities
- Studies and/or plans that identify opportunities to restore or enhance safe, multimodal connections and improve equitable access to jobs, services, and community destinations

Corridor

- Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plans
- Corridor enhancement studies
- Local or regional corridor plans
- Studies and plans that can help to quantify and highlight the value and importance of the rural State transportation system which connects large urban centers to rural open space, State and federal lands, and recreation and agriculture hubs.
- Studies and plans to mitigate for impacts to the rural transportation system due to increased interregional tourism and visitor traffic
- Modeling improvements that address SB 743 implementation and induced travel (see Sustainable Communities – Technical grant-specific objectives in Chapter 2.1)

Freight/Goods Movement

- Studies or plans related to zero emissions vehicle goods movement
- Freight/goods movement plans and studies
- Complete Streets plans that consider last-mile freight
- Curbside freight management plans
- Sustainable freight plans
- Agriculture goods movement plans
- Freight/supply chain resiliency studies

Integrated Housing, Land Use, and Transportation

- Studies, plans or planning methods that assist transportation agencies in creating sustainable communities and transit-oriented development
- SCS/APS development
- Studies that promote greater access between affordable housing and job centers
- Station area planning
- Integration of transportation and environmental planning
- First Mile/Last Mile project development planning
- An update to a general plan land use element, zoning code, or land use plan that increases development opportunities around key transportation corridors or nodes
- Creation of a Transit-Oriented Development overlay zone or other special zoning district around key transportation corridors or nodes
- Studies, plans, and policies that address land use conflicts with major transportation corridors such as major highways, ports, shipping and freight corridors, etc. that are near sensitive land uses such as homes, schools, parks, etc. or potentially impacted by climate change

Multimodal

- Multimodal transportation plans
- Long range transportation plans for tribal governments

- Studies, plans or planning methods that advance a community's effort to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips and transportation related GHG through strategies including, but not limited to, advancing mode shift, demand management, travel cost, operational efficiency, accessibility, and coordination with future employment and residential land use
- Context-sensitive streetscapes or town center plans
- Studies that evaluate accessibility and connectivity of the multimodal transportation network
- Shared mobility services planning studies
- Community outreach plans for park-and-ride lots

Safety

- Bike and pedestrian plans with a safety enhancement focus, including Vision Zero plans
- Community to school studies or safe routes to school plans
- Traffic calming and corridor safety enhancement plans

Social Equity

- Community Needs Assessments
- Health and transportation studies, including health equity transportation studies and other plans that incorporate health into transportation planning
- Studies to improve access to social services and other community destinations for under-resourced communities such as grocery stores, schools, hospitals, transit stations, etc.
- Studies, plans or planning methods that address environmental justice issues in a transportation related context
- Congestion pricing studies including plans that enhance social equity and avoid inequitable cost burdens
-
- Studies or plans to ensure that infill and transit-oriented development benefits existing residents and businesses, low-income and under-resourced communities, and minimizes displacement
- Outreach to educate under-resourced communities on mode shifts to electric forms of transportation, as part of a plan or study as appropriate
- Student internships for rural agencies and/or under-resourced communities
- Native American Tribal Government transportation planning training and capacity building

Technical

- Transportation modeling studies or planning activities that address SB 375 and SB 743 implementation, induced travel, active transportation, emerging technology, public health, VMT and other impacts
- Planning for zero or near zero emission vehicles
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure network planning
- Transit planning for zero emission bus fleets
- Planning for autonomous vehicles
- Road or parking pricing studies
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) studies
- Commute trip reduction studies and plans
- Data collection/data sharing initiatives

- Integration of transit, new emerging technologies, and shared mobility services
- Educational outreach as part of a plan or study as appropriate, e.g., for mode shifts to electric forms of transportation

Transit

- Identification of policies, strategies, and programs to preserve transit facilities and optimize transit infrastructure
- Transit planning studies related to accessible transit, paratransit, mobility management, etc.
- Studies, plans, or outreach for school public transit, school pool ridesharing
- Strategies to increase transit ridership
- Studies or plans that evaluate commuter rail or multimodal connectivity
- Studies or plans that evaluate first and last mile transit connectivity
- Planning for new or emerging technology that supports transit ridership including tools and strategies that improve rider information, fare payment, service reliability, first/last mile connections, accessibility, data integration, and customer experience

2.3 Eligible and Ineligible Activities and Expenses

Eligible Activities and Expenses

Eligible activities must have a transportation nexus per the California Constitution, Article XIX Section 2 and 3. Please consult Caltrans district staff for more information on whether costs are eligible for funding.

Examples of eligible costs include:

- Data gathering and analysis
- Report writing and the development of associated graphics
- Planning consultant procurement
- Advertising for consultant procurement
- Advertising for public workshops, e.g., flyers, paid media ads
- Travel expenses (See Chapter 5.4 for details)
- Up to 30 percent design or conceptual drawings
- Equipment (as defined in 2 CFR Part 200.33)¹ purchases must remain under \$5,000 or depreciation will need to be taken into account when the grant project is completed since equipment could have future uses. 2 CFR Part 200.436² provides the criteria for depreciation
- Community surveys, meetings, public workshop room rental, charrettes, focus groups
- Virtual outreach activities and on-line meetings
- Bilingual services for interpreting and/or translation services for meetings
- Community/stakeholder advisory groups

¹ Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, 2 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200.33, 2020, <https://www.ecfr.gov/on/2017-01-03/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-A/subject-group-ECFR2a6a0087862fd2c/section-200.33>

² Govinfo, 2 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200.436, 20, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2022-title2-vol1/CFR-2022-title2-vol1-sec200-436>

- Light snacks and refreshments for public workshops (no full meals), subject to Caltrans approval
 - Requests to enhance public participation beyond the currently eligible costs for light refreshments will need justification regarding the cost benefit of the anticipated increase in public participation and must be submitted to Caltrans, and FHWA, when applicable, for consideration and approval, on a case-by-case basis
- Project administration (up to 5 percent of the grant award is allowed, i.e., quarterly reports, invoicing, and kick-off meeting with Caltrans)

Ineligible Activities and Expenses

Ineligible activities, tasks, and/or project components will disqualify the application from the competitive review process.

Ineligible activities and expenses include:

- Environmental studies, plans, or documents normally required for project development under the National Environmental Policy Act or the California Environmental Quality Act
- Engineering plans and design specification work
- Project Initiation Documents
- Program or project implementation
- Repurposing unspent grant funds (not applicable to Sustainable Communities Formula)
- Application development to pursue construction funds/project implementation
- RTPs or updates to the RTP, excluding SCS/APS development
- Construction projects, capital costs, such as the building of a facility, or maintenance
- Office furniture purchases or other capital expenditures
- Decorations – banners, etc., for public workshop events
- Acquisition of vehicles or shuttle programs
- Organizational membership fees
- Incentives for public participation
 - Stipends, giveaways, childcare
- Charges passed on to sub-recipient for oversight of awarded grant funds
- Other items unrelated to the project

2.4 Tips for Successful Sustainable Communities Grant Applications

Criteria for Successful Sustainable Communities Grant Applications

Below is guidance for successful grant applications, but is not all inclusive:

- Integrate Grant Program Considerations (See Chapter 1.2)
- Advance transportation related GHG emission reduction project types/strategies (i.e., mode shift, demand management, travel cost, operational efficiency, accessibility, and coordination with future employment and residential land use, etc.)
- Identify and address deficiencies in the multimodal transportation system, including the needs of environmental justice and under-resourced communities, including Native American Tribal Governments and rural communities
- Encourage stakeholder collaboration
- Involve active community engagement for under-resourced communities and Native

American Tribal Governments by utilizing advocacy groups, community-based organizations, and tribal organizations

- Coordinate transportation, housing, and land use planning
- Results of completed grant projects should lead to programming and implementation of multimodal transportation system improvements

General Tips

- Sections of the grant application may seem redundant when discussing under-resourced community engagement, overall public engagement, and stakeholder involvement. The general public and under-resourced communities are stakeholders for projects, for the application purposes, the strategy, and methods for engaging these groups will be different, as described below.
 - Overall public engagement will describe the general strategy to engage the public at large.
 - Under-resourced communities' engagement will explain how the project will go above and beyond business as usual or what is statutorily required to address the specific needs of under-resourced communities and use unique methods to involve these groups in the decision-making process. Refer to Appendix A, *Active Community Engagement*, which includes case studies for examples of equitable community engagement.
 - Stakeholder engagement will explain how partner agencies, businesses, and/or non-profit community-based organizations will be involved throughout the project.
- Consult your district representative for technical assistance before the application deadline.
- Use the Samples and Checklists provided for the Application, Scope of Work, and Cost & Schedule.
- Include Caltrans as an active partner in the project.
- Provide tailored letters of support and project area photographs to enhance the application. If applicants/supporters do not have the time/resources to provide tailored letters of support, a petition signed by supporters in a simple table format that lists the supporters and specifically how supporters will benefit the proposed project will suffice.

Project Description

Concisely describe the project. Explain What parties are involved, the proposed major milestones, and why the project is necessary.

Project Justification

- Clearly define and explain the transportation problem or deficiency that the project will attempt to address and how the project will address the problem. Why is it critical to address the problem now? Make the case for a critical need that the project will address and support it with verifiable data, if available.
- Explain how the project affects under-resourced communities. The tools in Appendix A are intended to help applicants define an under-resourced community in the project area. Please cite data sources, the tools used and include a comparison to the statewide thresholds that are established in each tool.
- If the applicant is a Native American Tribal Government or a rural area (outside of the urbanized areas with 50,000 in population or greater) of the State, describe population characteristics such as demographics, location, and size.

Grant Specific Objectives

Demonstrate how the project fits every aspect of the Grant Specific Objectives, as appropriate for the applicant and project type. Some guidance is provided below; however, it is not intended to be all inclusive. Applications should reference Appendix A for Resources to Advance Sustainable Communities Grant Specific Objectives.

Successful applications should include:

Planning for Housing, Housing Element Compliance, and Pro-housing Designation

- Applicants must demonstrate how they integrate housing planning into their policies, programs, and project, or commit to coordinate housing and transportation in future policies and programs throughout the application (e.g., narrative and scope of work). See Chapter 2.2 for a list of example projects that coordinate housing, land use, and transportation.
- To be eligible for a grant award, city and county primary/sub-grant applicants are required to submit:
 1. A housing element adopted by the local government to the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and HCD must find the adopted housing element in substantial compliance with state housing element law pursuant to Government Code Section 65585.
 2. Annual Progress Reports (APRs) to HCD for at least the previous two years, 2024 and 2025.
- City or county primary/sub-applicants will receive a high recommendation from HCD if they have a Pro-housing Designation, which can be earned by adopting local policies that facilitate the planning, approval, and construction of housing. The HCD Pro-housing Designation Program provides incentives to cities and counties in the form of additional points or other preference in the scoring of competitive housing, community development, and infrastructure programs. For HCD Pro-housing Designation Program information and how to develop a competitive application, refer to Appendix A, *Integrated Housing, Land Use, and Transportation Planning*.

IMPORTANT TIPS:

City and county primary/sub-grant applicants are required to submit:

1. A housing element adopted by the local government to HCD.
2. Annual Progress Reports to HCD for at least the previous two years, 2024 and 2025.

Note: Charter cities are not exempt from this specific program requirement and must submit an Annual Progress Report for the calendar years mentioned above.

Community Engagement

- Evidence of additional public outreach measures that promote access to decision-making and program implementation for all segments of the community, including special needs populations, under-resourced communities, and a variety of socio-economic groups (e.g., households across the income and employment spectrum, ethnically and racially diverse households).
- The application narrative should outline specific outreach strategies including in-person and virtual options.

- Tailored letters of support with electronic signatures from community-based organizations or public advocacy groups to demonstrate their support or involvement in identifying the issues that the proposed project is attempting to address.
- If applicants/supporters do not have the time or resources to provide tailored letters of support, a petition electronically signed by supporters in a simple table format that indicates specifically how supporters will benefit the proposed project will suffice.
- Refer to Appendix A, *Active Community Engagement*, for Community Engagement Best Practices.

Integrated Housing, Land Use, and Transportation Planning

- Application narrative and any relevant supporting or illustrative data should describe how the proposed project integrates and connects land use and transportation, including how transportation and land use agencies or jurisdictions are actively collaborating on the project in all project phases.
- Competitive grant applications should demonstrate how the project furthers this coordinated and integrated approach to planning. For example:
 - Demonstrate how the project will support or align with the region's Regional Early Action Planning (REAP)³ grant investments or other regional planning or implementation efforts. REAP 2.0 seeks to accelerate infill housing development, reduce VMT, increase housing supply at all affordability levels, affirmatively further fair housing, and facilitate the implementation of adopted regional/local plans to achieve these goals. Eligible uses include projects that invest in infrastructure to expand active transportation and fund and implement parking and TDM programs or ordinances.
 - Describe how the project aligns with State housing policies and goals by serving a community within ½ mile of a transit station or stop that has received a positive Pro-housing Designation Program score, certified by HCD.
 - Explain how the project is located in an area that has earned a Pro-housing Designation and positive scores for Pro-housing Enhancement policies from HCD. Jurisdictions supporting integrated housing, land use, and transportation planning may have policies that include Pro-housing Enhancement Factors, which represent a multi-faceted approach to planning objectives, are consistent with State priorities, go beyond state law, etc. Competitive applications may also identify a jurisdiction's policies that promote housing development and reduce VMT. For information about the HCD Pro-housing Designation Program and how applicants can develop a competitive application with Pro-housing Enhancement Factors or VMT reducing policies, refer to Appendix A, *Integrated Housing, Land Use, and Transportation Planning*. HCD will highly recommend awards for City and county primary/sub-applicants that earn this designation.

HELPFUL TIPS:

Tailored letters of support from local agencies that not only provide support for the project, but also confirms that the proposed project:

- ✓ Helps to implement the RTP SCS/APS and/or State priorities.
- ✓ Involves a coordinated approach to integrating land use and transportation in all phases of project planning and implementation.

³ REAP Website: [Programs: Active | California Department of Housing and Community Development](#)

Project Management

- **Scope of Work:** Refer to the Scope of Work Checklist in Appendix B.
- **Cost & Schedule:** Refer to the Cost & Schedule Checklist in Appendix B.

3. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FORMULA

The Sustainable Communities grant program includes \$12.5 million that is distributed to the MPOs on a formula basis. The formula funds for the MPOs will reflect the same formula used to distribute Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Metropolitan Planning PL funds.

The FHWA PL formula has three components:

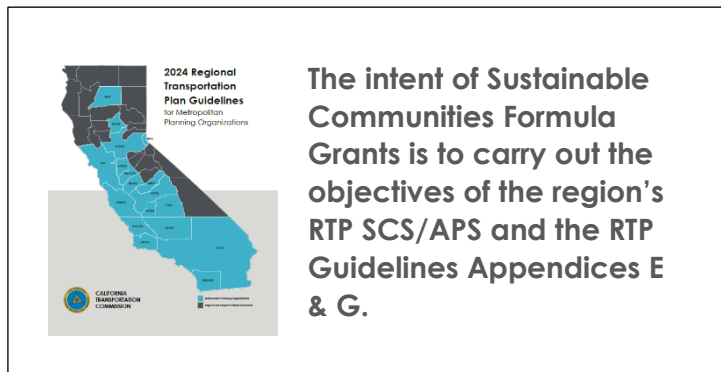
1. A base allocation
2. A two-part population component which distributes funds by the proportion of the total population of each MPO based on California Department of Finance estimates each January
3. An Air Quality component based on the proportion of federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funds to total programmatic FHWA PL funds

3.1 Purpose and Specific Objectives

The purpose of Sustainable Communities Formula is to fund local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further the region's RTP SCS/APS (where applicable), contribute to the State's GHG reduction targets, and assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives (See Chapter 1.2).

The specific objectives, eligibility requirements, and performance considerations for Sustainable Communities Formula Grants awarded to MPOs are consistent with Sustainable Communities Competitive Grants.

The intent of Sustainable Communities Formula Grants is to carry out the objectives of the region's RTP SCS/APS (where applicable) and the RTP Guidelines Appendices E (Promoting Health and Health Equity in MPO RTPs) and G (Planning Practice Examples). In addition, MPOs are strongly encouraged to administer Sustainable Communities Formula funding in a transparent manner and maintain non-profit eligibility, consistent with the legislative intent of SB 1 - The Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017.



3.2 Guidance and Approval Process

Minimum Eligibility Criteria

MPOs should meet the following minimum eligibility criteria to apply for Sustainable Communities Formula Grants:

- Of the Consolidated Planning Grant, FHWA PL carryover is at or below 100 percent of the annual FHWA PL allocation
- Have an RTP SCS/APS that meets the SB 375 GHG reduction targets
- Meet civil rights and environmental justice obligations, as summarized in Section 4.2 of the RTP Guidelines

If an MPO does not meet the minimum eligibility criteria listed above by **April 30, 2027**, their allocation will be redistributed to the remaining MPOs that are eligible and apply for Sustainable Communities Formula Grants.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

- ✓ If an MPO does not meet the minimum eligibility criteria, their allocation will be redistributed to the remaining MPOs that are eligible and apply for Sustainable Communities Formula Grants.

