

**2023
REGIONAL
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM
GUIDELINES**



San Joaquin Council of Governments

May 2023

**SAN JOAQUIN COUNCIL OF
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I. Introduction

1. Background

The Active Transportation Program (ATP) is a competitive statewide program created to encourage increased use of active modes of transportation, such as biking and walking. Senate Bill 99 (Chapter 359, Statutes of 2013) and Assembly Bill 101 (Chapter 354, Statutes of 2013) created the ATP, and Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) (Chapter 2031, statutes of 2017) directs additional funding from the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account to the ATP. The ATP distributes the total annual funding capacity between three programs with 10% going to small urban/rural areas with populations of 200,000 or less, 40% going to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in urban areas with populations greater than 200,000 and 50% going to a statewide program. All funding must be competitively awarded, the requirement that 25% of the funds in each program benefit disadvantaged communities. The ATP has two separate grant processes, one led by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and the other led by the nine large MPOs including the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG). The 2023 ATP Guidelines were adopted by the CTC on March 16, 2022.

These guidelines describe the policies, standards, criteria, and procedures for the development of the 2023 Regional Active Transportation Program. Where silent, these guidelines will defer to the CTC's 2023 ATP Guidelines.

2. Program Goals

Pursuant to statute, the purpose of the ATP is to encourage increased use of active modes of transportation, such as biking and walking. The goals of the ATP are to:

- Increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking.
- Increase the safety and mobility of non-motorized users.
- Advance the active transportation efforts of regional agencies to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals as established pursuant to Senate Bill 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) and Senate Bill 391 (Chapter 585, Statutes of 2009).
- Enhance public health, including reduction of childhood obesity through the use of programs including, but not limited to, projects eligible for Safe Routes to School Program funding.
- Ensure that disadvantaged communities fully share in the benefits of the program.
- Provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of active transportation users.

3. Program Schedule and Funding Years

The programming capacity for the 2023 Regional Active Transportation Program will be for state fiscal years 2023/24 through 2026/27. The following schedule lists the major milestones for the development and adoption of the 2023 Regional Active Transportation Program:

Call for Projects	March 16-17, 2022
Electronic project applications due to SJCOG (postmark date)	August 1, 2022
SJCOG staff funding recommendations for program	April, 2023
SJCOG Board adopts funding recommendations	April, 2023
SJCOG funding recommendations submitted to CTC	May, 2023
CTC adopt SJCOG selected ATP projects	June, 2023

II. Funding

4. Sources

The 2023 Regional Active Transportation Program is funded from various state, local, and federal funding sources:

- Approximately \$5.227 million from the regional portion of the Active Transportation Program (ATP)

5. Distribution

The 2023 Regional Active Transportation Program will be distributed as follows

- Approximately of \$5.227 million of Active Transportation funds will be programmed on a competitive basis to Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Safe Routes to School projects.

6. Matching Requirements

SJCOG does not require a funding match for the 2023 Regional Active Transportation Program.

7. Leveraging Funds

SJCOG encourages the leveraging of additional funds for a project by considering leveraging in the evaluation criteria for all projects, however, applicants are not required to leverage funds. SJCOG will only consider cash funds for leveraging. In-kind contributions are not permitted. Pre-construction phases funded by the applicant will be considered for leveraging even if the funds were expended before the application deadline.

Except for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding, SJCOG will only consider funds that are not allocated by the CTC on a project specific bases as eligible funds for leveraging points. Leveraging funds may include Non-competitive Measure K Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Safe Routes to School funds, other Measure K funds derived by formula, or other federal or local funds.

Applicants must provide a complete (phase-by-phase) project funding plan through construction that demonstrates that any competitive funding and leveraged funding in the plan (local, federal, state, private) are reasonably expected to be available and sufficient to complete the project.

8. Funding for Plans

Funding from the Active Transportation Program may be used to fund the development of community-wide active transportation plans, including bicycle, pedestrian, safe routes to schools, or comprehensive active transportation plans. ATP funds may only be used to fund plans within or encompassing disadvantaged communities. A list of the components that must be included in an active transportation plan can be found Appendix A of the 2023 ATP Guidelines as adopted by the CTC on March 16, 2022.

9. Reimbursement

The ATP is a reimbursement program for eligible costs incurred from a project. In order for an item to be eligible for reimbursement through Caltrans, that item's primary use or function must meet the program purpose and at least one of the program goals. Reimbursement is requested through the invoice process detailed in the Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual, Chapter 5, Invoicing. Costs incurred prior to CTC allocation are not eligible for reimbursement.

