2018 Sustainable Communities Program
Frequently Asked Questions

General

1. What is the Sustainable Communities Program?
   The Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) provides technical assistance and resources to local agencies to support local planning efforts that integrate transportation and land use and implement the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The Program began in 2005 as the Compass Blueprint Program, and the name was later changed to the Sustainability Planning Grant (SPG) program.
   
   The updated moniker better reflects the SCP’s goal to provide resources to local jurisdictions to implement SCAG’s Sustainable Communities Strategy. The most recent SCS was adopted by SCAG’s Regional Council in 2016 and can be found here: http://scagrtscs.net/Pages/default.aspx.

2. How much funding is available through the Sustainable Communities Program?
   There is a multi-year funding commitment of approximately $6 million, split between the three project categories. Approximately $1.6 million are available in SCAG’s FY 2018-19 Overall Work Program (OWP), while approximately $4.4 million are anticipated from the California Active Transportation Program (ATP) for SCAG’s fiscal year 2019-2020. If additional resources become available, they will be included in the budget development process in future fiscal years.

3. Will additional funding become available for the Sustainable Communities Program?
   A portion of the funding comes from Senate Bill 1 (SB1), the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017. If SCAG receives an additional allocation of SB1 funding for FY 2019-2020, some of this funding could be allocated to increase the number of awards made available through the 2018 Sustainable Communities Program. As indicated in Question 4, if additional funding does become available, it would be incorporated into SCAG’s budget development process for future fiscal years. If additional funding does become available, resources will likely be allocated to applicants that submit applications for this Call for Applications based upon anticipated demand.

4. If a portion of the Sustainable Communities Program is funded by SB1, will the amount of funding available be reduced or eliminated if SB1 is repealed?
   If SB1 is repealed, it is likely the amount of funding available to SCAG from the California Active Transportation Program (ATP) would be reduced and the remaining funds would not be programmed or available until FY 2020-2021 or FY 2021-2022. While there are many variables as to what the reduction would be, staff anticipates that the funding available would be reduced to approximately $2 million from the ATP. This would mean that approximately $3.6 million would be available for the Sustainable Communities Program overall.

   The amount of money available for Integrated Land Use and Green Region Initiatives projects will not change even if SB1 is repealed.
5. Why are the project types more limited than in the past?

The program focus has been sharpened to identify specific project types that provide practical, relevant strategies for meeting SB 375 greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets and queue jurisdictions for future funding opportunities. The approach will also allow SCAG to maximize benefits from the limited amount of available resources within the restrictive conditions associated with funding sources.

The approach will allow SCAG to use a more streamlined approach for procurement and contracting and help ensure that SCAG is able to deliver projects more efficiently.

Funding is available for a wider range of planning projects through the Caltrans Transportation Planning Grant Program. More information on the program can be found here. An application workshop for the program will also be held at the SCAG Office in downtown Los Angeles on Thursday, October 18th from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon.

6. How were the project types identified?

Nine (9) initial project types were developed, and a survey was sent to participants in SCAG’s numerous Regional Planning Working Groups for input and comments. Approximately 1,500 representatives from cities, counties, county transportation commissions, councils of government, state agencies, non-profits/non-governmental organizations, universities, and the private sector received the survey in early July 2018. SCAG staff received responses from 132 respondents from across the SCAG region. Staff refined and finalized the nine project types based on survey responses.

7. How will SCAG allocate funds to the different projects? Will SCAG be funding at least one project from every agency?

As in previous cycles, the evaluation team will be comprised of staff from partner agencies and from SCAG. For Active Transportation project types, there will be one evaluation team per county that is comprised of staff from the county transportation commissions and SCAG. Final awards will be based on application score, regional equity targets, and funding eligibility.

Because of limited funding availability, SCAG cannot commit to providing funding to at least one project per agency in this Call for Applications.

8. What does it mean to say that successful applicants will receive “technical assistance” through the Sustainable Communities Program?