Annual Draft Overall Work Program (OWP) Development and Approval Process

Sustainable Communities Formula Grants are part of the annual draft OWP development and approval process. The draft OWP process includes meaningful consultation with Caltrans district staff and the Headquarters Office of Regional and Community Planning (ORCP). MPOs are responsible for including a draft Work Element(s) for Sustainable Communities Formula Grant funds in the draft FY 2027-28 OWP and sending a list of activities using the provided template to Caltrans, no later than **March 1, 2027**. Draft OWPs are submitted to the district Regional Planning Liaison who will coordinate with ORCP. The draft Work Element(s) should include an explanation of how the project supports the Sustainable Communities Grant Specific Objectives and provide the same level of detail included in the grant application Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule for Sustainable Communities Competitive Grants. The Work Element name and number must remain unchanged until the project(s) is completed. If a Work Element does not provide enough detail, MPOs will need to submit the competitive grant application Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule. More information and detailed requirements are outlined in the *SB 1 Guidance for OWPs and Requests for Reimbursements*, available upon request.

3.3 Example Project Types

MPOs have flexibility for how the Formula Grant allocation is administered. For example, MPOs may use these funds for a regional competitive grant program, integrated land use and transportation planning activities related to the development of their SCS/APS, carrying out the best practices cited in the RTP Guidelines, or a combination thereof. If an MPO uses Formula Grant funds to administer a regional grant program, the MPO must submit their grant program criteria and list of eligible applicants and sub-applicants to the Caltrans district and ORCP. This step is to ensure the MPO's grant program aligns with Caltrans Sustainable Communities Competitive Grants, including city and county housing element compliance. MPOs will also submit a list of awarded grants to the Caltrans district and ORCP. MPOs should coordinate the submittal of this information with the Caltrans district and ORCP to avoid delays with releasing the call-for-projects and grant awards. For additional example project types, refer to Chapter 2.2.

3.4 Eligible and Ineligible Activities and Expenses

Refer to Chapter 2.3 for eligible and ineligible activities and expenses.

3.5 Formula Grant Allocation Estimates

The following funding table estimates how formula funds may be distributed to each MPO, contingent upon meeting the minimum eligibility criteria:

Sustainable Communities Formula Grants	
Metropolitan Planning Organization	Total Formula Grant Allocation
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency	\$160,750
Madera County Transportation Commission	\$164,209
Kings County Association of Governments	\$162,943
Shasta Regional Transportation Agency	\$163,172
Butte County Association of Governments	\$180,569
Merced County Association of Governments	\$197,424
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments	\$195,962
Tulare County Association of Governments	\$246,944
Santa Barbara County Association of Governments	\$224,579
Stanislaus Council of Governments	\$291,053
San Joaquin Council of Governments	\$341,671
Kern Council of Governments	\$374,899
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments	\$315,267
Fresno Council of Governments	\$407,484
Sacramento Area Council of Governments	\$774,991
San Diego Association of Governments	\$1,021,553
Metropolitan Transportation Commission	\$2,106,140
Southern California Association of Governments	\$5,170,390
Total	\$12,500,000

4. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The Strategic Partnership Grant program includes \$1.5 million in FHWA State Planning and Research (SPR) Part 1 funds and \$3 million in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5304 funds. FHWA SPR Part 1 funds will be distributed through a competitive program to MPOs and RTPAs. FTA Section 5304 funds will be distributed through a competitive program to MPOs, RTPAs, and transit agencies. Funding distribution for the competitive program will depend on the quality and quantity of applications received.

4.1 Purpose and Specific Objectives

Strategic Partnerships are intended to fund planning projects that partner with Caltrans to address needs on, or connecting to, the State Highway System, while the transit sub-category will address multimodal planning projects that focus on transit.

The objectives of Strategic Partnerships and Strategic Partnerships - Transit grants are to:

- Strengthen government-to-government partnerships
- Accomplish the Federal Planning Factors
- Achieve the Caltrans Mission and the Grant Program Objectives

4.2 Federal Planning Factors

The Federal Planning Factors should be considered in the development of the Strategic Partnership Grant applications.

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
4. Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
7. Promote efficient system management and operation
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system
9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation
10. Enhance travel and tourism

4.3 Example Project Types

Example Project Types - Strategic Partnerships

- Studies that identify interregional, inter-county, and/or statewide mobility and access needs
- Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plans
- Corridor performance/preservation studies
- Corridor enhancement studies

- Studies that evaluate transportation issues involving ground access to international borders, seaports, airports, intermodal facilities, freight hubs, and recreational sites
- Development of planning activities that result in sustainable transportation investments
- Enhanced tools to capture GHG benefits of Operations and System Management projects
- Integration of transportation and economic development
- Studies and plans that can help to quantify and highlight the value and importance of the rural State transportation system which connects large urban centers to rural open space, State and federal lands, and recreation and agriculture hubs
- Planning for sustainable freight
- Planning for transportation safety
- Transportation planning for special events
- Studies for relinquishment of state routes
- Statewide or interregional research or modeling tools
- Transportation Demand Management plans
- System investment prioritization plans
- Assessment and integration of new technology
- Complete street plans that consider last-mile freight
- Curbside freight management plans
- Agriculture goods movement plans
- Freight/supply chain resiliency studies
- Studies that evaluate accessibility and connectivity of the multimodal transportation network
- Integration of transportation and environmental planning
- Studies, plans, and policies that address land use conflicts with major transportation corridors such as major highways, ports, shipping and freight corridors, etc. that are near sensitive land uses such as homes, schools, parks, etc. or potentially impacted by climate change
- Studies, plans or planning methods that advance a community's effort to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips and transportation related GHG through strategies including, but not limited to, advancing mode shift, demand management, travel cost, operational efficiency, accessibility, and coordination with future employment and residential land use

Example Project Types - Strategic Partnerships Transit

- Identification of policies and procedures to integrate transit into the transportation system and planning process
- Statewide and regional transit planning surveys and research
- Identification of policies, strategies, and programs to manage transit assets, preserve transit facilities, and optimize transit infrastructure
- Projects that evaluate accessibility and connectivity of the multimodal transportation network
- Transit technical planning studies and operational analyses to optimize system performance
- Studies or plans that evaluate rail or multimodal connectivity
- Studies or plans that evaluate bike and pedestrian connections to transit
- Short- and long-range Transit plans
- Station area planning
- Complete Streets plans or multimodal transportation plans
- Studies that evaluate accessibility and connectivity of the multimodal transportation network

- Transit planning for zero emission bus fleets
- Integration of transit, new emerging technologies, and shared mobility services
- Strategies to increase transit ridership
- Studies, plans or planning methods that assist transportation agencies in creating sustainable communities and transit-oriented development

4.4 Eligible and Ineligible Activities and Expenses

Eligible Activities and Expenses

Eligible activities must have a transportation nexus per the California Constitution, Article XIX, Section 2 and 3. Please consult Caltrans district staff for more information on whether costs are eligible for funding.

Some examples of eligible costs include:

- Data gathering and analysis
- Planning consultant procurement
- Advertising for consultant procurement
- Advertising for public workshops, e.g., flyers, paid media ads
- Virtual outreach activities and on-line meetings
- Travel expenses (See Chapter 5.4 for details)
- Up to 30 percent conceptual drawings and design
- Equipment (as defined in 2 CFR Part 200.33)⁴ purchases must remain under \$5,000 or depreciation will need to be taken into account when the grant project is completed since equipment could have future uses. 2 CFR Part 200.436⁵ provides the criteria for depreciation, at the GovInfo website
- Community surveys, meetings, public workshop room rental, charrettes, focus groups
- Bilingual services for interpreting and/or translation services for meetings
- Community/stakeholder advisory groups
- Light snacks and refreshments for public workshops (no full meals), subject to Caltrans and federal approval
 - Requests to enhance public participation beyond the currently eligible costs for light refreshments will need justification regarding the cost benefit of the anticipated increase in public participation and must be submitted to Caltrans, and FHWA, when applicable, for consideration and approval, on a case-by-case basis
- Project administration (up to 5 percent of the grant is allowed, i.e., quarterly reports, invoicing, and kick-off meeting with Caltrans)

⁴ Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, 2 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200.33, 2020, <https://www.ecfr.gov/on/2017-01-03/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-A/subject-group-ECFR2a6a0087862fd2c/section-200.33>

⁵ Govinfo, 2 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200.436, 2022, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2022-title2-vol1/CFR-2022-title2-vol1-sec200-436>

Ineligible Activities and Expenses

Ineligible activities, tasks, and/or project components will disqualify the application from the competitive review process. Ineligible activities and expenses include:

- Environmental studies, plans, or documents normally required for project development under the National Environmental Policy Act or the California Environmental Quality Act
- Engineering plans and design specification work
- Project Initiation Documents
- Program or project implementation
- Repurposing unspent grant funds
- Consultant mark-ups
- Application development to pursue construction funds/project implementation
- RTPs or updates to the RTP
- Economic development plans or studies
- Land use plans or studies
- General Plans or updates to elements
- Construction projects, capital costs, such as the building of a facility or maintenance
- Office furniture purchases or other capital expenditures
- Decorations – banners, etc., for public workshop events
- Acquisition of vehicles or shuttle programs
- Organizational membership fees
- Incentives for public participation
 - Stipends, giveaways, childcare
- Charges passed on to sub-recipient for oversight of awarded grant funds
- Other items unrelated to the project

4.5 Tips for Successful Strategic Partnerships Grant Applications

Criteria for Successful Strategic Partnerships Grant Applications

- Partner with Caltrans to identify and address statewide, interregional, or regional transportation deficiencies related to the State Highway System (or multimodal transportation system for transit-focused projects)
- Strengthen government-to-government relationships, and
- Result in programmed system improvements

General Tips

- Consult with your district representative for technical assistance before the application deadline.
- Use the Samples and Checklists provided for the Application, Scope of Work, and Cost & Schedule.
- Include Caltrans as an active partner in the study.
- Provide tailored letters of support and project area photographs to enhance the application. Project supporters should describe why they support the project and how they would benefit from the project.
- If applicants/supporters do not have the time/resources to provide tailored letters of

support, a petition signed by supporters in a simple table format that lists the supporters and specifically how supporters will benefit the proposed project will suffice.

- Refer to Appendix A, *Multimodal System Planning*, for guidance documents in the development of proposed corridor plans/studies, freight plans/studies, and other multimodal system planning documents.

Project Summary

- Concisely describe the project in less than 150 words. Explain What parties are involved, the proposed major milestones, and why the project is necessary.

Project Justification

- Clearly define and explain the transportation problem or deficiency that the project will attempt to address. Why is it critical to address the problem now? Make the case for a critical need that the project will address and support it with verifiable data, if available.

Grant Specific Objective

Demonstrate how the project fits every aspect of the Grant Specific Objective, as appropriate for the applicant and project type.

Project Management

- **Scope of Work:** Refer to the Scope of Work Checklist in Appendix B.
- **Cost & Schedule:** Refer to the Cost & Schedule Checklist in Appendix B.

5. GRANT PROJECT ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The content of this chapter should be notably considered in the development of grant applications as it lays the foundation for what to expect when applying for these grant funds. Upon award, grantees will receive more specific guidance including administrative and reporting requirements.

5.1 Coordination with Caltrans

Caltrans is committed to being an active partner. If awarded a grant, the applicant should include Caltrans district staff when planning both technical advisory and community meetings. Caltrans district staff will help to ensure that the approved Scope of Work, Cost & Schedule, and project funding is maintained throughout the life of the contract. Applicants are also recommended to engage Caltrans district staff throughout the duration of the grant, when applicable.

Caltrans may contact grantees to participate in peer exchange forums to promote information sharing and best practices.

If an agency does not demonstrate adequate performance and timely use of funds, Caltrans may take appropriate actions, which can include termination of the grant.

5.2 Third Party Contracts

The agreements between a grantee and a sub-applicant/recipient, consultant, or sub-consultant are often referred to as “third party contracts.” An eligible sub-applicant should be identified by an eligible applicant at the onset of the application. Eligible sub-applicants/recipients may be added to an application after award with prior Caltrans approval. If a grantee or a sub-recipient is going to hire a consultant to perform work during the project, then proper procurement procedures must always be used. An on-call shortlist may be used for consultant procurement if the on-call shortlist was established through a competitive process and is no more than five years old. Additionally, the consultant services solicited via the on-call shortlist must be consistent with the services sought in the initial request for proposals used to establish the on-call shortlist. Agencies may not use another agency's on-call shortlist unless they are a grantee's sub-applicant.

Grantees may use their agency's procurement procedures if they comply with the State Contracting Manual, Chapter 5, the Local Assistance Procedures Manual, Chapter 10, and the terms of the agreement with Caltrans. In addition, work can only be contracted if it has been stated in the applicant's Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule. A grantee is fully responsible for all work performed by its sub-recipient, consultant, or sub-consultant. Caltrans solely enters into a contract directly with the grantee; therefore, the grantee is responsible for ensuring that all third parties adhere to the same provisions included in the contractual agreement between Caltrans and the grantee.

All government funded consultant procurement transactions must be conducted using a fair and competitive procurement process that is consistent with the State Contracting Manual, Chapter 5,⁶

⁶ California State Contracting Manual Volume 1, Chapter 5, 2023, <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/OLS/Resources/Page-Content/Office-of-Legal-Services-Resources-List-Folder/State-Contracting>

the Local Assistance Procedures Manual, Chapter 10,⁷ and the terms of the agreement with Caltrans. Documentation of all third-party contract procurements must be retained, and copies of all agreements must be submitted to Caltrans. For more information on third party contracting, visit the State Contracting Manual and the Local Assistance Procedures Manual Websites.

5.3 Quarterly Reporting

A Quarterly Progress Report (QPR) is required to be submitted for each State FY quarter after the grant recipient has received a Notice to Proceed letter. The table below illustrates the State FY timeframes for submitting the QPR to Caltrans district staff.

Quarterly Progress Report Timeframes			
Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
July – September	October – December	January – March	April – June

For MPOs and RTPAs, the progress and expenditure of each awarded grant project must be included as part of the OWP Quarterly Progress and Expenditure Report. If this method of reporting is not adequately satisfied, Caltrans staff will require separate quarterly reports for each awarded grant project.

All other primary grant recipients shall submit a QPR every quarter for each awarded grant project. Caltrans district staff will provide the brief report form and due dates.

5.4 Invoicing and Financial Requirements

Pre-Award Audit

The Sustainable Communities and Strategic Partnerships grants are available for up to \$700,000. Any awarded grant that exceeds \$250,000 may require a pre-award audit. The pre-award audit is to ensure that recipients of State or federal funds maintain adequate financial management systems prior to receiving funds. Pre-award audits may be required of new grantees, agencies that have not recently been audited, agencies that have undergone prior audits with significant weaknesses or deficiencies in their financial management systems, or those determined to be a higher risk to Caltrans. If a pre-award audit is needed, the local Caltrans district office will contact the grantee to facilitate the appropriate action.

Accounting Requirements

Grantees and sub-applicants/recipients are required to maintain an accounting system that properly records, and segregates incurred project costs and matching funds by line item. The accounting system of the grantee, including its sub-applicants and subcontractors, must conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles that enable the determination of incurred costs at interim points of completion and provides support for reimbursement payment vouchers or invoices sent to or paid by Caltrans. Allowable project costs must comply with 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 200.

⁷ Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual, Chapter 10, 2024, <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/guidelines-and-procedures/local-assistance-procedures-manual-lapm>

The accounting system must have the following attributes:

- Account numbers identifying allowable direct, indirect, and unallowable cost accounts
- Ability to accumulate and segregate allowable direct, indirect, and unallowable costs into different cost accounts
- Ability to accumulate and segregate allowable direct costs by project, funding source, and type of cost (e.g.: labor, consulting, pass-thru, or other)
- Internal controls to maintain integrity of financial management system
- Ability to account and record costs consistently and to ensure costs billed are in compliance with 2 CFR Part 200
- Ability to ensure costs billed reconcile to general ledgers and job costing system; and
- Ability to ensure costs are in compliance with contract terms and State and federal requirements

The types of records that are used to support the existence of these attributes include the following:

- Subsidiary general ledgers
- Chart of accounts
- Time keeping records
- General ledger and job costing ledgers
- Audited financial statements
- Accounting policy and procedure manuals specific to the agency
- Documents supporting actual costs (e.g. invoices, canceled checks)

It is the grantee's responsibility, in conjunction with Caltrans district staff, to monitor work and expenses to ensure the project is completed according to the contracted Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule. Grantees must monitor work and costs to ensure invoices are submitted on a regular and timely basis (monthly or quarterly as milestones are completed). Grantees must communicate with their local Caltrans district office to ensure any issues are addressed early during the project period.

Local Match

All tasks require a grant amount and local match, except for the administrative tasks (Task A and Task B), where both a grant amount and local match are optional. The local match is a financial requirement that demonstrates the grantee/local agency is vested in the project.

Because the local match is part of the total project cost, the local match can only fund eligible grant activities. Therefore, grant recipients must fund ineligible activities with funds other than the local match.

The local match can be all cash, all third-party in-kind contributions, or a combination of the two. The minimum local match is a percentage of the total project cost (i.e., minimum local match amount plus the grant amount) and is identified in the Cost & Schedule at the task level.

Grantees can utilize a tapered local match, which allows grantees to vary the required local match ratio for each task and with each Request for Reimbursement. If Task A or Task B does not include a local match amount, the tapered local match box must be selected on the Cost & Schedule. Grantees using a tapered local match agree to satisfy the total local match amount by the grant expiration date.

Local Match Sources

- **Sustainable Communities Competitive and Technical**

Federal toll credits, FHWA PL, and FTA Section 5303, and Sustainable Communities Formula are ineligible match sources; otherwise, any source of funds may be used if the proposed grant work is an eligible activity for the local match fund source.

Local match is not required for Native American Tribal Governments.