III. Eligibility

10. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for the Active Transportation Program are specified in Section 11 of the 2023 ATP Guidelines as adopted by the CTC on March 16, 2022, and are listed below.

The following entities within the State of California are eligible to apply for ATP funds:

1) Local, Regional, or State Agencies. Examples include city, county, MPO*, and Regional Transportation Planning Agency.

2) Caltrans.*

o Caltrans nominated projects must be coordinated and aligned with local and regional priorities. Caltrans is required to submit documentation that local communities are supportive of and have provided feedback on the proposed Caltrans ATP project.

o Caltrans must submit documentation to support the need to address the project with ATP funds, rather than other available funding sources such as the State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP).

3) Transit Agencies. Any agency responsible for public transportation that is eligible for funds under the Federal Transit Administration.

4) Natural Resources or Public Land Agencies. Federal, Tribal, State, or local agency responsible for natural resources or public land administration. Examples include:

- o State or local park or forest agencies.
- o State or local fish and game or wildlife agencies.
- o Department of the Interior Land Management agencies.
- o U.S. Forest Service.

5) Public schools or school districts.

6) Tribal Governments – federally recognized Native American Tribes.

o For funding awarded to a tribal government, a fund transfer to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) may be necessary.

o A tribal government may also partner with another eligible entity to apply if desired.

7) Private nonprofit tax-exempt organizations that are responsible for the management of public lands may only apply with projects eligible for Recreational Trails Program funds. Eligible project types include recreational trails and trailheads, park projects that facilitate trail linkages or connectivity to nonmotorized corridors, and conversion of abandoned railroad corridors to trails. Projects must benefit the general public, not only a private entity.

8) Any other entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails that the Commission determines to be eligible. Eligibility should be established with Commission staff before the application deadline

* Caltrans and MPOs, except for MPOs that are also regional transportation planning agencies, are not eligible project applicants for the federal Transportation Alternative Program funds appropriated to ATP. Therefore, funding awarded to projects submitted directly by Caltrans and MPOs are limited to other ATP funds. Caltrans and MPOs may partner with an eligible entity to expand funding opportunities.

11. Partnering With Implementing Agencies

Applicants are encouraged to partner with other agencies/groups, including private and non-profit organizations, in applying for funds.

12. Eligible Projects

All projects must be selected through a competitive process and must meet one or more of the program goals:

- a. Infrastructure Projects: Capital improvements that will further the goals of this program. This typically includes the environmental, design, right-of-way, and construction phases of a capital (facilities) project.
- b. Plans: The development of a community wide bicycle, pedestrian, safe routes to school, or active transportation plan.
- c. Non-infrastructure Projects: Education, encouragement, and enforcement activities that further the goals of this program. SJCOG intends to focus funding for non-infrastructure on start-up projects. A project is considered to be a start-up when no program currently exists. Start-up projects must demonstrate how the program is sustainable after funding is exhausted. The program cannot fund ongoing program operations. Non-infrastructure projects are not limited to those benefiting school students. Program expansions or new components of existing programs are eligible for funding as long as the existing program will be continued with other funds.
- d. Infrastructure projects with non-infrastructure components.
- e. Quick-Build Pilot Projects: Quick build projects are interim capital improvement projects that further the goals of the program. These projects do require construction, but are built with durable, low to moderate cost materials and last from one year to five years. See Appendix D of the CTC's 2023 ATP Guidelines for details.

13. Minimum Request for Funds

To maximize the effectiveness of program funds and to encourage the aggregation of small projects into one larger comprehensive project, the minimum request for funding that will be considered is \$250,000. This minimum does not apply to non-infrastructure projects, safe routes to school projects, plans, and quick-build pilot projects.

14. Project Type Requirements

As discussed in the Funding Distribution section (above), the program include multiple, overlapping components for which the requirements specific to these components are below.

A. Disadvantaged Communities

For a project to contribute toward the disadvantaged communities funding requirement, the project must clearly demonstrate, with verifiable information, a direct, meaningful, and assured benefit to a disadvantaged community as defined using the criteria outlined below. A project is considered beneficial if it fulfills an important need of a disadvantaged community in a way that provides a significant value. The project's benefits must primarily target a disadvantaged community while avoiding substantial burdens on that community. It is incumbent upon the applicant to clearly articulate how the project benefits the disadvantaged community; there is no presumption of benefit, even for projects located within a disadvantaged community. For a project to qualify as directly benefiting a disadvantaged community, the project must:

- Be located within, or be within reasonable proximity to, the disadvantaged community served by the project,
- Have a direct connection to the disadvantaged community, or
- Be an extension or a segment of a larger project that connects to or is directly adjacent to the disadvantaged community.