As in the past, the Sustainable Communities Program will not provide grant funding but will instead provide resources and direct technical assistance to complete projects. SCAG staff will work with the awarded agency to complete the procurement and contracting. SCAG staff will serve as the administrative project manager, managing the contract and paying invoices. Agency staff will play a large role in the day-to-day dealings with the consultant.
9. **When are applications due?**

Applications are due on **Thursday, November 15th by 5:00 p.m.**

10. **How do I submit my application?**

Applications should be emailed to **scp@scag.ca.gov**.

Please use the following naming convention for applications:

- [Agency Name]_[Project Category]_App
  
  (e.g. SCAG_SB 743_App)

For all Active Transportation projects, you must also submit a completed budget and scope of work. Please use the following naming convention for the budget/scope of work document:

- [Agency Name]_[Project Category]_SOW
  
  (e.g. SCAG_Regional Corridors_SOW)

Please use the following names for the project categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Category</th>
<th>Abbreviated Name for File Convention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community-wide &amp; Area Plans</td>
<td>Community_Wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Corridors Plans</td>
<td>Regional_Corridors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Demonstration Projects (Quick-Build)</td>
<td>Quick_Build</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Strategic Plan</td>
<td>Safety_Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB 743 Implementation Assistance</td>
<td>SB743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Management, Pricing and Reduction Strategies</td>
<td>Parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livable Corridor &amp; Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Planning</td>
<td>Livable_Corridors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat Island Reduction with Urban Greening and Cool Streets</td>
<td>Urban_Greening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Planning</td>
<td>EV_Charging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a part of your email submittal, you must also include the following documents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Transportation</th>
<th>Integrated Land Use &amp; Green Region Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Application</td>
<td>☐ Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Budget &amp; Scope of Work</td>
<td>☐ Application Signature Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Letters of Support (combined)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Application Signature Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Additional Attachments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. What must my agency do to be in compliance with the Housing Element requirement for the Sustainable Communities Program?

Formula funds from SB1 have been allocated to SCAG through the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program. These funds provide resources for the Integrated Land Use and Green Region Initiative project categories, as well as Safety Strategic Plans. Accordingly, applicants, sub-applicants and/or jurisdictions applying for these project types are required to have a housing element in substantial compliance with State housing element law, and must have submitted updated housing element Annual Progress Reports (APRs). This requirement will apply at the time SCAG announces awards in March 2019. More information about compliance status and APRs can be found at [http://hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/index.shtml](http://hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/index.shtml).

12. Is an agency precluded from receiving technical assistance if it has received it in a previous round?

No. An agency is not precluded from receiving technical assistance if it has received it in a previous round, even if the previous project has not been completed. However an agency will score poorly if it applies for a project type of which it has already received funding to complete the same type of project.

13. Who do I contact if I have more questions about the program?

You can direct any questions about the program to Caitlin Sims at [sims@scag.ca.gov](mailto:sims@scag.ca.gov) or (213) 630-1550.

Eligibility

14. Is any project eligible for the Sustainable Communities Program?

The Sustainable Communities Program defines 9 specific project types within 3 project categories – Active Transportation, Integrated Land Use, and Green Region Initiative – that are eligible for technical assistance. Any project that does not fit within one of these 9 specific project types will not be eligible. These specific project types were identified because they provide practical and relevant strategies for meeting SB 375 greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets and queue jurisdictions for future funding opportunities (i.e. the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund). The specific project types are laid out in the [Program Guidelines](http://hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/index.shtml).

Applicants will need to define a project area and complete the application for each project type for which they are interested. Successful applicants will receive specific deliverables, which have largely been defined and which are outlined in the project guidelines and application.

15. Who is eligible to apply?

All applying entities must be from within the SCAG region. Eligibility varies slightly between the Active Transportation and Integrated Land Use/Green Region Initiative project categories.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Transportation</th>
<th>Integrated Land Use &amp; Green Region Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Local or Regional Agency (i.e. cities, counties, councils of government, Regional Transportation Planning Agency and County Public Health Departments);</td>
<td>Applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transit Agencies (i.e. any agency responsible for public transportation that is eligible for funds under the Federal Transit Administration);</td>
<td>• Transit agencies,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Natural Resources or Public Land Agencies (i.e. Federal, Tribal, State, or local agency responsible for natural resources or public land administration);</td>
<td>• Cities and counties,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public schools or School districts;</td>
<td>• Native American tribal governments,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Native American Tribal Governments</td>
<td>• Other public transportation planning entities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. **What is an “other public transportation planning entity”?**

A “public transportation planning entity” is any agency that has statutory authority for transportation planning. Any agency that has this authority is eligible to submit an application as an applicant for the Integrated Land Use & Green Region Initiative project types.