- **Sustainable Communities Formula**

Federal toll credits are an ineligible match source; otherwise, any source of funds may be used if the proposed grant work is an eligible activity for the local match fund source. If MPOs are matching with federal Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) funds (i.e., FHWA PL or FTA Section 5303), the work must all be eligible. However, federal approval is required as CPG objectives may differ and must be aligned with Sustainable Communities Formula specific objectives and 23 CFR Part 450 requirements.⁸

- **Strategic Partnerships and Strategic Partnerships – Transit**

Any non-federal source of funds may be used if the proposed grant work is an eligible activity for the local match fund source. If MPOs are matching with Sustainable Communities Formula funds, the objectives for each grant must be in alignment. Caltrans approval is required.

Cash Match

Cash match includes:

- Staff time from the primary applicant is considered cash match. Staff time charged to a specific project cannot be used to meet the match requirement for another project.
- Sub-applicant staff time, if reimbursed, is considered cash match. If sub-applicant staff time is donated, it is considered in-kind match.
- Revenue sources for cash match can include local sales tax, special bond measures, private donations, private foundations, etc.

Third-Party In-Kind Match

Third party in-kind contributions are typically goods and services donated from outside the primary grantee's agency and can be counted towards the minimum local match requirement. Examples of third-party in-kind contributions include:

- Public outreach materials
- Interpreter services
- Facilities
- Equipment
- Advertising
- Student volunteers and other stakeholder staff time
- Other goods and services

⁸ Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 450,

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2004-title23-vol1/pdf/CFR-2004-title23-vol1-part450.pdf>

The Third-Party In-Kind Valuation Plan is required to itemize and place value on donated goods and services. It must be submitted to Caltrans for approval only if the grant application is awarded. The Third-Party In-Kind Valuation Plan Checklist and Template can be found in Appendix B.

In addition:

- The value of third-party in-kind contributions must be directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to the project.
- Minimum wage standards for student workers or Caltrans pay rates for equal-level volunteers are acceptable base values of volunteer time.
- Third-party in-kind contribution information must be identified on the Grant Application Cover Sheet, the Cost & Schedule, and the project specific Work Element in the OWP (if applicable).

Minimum Local Match Requirements

Applicants will be held responsible for any local commitments above the minimum requirement included in the grant application and will be made part of the grant agreement with Caltrans. Once the agreement is executed, any decrease to local match commitments above the minimum required amount will require Caltrans' approval through a formal amendment. The example shown in the following table illustrates the minimum local match requirement based on a grant request of \$300,000. Applicants must use the Local Match Calculator⁹ to ensure the correct amounts are reflected on the Grant Application Cover Sheet and the Cost & Schedule.

Minimum Local Match Requirements (Percentage of Total Project Cost)			
Grant Program	Grant Request	Local Match	Total Project Cost
Sustainable Communities and Strategic Partnerships –Transit	88.53% Example: \$300,000	11.47%* Example: \$38,868	100% Example: \$338,868
Strategic Partnerships	80% Example: \$300,000	20% Example: \$75,000	100% Example: \$375,000

Indirect and Direct Costs

Direct costs are those costs that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective, such as a state award, or other internally or externally funded activity, or that can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances must be treated consistently as either direct or indirect costs, also known as facilities and administrative costs or overhead costs.

Indirect Costs are costs that are incurred for a common or joint purpose. These costs benefit more than one cost objective and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective. Reproduction costs, computer purchase, and office supplies are considered indirect costs, unless they are tied to a specific task or activity.

⁹ Local Match Calculator (will download as MS Excel spreadsheet): <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/division-transportation-planning/regional-and-community-planning/9-local-match-calculator-grants-a11y.xlsx>

Indirect Cost Allocation Plan/Indirect Cost Rate Proposal

If a grantee, including sub-recipients and third-party contractors/consultants, are seeking reimbursement of indirect costs, they must submit an Indirect Cost Allocation Plan (ICAP) or an Indirect Cost Rate Proposal (ICRP) to Caltrans. Submissions should be sent to Caltrans Internal Audits Office (CIAO) or Independent Office of Audits and Investigations (IOAI).

CIAO is responsible for the review and approval of government entities and non-profits ICAP submissions.

An ICAP or ICRP must be prepared and submitted yearly in accordance with 2 CFR, Part 200. Indirect costs may be sought for reimbursement only after the grantee has received ICAP/ICRP approval from CIAO. For guidance on the ICAP/ICRP submission process, visit Caltrans Internal Audit Office¹⁰ and the Caltrans LAPM Chapter 5 Accounting/ Invoicing.¹¹

IMPORTANT NOTE

- ✓ Applications must include the estimated indirect cost rate on the Cost & Schedule.

Most Common Types of Indirect Cost Rates

The following are the most common types of Indirect Cost Rates:

- Fixed Rate
- Final Rate
- De Minimis Rate
- Safe Harbor Rate

Changes to the De Minimis Rate are outlined in the revised 2 CFR Part 200.414(f)¹² that became effective November 12, 2020.

Applications must include the estimated indirect cost rate on the Cost & Schedule.

Travel Expenses

Grantees may be eligible to claim travel expenses if they have been approved in the Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule. Travel expenses and per diem rates are not to exceed the rate specified by the State of California Department of Personnel Administration for similar employees (i.e., non-represented employees). Any request for reimbursement that exceeds the State rates will be denied. The grantee is responsible for paying beyond the State rates and cannot use local match to cover excess costs.

For more information on eligible travel expenses, visit the Caltrans Travel Guide Website.¹³

¹⁰ Caltrans Internal Audits Office, ICAP/ICRP Submission Process, 2022, <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/audits/submission-review-main>

¹¹ Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual Chapter 5, 2020, <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/local-assistance/documents/lapm/ch05.pdf>

¹² Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, 2 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200.414(f), 2020, https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=se2.1.200_1414&rgn=div8

¹³ Caltrans Travel Guide, 2020, <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/accounting/travel-guide>

Requests for Reimbursements

- Grant payments are made only as reimbursements.
- Grant reimbursements will be based on actual allowable incurred costs.
- Grant costs will be reimbursed if incurred on or after the start date and the issuance of the Notice to Proceed and before the expiration date.
- Request for Reimbursements (RFRs) must be submitted at least quarterly, but no more frequently than monthly.
- A one-time, lump sum invoice or RFR for the entire grant is not allowed.
- Grantees must pay sub-recipients and subcontractors prior to submitting an RFR to Caltrans.
- Incomplete or inaccurate RFRs will be returned for correction.
- An accounting management system generated report must accompany all RFRs.
- Refer to Chapter 8.2 to determine final RFR dates.
- When requesting reimbursement of indirect costs, the following items are required as part of the submitted RFR package:
 - An approved ICAP/ICRP rate must be on file for the FY in which the costs occurred.
 - A financial management system report that segregates direct/indirect costs by fund source.
 - ICAP support document spreadsheet that identifies direct charges and rate applied to those charges.
- Grantees must pay final consultant invoices by the final invoice due date to be eligible for reimbursement when submitting a final RFR.

5.5 Non-Discrimination Requirements

Title VI Non-Discrimination Requirement

The FHWA and the FTA each have requirements that recipients of federal Metropolitan Planning funds must demonstrate continued compliance with Title VI. Compliance with Title VI includes conducting meetings in a fair and reasonable manner that are open to all members of a community. Interpretation and translation services should also be provided when appropriate. Compliance reflects not only the law but is also a good policy that builds the kind of trust and information sharing upon which successful planning is done. Even where a city or county may not be receiving federal funding for transportation, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 also obligates that a city or county comply with Title VI, if it receives any other federal funding for any program. Refer to the Caltrans Title VI website¹⁴ for more information.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises

Successful grant applicants were previously expected to market contracting opportunities to all small businesses, including DBEs and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises. However, the U.S. Department of Transportation published an Interim Final Rule (IFR) in the Federal Register on October 3, 2025, which updates 49 CFR Parts 23 and 26 governing the DBE and Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) Programs.

The IFR issued on October 24, 2025, requires Caltrans to operate the DBE and ACDBE Programs in a constitutionally compliant, nondiscriminatory manner. The IFR eliminates all race- and sex-based

¹⁴ Caltrans, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2020,
<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi>

presumptions of disadvantage and replaces them with a strictly individualized determination standard. The California Unified Certification Program (CUCP) must reevaluate all DBE firms under the new criteria before their eligibility can be confirmed. Until the reevaluation is complete, DBE goals cannot be set on contracts, and no DBE participation may be counted toward any DBE goal.

- Per 49 CFR § 26.55(i) and § 26.47(e) (as amended), recipients may not count DBE participation toward contract or overall goals until the CUCP completes the required reevaluation of currently certified firms.
- The requirement to meet the overall goal is also suspended.
- Goal-based compliance monitoring and enforcement activities related to overall DBE attainment are temporarily suspended during this period.

For details the IFR and DBE requirements, visit the Office of Civil Rights website.¹⁵

5.6 Final Product

All final reports funded through the STPG Program shall credit the FHWA, FTA, or Caltrans' financial participation on the cover or title page. An Americans with Disabilities Act of 1994 (ADA)-accessible electronic copy of all final reports shall be forwarded to the Caltrans district office responsible for the administration and oversight of the grant. There are resources to assist with development of ADA compliant documents.¹⁶

Any technologies or inventions that may result from the use of these grants are in the public domain and may not be copyrighted, sold, or used exclusively by any business, organization, or agency. Caltrans reserves a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use and to authorize others to use for public purposes.

Applicants should thoughtfully develop the project title. Once a Caltrans grant agreement is executed, changes to the original grant project title are not allowed. Grantees may use an "Also Known As" (AKA), but both the AKA and the original title must be included in the final product.

Grantees must submit their final product with the final RFR to Caltrans for approval and reimbursement. Grantees will not be reimbursed for activities that are not completed, and the activity budget must be left unexpended.

5.7 Project Close-Out Survey

Once awarded grant projects are completed, grantees will complete a close-out survey to describe the successes and challenges of their project. The survey will give the opportunity to (1) highlight successes and obstacles in project implementation of the concepts identified by the planning process, (2) identify best practices in transportation planning, with an emphasis in public engagement, and (3) identify studies/plans that have been or will be funded for continued project development. Information from the survey will be compiled into a report to illustrate the value of

¹⁵ Caltrans, Office of Civil Rights, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Website: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights>

¹⁶ State of California Accessibility Website: <https://www.ca.gov/accessibility/>

California Department of Rehabilitation Accessibility Website: <https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/Accessibility>

MS Office Support Video: <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/video-check-the-accessibility-of-your-document-9d660cba-1fcd-45ad-a9d1-c4f4b5eb5b7d>

the grant program and inform planning practitioners in their planning efforts. Caltrans' goal is to provide transparency and accountability for the program, as well as to use the survey feedback to better serve future grant applicants.

5.8 California Public Records Act

All applications are subject to the California Public Records Act of 1968¹⁷. As such, applicants may be contacted by anyone who requests their grant application. While Caltrans is obligated to share applications at any time, awarded applicants should avoid a potential conflict of interest when contacted by consultants who may inquire about the grant-funded project and not give the consultant an unfair advantage for the consultant procurement process.

¹⁷ Leg info, California Government Code, Sections 7920 - 7931, https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayexpandedbranch.xhtml?tocCode=GOV&division=10.&title=1.&part=&chapter=&article=.

6. APPLICATION SUBMITTAL PROCESS

The STPG Program is highly competitive. This section provides applicants with supplemental information as well as details on required documents that must accompany an application at the time of submittal. All applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to these requirements to score competitively during the application evaluation process.

6.1 Applicant Eligibility

Primary applicants must have statutory authority to conduct transportation/transit planning for their jurisdiction. Generally, the local and regional agencies have this specific authority. All Native American Tribal Governments are eligible. Refer to the public entity's bylaws to find this information.

6.2 Early Coordination and Technical Assistance for Primary Applicants

Sub-applicants are encouraged to work far in advance of the application deadline with the appropriate primary applicant to coordinate application development. It is also beneficial for sub-applicants to be informed of the appropriate primary applicant process and schedule, as they may differ slightly from those of Caltrans. RTPAs residing within MPO boundaries should also coordinate application development with the MPO, as it is critical to ensure that proposed studies align with the RTP SCS/APS for the entire MPO region and do not duplicate efforts being applied for or already awarded to the MPO.

Caltrans district staff (See Appendix D) are available during the application period to answer questions and help interested groups complete their applications.

For questions specific to the STPG Application Guide, applicants are also welcome to contact:

Application Guide Technical Assistance	Contacts
Sustainable Communities & Strategic Partnerships	Kevin Mariant, Grant Management Branch Chief Caltrans Division of Transportation Planning Office of Regional and Community Planning Email: Kevin.Mariant@dot.ca.gov
Questions about Housing Element Compliance for Sustainable Communities Competitive and Technical	Paul McDougall Department of Housing and Community Development Email: Paul.McDougall@hcd.ca.gov

6.3 Application Submittal Instructions

The STPG Application Guide, Application forms, and required templates are available on the [Caltrans STPG Program website](#).

- All grant application packages must be submitted via Smartsheet.
- Smartsheet features work better with Google Chrome browser.
- Smartsheet progress cannot be saved. To avoid issues, follow these instructions:
 1. Complete the Application Cover Sheet in MS Word.
 2. Transfer Application Cover Sheet information into Smartsheet.
 3. Have the PDF attachment ready to upload into Smartsheet.
- An agency may only submit one application package per Smartsheet submittal.
- An application cannot be submitted to more than one grant category.
- The required items outlined on the Grant Application Checklist in Appendix B must be submitted as a single PDF document (not to exceed 25MB); if awarded, original formats will be requested.
- All application documents must list the applicant's legal name.
- Confirmation of receipt can be sent via Smartsheet if the applicant checks the box to receive a copy of the submittal.

[Submit applications](#) by Friday, October 9, 2026 by 5 p.m.

Hard copies will not be accepted, and late applications will not be reviewed.

Caltrans anticipated STPG award announcements: Spring 2027

Caltrans district staff are available to help during the application period. Refer to Appendix D, *Caltrans District Contact List*, for contact information.

Download the latest version of [Adobe Reader DC ®](#) to complete the application form.
This version of Adobe is available free of charge.

6.4 Application Supplemental Documentation

The following documents are not required, but enhance the overall application and typically result in a more competitive application during the evaluation process:

Letters of Support

Letters of support must be included with the application package. Letters received late or separate from the application package will not be considered. The letters should be addressed to the applicant. Such letters can come from community-based organizations, local governments, regional governments, Native American Tribal Governments, service agencies, and elected officials.

Graphics

Clearly labeled photographs, maps, planning diagrams, land use or design illustrations, or other relevant graphic representations of the proposed project area convey existing conditions and help to further explain the need for the grant and the priority of the proposed planning project with respect to community need. Please ensure that graphics include a text description to provide context.

Safety Data

Statistical data such as pedestrian-vehicle injuries/crashes or fatalities resulting from lack of safe infrastructure, or other road conditions that contribute to possible injuries can support the need for the proposed project. This information may be obtained from police reports, transit agencies, National Highway Traffic Administration, or the Governor's Highway Safety Association.

Travel Mode Data

Data on mode share, commute patterns, accessibility for low-income and under-resourced populations, access to job centers, or other data to show the need and potential for mode shift to non-auto transportation modes.

Other Data

As applicable, to indicate the need and potential for reducing VMT and GHG, where available.

The following documents are not required, but enhance the overall application and typically result in a more competitive application during the evaluation process:

- Letters of Support
- Graphics
- Safety Data
- Travel Mode Data
- Other Data

7. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

7.1 Two-Tiered Application Review Process

This chapter provides a brief overview of the grant application review process. Grant application evaluation is a two-tiered process that consists of:

- Caltrans District Review and Evaluation
- Caltrans Headquarters (HQ) Interagency Review Committees Evaluation

Caltrans district staff conducts the first-level review of all applications for content, submission of proper documentation, overall relationship to regional and local planning efforts, and documents their evaluations. Caltrans district staff scores, prioritizes, and recommends the most highly ranked Sustainable Communities and all Strategic Partnerships applications for the next level of review with the HQ Interagency Review Committees. Grant applications from Native American Tribal Governments, Transit Agencies, and proposed projects spanning multiple Caltrans districts or projects having a statewide significance, may also move on directly from Caltrans districts to HQ for review.

The HQ Interagency Review Committees conduct the second-level review and comprise staff from Caltrans HQ, FHWA, FTA, HCD, the California Department of Public Health, the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, the Strategic Growth Council, and the California Air Resources Board. Caltrans HQ also coordinates with internal specialists, depending on the grant application subject matter, to provide high-level reviews of the proposed project to avoid funding duplicative efforts or efforts that are not supportive of State planning efforts. The committees for each grant category convene to develop funding recommendations that are approved by every level of Caltrans management and the California State Transportation Agency.

7.2 Application Evaluation/Scoring Process

Grant applications that address every aspect of the grant specific objectives will score higher overall. Caltrans has diverse applicants and project types, which makes it difficult to use a one-size fits all scoring rubric that would not unintentionally put some applicant/project types at a disadvantage. Therefore, applications will be scored based on how well they are able to describe the project, justify need, incorporate the grant specific objectives, and develop a Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule, all in accordance with the STPG application guide, samples and checklists provided, as applicable and appropriate for the applicant and project type. Once the grant review committees evaluate, rank, and select the best applications for grant funding, final recommendations are presented to Caltrans management and California State Transportation Agency for approval.

7.3 Past Performance Award Considerations

Previous Caltrans transportation planning grantee performance will be considered during the evaluation process. Applicants with a history of inadequate performance and/or unresolved past grant performance issues may be at a competitive disadvantage in the application review process. Past performance issues could include the following:

- Poor grant project management
- Lack of communication/coordination with Caltrans
- Failure to achieve grant project milestones
- Untimely invoice submittals

- Excessive balances and consistent relinquishment of transportation funds administered by Caltrans HQ Division of Transportation Planning
- Unresolved audit issues or findings
- Overall poor quality of the final grant product
- Failure to satisfy the required State and federal planning requirements including submittal and administration of OWPs, RTPs, and Transportation Improvement Programs

If an agency does not demonstrate adequate performance and timely use of funds, Caltrans may take appropriate actions, which can include denial of extenuating circumstance time extension requests and termination of the grant.