To qualify as a disadvantaged community the community served by the project must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- median based on the most current Census Tract (ID 140) level data from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (<\$60,188). Communities with a population of less than 15,000 may use data at the Census Block Group (ID 150) level. Unincorporated communities may use data at the Census Place (ID 160) level. Data is available at the [United States Census Bureau Website](#).
- CalEnviroScreen: An area identified as among the most disadvantaged 25% in the state according to the CalEPA and based on the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool 4.0 (CalEnviroScreen 4.0) scores (score must be greater than or equal to 40.05). The mapping tool can be found [here](#) and the list can be found under "[SB 535 List of Disadvantaged Communities](#)".
- National School Lunch Program: At least 75% of public-school students in the project area are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program for the 2019-2020 school year. Data is available at the [California Department of Education website](#). Applicants using this measure must indicate how the project benefits the school students in the project area. The project must be located within two miles of the school(s) represented by this criteria.
- Healthy Places Index: The Healthy Places Index includes a composite score for each census tract in the State. The higher the score, the healthier the community conditions based on 25 community characteristics. The scores are then converted to a percentile to compare it to other tracts in the State. A census tract must be in the 25th percentile or less to qualify as a disadvantaged community. The live map and the direct data can both be found on the California Healthy Places Index website.

- Native American Tribal Lands: Projects located within Federally Recognized Tribal Lands (typically within the boundaries of a Reservation or Rancheria) and projects submitted by tribal governments (Federally Recognized Native American Tribes).
- Other: If an applicant believes that the project benefits a disadvantaged community, but the project does not meet the aforementioned criteria due to a lack of accurate information, the applicant may submit another means of qualifying for consideration. Commission staff will assess and score this question for applicants using the “Other” category to qualify as a disadvantaged community. Suggested alternatives that can be submitted under this category include:
 - Census data that represents a small neighborhood or unincorporated area. The applicant must submit for consideration a quantitative assessment, such as a survey, to demonstrate that the community’s median household income is at or below 80% of the state median household income.
 - CalEnviroScreen data that represents a small neighborhood or unincorporated area. The applicant must submit for consideration an assessment to demonstrate that the community’s CalEnviroScreen score is at or above 40.05.

B. Safe Routes to School Projects

For a project to qualify for a Safe Routes to School designation, the project must directly increase safety and convenience for public school students to walk and/or bike to school. Safe Routes to Schools infrastructure projects must be located within two miles of a public school or within the vicinity of a public school bus stop, and the school community, including students, parents, caregivers, teachers, and staff, must be the intended beneficiaries of the project. For Safe Routes to School non-infrastructure, the program must benefit school students, parents, caregivers, teachers, and/or staff and primarily be based at the school.

C. Recreational Trails Projects

Trail projects that are primarily recreational should meet the federal requirements of the Recreational Trails Program, as such projects may not be eligible for funding from other sources. However, trails that serve active transportation purposes (such as multi-use paths, Class I bikeways, etc.) are fully eligible in the ATP and need not meet the Recreational Trails Program requirements.

IV. Project Application

All applications will must use the latest state 2023 ATP Cycle 6 Electronic Applications available at the Caltrans Local Assistance Website located at: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/active-transportation-program/general-and-technical-information>. In addition, the 2023 SJCOG Regional ATP Supplemental Application must be submitted as described below.

There are five different applications available for applicants to complete depending on the project type and size. It is incumbent on the applicant to complete the application appropriate for their project. Applicants applying for infrastructure projects must utilize the application type

based on the entire project cost, not the ATP request amount. All eligible projects must apply with one of the following application types. Applications for plans may not be combined with applications for infrastructure or non-infrastructure projects.

The five application types are:

- A. Large Project, Infrastructure Only or Infrastructure/Non-Infrastructure
 - Projects with a total project cost of greater than \$10 million will be considered a large project and must use the Large Project application. Caltrans and Commission staff may conduct onsite field reviews on a selection of projects that qualify as large projects. Field reviews are not indicative of the project's likelihood of receiving funding.
 - Projects that qualify for the large application do not need to apply for construction and may apply for pre-construction phases only.

- B. Medium Project, Infrastructure Only or Infrastructure/Non-Infrastructure
 - Projects with a total project cost of more than \$3.5 million and up to \$10 million will be considered a medium project and must use the Medium Project application.