17. **Are councils of government (COGs) eligible to submit an application?**

Councils of government are eligible to submit an application for project types in the Active Transportation Project Category. For project types in the Integrated Land Use & Green Region Initiative Project Categories, they are eligible to submit an application as a sub-applicant with an eligible applicant.

18. **Can my agency apply for more than one project?**

Yes. Applicants may apply in more than one category and may submit multiple proposals within a single category. Each application will ask that the applicant prioritize their applications.

19. **Do I prioritize my applications within each project category (i.e. Integrated Land Use, Green Region Initiative, Active Transportation) or overall?**

An agency’s applications should be prioritized overall (rather than within each project category).

20. **If an agency is submitting applications from multiple departments, should they be prioritized by department or by agency?**

An agency should prioritize their applications overall, regardless of which department initiates the application.
**Application**

21. Is there a maximum amount of funding a project can receive?

For Integrated Land Use and Green Region Initiative project types, applicants are not required to submit a budget. As a result, there is no maximum funding amount. For the Active Transportation project types, the following maximum funding amounts – as found in the Guidelines – can be found below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>Maximum Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community-wide &amp; Area Plans</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Corridor Plans</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Strategic Plans</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Demonstration Projects (Quick-Build)</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Can a multi-jurisdictional application be submitted?

Yes. A multi-jurisdictional application can be submitted. One eligible applicant should serve as the “lead applicant” and the remaining jurisdictions or agencies should be listed as sub-applicants on the application, along with proposed role in the project.

23. Can multi-jurisdictional applications exceed the maximum project funding amount?

No. For project types in the Active Transportation Project Category, multi-jurisdictional applications cannot exceed the maximum project funding amount.

24. Can a consultant prepare my application?

A consultant can prepare an agency’s application. However, for projects that are awarded, that consultant is then not eligible to compete for the project during the competitive procurement process.

25. Is there a local match requirement?

There is no local match requirement. For the “Quick Build” project type in the Active Transportation project category, applicants will receive up to 5 points for providing a cash match, based on the percentage of the overall project cost. There are no points awarded for providing a cash match in any of the other Active Transportation project types or any of the Integrated Land Use or Green Region Initiative project types.

26. Can I provide an in-kind match for our local match?

No. Applicants may only provide a cash match for their local match. Agencies that provide a cash match will be asked to provide the funding to SCAG prior to the start of the project (i.e. when the contract with the consultant is executed). Any other type of “match” will not be accepted.

27. Does staff time count as cash match?

No. Staff time does not count as cash match.
28. How will applications be evaluated?

Proposals in each of the three categories will be evaluated based on project need (50 points); goals, objectives, and outcomes (35 points); and partnerships and leveraging (15 points). The potential points awarded for each question are noted in each application. Further clarification regarding how points are awarded to each question is also provided in each application.

Commencing Work

29. When and how will applicants be notified of their award status?

SCAG anticipates that the Regional Council (RC) will consider the Application Rankings at their March 7, 2019, meeting. Project applicants will be contacted via email following the RC action regarding the status of their application and will be provided with additional information on the timing of their award and next steps for initiating the project. At that time, unsuccessful applicants will have the opportunity to schedule a debrief to discuss ways to improve the proposal for future funding cycles or other grant programs.

30. What is the timeline for completing projects?

Staff anticipates that the SCAG Regional Council will recommend project awards at its March 2019 meeting. Following that award, SCAG staff will meet with all awardees within 3 months of final project approval to lay out the proposed project schedule. The schedule below provides a high-level overview of when projects are anticipated to start.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Integrated Land Use &amp; Green Region Initiative Project Types</th>
<th>Safety Strategic Plan Project Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding Available</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Initial Award Meetings</td>
<td>March – June 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement Process</td>
<td>March – July 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Kick-off</td>
<td>August – September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Completion</td>
<td>December 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Other Active Transportation Project Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California Transportation Commission Project Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Initial Award Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Kick-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Completion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that projects should be completed in approximately 12 to 36 months in duration following project kick-off. All projects must be completed by the “Project Completion” date listed above.