8. APPLICATION AWARD PROCESS

8.1 Award and Non-Award

Successful grant applicants will receive a Conditional Award Letter via email. A list of awarded and non-awarded grants will be posted to the [Caltrans STPG Program website](#).

Conditional Award Teleconferences

Each grantee will receive a Conditional Award Letter that outlines the grant project cost and important expiration and final invoice dates.

Caltrans district staff will schedule individual teleconferences to provide the specific and general conditions of grant acceptance that are necessary to accept grant funding, including any revisions to the grant application, Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule. Conditions may include revisions to the project Scope of Work to bolster public participation, consider land use and housing, and to coordinate with local housing and community development departments and health departments. Awardees are required to submit all supporting materials and a signed agreement or risk forfeiting the grant award.

Non-Award Debriefings

Unsuccessful grant applicants are encouraged to request a debriefing from Caltrans. Applicants typically receive specific comments from the District/HQ Interagency Review Committee on how to improve applications to re-apply in a future grant cycle. If the application advanced to the second-level review, HQ provides the HQ Interagency Review Committee score, as well as how close the application was relative to the cut-off score for available grant funding. Applicants sometimes apply two or three times before they are successful due to the competitiveness of the grant program.

8.2 Contracting with Caltrans

All awarded grant funds must be under an executed agreement with Caltrans during the State FY 2027-28. The project start date depends on the method of contracting with Caltrans.

MPOs and RTPAs

All MPOs/RTPAs with a current Master Fund Transfer Agreement (MFTA) must have the entire grant award and local match programmed in the FY 2027-28 OWP within 90-days of receiving the signed FY 2026-27 reconciliation letter. Due to the competitiveness of this grant program, failure to program funds may result in forfeiture of grant funds. To maximize the eligible grant activity period, MPOs/RTPAs should include a place-holder Work Element in the Draft FY 2027-28 OWP, satisfy any specific and general conditions of award, and program the grant in an early FY 2027-28 OWP amendment. If they do so, MPO/RTPAs can anticipate starting their project in July 2027, after the OWP amendment is approved and Caltrans issues a formal Notice to Proceed.

Non-MPOs/RTPAs

Grantees that do not have a current MFTA with ORCP (i.e., cities, counties, transit agencies, Native American Tribal Governments), will contract directly with Caltrans through the Restricted Grant Agreement (RGA) process. For grantees that undergo the RGA contracting process, work may begin as early as September 2027, assuming the grantee has received a fully executed contract and Caltrans district staff send a formal Notice to Proceed which allows grantees to begin work.

Estimated Project Start/Expiration Dates

It is important for applicants to reflect the estimated project start date in the Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule. Project timeline constraints for both methods of contracting with Caltrans are provided below. Grantees must consider these dates when developing the Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule:

Master Fund Transfer Agreement Project Timeline (MPOs/RTPAs Only)	
July 2027	Anticipated start date
June 30, 2030	- Grant project end/expiration date - Reimbursable work must be completed - Grant extensions are only allowed for extenuating circumstances and may require a formal Overall Work Program (OWP) amendment
August 29, 2030	All Final RFRs must be submitted no later than 60 days after the end of the fiscal year to coincide with the submission of the OWP Final Expenditure Report
Restricted Grant Agreement Project Timeline (Non-MPO/RTPAs)	
July 2027	Anticipated start date
June 30, 2030	- Grant project end/expiration date - Reimbursable work must be completed - Grant extensions are only allowed for extenuating circumstances and require a formal amendment
August 29, 2030	Final RFRs and final products must be submitted to Caltrans for approval and reimbursement. This allows Caltrans sufficient time to comply with the State Controller's Office payment requirements.

Native American Tribal Governments

Native American Tribal Governments have the following options for contracting with Caltrans:

- (1) Contracting with Tribes Directly** – The authority Caltrans uses to contract with tribes directly comes from California Streets and Highways Code section 94. **Caltrans no longer requires tribes to provide a limited waiver of sovereign immunity with an RGA unless requested by a tribe.** The RGA boilerplate template for Native American Tribal Governments is available upon request.
- (2) Partnering with a Regional Agency** – Another mechanism for contracting with Caltrans is to collaborate with an MPO or RTPA with a current MFTA. Caltrans can pass through grant funding to tribes for planning projects where options or time are limited. This option uses the three-part contract, MFTA/OWP/OWPA, and is usually the quickest option to allow planning projects to get started.
- (3) Transferring Funds Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 202(a)(9)** – Section 202(a)(9) of title 23, United States Code encourages cooperation between States and Tribes by allowing any funds received from a State, county, or local government to be credited to appropriations available for the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP). One potential source of such funding is funds apportioned or

allocated to a State under title 23. Section 104(f)(3) allows the Secretary of Transportation to, at the request of a State, transfer among States, or to FHWA, funds that have been so apportioned or allocated. This provision, used in conjunction with the authority under 23 U.S.C. 209(a)(9), allows State funds to be transferred to FHWA, which in turn would provide the funds to the specified Tribe.

For more information visit the FHWA website.¹⁸

Caltrans has successfully used the federal Section 202(a)(9) process to transfer Sustainable Communities grant funds to a Native American Tribal Government. To use this transfer process, an agreement would need to be in place with FHWA or the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Tribe, and the State that clearly identifies the project and the roles and responsibilities of all parties. Each interagency fund transfer includes 1) a fund transfer template and 2) an addendum lining out the specifics of the terms. This option requires involvement and approval by Caltrans Legal and the funds must be used for the intended purpose of the awarded Sustainable Communities grant.

¹⁸ Federal Highway Administration, Office of Tribal Transportation , 2020
<https://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/ttp/documents/Funds-Transfer-Procedures-Pursuant-to-23-U.S.C.202%28a%29%289%29.pdf>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. GUIDANCE, TOOLS, AND RESOURCES FOR PREPARING A GRANT APPLICATION

Grant Program Considerations

The STPG Application Guide incorporates guidance from many sources. The following links are provided to assist applicants in preparing a competitive grant application consistent with the grant program, specific objectives, and the Grant Program Considerations:

- Caltrans Strategic Plan
- California Transportation Plan (CTP) 2050
- California Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) 2025-2029
- Modal Plans that Support the CTP
 - Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan
 - California Freight Mobility Plan
 - California State Rail Plan
 - California State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
 - Statewide Transit Plan
 - California Aviation System Plan
- Title VI and Environmental Justice
- Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure
- California Climate Adaptation Strategy
- Master Plan for Aging
- Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards Program

Caltrans Strategic Plan

The Caltrans Strategic Plan is our guiding document that defines our culture, lays out our top priorities and represents our desired outcomes. It is our roadmap to the future. The tools we use to implement this Plan are performance management, transparency, accountability, sustainability, and innovation. The Plan serves a number of functions including:

- Provides direction for meeting statewide outcomes;
- Provides performance objectives that monitor success; and
- Outlines how Caltrans will lead the way in helping improve the quality of life for all Californians

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/risk-strategic-management/documents/2024-28-caltrans-strategic-plan-final-a11y.pdf>

California Transportation Plan 2050

The CTP 2050 is the State's statutorily fiscally unconstrained long-range transportation roadmap for positive change that:

- Provides a unifying and foundational policy framework for making effective, transparent, and transformational transportation decisions in California
- Addresses the varied transportation needs of urban, suburban, rural, and tribal communities
- Emphasizes implementation and identifies a timeline, roles, and responsibilities for each plan recommendation.

The CTP does not contain projects, but policies and strategies required to close the gap between what the RTPs aim to achieve and how much more is required to meet 2050 goals. Competitive applications will discuss how proposed projects will assist in achieving the CTP 2050.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/ctp-2050-v3-a11y.pdf>

Strategic Highway Safety Plan

California's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) is a statewide, comprehensive, data-driven effort to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on public roads. Started in 2005, the SHSP is updated regularly to ensure continued progress and meet changing safety needs. Currently, over 500 safety stakeholders from 80 public and private agencies and organizations work together to implement the plan under the direction of the SHSP Executive Leadership and a 13-member Steering Committee. The SHSP includes behavioral, infrastructure, and technology strategies addressing the "5Es" of safety: engineering, enforcement, education, emergency services, and emerging technologies.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/shsp/2025-2029-ca-shsp-plan-a11y.pdf>

Modal Plans that Support the California Transportation Plan

The CTP is the umbrella plan that informs and pulls together the State's long-range modal plans, described below, to envision the future system:

Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP)

A Caltrans document that provides guidance for the identification and prioritization of interregional transportation improvements to be funded in the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). The ITSP analyzes the entire interregional transportation system including highways and rail. While the ITSP informs the ITIP, the purpose of the plan is to be a guiding document for all investment in the interregional transportation system regardless of funding source.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/system-planning/systemplanning/2021-itsp-oct21-a11y.pdf>

California Freight Mobility Plan

A statewide, long-range plan for California's freight transportation system. Developed in collaboration with our partners, the California Freight Mobility Plan (CFMP) was developed by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and Caltrans in consultation with the California Freight Advisory Committee.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/cfmp/cfmp-july-2023-final-v1-a11y.pdf>

California State Rail Plan

A statewide plan that provides a framework for planning and implementing California's rail network for the next 20 years and beyond. The Rail Plan is a strategic plan with operating and capital investment strategies that will lead to a coordinated, statewide travel system.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/rail-mass-transportation/documents/california-state-rail-plan/2024-ca-state-rail-plan-a11y.pdf>

California State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

"Toward an Active California," California's first statewide plan that lays out the policies and actions that Caltrans and its partner agencies will take to achieve the Department's ambitious statewide goals to double walking and triple bicycling trips by 2020.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/f0020350-activeca-final-plan-2017-05-18-a11y.pdf>

2023 Progress Report:

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/active-transportation-complete-streets/2023-sbpp-progress-report-v2-a11y.pdf>

Statewide Transit Plan

The Statewide Transit Plan establishes a statewide unified vision for an integrated transit system that provides comprehensive and coordinated service to passengers through a frequent, reliable, accessible, and seamless public transportation system. The Transit Plan outlines the vision, goals, objectives, strategies, and actions for improving public transportation in California.

California Aviation System Plan

A multi-element plan prepared by Caltrans with the goal of developing and preserving the system of publicly owned, public-use airports and to promote the development of a safe, efficient, and sustainable air transportation system that meets the integrated mobility needs of the State of California.

https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/aeronautics/documents/2020_casp_adopted_divofaero_01052022-a11y.pdf

Title VI and Environmental Justice

Title VI

Title VI of the U.S. Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. A similar prohibition applies to recipients of State funds under California Government Code section 11135, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, as well as ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, or disability. Title VI specifically provides the following:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving financial assistance from the Federal government.

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi>

The following tools are provided to assist grant applicants with integrating environmental justice in their proposed activities:

Environmental Justice Agency Assessment 2020

The California Environmental Justice Alliance completed the fifth Environmental Justice Agency Assessment, the only one in the nation to formally examine how state agencies develop, implement, and monitor environmentally related policies that particularly impact low-income

communities and communities of color. The assessment is conducted in the spirit of holding state agencies and elected officials accountable to the public, and to provide guidance on how they can make their work more equitable.

https://ceja.org/file_download/inline/fe24c241-a042-4c44-a482-f8897b402608

Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure

The Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) and the subsequent CAPTI 2.0 (published in January 2025) detail how the State recommends investing billions of discretionary transportation dollars annually to aggressively combat and adapt to climate change while supporting public health, safety and equity. CAPTI builds on executive orders signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in 2019 and 2020 targeted at reducing GHG emissions in transportation, which account for more than 40 percent of all emissions, to reach the State's ambitious climate goals.

CAPTI:

<https://calsta.ca.gov/-/media/calsta-media/documents/capti-july-2021-a11y.pdf>

CAPTI 2.0:

<https://calsta.ca.gov/-/media/calsta-media/documents/capti-2025-a11y.pdf>

California Climate Adaptation Strategy

The California Climate Adaptation Strategy, mandated by Assembly Bill 1482 (Gordon, 2015), links the State's existing and planned climate adaptation efforts, showing how they fit together to achieve California's six climate resilience priorities. The Strategy is organized around outcome-based priorities, enabling a coordinated, integrated approach to building climate resilience. The Strategy shows how the State's efforts fit together to deliver on six priorities for climate resilience action in California: Strengthen Protections for Climate Vulnerable Communities; Bolster Public Health and Safety to Protect Against Increasing Climate Risks; Make Decisions Based on the Best Available Climate Science; Build a Climate Resilient Economy; Accelerate Nature-Based Climate Solutions and Strengthen Climate Resilience of Natural Systems; Partner and Collaborate to Leverage Resources.

<https://www.climate resilience.ca.gov/>

Master Plan for Aging

The Master Plan for Aging is a blueprint for aging across the lifespan and outlines five goals and twenty-three strategies to build a California for All Ages by 2030. It also includes a Data Dashboard for Aging to measure progress and a Local Playbook to drive partnerships that will assist in meeting the goals of the Master Plan.

<https://mpa.aging.ca.gov/>

Master Plan for Aging Local Playbook:

<https://aging.ca.gov/download.ashx?IE0rcNUV0zb5AqXyfgtfvg%3d%3d>

Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards Program

Reconnecting communities efforts focus on restoring community connectivity by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community cohesion, including to mobility, access, or economic development. Strengthening

partnerships with other state, regional, tribal, and local agencies is a key facet of reconnecting community efforts.

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/rc-h2b>

Resources to Advance Grant Specific Objectives

Applicants must demonstrate how the project fits every aspect of the Grant Specific Objective, as appropriate for the applicant and project type. The following resources are provided in this section:

- Addressing the Needs of Under-Resourced Communities
- Integrated Housing, Land Use, and Transportation Planning
- Advance Transportation Related GHG Reduction Project Types/Strategies
- Promote the Region's RTP SCS/APS, State Planning Priorities, and Climate Adaptation Goals
- Active Community Engagement
- Public Health Resources
- Multimodal System Planning
- Climate Ready Transportation and Climate Adaptation Planning

Addressing the Needs of Under-Resourced Communities

Caltrans encourages eligible applicants to apply for Sustainable Communities Competitive Grants to address transportation needs and deficiencies in under-resourced communities. Supporting planning projects that benefit a under-resourced community is a priority; therefore, a minimum threshold of 50 percent of Sustainable Communities Competitive Grants has been identified for projects that benefit under-resourced communities, which includes Native American Tribal Governments and rural communities (for transportation planning purposes, rural is defined as all areas of the state that are not included in urbanized areas of 50,000 in population or greater; see map in Appendix C which indicates rural areas). In sum, acceptable under-resourced communities definitions include:

- Rural communities of 50,000 or less and outside of urbanized areas
- Native American Tribal Governments
- Regionally/locally defined under-resourced communities
- At or below 80% Assembly Bill 1550 (Gomez, Chapter 369, Statutes of 2016)

- At or above 75% California Department of Education, Free or Reduced Priced Meals Data
- At or above 75% CalEnviroScreen Version 4.0
- At or below 25% California Healthy Places Index (HPI)

Grant applicants are required to provide a justification in their grant application for how the project area meets the definition of an under-resourced community and a description of how the project will benefit these communities, as well as how these communities will be engaged throughout the project.

The following tools, related to income level, environmental burden, and health inequities, are intended to help applicants identify the most vulnerable places that are facing disproportionate rates of economic, environmental, and health burdens. These tools must be cited in the grant application, as well as how the project area is compared to the statewide thresholds that are established in each tool.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Grant applicants are required to provide a justification in their grant application for how the project area meets the definition of under-resourced communities and a description of how the project will benefit these communities, as well as how these communities will be engaged throughout the project.

Regionally and/or Locally Defined Under-Resourced Communities

Regionally and/or locally defined under-resourced communities may be acceptable as long as statewide thresholds for the tools below are not circumvented. Applicants that use a regional or local definition should also provide data for their project, using the statewide tools below. Caltrans may not accept the regional/local definition if it is inadequately supported in the justification section of the grant application.

Assembly Bill (AB) 1550 (Gomez, Chapter 369, Statutes of 2016)

AB 1550 further enhanced the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund statutory requirements to invest a minimum of twenty-five percent in under-resourced communities and another ten percent in low-income households or communities. AB 1550 provides definitions for low-income households and low-income communities that may be considered in application development:

- (1) "Low-income households" are those with household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by HCD's list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093.
- (2) "Low-income communities" are census tracts with median household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with median household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by HCD's list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093.

AB 1550: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1550

California Department of Education, Free or Reduced Priced Meals (FRMP) Data

The California Department of Education maintains the complete data files pertaining to students who are eligible for FRMP. FRMP data are collected annually and can also be used to assist Sustainable Communities applicants to define their under-resourced community. Per SB 99 (Chapter 359, Statutes of 2013), the State's Active Transportation Program disadvantaged

community's definition includes low-income schools, where at least 75 percent of students are eligible to receive free or reduced meals under the National School Lunch Program.

FRMP data files: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filespp.asp>

SB 99: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB99

CalEnviroScreen Version 4.0

CalEnviroScreen is a screening methodology that can be used to help identify California communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. CalEnviroScreen uses environmental, health, and socioeconomic information to produce a numerical score for each census tract in the state. For purposes of SB 535 (De León, Statutes of 2012), disadvantaged communities are defined as the top 25 percent scoring areas from CalEnviroScreen along with other areas with high amounts of pollution and vulnerable populations.