- C. Small Project, Infrastructure Only or Infrastructure/Non-Infrastructure
 - Projects with a total project cost of \$3.5 million or less will be considered a small project and must use the Small Project application.

- D. Non-Infrastructure Only
 - Education and encouragement activities that further the goals of the ATP. Non-infrastructure programs include those benefiting school students, older adults, or entire communities. Non-infrastructure projects may utilize existing best practices or be innovative in nature.

- E. Plan
 - Applicants can only apply for a plan with the Plan application. This application cannot be combined with any other type of project. Plan projects must be within or encompass a disadvantaged community.

15. Reduced Scope

SJCOG is offering applicants an opportunity to submit a project with a reduced scope from what was submitted in the State ATP application. If a jurisdiction submits an application with a reduced scope to the MPO component (SJCOG's Regional ATP), the state ATP application should be revised and submitted along with the Regional ATP Supplemental Application.

16. Application Submittal Requirements

- All project applications must include the signature of the Chief Executive Officer or other officer authorized by the applicant's governing board.
- Where the project is to be implemented by an agency other than the applicant, documentation of the agreement between the project applicant and implementing agency must be submitted with the project application.

A project application must also include documentation of all other funds committed to the projects.

The following contents are required to be submitted:

- Signed cover letter (electronic signature is accepted)
- Completed Supplemental Application
 - Project Information – Section I
 - Supplemental Questions – Section II
 - Supplemental Application Checklist – Section III
- Complete Appendix – in order
 - State ATP Application
 - Any additional exhibits not included in your State ATP Application
 - Miscellaneous – Any other information not included in your State ATP Application

One (1) electronic copy must be submitted via thumb drive, or email/file sharing site of the complete grant application no later than 4:00 p.m. on **August 1, 2022** to:

Joel Campos, Associate Regional Planner
San Joaquin Council of Governments
555 E. Weber Avenue
Stockton, CA 95202
campos@sjcog.org

V. Project Selection Process

17. Scoring Criteria

Proposed projects will be scored and ranked on the basis of applicant responses to the below criteria. See the chart below to reference the scoring criteria and points allotted to the different types of applications. The chart below shows the maximum number of points allowed for each scoring criteria for each type of application. If a scoring criterion is left blank, it is not applicable to that application type.

Topic	Plan	NI Only	Infrastructure or Infrastructure with Non-Infrastructure		
			Small	Medium	Large
Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities	30	10	10	10	10
Need	40	60	50	40	35
Safety	-	10	25	25	25
Public Participation & Planning	25	15	10	10	10
Scope and Plan Layout Consistency and Cost Effectiveness	-	10	5	5	5
Evaluation and Sustainability	-	10	-	-	-
Transformative Projects	-	-	-	-	5
Context Sensitive & Innovation	-	5	-	5	5
Implementation & Plan Development	25	-	-	-	-
Leveraging of Other Funding	10	10	10	15	15
Project Readiness	-	-	20	20	20
Project Location	20	20	20	20	20
Transit Access	20	20	20	20	20
Mixed Land Uses and Development	15	15	15	15	15
Housing Diversity and Affordability	15	15	15	15	15
Total	200	200	200	200	200

Project programming recommendations may not be based strictly on the rating criteria given the requirements of the various funding sources. A minimum of 25% of ATP funding will be programmed to projects that benefit Disadvantaged Communities per CTC requirements. Project Selection between

18. Project Applications with the Same Score

If two or more projects applications receive the same score that is at the funding cut-off score, the following criteria will be used to determine which project(s) will be funded in the following priority order:

- a. Infrastructure projects
- b. Project readiness including, but not limited to, completed environmental documents
- c. Highest score on the highest point value question (questions with the highest point value may vary by application type).

19. Project Evaluation Committee

SJCOG staff will form a multidisciplinary Project Evaluation Committee made up of 5 or 7 volunteers to assist in evaluating project applications. In forming the Project Evaluation Committee, staff will seek participants with expertise in bicycling and pedestrian transportation and land use, including Safe Routes to Schools type projects, and in projects benefiting disadvantaged communities, and will seek geographically balanced representation from local jurisdictions and non-governmental organizations.

20. Project Programming

SJCOG staff will program funding to projects based upon the project scores and input from the Project Evaluation Committee. SJCOG staff will seek to program projects to concentrate federal and state funding on as few projects as possible. Final programming recommendations are subject to review and consideration by the SJCOG committees before adoption by the SJCOG Board. Approval of ATP funding is subject to approval by the CTC.