If SB1 is repealed, funds for Active Transportation Project Types may be delayed.
31. Will the City Council need to take action prior to beginning work on the project?

Yes, SCAG will ask awarded applicants to have their governing body (i.e. City Council, Board of Directors, etc.) adopt a resolution of support/participation prior to beginning work on the project. If it is not possible for the City Council to adopt a resolution, SCAG will ask for a letter signed by the City Manager/Executive of the Agency.

32. How long do awardees have to complete their projects?

Projects should be completed in approximately 12 to 36. All Integrated Land Use and Green Region Initiative Projects and the Safety Strategic Plan Projects must be completed by December 2020. All other Active Transportation Projects must be completed by January 2023.

Green Region Initiative and Integrated Land Use Projects

33. How much will the deliverables be personalized to my agency?

Successful applicants will receive deliverables that are specifically customized to their agency and/or specified project area.

34. Will my agency be able to make any modifications to the proposed deliverables for the Integrated Land Use and Green Region Initiative projects?

Agencies will not be able to make substantial modifications to the proposed deliverables for the Integrated Land Use and Green Region Initiative projects. For each of the five Integrated Land Use and Green Region Initiative projects, SCAG will procure a single consultant to complete the deliverables for all of the selected agencies. However, each agency will receive customized deliverables, and SCAG will work with agencies to ensure that the proposed deliverables meet their needs.

Livable Corridor and TOD Planning Project Type

35. Does the livable corridor designation apply only to certain corridors already determined by SCAG or can it apply to any corridor meeting a certain set of criteria?

The livable corridor designation applies to any corridor that features bus rapid transit (BRT) or frequent bus service, as described in the Program Guidelines.

Active Transportation Projects

36. My Agency has already submitted a non-infrastructure/planning application for Cycle 4 ATP Funding for a project that would be eligible for the Sustainable Communities Program. Just in case I don’t receive that funding, should I submit an application for SCAG’s Sustainable Communities Program as well?

As outlined in SCAG’s 2019 ATP Regional Guidelines, planning and non-infrastructure applications not funded at in the state call for projects will be programmed through SCAG’s regional program using their statewide score. These scores will be evaluated alongside scores from the SCP to determine the final project list. This may lead to a reduction in total ATP funding within the SCP.
The maximum request that SCAG will fund for projects in its regional program is $250,000 for planning projects and $500,000 for non-infrastructure guidelines. If the project submitted to the statewide ATP exceeds these funding caps, the applicant may wish to downscope and submit the project via the SCP. If the project submitted to state did not exceed limits then there is no need to resubmit. If your agency’s statewide ATP application requested more than these limits, and you do not wish to resubmit, your agency will be responsible for funding the difference or required to forfeit the project.

Active Transportation Infrastructure Demonstration Project (Quick-Builds) Project Type

37. Will SCAG’s consultant provide both design and installation of quick-build projects?

Yes. SCAG’s consultant will provide both the design and installation of quick-build projects. At the end of the pilot period, the consultant will then remove the installation.

38. Do projects require engineering drawings and approval of a Professional Engineer?

No. Projects will not require engineering drawings and do not require stamped approval of a licensed Professional Engineer (PE). Engineering approval should not be included in the scope of the Quick Build application. If applicants wish to include engineer approval or drawings, applicants must seek PE approval separate from the scope of the Quick Build project.

39. How are Quick Build projects different from past Go Human demonstration projects?

Quick Builds are an evolution of the Go Human demonstration projects, which were typically one-day infrastructure demonstrations and included a community event. Quick Builds are longer-term demonstration projects focused on testing innovative infrastructure the agency is considering for permanent installation and may be coupled with an existing community event to enhance public outreach. Quick Builds should include a community advisory committee to help shape the project and should include strategies and tools for soliciting public feedback throughout the installation period and plans for evaluating the project outcomes.

Regional Corridors Plans Project Type

40. Is a protected creek multi-use path extension eligible in this category?

Yes.