<https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>

California Healthy Places Index (HPI)

HPI is an interactive data and mapping tool that provides a detailed snapshot of the social determinants of health across California, mapped down to the Census tract level. HPI provides comparison rankings of Census tracts statewide and an accompanying policy action guide. Therefore, the HPI can be a useful tool in prioritizing areas with high levels of social and economic disadvantage for funding, policy, and planning interventions. HPI was developed by the Public Health Alliance of Southern California in collaboration with health departments and data experts across the state. Because HPI focuses on the social and environmental conditions that contribute to health, policy makers and local agencies can use it to identify actionable policies that would improve health in their community, such as improving transportation access, housing affordability and quality, or access to parks and open space, HPI also incorporates "decision support layers" that can be overlaid to show additional indicators such as the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) climate change and health vulnerability indicators (see Appendix A, *Public Health Resources*, CDPH Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Indicators for more information).



<https://healthyplacesindex.org/>

Understanding the HPI Score

HPI includes a composite score for each Census tract in the state. The higher the score, the healthier the community conditions. Each Census tract's score is converted to a percentile, which allows it to be compared to other California Census tracts. For example, an HPI percentile of 79 indicates that a Census tract has healthier community conditions than 79 percent of the Census tracts in California. HPI percentile rankings are further broken into quartiles, with percentiles below 25 typically used to indicate disadvantaged communities. Thus, lower scores can be used to demonstrate a community, or project/service area, is under-resourced for purposes of qualifying for the minimum threshold of 50 percent for under-resourced communities in this program.

In addition to the composite score and percentile ranking, applicants can review the individual domain scores or indicators themselves and explain how their project will improve one or more of these public health challenges. The numeric value and percentile ranking for these component indicators can be found either by using the live map or by accessing the data directly. See the following table for HPI examples.

These HPI tools can be accessed at:

Live Map: <https://map.healthylplacesindex.org/>

HPI Learning Center: <https://www.healthylplacesindex.org/learning-center>

HPI Examples		
Indicator	HDI Percentile	How will the project improve this health challenge?
Policy Action Area (Composite) Scores		
Neighborhood	Percentile ranking of all neighborhood-related indicators	Demonstrate how this plan will address health and transportation challenges related to neighborhood indicators (park access, supermarket access, retail density, alcohol availability and tree canopy)
Transportation	Percentile ranking of all transportation indicators	Demonstrate how this plan will address health and transportation challenges related automobile access and active commuting
Individual Indicators		
Automobile Access	XX percent	Describe how plan will increase and improve transportation access to vital destinations, goods and services for those without auto access.
Active Commuting	XX percent	Describe how the plan will improve transportation options for those without a car, specifically regarding active commuting by foot, bike, and transit in the project area.
Park Access	XX percent	Demonstrate how project will improve transportation access to parks/ open space.

For more information on HPI, including how to calculate a score for your project area and suggested project types for improving public health, visit <https://healthylplacesindex.org/>.

Caltrans Transportation Equity Index

The Equity Index (EQI) is a mapping tool developed by Caltrans to identify areas with the greatest need for improved transportation, access and safety. It incorporates multiple indicators, including underserved communities (based on Census blocks aligned with SB 535 and AB 1550), traffic exposure (such as proximity to high-volume corridors), access to destinations (measuring multimodal access to essential services), and transportation-based priority populations (considering demographic factors and the intersection of transportation benefits and burdens). Together, these components provide a comprehensive, data-driven view of transportation equity conditions at a granular level.

Underserved Communities – Caltrans defines underserved communities using a combination of socioeconomic and geographic criteria captured in the EQI. This includes low-income communities as well as Tribal lands. These definitions align with state guidance (i.e., SB 960) and are intended to ensure consistency in identifying communities most affected by transportation inequities, therefore supporting more equitable planning, investment, and decision-making. For

additional details, users can refer to the EQI User Guide and the SB 960 Underserved Communities Guidance available on the EQI website.

SB 960 Underserved Communities Guidance: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/esta/documents/race-equity/eqi/directors-office-eqi-fact-sheet-final-a11y.pdf>

EQI Website: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/eta/transpo-equity/eqi/resources>

Senate Bill 1000 (Leyva, Chapter 587, Statutes of 2016)

SB 1000 requires local jurisdictions to develop an Environmental Justice (EJ) element, or integrate related goals, policies, and objectives in other elements of their General Plans. These EJ updates must be adopted or reviewed upon the adoption or next revision of 2 or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018. Grant applicants are encouraged to describe efforts to comply with this new General Plan requirement.

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB1000

California Environmental Justice Alliance SB 1000 Toolkit

The California Environmental Justice Alliance SB 1000 Toolkit offers resources to support local governments and planners with the implementation of SB 1000 statutes. The toolkit can help applicants describe their efforts to include the EJ element in their General Plan updates.

https://ceja.org/file_download/inline/17d82997-0254-4509-9598-58efd0baaa33

Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) General Plan Guidelines Senate Bill 1000 Technical Advisory

The OPR General Plan Guidelines for Senate Bill 1000 provide guidance for determining whether an EJ element or equivalent is required in a local jurisdiction, including identifying the location of disadvantaged communities (as defined in Gov. Code, § 65302, subdivision (h)(4)(A))¹⁹ as well as the nature of their environmental burdens, health risks, and needs. The guidelines also provide considerations for conducting community engagement with disadvantaged communities; and offers goals, policies, and programs that address the unique and compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities, as well as prioritize improvements and programs that meet the needs of disadvantaged communities.

https://lci.ca.gov/docs/20200706-GPG_Chapter_4_EJ.pdf

Displacement/Gentrification

Transportation improvements, especially new rail lines and stations to low-income communities, can increase access to opportunities. But they can also result in much higher property values and an increase in the cost of owning and renting property, inadvertently displacing existing residents and businesses. Being forced to leave a home is a stressful, costly and traumatic life event, especially when affordable housing is so limited. There is a growing recognition of tools and strategies that can be implemented alongside community investments to reduce displacement.

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https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=1.&title=7.&part=&chapter=3.&article=5

Grant applicants are encouraged to reference the *2024 RTP Guidelines, Appendices E and G*, for best practices in addressing displacement of low income and under-resourced communities.

Transformative Climate Communities Program

The State's Transformative Climate Communities Program provides a framework for applicants to avoid displacement and may assist Sustainable Communities grant applicants in addressing displacement.

https://sgc.ca.gov/meetings/council/2022/docs/20220428-Item5a_TCC_Guidelines_Round%204_Technical%20Amendment_Clean.pdf

Implementing Senate Bill 350 (De Leon, Chapter 547, Statutes of 2015) and Community Needs Assessments

Caltrans supports implementation of SB 350, the Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015, which establishes the State priority to reduce GHG emissions through the promotion of various clean energy policies, including widespread transportation electrification, for the benefit of all Californians. Transforming the State's transportation sector to support widespread electrification requires increasing access for all Californians, including low-income residents and those living in under-resourced communities, across a broad spectrum of clean transportation and mobility options to address community specific transportation needs. Caltrans is leading efforts to identify low-income residents and under-resourced communities' transportation and mobility needs through ongoing and potential future statewide planning processes.

In support of this State goal, Sustainable Communities applicants are encouraged to conduct local Community Needs Assessments of low-income resident and under-resourced communities' transportation and mobility needs to ensure feedback is incorporated in transportation planning. Community Needs Assessments include an evaluation of the following categories of transportation barriers and opportunities at the community level: (1) Access and Reliability; (2) Convenience; (3) Safety; (4) Demographic Characteristics and Community Setting; and, (5) Planning, Infrastructure and Investments.

SB 350: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB350

Final Guidance Document, Low-Income Barriers Study, Part B: Overcoming Barriers to Clean Transportation Access for Low-Income Residents

In February 2018, the California Air Resources Board released the Final Guidance Document, *Low-Income Barriers Study, Part B: Overcoming Barriers to Clean Transportation Access for Low-Income Residents*. This Guidance Document provides background for SB 350 and may assist Sustainable Communities applicants with developing Community Needs Assessments as a standalone project or as part of a proposed project.

<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/carb-barriers-report-final-guidance-document>

Integrated Housing, Land Use, and Transportation Planning

Development patterns directly impact GHG emissions, including those from transportation between jobs, services, and housing. Improved coordination between housing and transportation can reduce commute times, increase transit ridership, lower VMT, lower pollution and GHG, provide greater economic opportunity, and other positive outcomes.

Housing Element Compliance

To support planning for housing California's growing population, HCD reviews each local government's housing element of its general plan.

- The housing element must plan to meet the local government's existing and regional housing needs allocation and quantify and analyze the specific needs and resources available to address the housing needs.
- A housing element can also provide a mechanism to adopt efficient land-use strategies, including those that address climate change and reduce VMT. For example, strategies could include the promotion of affordable higher density, infill development, mixed-use development, or transit-oriented development near transit stations or transit corridors.
- Local governments are required to annually submit progress reports on the implementation of the housing element and provide a detail of production toward their projected housing needs.

For more information on:

- Housing element requirements, see the HCD Building Blocks website at <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-elements/building-blocks>
- Adopted housing element requirements, see the "Housing Element Process" section at <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-elements>
- A local government's housing element compliance, see <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-open-data-tools/housing-element-review-and-compliance-report>
- Annual Progress Reports, see <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/annual-progress-reports>

Pro-housing Designation Program

The State 2019-20 Budget Act, Assembly Bill 101 enacted the Pro-housing Designation Program (Program), which enables HCD to designate local jurisdictions as Pro-housing when they demonstrate policies and planning that accelerate the production of housing. To receive the Pro-housing Designation, local jurisdictions must meet basic threshold requirements related to compliance with the Housing Element Law and other State housing laws and demonstrate actions worth at least 30 points spread across each of four categories of Pro-housing policies: favorable zoning and land use, acceleration of housing production timeframes, reduction of construction and development costs, and providing financial subsidies. The benefit to local jurisdictions receiving the Pro-housing Designation includes being given an advantage such as priority processing or additional points when applying for several competitive funding programs, including:

- Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities
- Infill Infrastructure Grant
- Transformative Climate Communities
- Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program

VMT reducing policies and the Pro-housing Enhancement Factors below help indicate that a project is within a jurisdiction supporting integrated housing, land use, and transportation planning. These policies show that a jurisdiction further supports State housing priorities in promoting affordable housing, reducing development barriers, and reducing vehicle miles travelled.

Pro-housing Enhancement Factors include policies that:

- Represent one element of a unified, multi-faceted strategy to promote multiple planning objectives, such as efficient land use, access to public transportation, affordable housing, climate change solutions, and/or hazard mitigation.
- Promote development consistent with the State planning priorities pursuant to Government Code section 65041.1.
- Go beyond State law requirements in reducing displacement of lower income households and conserving existing housing stock that is affordable to lower income households.
- Rezoning and other policies that support high-density development in Location Efficient Communities.

VTM reducing policies may include projects located in jurisdictions that are/have:

- Permitting missing middle housing uses (e.g., triplexes and fourplexes) by right in existing low-density, single-family residential zones.
- With density bonus programs which exceed statutory requirements by 10 percent or more.
- Increasing allowable density in low-density, single-family residential areas beyond the requirements of State Accessory Dwelling Unit law (e.g., permitting more than one ADU or JADU per single-family lot). These policies shall be separate from any qualifying policies under category (ii) above.
- Reducing or eliminating parking requirements for residential development as authorized by Government Code sections 65852.2; adopting vehicular parking ratios that are less than the relevant ratio thresholds at subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of Government Code section 65915, subdivision (p)(1); or adopting maximum parking requirements at or less than ratios pursuant to Government Code section 65915, subdivision (p).
- Zoning to allow for residential or mixed uses in one or more non-residential zones (e.g., commercial, light industrial). Qualifying non-residential zones do not include open space or substantially similar zones.
- Modifying development standards and other applicable zoning provisions to promote greater development intensity. Potential areas of focus include floor area ratio; height limits; minimum lot or unit sizes; setbacks; and allowable dwelling units per acre. These policies must be separate from any qualifying policies under Category (ii) above.
- Adopted a Nondiscretionary Local Approval Process for residential and mixed-use development in all zones permitting multifamily housing, established a Workforce Housing Opportunity Zone, as defined in Government Code section 65620, or a housing sustainability district, as defined in Government Code section 66200.
- Zoning more sites for residential development or zoning sites at higher densities than is required to accommodate 150 percent of the minimum regional housing need allocation for the Lower-Income allocation in the current housing element cycle.
- Priority permit processing or reduced plan check times for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)/Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs), multifamily housing, or homes affordable to Lower- or Moderate-Income households.
- Adopted ordinances or implemented other mechanisms that result in less restrictive requirements than Government Code sections 65852.2 and 65852.22 to reduce barriers for property owners to create ADUs/JADUs. Examples of qualifying policies include, but are not limited to, development standards improvements, permit processing improvements, dedicated ADU/JADU staff, technical assistance programs, and pre-approved ADU/JADU design packages.
- Measures that reduce costs for transportation-related infrastructure or programs that encourage active modes of transportation or other alternatives to automobiles. Qualifying policies include, but are not limited to, publicly funded programs to expand sidewalks or

protect bike/micro-mobility lanes; creation of on-street parking for bikes; transit-related improvements; or establishment of carshare programs.

- Established pre-approved or prototype plans for missing middle housing types (e.g., triplexes and fourplexes) in low-density, single-family residential areas.
- Documented practice of streamlining housing development at the project level, such as by enabling a by-right approval process or by utilizing statutory and categorical exemptions as authorized by applicable law (Pub. Resources Code, sections 21155.1, 21155.4, 21159.24, 21159.25; Gov. Code, section 65457; Cal Code Regs., tit. 14, sections 15303, 15332; Pub. Resources Code, sections 21094.5, 21099, 21155.2, 21159.28).
- Policies that represent one element of a unified, multi-faceted strategy to promote multiple planning objectives, such as efficient land use, access to public transportation, affordable housing, climate change solutions, and/or hazard mitigation.
- Policies that promote development consistent with the State planning priorities pursuant to Government Code section 65041.1.
- Rezoning and other policies that support high-density development in Location Efficient Communities.

For more information on the Pro-housing Designation Program, email HCD at ProhousingPolicies@hcd.ca.gov or visit the following HCD websites:

Program Website

<https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/prohousing-designation-program>

Pro-housing Designation Application Status List

<https://www.hcd.ca.gov/sites/default/files/docs/planning-and-community/Prohousing-Public-Application-Tracker.xlsx>

Pro-housing Designation Program FAQs

<https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/prohousing/docs/ProhousingFAQ.pdf>

Advance Transportation Related GHG Reduction Project Types/Strategies

CARB 2022 Scoping Plan, Appendix E

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted the *2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality*, to guide how the State develops communities, preserves and protects its landscapes, and ensures that all Californians have equitable access to housing, health care, jobs, and opportunity. Competitive Sustainable Communities grant applications will demonstrate a linkage to this land use vision.

The 2022 Scoping Plan (Appendix E, *Sustainable and Equitable Communities*) also includes information on the need for reducing VMT and outlines a list of potential additional strategies that the State and other responsible parties could pursue to help achieve further VMT reduction, support local and regional actions already underway, and advance multiple additional goals.

While this document is intended to guide State-level actions, many of the strategies can also be implemented at a regional and local level. Sustainable Communities grant applicants are encouraged to explore these strategies and apply them, as appropriate, to proposed planning projects.

CARB 2022 Scoping Plan (all updates and appendices):

<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/ab-32-climate-change-scoping-plan/2022-scoping-plan-documents>

CARB 2022 Scoping Plan, Appendix E:

<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-11/2022-sp-appendix-e-sustainable-and-equitable-communities.pdf>

For current CARB activities and future updates on Scoping Plan efforts, visit:

<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/ab-32-climate-change-scoping-plan>

Senate Bill 375

The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375) was signed in 2008. It supports the State's climate goals by helping reduce GHG emissions through coordinated transportation, housing, and land use planning.

Under the Sustainable Communities Act, CARB sets regional targets for GHG emissions reductions from passenger vehicle use. CARB set targets for 2020 and 2035 for each of the 18 MPO regions.

Each of the MPO regions must prepare an SCS/APS, as an integral part of its RTP, that contains land use, housing, and transportation strategies that, if implemented, would allow the region to meet CARB's targets. Once the SCS/APS is adopted by the MPO, CARB must review the adopted SCS/APS to accept or reject the MPO's determination that the SCS/APS, if implemented, would meet the targets.

Sustainable Communities grant applicants, where applicable, should explore their regions SCS/APS, and apply them, as appropriate, to proposed planning projects.

CARB SCS/APS Evaluations: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/sustainable-communities-program/regional-plans-evaluations>

SB 375: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200720080SB375

Senate Bill 743

Senate Bill (SB) 743 was signed in 2013, with the intent to "more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of GHG emissions." As such, automobile delay or traffic congestion, as measured in level of service, is not considered a significant environmental effect under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Changes to the CEQA Guidelines were certified in December 2018 and established VMT as the most appropriate measure of transportation-related environmental impact. A key element of transportation analysis under the new guidance is forecasting induced vehicular travel, or the change in VMT attributable to a project. Since July 1, 2020, statewide implementation of VMT analysis in CEQA documents is required.

Applicants who wish to pursue model improvements or develop VMT Mitigation Programs using Sustainable Communities Competitive Technical or Formula grants are encouraged to review available materials relating to forecasting induced travel or strategies to mitigate and reduce VMT, including those found on the Caltrans SB 743 implementation website. Refer to the Caltrans Transportation Analysis Framework, the Caltrans Transportation Analysis Under CEQA, and other resources linked on the website for more information.

Example project types include:

- Integration of land use modeling into travel demand models, improving long-term induced travel modeling capability
- Incorporation of impacts to trip-making behaviors as a result of network improvements
- Improved congestion feed-back into existing models, or pre- and post-processing procedures
- Induced travel case studies
- VMT-reducing strategies and programs intended to mitigate for induced travel impacts

SB 743: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB743

Caltrans SB 743 Implementation Resources: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/sustainability/sb-743/resources>

Promote the Region's RTP SCS/APS, State Planning Priorities, and Climate Adaptation Goals

SB 1 - The Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 (Beall, Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017)

The intent of additional Sustainable Communities grant funding, pursuant to SB 1 - The Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, is to encourage local and regional planning that furthers State goals, including but not limited to, the goals and best practices cited in the RTP Guidelines. Competitive applications will incorporate these cutting-edge planning practices into their proposed planning projects.

SB 1: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB1

2024 RTP Guidelines (Appendix E, Page 228; Appendix G, Page 260)

The California Transportation Commission adopted the 2024 RTP Guidelines for RTPAs and 2024 RTP Guidelines for MPOs which includes Appendix E – Promoting Health and Health Equity in MPO RTPs and Appendix G – Planning Practice Examples. These appendices highlight planning practices that are undertaken by large, medium, and small MPOs in both rural and urban areas throughout the state.

<https://catc.ca.gov/-/media/ctc-media/documents/programs/transportation-planning/adopted-2024-rtp-guidelines-for-mpos.pdf>

State Planning Priorities

The State Planning Priorities are intended to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety in the state, including in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Government Code Section 65041.1:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=65041.1

SB 375 (Steinberg, Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008)

Caltrans supports SB 375 RTP SCS/APS efforts. Successful applications must be compatible with an existing adopted SCS/APS, where applicable, that meets the region's GHG targets and must strongly support and aim to implement regional SCS/APS efforts. The SCS/APS planning process is

intended to help communities reduce transportation related GHG emissions, coordinate land use and transportation planning, and assist local and regional governments in creating sustainable communities for residents throughout the state.

Although most rural areas of the state are not subject to SB 375 SCS/APS requirements, Caltrans still promotes the development of sustainable communities in these areas of the state and efforts to match GHG reduction targets and other goals embodied in SCS/APSs under SB 375. Eligible rural agencies are strongly encouraged to apply for Sustainable Communities Competitive Grants.

Information on SB 375-related planning efforts:

<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/topics/sustainable-communities>

SB 375: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200720080SB375

Complete Streets and Smart Mobility Framework

In recognition that walking, biking, transit, and passenger rail are integral to our vision of delivering a brighter future for all through a world-class transportation network, Caltrans also supports Complete Streets and the Smart Mobility Framework (SMF). In locations with current and/or future pedestrian, bicycle, or transit needs, Caltrans encourages applicants to consider the tools and techniques contained in the SMF as well as typical components of Complete Streets. Specifically, this might include how the project addresses components of community design, regional accessibility, place types, and priority activities to achieve smart mobility outcomes, community transition, and associated multimodal performance measures for the appropriate context of the problem. Information on these efforts can be found at:

Complete Streets

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/division-of-transportation-planning/complete-streets-planning>

Smart Mobility Framework

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/division-of-transportation-planning/complete-streets-planning/smart-mobility-framework>

Active Community Engagement

Sustainable Communities Competitive Grant applications must include an explanation of how local residents and community-based organizations will be meaningfully engaged in developing the final product, especially those from under-resourced and low-income communities, and how the final product will address community-identified needs. Applicants are encouraged to implement, as applicable and appropriate the tips, best practices, and tools listed below:

Community Engagement Best Practices

- Refer to the following case studies that meaningfully demonstrate the expectations of equitable community engagement:
 - The community driven Carsharing and Mobility Hubs in Affordable Housing Pilots²⁰ offer a strong example of equitable community engagement. The equity-based project

²⁰ Carsharing and Mobility Hubs in Affordable Housing Pilots:

<https://greenlining.org/publications/reports/2021/clean-mobility-transportation-equity-report/>

- incorporated community input from start to finish through community partnership building.
- The Mobility Equity Framework²¹ should be used to assess and compare multimodal transportation options and centers community needs and shifts decision making power to the public. For successful implementation examples, refer to: (1) California Air Resources Board (CARB) Clean Mobility Options Program²², (2) City of Portland, Oregon, Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility Project²³, and North Carolina's Transit Equity Campaign²⁴.
 - Refer to Greenlining Institute's Six Standards for Equitable Investment²⁵ to implement qualitative measures of equity. These standards feature a list of approaches, ranging from the minimum to transformative approach, depending on how much time, resources, and effort are generally required because equity approaches differ in each community context and conditions.
 - Refer to Greenlining Institute's Making Equity Real in Mobility²⁶, a toolkit of clear strategies and best practices to put equity in action.
 - Refer to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Community Engagement Model and Workbook. CARB's Community Engagement Model is intended to provide a consistent approach to community engagement to build trust and strong relationships with communities.
<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/community-engagement-model>
 - The Strategic Growth Council developed a Technical Assistance Toolkit for Outreach and Engagement to maximize meaningful and sustained engagement.
<https://sgc.ca.gov/technical-assistance/toolkit/outreach-engagement/>
 - Clarify the type of engagement will be utilized, as seen in the Public Participation Spectrum²⁷. Agencies and communities need to understand where engagement level falls from the "inform" to "empower" model.
 - Utilize a Participatory Budgeting (PB) planning process, as appropriate. PB is a democratic approach to public spending that meaningfully and deeply engages people in government and the community. During PB, community members democratically decide how to spend part of a public budget, enabling them to make the fiscal decisions that affect their lives and the health of their communities.
 - Seek existing community-based organizations or agencies that organize vulnerable populations, to be able to reach out and form collaborative relationships.

²¹ Mobility Equity Framework: <https://greenlining.org/publications/2018/mobility-equity-framework/>

²² CARB Clean Mobility Options Program: <https://cleanmobilityoptions.org/about/>

²³ Portland, Oregon, Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility Project:
<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/planning/pricing-options-equitable-mobility-poem>

²⁴ North Carolina Transit Equity Campaign: <https://bikedurham.org/transit>

²⁵ Greenlining Institute's Six Standards for Equitable Investment: <https://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Clean-Mobility-Equity-A-Playbook-Greenlining-Report-2021.pdf>

²⁶ Greenlining Institute's Making Equity Real in Mobility: https://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Toolkit_Making-Equity-Real-in-Mobility-Pilot-Projects_Final-1.pdf

²⁷ Public Participation Spectrum:
<https://sustainingcommunity.wordpress.com/2017/02/14/spectrum-of-public-participation/>

- Involve local health departments which can assist in reaching community-based organizations and under-resourced and vulnerable community members.
- Collaborate with under-resourced, vulnerable, and tribal communities to design and implement programs, plans and policies. Robust engagement of under-resourced and vulnerable communities in significant agency decisions brings about better decisions through increased input from different perspectives, increases buy-in and acceptance of decisions and support for their implementation.
- Make opportunities for input accessible in terms of formats (pop-up workshops, temporary built-environment demonstrations, online, in public meetings, one on one, by mail, etc.), venues (at school and community events, community centers, libraries, transit hubs, etc.), hours (evening or weekend), and language (accessible to lay people and translated into the principal languages of the relevant communities, including accessible media such as caption videos).
- Develop a written collaboration agreement or memorandum of understanding that defines respective roles, expectations, desired outcomes, and agreements for how to work together.
- Establish an advisory group of representatives of vulnerable communities, including community leaders and give them worthwhile roles to design the public engagement process, so that community capacity is built during the collaboration process.
- Conduct targeted outreach to community groups representing special needs populations, under-resourced communities, and a variety of socio-economic groups through various methods.
- Use a variety of outreach methods to optimize participation, such as creating and marketing user-friendly survey websites for public feedback, conducting surveys in multiple languages to collect input on local citizens' priorities, and carrying out meetings at accessible times and meeting locations (e.g., using community group buildings, hosting pop-up workshops at public venues, etc.).
- Have material available in multiple languages when requested. Have translator available during workshops, public meetings, and events.
- Use plain language.

Note: The applicant should increase efforts beyond basic public noticing and public hearings. Options for demonstrating additional public outreach could include, but not limited to, all the above.

Additional Public Engagement Best Practices and Strategies

Applicants will need to consider how to conduct public outreach and engagement that allows for both in-person and virtual options. Below are some resources to help applicants evaluate and develop the best strategy for public engagement.

- **The USDOT Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement.** This document provides promising practices which can promote a shared understanding of meaningful public involvement and should be used as an adaptable framework to ensure communities have a voice in the transportation decision-making process.

<https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-10/Promising%20Practices%20for%20Meaningful%20Public%20Involvement%20in%20Transportation%20Decision-making.pdf>

- **California Climate Investments Outreach and Engagement Resources** help incorporate community needs and feedback into design.
<https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/resource-portal-engagement>
- **Caltrans Planning Horizons, “Digital Public Engagement and Transportation: Getting It Right – Theory, Techniques and Best Practices.”**: Digital engagement can greatly increase the reach of public education and involvement; many public agencies have been surprised by the positive results and substantial increase in participants.
<https://youtu.be/85t9ibR2U7Q>
- **Digital Environmental Engagement Resource Catalogue**: The California Natural Resources Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency developed a resource catalogue of online sessions on community engagement and equity. This resource catalogue comes from the “Online Environmental Engagement: Building Our Skills Together” conference. From June 2nd to 4th 2020, forty-nine panelists and approximately 1,500 registrants from California and across the nation gathered together online to discuss their successes, challenges and practical tips for online environmental engagement.
<https://resources.ca.gov/Outreach/Digital-Environmental-Engagement-Resource-Catalogue>
- **Broadening Participation Using Online Engagement Tools**: This document provides examples and guidance to local governments interested in enhancing public participation outcomes with online engagement tools.
https://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/broadening_participation_via_online_tools_final_draft_1.pdf
- **The Guide to Remote Community Engagement**: A collection of resources designed to support cities that wish to create and maintain strong, institutionalized practices of community engagement during periods of remote working and in an increasingly digital world. Refer to the article, *5 Methods for Non-Internet Based Remote Community Engagement*, for ideas on how to supplement traditional online public engagement efforts to be inclusive of residents lacking high-speed broadband internet access.
<https://medium.com/the-guide-to-remote-community-engagement>
- **Designing Parks Using Community-Based Planning**: This document inspires meaningful community engagement for future public projects. It shares methods learned through California's Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program. These methods have been proven effective in urban, rural, and suburban settings.
https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/planning_guide
- **The FHWA's 2023 Report: Making Transportation Planning Applicable in Tribal Communities Research Study** highlights some key considerations when engaging with Tribal Communities on Transportation.
https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2025-03/TransportationPlanninginTribalCommunities_ResearchStudy_12.2023.pdf
- **Community Based Organization & Resident Engagement**: CBO & Resident Engagement is one of 12 competencies of CDPH's Organizational Assessment for Equity Infrastructure. This webpage provides a list of resources for engaging community based organizations and community members.
<https://oheace.cdph.ca.gov/vet/competencies/detail/?id=b40db5b6-2c48-ee11-be6d-001dd804e66d&addendum=false>

Public Health Resources

The following tools can be used to further describe the community's climate change and health vulnerability, and other needs, including helping to create qualitative descriptions of existing community health risks and vulnerabilities and how the proposal will address them.

Community Health Needs Assessments

Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) and implementation strategies are regularly conducted by county public health departments and are newly required of tax-exempt hospitals as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. These assessments and strategies create an important opportunity to improve the health of communities. They ensure that hospitals have the information they need to provide community benefits that meet the needs of their communities. They also provide an opportunity to improve coordination of hospital community benefits with other efforts to improve community health. By federal statute, the CHNAs must take into account input from "persons who represent the broad interests of the community served by the hospital facility, including those with special knowledge of or expertise in public health." To avoid duplicative efforts, grant applicants are encouraged to contact and coordinate with local health departments/non-profit hospitals to take advantage of information that may have been collected as part of CHNA efforts, such as low-income resident and under-resourced communities' transportation and mobility needs. It is important for grant applicants to connect with these public health entities for both partnership building on transportation needs for under-resourced communities, but also to not over-burden those communities with multiple assessments or efforts asking similar questions.

CDPH Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Indicators (CCHVIs)

CDPH developed the Climate Change and Health Vulnerability indicators, narratives, and data to provide local health departments and partners the tools to better understand the people and places in their jurisdictions that are more susceptible to adverse health impacts associated with climate change, specifically extreme heat, wildfire, sea level rise, drought, and poor air quality. The assessment data can be used to screen and prioritize where to focus deeper analysis and plan for public health actions to increase resilience.

The CCHVIs can be viewed on "CCHViz", CDPH's interactive data visualization platform: <https://skylab.cdph.ca.gov/CCHViz/>. The CCHVIs have also been incorporated into the HPI as decision support layers, to better integrate addressing health outcomes associated with climate change and various social determinants of health. See above for more information on the HPI.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OHE/Pages/CC-Health-Vulnerability-Indicators.aspx>

CDPH Climate Change and Health Profile Reports (CHPRs)

The CDPH CHPRs are designed to help counties in California prepare for the health impacts related to climate change through adaptation planning. The reports present projections for county and regional climate impacts, the climate-related health risks, and local populations that could be vulnerable to climate effects. The information is based on available science compiled from previously published, State-sponsored research and plans.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OHE/Pages/ClimateHealthProfileReports.aspx>

CDPH Healthy Communities Data and Indicators Project (HCI)

The goal of the HCI is to enhance public health by providing a standardized set of statistical measures, data, and tools that a broad array of sectors can use for planning healthy communities

and evaluating the impact of plans, projects, policy, and environmental changes on community health. The Healthy Community Framework identifies 20 key attributes (i.e., "aspirational goals", such as "Safe, sustainable, and affordable transportation options" or "Access to affordable and safe opportunities for physical activity") of a healthy community through all stages of life, clustered in five broad categories (i.e., "domains", such as "Meets the Basic Needs of All" or "Quality and Sustainability of Environment"). HCI data indicators, narratives, and visualizations are found here.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OHE/Pages/HCI-Search.aspx>

Integrated Transport and Health Impact Model (ITHIM)

The California version of ITHIM is a planning tool that answers the question of "How much benefit or harm to human health can we expect by changing the mix of active and motorized travel across a county, region, or the entire State of California?" ITHIM contrasts one travel pattern that serves as a reference with an alternative that has a different profile of fine particulate air pollution from vehicle exhaust, physical activity from walking and cycling, and injuries from traffic collisions. ITHIM calculates the change in deaths, years of life shortening and disability, and costs due to these changes in air pollution, physical activity, and traffic injuries. Grant applicants are encouraged to reference and utilize ITHIM to assess the health impacts their projects and programs.

<https://skylab.cdph.ca.gov/HealthyMobilityOptionTool-ITHIM/>

Health In All Policies (HiAP) Approach

The HiAP initiative is a collaborative approach designed to improve the health of Californians by incorporating health, equity, and sustainability considerations into policymaking across sectors. The approach recognizes that chronic illness, climate change, health inequities, and increasing health care costs are interrelated and influenced by policies, programs, and investments across sectors. The initiative provides access to tools, resources and journal articles highlighting Health in All Policies approaches, techniques, and concepts from California and beyond.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OHE/Pages/HiAP.aspx>

Multimodal System Planning

The following guidance documents can be used in the development of proposed corridor plans/studies, freight plans/studies, and other multimodal system planning documents.

Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan Guidelines

The California Transportation Commission developed the Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan Guidelines (plan guidelines) to provide guidance to eligible Solutions for Congested Corridors Program applicants regarding the statutory requirements for comprehensive corridor plans utilized by agencies to apply for funding through the Congested Corridors Program. Applicants proposing to develop a comprehensive corridor plan are encouraged to review the plan guidelines to ensure their application and final product would align with and compete well for the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program.

<https://catc.ca.gov/programs/sb1/solutions-for-congested-corridors-program/comprehensive-multimodal-corridor-plan-guidelines>

Caltrans Corridor Planning Process Guide

The Caltrans Division of Transportation Planning prepared the Corridor Planning Process Guide (Guide) for use in preparing corridor planning documents. This Guide establishes a comprehensive

planning approach through desired protocols and procedures to identify and implement multimodal transportation needs. It is neither intended as nor does it establish a legal standard for these functions.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/system-planning/systemplanning/corridor-planning-process-guide-april-2022-a11y.pdf>

Planning for Operations Strategic Work Plan

The Planning for Operations Strategic Work Plan is a statewide framework for multimodal system management planning, aims to identify the specific steps needed to implement multimodal system management planning at Caltrans and prioritize implementation actions.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/system-planning/systemplanning/caltrans-p4ops-strategic-work-plan-2018-a11y.pdf>

Caltrans Climate Change Emphasis Area Guide for Corridor Planning

Consideration of climate change adaptation and mitigation must be included in the corridor planning process. This guidance was developed to describe how to address climate risk in the context of the Caltrans Corridor Planning Process Guide's 8 steps process.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/cc-ea-guide-for-corridor-planning-march2022-a11y.pdf>

Climate Adaptation Strategies for Transportation Infrastructure

This educational-only resource describes the types of hazards and/or threats represented by different climate stressors and lists the types of adaptation actions or strategies that could be considered to minimize climate change impacts.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/office-of-smart-mobility-and-climate-change/fy23-24-adaptation-strategies-transportation-infrastructure-05102024v2-a11y.pdf>

Active Transportation Emphasis Area Guidance

Active Transportation is one of several distinct emphasis areas to be considered in corridor plan analysis. Caltrans Active Transportation guidance has one goal – to provide corridor planners with a framework to assess and analyze the variety of Active Transportation issues that can be addressed in Corridor Plans. As the “Eight Step” process will be required to develop Corridor Plans, this Active Transportation Emphasis Area (EA) Guidance is based upon those eight steps.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/active-transportation-complete-streets/20220131active-transportation-emphasis-area-guidance-final-version-v7a11y.pdf>

Climate Ready Transportation and Climate Adaptation Planning

Through the Grant Program, Caltrans supports the State's broader efforts to help ensure our transportation infrastructure is climate-ready. To prioritize these investments, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Executive Order (EO) N-19-19 on September 20, 2019, to redouble the State's “efforts to reduce GHG emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change while building a sustainable, inclusive economy.” The EO lists California's ambitious and essential climate goals to transition to a healthier, more sustainable, and more inclusive economy, including:

- Reducing GHG emissions 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030
- Providing 100 percent of the State's electricity from clean energy sources by 2045
- Reducing methane emissions and hydrofluorocarbon gases by 40 percent
- Adding five million zero-emission vehicles to the State's roads by 2030

To help achieve these goals, the EO directs the California State Transportation Agency to leverage over \$5 billion in annual state transportation spending toward transportation construction, operations, and maintenance to lower fuel consumption and GHG emissions from transportation. This includes strategies for lowering VMT such as supporting housing development near available jobs and supporting active modes of transportation such as biking and walking that also benefit public health. The EO specifically requires that the State Transportation Agency also work to mitigate increased transportation costs for low-income communities.

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/9.20.19-Climate-EO-N-19-19.pdf>

Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program

Senate Bill 246 (Wieckowski, Chapter 606, Statutes of 2015) established the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program (ICARP) within the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to coordinate regional and local efforts with State climate adaptation strategies (Public Resources Code Section 71354). Grant applicants may refer to the ICARP website to explore the State Adaptation Clearinghouse, a centralized source of information and resources to assist decision makers at the state, regional, and local levels when planning for and implementing climate adaptation projects to promote resiliency across California. Caltrans is coordinating with ICARP staff on the OPR Climate Adaptation Planning Grant Program.

ICARP Website: <https://opr.ca.gov/climate/icarp/>

SB 246: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB246

Adaptation Planning Grants: <https://www.opr.ca.gov/climate/icarp/grants/adaptation-planning-grant.html>

California Adaptation Clearinghouse

The Adaptation Clearinghouse serves as a centralized source of information that provides the resources necessary to guide decision makers at the state, regional, and local levels when planning for and implementing climate adaptation projects to promote resiliency to climate change in California.

<https://resilientca.org/>

Resilient CA Adaptation Planning Map (RAP-Map)

ICARP – supported through the Governor's Office of Planning & Research – contains a statewide inventory of local government adaptation and resiliency planning efforts. It is an open data tool, to inventory local government climate risk, adaptation, and resiliency planning efforts across the state and track progress towards statewide adaptation planning goals.

<https://resilientca.org/rap-map/>

State Guidance for Adaptation Planning

2017 General Plan Guidelines, Safety Element (Ch. 4)

The General Plan Guidelines set out each statutory requirement in detail, provides OPR recommended policy language, and includes online links to city and county general plans that

have adopted similar policies. The guidelines include information on how to consider climate change during general plan development/updates. In accordance with Senate Bill 379, general plans must address climate adaptation and resilience within the Safety element. Local governments are required to include a climate change vulnerability assessment, measures to address vulnerabilities, and a comprehensive hazard mitigation and emergency response strategy.

https://opr.ca.gov/docs/OPR_COMPLETE_7.31.17.pdf

Climate Data Sources and Adaptation Plans

Cal-Adapt

Cal-Adapt is the repository for State-endorsed climate change projections, developed through the State's Climate Change Assessment efforts. Cal-Adapt offers free public access to peer-reviewed data that show climate change impacts on state infrastructure, communities, and natural resources. Find tools, data, and resources to conduct research, develop adaptation plans and build applications.

<https://cal-adapt.org/>

Climate Action Plans

Many California cities and counties are developing Climate Action Plans to reduce their GHG emissions. Agencies may have existing plans that include strategies or insight on potential approaches to implementing climate change considerations on the transportation network. CARB has created a webmap that can be used to identify plans created, GHG inventory information, GHG reduction targets, local strategies planned to meet these targets, and more. The second website provides a host of resources, including example Climate Action Plans and templates. This information can also be found on the Adaptation Clearinghouse.

<https://webmaps.arb.ca.gov/capmap/>
<http://www.ca-ilg.org/climate-action-plans>

APPENDIX B. SAMPLE APPLICATION PACKAGE

The Grant Application Guide and all fillable application documents can be found on the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant website.

- Application Checklist, Cover Sheet, and Signature Page
- Application Narratives for Sustainable Communities and Strategic Partnerships
- Scope of Work and Checklist
- Cost & Schedule and Checklist
- Third-Party In-Kind Valuation Plan and Checklist
- Local Resolution and Checklist

Application Checklist

The following documents are required and must be submitted via Smartsheet in one single PDF document, not to exceed 25 MB. Keep the file name brief, as files are corrupted when file names are too long. Refer to the Grant Application Guide for additional information and/or samples. Failure to include any of the required documents will result in a reduced application score.

PDF documents should be submitted in their fillable PDF formats. The original file formats will be required upon grant award.

Required Application Documents	
(✓)	Ensure these items are completed prior to submitting to Caltrans via Smartsheet
	Application Cover Sheet
	Signature Page (Electronic signatures accepted)
	Application Narrative
	Scope of Work
	Cost & Schedule
	Third Party In-Kind Valuation Plan (if applicable, required upon award)
	Map of Project Area
Supplemental Documentation (not required)	
	Graphics of Project Area (when applicable)
	Letter(s) of support
	Data



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

PART A. APPLICATION INFORMATION				FY 2027-28	
Grant Category (select only one)					
Sustainable Communities (MPOs with sub-applicant, RTPAs, Transit Agencies, Cities, Counties, Tribes, other Public Transportation Planning Entities)			Strategic Partnerships (MPOs & RTPAs only) Strategic Partnerships Transit (MPOs, RTPAs & Transit Agencies only)		
	Sustainable Communities Competitive (11.47% Local Match requirement) **Not applicable to Native American Tribal Governments**			Strategic Partnerships (FHWA SPR Part I) (20% Local Match requirement)	
	Sustainable Communities Competitive Technical (11.47% Local Match requirement) **Not applicable to Native American Tribal Governments**			Strategic Partnerships Transit (FTA 5304) (11.47% Local Match requirement)	
Application Submittal Type (more than one may be selected)					
New		Prior Phases		Re-Submittal	
	New Application		Continuation of a prior project. If so, list the Grant FY and project title below.		Re-submittal from a prior grant cycle.
					How many times has this application been previously submitted? (Not including this submission)

PART B. PROJECT INFORMATION					
Project Title and Location					
Project Title					
Project Location (City)		Project Location (County)			
Funding Information					
1. Is the applicant proposing to meet the minimum local match requirement or an over-match? Use the Match Calculator to determine the appropriate match. (Posted on STPG Website) ☐ Minimum Local Match ☐ Over-Match 2. What is the source of Local Match funds being used? (MPOs – Federal Toll Credits, PL, and FTA 5303 <u>cannot</u> be used to match Sustainable Communities) ☐ Local Transportation Funds ☐ Local Sales Tax ☐ Special Bond Measures ☐ Other, specify:					
Grant Funds Requested	Local Match (Cash)	Local Match (In-Kind)	Total Local Match	% Local Match	Total Project Cost
\$	\$	\$	\$		\$



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

PART B. PROJECT INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

Project Description (5 Sentences Maximum)

Insert Application Narrative:
1. Project Description

Project Type

Choose the Project Type that best represents the focus of the proposed project. See Grant Application Guide for examples. **Select a maximum of two project types.**

- ☐ Active Transportation (Bicycle and Pedestrian)
- ☐ Climate Adaptation (Infrastructure Adaptation, Vulnerability and Resiliency)
- ☐ Complete Streets (Multimodal specific type, Reconnecting Communities)
- ☐ Corridor (Local Streets or Highways)
- ☐ Freight/Goods Movement
- ☐ Integrated Housing, Land Use, and Transportation (Circulation Element, Land Use Element)
- ☐ Multimodal (Motorized and Active Transportation)
- ☐ Safety (Vision Zero, Safe Routes to Schools)
- ☐ Social Equity
- ☐ Technical (Modeling, VMT Mitigation, ZEV Infrastructure, ZEB Transition, etc.)
- ☐ Transit (Bus, Light Rail, and Commuter Rail Service)
- ☐ Other, specify:

Under-Resourced Community Definitions

If applicable to the project, what tools were used to identify the under-resourced communities in the project area? Choose all that apply.

- ☐ Rural Communities of 50,000 or less and outside of urbanized areas
- ☐ Native American Tribal Governments
- ☐ Regionally/Locally Defined Under-Resourced Communities
- ☐ At/Below 80% Assembly Bill 1550 (Gomez, Statutes of 2016)
- ☐ At/Above 75% California Department of Education, Free or Reduced Priced Meals Data
- ☐ At/Above 75% CalEnviroScreen Version 4.0
- ☐ At/Below 25% California Healthy Places Index



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

PART C. CONTACT INFORMATION*

	Primary Applicant	Sub-Applicant	Sub-Applicant
Organization (Legal name)			
Dept./Division			
Street Address			
City			
Zip Code			
Phone Number			
Executive Director Name			
Title			
Executive Director E-mail			
Financial Manager Name			
Title			
Financial Manager E-mail			
Contact Person Name			
Title			
Contact Phone Number			
Contact E-mail			

*Use additional pages if necessary.



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

PART D. COMPLIANT HOUSING ELEMENT

City/County Primary/Sub-Applicants for Sustainable Communities Grants	Yes	No
Does the City/County have a compliant Housing Element? If No, explain the current status:		
Has the City/County submitted Annual Progress Report to the California Department of Housing and Community Development for calendar years 2024 and 2025?		

PART E. OTHER FUNDING PROGRAMS

Applicants may leverage other program funds for this planning grant, as long as the activities are eligible.			
	Yes	No	N/A
Is the applicant applying for any other funding programs to complete this project? If yes, list them here:			



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

PART F. LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

Use the following link to determine the appropriate legislative members in the Project area.

Search by address: <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/>

State Senator(s)		Assembly Member(s)	
District	Name	District	Name

PART G. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

List all letters of support received for the proposed project. Letters should be addressed to the applicant. Letters received after the final application filing date will not be considered.

Name/Agency	Name/Agency



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

GRANT APPLICATION SIGNATURE PAGE

If selected for funding, the information contained in this application will become the foundation of the contract with Caltrans.

To the best of my knowledge, all information contained in this application is true and correct. If awarded a grant with Caltrans, I agree that I will adhere to the program guidelines.

Applicant			
Authorized Official (Applicant)			
Print Full Name			
Title			
Signature		Date	
Sub-Applicant(s)*			
Authorized Official (Sub-Applicant)			
Print Full Name			
Title			
Signature		Date	
Authorized Official (Sub-Applicant)			
Print Full Name			
Title			
Signature		Date	
Authorized Official (Sub-Applicant)			
Print Full Name			
Title			
Signature		Date	

*Use additional pages if necessary.



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION
NARRATIVE

PART H. APPLICATION NARRATIVE		FY 2027-28
Project Information		
Organization (Legal name)		
Project Title		
Project Area Boundaries		
Project Timeframe (Start and End Dates)		
Do not alter application format and font size 10		
Application Narrative		
1. Project Description (10 points) - Do not exceed the space provided (5 sentences maximum) Briefly summarize project in a clear and concise manner, including why the project is necessary, major deliverables, parties involved, and any connections to relevant local, regional, and/or State planning efforts.		
2A. Project Justification (15 points) - Do not exceed the space provided • Describe the problems or deficiencies the project is attempting to address, as well as how the project will address the identified problems or deficiencies • Describe the ramifications and impact of not funding this project • Clearly define the existing issues surrounding the project (e.g., transportation issues, inadequate transit services, impacts of heavy trucking on local streets, air pollution, etc.) • Competitive applications support the need for the project with empirical data • Describe how this project addresses issues raised • Define the public benefit • Explain how the public was involved with identifying issues		



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION NARRATIVE

2B. Under-Resourced Communities Justification (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided

- Explain how the project area or portions of the project area are defined as an under-resourced community, (including Tribes and rural communities)
- Explain how the proposed project addresses the needs of the under-resourced community
- Describe how under-resourced communities will benefit from the proposed planning project
- Cite data sources, the Application Guide Appendix A tools used to define under-resourced communities, and include a comparison to statewide thresholds that are established in each tool

2C. Under-Resourced Communities Engagement (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided

- See Grant Application Guide, Appendix A, for community engagement best practices
- Describe how the proposed effort would engage under-resourced communities, including Tribes and rural communities. Include specific outreach methods for involving under-resourced communities
- Describe the efforts to continue engagement with under-resourced communities after the plan/study is complete. Highlight engagement efforts at each phase of implementation.

3. Grant Specific Objectives (Total 35 points)

Integrate the following Grant Program Considerations (Grant Application Guide, Chapter 1.2) in the responses for 3A-G below, as applicable:

- Caltrans Strategic Plan
- California Transportation Plan (CTP)
- Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)
- Modal Plans that Support the CTP
- Title VI and Environmental Justice
- Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI)
- California Adaptation Strategy
- Master Plan for Aging
- Reconnecting Communities



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION NARRATIVE

3A. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided • Explain how the proposal encourages local and regional multimodal transportation, housing and land use planning that furthers the region's RTP SCS (where applicable) • Demonstrate how the proposed effort would coordinate transportation, housing, and land use planning components of the project to inform one another (i.e., regular coordination meetings between responsible entities, joint community meetings, letters of commitment from all relevant implementing agencies, etc.) • Explain how the proposed effort would contribute to shifts in land use towards more sustainable and equitable communities, such as more affordable housing near transit or more compact regional development patterns (Reference Grant Application Guide, Chapter 2.2, for example project types)
3B. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided • Explain how the proposal contributes to the State's GHG reduction targets and advances transportation related GHG emission reduction project types/strategies (i.e., mode shift, demand management, travel cost, operational efficiency, accessibility, and coordination with future employment and residential land use, etc.)
3C. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided • Explain how the proposal supports other State goals, including but not limited to: ◦ Goals and Best Practices cited in the 2024 RTP Guidelines, Appendices E and G ◦ State Planning Priorities (Government Code Section 65041.1) ◦ Climate Adaptation Goals (State Adaptation Strategy)
3D. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided • Explain how the proposal encourages stakeholder involvement • List the stakeholders involved in the planning effort (e.g., first responders, community-based organizations, local housing and public health departments, transit agencies, and partners including State, federal, local agencies) • Explain how stakeholders will be involved throughout the project
3E. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided • Explain how the proposal involves active community engagement • Describe the specific public outreach methods/events that will be employed throughout the project • Explain how public input will inform the project • Describe how the effort will survey the public at the end of each outreach event to gauge effectiveness of these activities for the planning effort
3F. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided • Explain how the proposal assists in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives (Grant Application Guide, Chapter 1.2): Safety, Sustainability, Preservation, Accessibility, Innovation, Economy, Health, and Social Equity, as applicable
3G. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided • Explain how the proposal ultimately results in funded and programmed multimodal transportation system improvements • Discuss next steps for project implementation, including timing for programming improvements that would result from the planning effort



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION
NARRATIVE

4. Project Management (Total 30 points)

See Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule samples and checklists for requirements (Grant Application Guide, Appendix B), also available on the Caltrans grants website:
<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/division-of-transportation-planning/regional-and-community-planning/sustainable-transportation-planning-grants>

4A. Scope of Work (25 points)

4B. Cost & Schedule (5 points)



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS - GRANT APPLICATION NARRATIVE

PART H. APPLICATION NARRATIVE		FY 2027-28
Project Information		
Organization (Legal name)		
Project Title		
Project Area Boundaries		
Project Timeframe (Start and End Dates)		
Do not alter application format and font size 10		
Application Narrative		
1. Project Description (10 points) - Do not exceed the space provided (5 sentences maximum) Briefly summarize the project in a clear and concise manner, including why the project is necessary, major deliverables, parties involved, and any connections to relevant local, regional, and/or State planning efforts.		
2. Project Justification (30 points) - Describe the problems or deficiencies the project is attempting to address, as well as how the project will address the identified problems or deficiencies - Describe the ramifications and impact of not funding this project - Clearly define the existing issues surrounding the project (e.g., transportation issues, inadequate transit services, impacts of heavy trucking on local streets, air pollution, etc.) - Describe how this project addresses issues raised - Competitive applications support the need for the project with empirical data Do not exceed the space provided		



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS - GRANT APPLICATION NARRATIVE

3. Grant Specific Objectives (Total 20 points)

Integrate the following Grant Program Considerations (Grant Application Guide, Chapter 1.2) in the responses for 3A-3D below, as applicable:

- Caltrans Strategic Plan
- California Transportation Plan (CTP)
- Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)
- Modal Plans that Support the CTP
- Title VI and Environmental Justice
- Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI)
- California Adaptation Strategy
- Master Plan for Aging
- Reconnecting Communities

3A. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points)

- List and explain how the proposal would accomplish the Federal Planning Factors (Grant Application Guide, Chapter 4.2), achieve the Caltrans Mission and the Grant Program Objectives (Grant Application Guide, Chapter 1.2.)
- **Do not exceed the space provided**

3B. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points)

- Explain how the proposal partners with Caltrans to identify and address statewide, interregional, or regional transportation deficiencies in the State Highway System (or multimodal transportation system for transit-focused projects)
- Clearly define how Caltrans will be a partner in the proposed project, as appropriate for the project
- **Do not exceed the space provided**

3C. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points)

- Explain how the proposal strengthens government-to-government relationships
- Outline the entities involved with the proposed project and how partnerships will be strengthened as a result
- **Do not exceed the space provided**

3D. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points)

- Explain how the proposal results in programmed system improvements
- Discuss next steps for project implementation, including timing for programming improvements that would result from the planning effort
- **Do not exceed the space provided**



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS - GRANT APPLICATION NARRATIVE

4. Project Management (Total 40 points)

See Scope of Work and Cost & Schedule samples and checklists for requirements (Grant Application Guide, Appendix B), also available on the Caltrans grants website, <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/division-of-transportation-planning/regional-and-community-planning/sustainable-transportation-planning-grants>

4A. Scope of Work (30 points)

4B. Cost & Schedule (10 points)

Scope of Work Checklist

The Scope of Work (SOW) is the official description of the work that is to be completed during the contract. Tasks 1-6 outlined in the SOW are for illustrative purposes only.

Applications with missing components will be at a competitive disadvantage. Please use this checklist to make sure your Scope of Work is complete.

Scope of Work Checklist	
(✓)	Ensure these items are completed prior to submitting to Caltrans
	Use the Fiscal Year 2027-28 template provided.
	Include the activities discussed in the grant application.
	List all tasks using the same title as included in the Cost & Schedule.
	Include task numbers in accurate and proper sequencing, consistent with the Cost & Schedule.
	Exclude sub-task numbers; only include sub-headings.
	Include a thorough Introduction to describe relevant background, related planning efforts, the project and project area demographics, and a description of the under-resourced community involved with the project, if applicable.
	Include a thorough and accurate narrative description of each task.
	A standalone project management and/or staff/consultant coordination task is allowed. The total task cost (grant award and local match) cannot exceed 5% of the grant award amount.
	Task A (Project Administration) is a required task. The total task cost (grant award and local match) cannot exceed 5% of the grant award amount. Only the grantee and sub-recipient(s) can charge against Task A. Task A must only include the following activities and deliverables: • Caltrans and grantee Project kick-off meeting at the start of the grant • Invoicing and quarterly reporting to Caltrans • DBE Reporting (federal grants only)
	Include Task B for the procurement of a consultant (if needed). Only the grantee and sub-recipient(s) can charge against Task B.
	Include detailed public participation and services to diverse communities in the Public Outreach Task (excluding technical projects).
	Identify public outreach strategies in a manner that provides flexibility and allows for a diverse range of outreach methods (both in-person and virtual), excluding technical projects.
	Include a Task(s) for a Draft and Final product. The draft plan must include an opportunity for the public to provide feedback (excluding technical projects).
	Include a summary of next steps your agency will take towards implementing the project in the Final Product.
	List achievable project deliverables for each Task.
	EXCLUDE environmental, complex design, engineering work, and other ineligible activities outlined in the STPG Application Guide

SCOPE OF WORK

Project Information	
Grant Category	
Grant Fiscal Year	FY 2027-28
Project Title	
Organization (Legal name)	

Disclaimer

Agency commits to the Scope of Work below. Any changes will need to be approved by Caltrans prior to initiating any Scope of Work change or amendment.

Introduction

[Provide a detailed summary of the grant project. Include a thorough Introduction to describe relevant background, related planning efforts, the project and project area demographics, including a description of the under-resourced community involved with the project, if applicable.]

Project Stakeholders

[Provide a detailed summary of who the Project Stakeholders are. Will a consultant be working on the project? If so, what activities/tasks will they be involved with?]

Overall Project Objectives

[Provide a detailed summary of the Overall Project Objectives.]

Summary of Project Tasks

[Provide a thorough description of activities to be completed for each task in the task narrative.]

Task A: Project Administration

This is an Administrative Task that shall only be charged against by the Grantee for the Administration of this grant project. Budget for this task (grant award and local match) cannot exceed 5% of the grant award amount.

Grantee will manage and administer the grant project according to the Grant Application Guidelines, Regional Planning Handbook, and the executed grant contract between Caltrans and the grantee.

[Provide a detailed narrative of activities to be completed in this Task]

Task Deliverables
[The following are the only allowable deliverables for this Task. This Task is not for the management of the consultant or meetings between the grantee and the consultant]
Kick-off meeting with Caltrans - Meeting Notes, quarterly invoices and progress reports, DBE reporting (federal Grants only)

Task B: Consultant Procurement

[Provide a detailed narrative of activities to be completed in this Task]

Grantee will procure a consultant, consistent with state and federal requirements, Local Assistance Procedures Manual for procuring non-Architectural and Engineering consultants, the Grant Application Guide, Regional Planning Handbook, and the executed grant contract between Caltrans and the grantee.

Task Deliverables
[List achievable deliverables for this Task]
Examples: Grantee's current procurement procedures, copy of the Request for Proposal/Qualifications, copy of the contract between consultant and grantee, copies of all amendments to the consultant contract

Task 1: Existing Conditions

[Provide a detailed narrative of activities to be completed in this Task]

Task Deliverables
[List achievable deliverables for this Task]
Examples: Summary of Existing Conditions

Task 2: Analysis

[Provide a detailed narrative of activities to be completed in this Task]

Task Deliverables
[List achievable deliverables for this Task]
Examples: Summary of Analysis

Task 3: Public Outreach

[Provide a detailed narrative of activities to be completed in this Task]

Task Deliverables
[List achievable deliverables for this Task]
Examples: PowerPoint Presentations, flyers, website announcements, sign-in sheets, community surveys, conceptual drawings, bilingual services

Task 4: Advisory Committee Meetings

[Provide a detailed narrative of activities to be completed in this Task]

Task Deliverables

[List achievable deliverables for this Task]
Examples: Agendas, meeting notes, list of attendees, list of action items

Task 5: Draft and Final Plan

[Provide a detailed narrative of activities to be completed in this Task]

Task Deliverables
[List achievable deliverables for this Task]
Examples: Draft Plan, Public Review – list of comments, Final Plan that includes a summary of next steps towards implementation, credits FHWA, FTA, and/or Caltrans on the cover or title page, submitted to Caltrans in an ADA accessible electronic copy

Task 6: Board Review/Approval or Presentation to the Board

[Provide a detailed narrative of activities to be completed in this Task]

Task Deliverables
[List achievable deliverables for this Task]
Examples: Board Agenda, presentation materials, meeting minutes including record of any Board action

Summary of next steps towards implementation of the project in the Final Product:

[Provide a detailed narrative of next steps in the implementation process]

Cost & Schedule Checklist

The Cost & Schedule is the official budget and timeline for the project. Tasks 1-6 outlined in the Cost & Schedule are for illustrative purposes only. **The Cost & Schedule must be consistent with the Grant Application Cover Sheet. Applications with missing components will be at a competitive disadvantage.**

Cost & Schedule Checklist	
(✓) Ensure these items are completed prior to submitting to Caltrans	
	Use the Fiscal Year 2027-28 template provided (do not alter the template).
	List all tasks using the same title as included in the Scope of Work.
	Include task numbers in proper sequencing, consistent with the Scope of Work.
	Exclude sub-task numbers and sub-headings.
	A standalone project management and/or staff/consultant coordination task is allowed. The total task cost (grant award and local match) cannot exceed 5% of the grant award amount.
	Task A (Project Administration) is a required task. The total task cost (grant award and local match) cannot exceed 5% of the grant award amount. Only the grantee and sub-recipient(s) can charge against Task A. Task A must only include the following activities and deliverables: • Project kick-off meeting between the grantee and Caltrans at the start of the grant • Invoicing and quarterly reporting to Caltrans • DBE Reporting (federal grants only)
	Include Task B for the procurement of a consultant (if needed). Only the grantee and sub-recipient(s) can charge against Task B.
	Complete all budget columns as appropriate: Total Cost, Grant Amount, Local Cash Match, and if applicable, Local In-Kind Match.
	Ensure the correct minimum local match amount, calculated as a percentage of the total project cost (grant plus local match), is provided.
	Use the Local Match Calculator to ensure the total Local Match amount meets the minimum required Local Match for the specified Grant Category.
	Include a grant amount for each Task (Tasks A and B can be zeroed out).
	Identify if a Tapered Local Match will be used (allows grantees to vary the required local match ratio over the life of the grant contract). Grantee agrees to satisfy the total local match amount by the contract expiration date.
	Identify the estimated indirect cost rate if indirect costs will be reimbursed. If FY 2027-28 indirect cost rates are not available, the rate will be an estimate based on the currently approved rate.
	Include a best estimate of the amount of time needed to complete each task.
	State a realistic total cost for each task based on the work that will be completed.
	Use only whole dollars in the grant amount and local match columns. Do not use formulas to calculate local match as it will lead to partial dollar amounts which will be rounded up or down.
	Start the timeframe at the beginning of the grant period (July 2027).
	At least one task must extend to the end of the grant period (June 2030).

California Department of Transportation
Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
COST & SCHEDULE

[illegible]

Third Party In-Kind Valuation Plan Checklist

The Third Party In-Kind Valuation Plan is an itemized breakdown by task and serves as documentation for the goods and/or services to be donated. The Third Party In-Kind Valuation Plan must be consistent with the information provided on the Cost & Schedule and Grant Application Cover Sheet. This document is required upon grant award as a condition of grant acceptance. Refer to Grant Application Guide, Chapter 5.4 for a Third-Party In-Kind description and examples.

Third-Party In-Kind Valuation Plan Checklist	
(✓) Ensure these items are completed prior to submitting to Caltrans	
	Use the Fiscal Year 2027-28 template provided (do not alter the template).
	Name the third party in-kind local match provider; this cannot be the Grantee
	Describe how the third party in-kind local match will be tracked and documented for accounting purposes.
	Describe the fair market value of third party in-kind contributions and how the values were determined.
	Include an itemized breakdown by task, consistent with the Cost & Schedule.
	Ensure the in-kind local match amount is consistent with the Grant Application Cover Sheet and Cost & Schedule.

California Department of Transportation
Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
THIRD-PARTY IN-KIND VALUATION PLAN

Grant Category
 Grant Fiscal Year
 Project Title
 Organization
 (legal name)

Task #	Task Title	Third-Party In-Kind Contribution	Name of Third-Party In-Kind Match Provider	Fair Market Value Determination	Fair Market Value or Hourly Rate	Number of Hours	Estimated Cost
Total In-kind Match:							\$0

Explain how the third party in-kind match will be documented for accounting purposes:	
---	--

Local Resolution Checklist

A Local Resolution is NOT required at the grant application stage; however, it is required upon award as a condition of grant acceptance.

Local Resolution Checklist	
(✓)	Ensure these items are completed prior to submitting to Caltrans
	State the title of the project (1)
	State the job title of the person authorized to enter into a contract with Caltrans on behalf of the applicant (2)
	Must be less than a year old (3)
	Signed by the grant applicant's governing board (4)

Sample Local Resolution

**CITY OF CAN DO RESOLUTION
NO. 009-2026**

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY OF CAN DO AUTHORIZING
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE AGREEMENTS WITH THE**

1

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE
CITY OF CAN DO COMPLETE STREETS PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the City of Can Do is eligible to receive Federal and/or State funding for certain transportation planning related plans, through the California Department of Transportation;

WHEREAS, a Restricted Grant Agreement is needed to be executed with the California Department of Transportation before such funds can be reimbursed through the Transportation Planning Grant Program;

WHEREAS, the City of Can Do wishes to delegate authorization to execute these agreements and any amendments thereto;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the City of Can Do, authorize the Executive Director, or designee, to execute all Restricted Grant Agreements and any amendments thereto with the California Department of Transportation.

2

APPROVED AND PASSED this 4th day of August 2026.

3

4



John Doe,
Chair

ATTEST:



Jane Doe,
Executive Director

APPENDIX C. CALTRANS/REGIONAL AGENCY BOUNDARIES MAP



APPENDIX D. CALTRANS DISTRICT CONTACT LIST

Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants District Grant Lead and Native American Liaison Contact List

DISTRICT	LEAD CONTACT(S)	NATIVE AMERICAN LIAISON CONTACT(S)	MPO/RTPA
DISTRICT 1 1656 Union Street P.O. Box 3700 Eureka, CA 95502	Tatiana Ahlstrand (707) 684-6884 Email: Tatiana.Ahlstrand@dot.ca.gov	Jerome Washington (707) 834-1486 Email: Jerome.Washington@dot.ca.gov Kathleen Sartorius (707) 441-5815 Email: Kathleen.Sartorius@dot.ca.gov	• Del Norte LTC • Humboldt CAOG • Lake CCAPC • Mendocino COG
DISTRICT 2 1657 Riverside Drive Redding, CA 96001	Kathy Grah (530) 782-3152 Email: Kathy.Grah@dot.ca.gov	Kendee Vance (530) 768-4200 Email: Kendee.Vance@dot.ca.gov	• Lassen CTC • Tehama CTC • Modoc LTC • Trinity CTC • Plumas CTC • Siskiyou CLTC • Shasta RTA
DISTRICT 3 703 B Street Marysville, CA 95901	El Dorado, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties Sukhi Johal (530) 565-3885 Email: Sukhi.Johal@dot.ca.gov Butte, Colusa, Lake Tahoe Basin, Glenn, Nevada, Placer, and Sierra Counties Kevin Yount (530) 513-0584 Email: Kevin.Yount@dot.ca.gov	Angelina Healy (530) 720-9449 Email: Angelina.Healy@dot.ca.gov	• Butte CAG • Sierra LTC • Colusa CTC • Glenn CTC • El Dorado CTC • Nevada CTC • Placer CTPA • Sacramento Area COG • Tahoe MPO
DISTRICT 4 111 Grand Avenue P.O. Box 23660 Oakland, CA 94623-0660	Hunter Oatman-Stanford (510) 496-9383 Email: Hunter.Oatman-Stanford@dot.ca.gov	Stephen Conteh (510) 960-0887 Email: Stephen.Conteh@dot.ca.gov	• Metropolitan Transportation Commission
DISTRICT 5 50 Higuera Street San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-5415	Bailey Barton (805) 835-6342 Email: Bailey.Barton@dot.ca.gov Veronica Lezama (805) 748-4216 Email: Veronica.Lezama@dot.ca.gov	Veronica Lezama (805) 748-4216 Email: Veronica.Lezama@dot.ca.gov	• Monterey TAMC • Santa Cruz CCRTC • San Benito COG • Assoc. of Monterey Co. Bay Area Govts • Santa Barbara CAG • San Luis Obispo COG

Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants District Grant Lead and Native American Liaison Contact List

DISTRICT	LEAD CONTACT(S)	NATIVE AMERICAN LIAISON CONTACT(S)	MPO/RTPA
DISTRICT 6 1352 W. Olive Avenue P.O. Box 12616 Fresno, CA 93778-2616	Christopher Xiong (559) 908-7064 Email: Christopher.Xiong@dot.ca.gov Lorena Mendibles (559) 840-6066 Email: Lorena.Mendibles@dot.ca.gov	Rachel Padilla (559) 353-4245 Email: Rachel.Padilla@dot.ca.gov	• Fresno COG • Tulare CAG • Kern COG • Kings CAG • Madera CTC
DISTRICT 7 100 S. Main Street Los Angeles, CA 90012	Adam Weitzmann (760) 874-8350 Email: Adam.Weitzmann@dot.ca.gov	Not applicable	• Southern California Association of Governments
DISTRICT 8 464 W. 4 th Street 6 th Floor, Mail Station 722 San Bernardino, CA 92401	Ricky Rivers (909) 963-9366 Email: Ricky.Rivers@dot.ca.gov Stephanie Ahmad (909) 383-4057 Email: Stephanie.Ahmad@dot.ca.gov	Lorna Foster (909) 501-5759 Email: Lorna.Foster@dot.ca.gov	• Southern California Association of Governments
DISTRICT 9 500 S. Main Street Bishop, CA 93514	Ben Downard (760) 874-8319 Email: Ben.Downard@dot.ca.gov Rick Franz (760) 874-8322 Email: Rick.Franz@dot.ca.gov	Marcela Castleberry (760) 784-4260 Email: Marcela.Castleberry@dot.ca.gov	• Inyo LTC • Mono LTC • Eastern Kern (COG)
DISTRICT 10 1976 E. Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard P.O. Box 2048 Stockton, CA 95201	Mountain Counties Gregoria Ponce (209) 483-7234 Email: Gregoria.Ponce@dot.ca.gov Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus Counties Tom Dumas (209) 941-1921 Email: Tom.Dumas@dot.ca.gov	Yolanda Tello-Jackson (209) 986-9828 Email: Yolanda.Tello-Jackson@dot.ca.gov Gregoria Ponce (209) 483-7234 Email: Gregoria.Ponce@dot.ca.gov	• Alpine County LTC • Amador CTC • Calaveras COG • Mariposa LTC • Merced CAG • Tuolumne CTC • San Joaquin COG • Stanislaus COG
DISTRICT 11 4050 Taylor Street Mail Station 240 San Diego, CA 92110	Omar Flores (619) 985-2124 Email: Omar.Flores@dot.ca.gov	Ben Guerrero (Acting) (619) 985-1492 Email: Benjamin.Guerrero@dot.ca.gov	• San Diego Association of Governments • Southern California Association of Governments
DISTRICT 12 1750 E. 4 th Street Santa Ana, CA 92705	Eric Chau (657) 328-6268 Email: Eric.E.Chau@dot.ca.gov	Not applicable	• Southern California Association of Governments



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

1120 N STREET

SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning>