

**2025 REGIONAL
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM
GUIDELINES**



**San Joaquin Council of Governments
February 2024**

**SAN JOAQUIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
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I. Introduction

1. Background

The Active Transportation Program (ATP) is a competitive statewide program created to encourage the increased use of active modes of transportation, such as biking and walking. Senate Bill 99 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 359, Statutes of 2013) and Assembly Bill 101 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 354, Statutes of 2013) created the ATP. Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) (Beall, Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017) directs additional funding from the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account to the ATP.

The ATP distributes the total annual funding capacity among 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 the statewide program. All funding must be competitively awarded and at least 25% of funds in each program must benefit disadvantaged communities. The ATP has two separate grant processes, one led by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and the other led by the ten large MPOs, including the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG).

These guidelines describe the policies, standards, criteria, and procedures for the development of the San Joaquin Council of Governments 2025 Regional Active Transportation Program.

Regional Stakeholder and Public Engagement

These guidelines are a result of extensive stakeholder and public engagement with SJCOG's member jurisdictions. SJCOG staff convened an ad-hoc committee made up of volunteers from throughout the region to update the region's Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 7 Program Package. The ad-hoc committee was made up of 7 representatives from the County of San Joaquin; the cities of Stockton, Lodi, Manteca, Tracy, and Ripon; and SJCOG's Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), a group of community members that represent the geographical, social, cultural, and economic diversity of the region. The ad-hoc committee met monthly from July to December 2023 to (1) modify the program guidelines (2) simplify the application and review process, and (3) level the playing field amongst urban and rural applicants. Committee members also collaborated with SJCOG staff to update Cycle 7's Application, Scoring Rubric, and Scorecard. In January 2024, staff circulated a draft Cycle 7 Program Package to SJCOG committees and SJCOG's Policy Board to solicit feedback. In February 2024, SJCOG staff incorporated the received feedback into a final application packet, which includes these guidelines.

2. Program Goals

The purpose of the ATP is to encourage the 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, pursuant to Senate Bill 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) and Senate Bill 391 (Chapter 585, Statutes of 2009).

SJCOG 2025 Regional ATP Guidelines (Cycle 7)

- Enhance public health, including reduction of childhood obesity using public 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 2025 Regional Active Transportation Program will be for state fiscal years 2025/26 through 2028/29. The table below lists the major milestones for the development and adoption of the 2025 Regional Active Transportation Program:

ATP Milestones	Date
Call for Projects opens for the statewide program	March 22, 2024
Call for Projects opens for the regional program	May 20, 2024
State applications due	June 17, 2024
Regional applications due to SJCOG (postmark date)	July 26, 2024
SJCOG’s Project Evaluation Committee reviews regional applications	August to October 2024
Projects not programmed by the CTC distributed to large MPOs	December 2024
SJCOG staff presents funding recommendations for program to SJCOG standing committees and SJCOG Board	January 2025
SJCOG Board adopts funding recommendations	January 2025
SJCOG staff submits approved funding recommendations to CTC	January 2025
CTC adopts SJCOG’s selected ATP projects	June 2025

III. **Funding**

4. Sources

The 2025 Regional Active Transportation Program is funded by the following state, local, and federal funding sources:

- State Active Transportation Program (ATP).
- Measure K
- Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ).

5. Funding Distribution

The 2025 Regional Active Transportation Program will be distributed as follows:

- State Active Transportation Program – \$4.887 million (per California Transportation Commission’s Fund Estimate, January 2024)
- Measure K Smart Growth – \$9.050 million
- Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) - \$4.232 million

6. Matching Fund Requirements

SJCOG does not require a funding match for the 2025 Regional Active Transportation Program.

7. Leveraging Funds

The regional ATP program will only consider leveraged funds for plans, non-infrastructure, and small infrastructure projects since the statewide ATP program considers leveraged funds for medium and large infrastructure projects in its evaluation process. However, applicants are not required to leverage funds.

SJCOG will only consider cash funds for leveraging. Pre-construction phase activities funded by the applicant will be considered for leveraging even if the funds were expended before the application deadline. Funds expended for ineligible program costs and activities will not be considered as leveraged funding.

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

Applicants must provide a complete, phase-by-phase project funding plan through

construction that demonstrates that any competitive ATP funding and leveraged funding in the plan (i.e., local, federal, state, and private funds) is reasonably expected to be available and sufficient to complete the project. Additionally, applicants must attach a signed letter of commitment indicating the amounts and sources of leveraged funds. The letter of commitment must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other officer authorized by the applicant's governing board. Applicants without a signed letter of commitment will not receive leveraging points. Applicants may also include other documentation to substantiate leveraging, including meeting minutes from a governing body, a budget sheet, a board, or council resolution, etc.

8. Funding for Active Transportation 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. State ATP funding can only be used to fund plans within a disadvantaged community or for area-wide plans that encompass at least one disadvantaged community. A list of the components that must be included in an active transportation plan can be found in the CTC's 2025 ATP Guidelines, Appendix A. Only 2% of State ATP funds allocated to MPOs may be used to fund active transportation plans. Therefore, where possible, plans should be funded through other means.

9. 50% Agency Cap

No agency or project may be awarded more than 50 percent of all available funds identified in the call for projects. If a project's total costs exceed more than 50 percent of the available funds, then the project would only be eligible for partial funding (i.e., up to 50 percent of the available funds). As with any partially funded project, SJCOG offers the applicant the right of first refusal or the opportunity to submit a scaled down version of the project scope. Any scaled down version of the project scope must provide a proportionate level of benefits, compared to the original project. If the applicant refuses to submit a scaled down project scope, then the award will be withdrawn.

10. Reimbursement

The ATP is a reimbursement program for eligible costs incurred from a project. For an item to be eligible for reimbursement through Caltrans, the item's primary use or function must meet the program purpose and at least one program goal.

Reimbursement is requested through the invoicing process detailed in the Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual, Chapter 5, Invoicing. Costs incurred prior to CTC allocation and, for federally funded projects, Federal Highway Administration project approval (i.e., Authorization to Proceed), are not eligible for reimbursement.

IV. Eligibility

11. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for the Active Transportation Program are specified in the CTC's 2025 ATP Guidelines and are listed below.

Only applications that have been submitted, reviewed, and scored in the Statewide Active Transportation Program will be accepted for consideration in the Regional Active Transportation Program. There is no limit on how many applications an eligible entity can submit.

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.*

- 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.
- 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:

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

5) Public schools or school districts.

6) Tribal Governments – federally recognized Native American Tribes.

- Tribal governments that are awarded funding have several options for contracting, such as a fund transfer to a federal agency or partnering with another eligible entity. Caltrans will work with Tribal governments to determine a Tribe's preferred contracting option.

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 is limited to other ATP funds. Caltrans and MPOs may partner with an eligible entity to expand funding opportunities.

12. Partnering With Implementing Agencies

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

13. Eligible Projects

All projects must be selected through a competitive process and must meet one or more of the following program goals. Refer to the CTC's 2025 ATP Guidelines, Appendix B, for example projects.

- 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. State funds cannot be used to program a new infrastructure project without a complete Project Study Report (PSR) or PSR equivalent. The CTC will not consider feasibility studies as PSR equivalent documents.
- Plans: The development of a community wide bicycle, pedestrian, safe routes to school, or active transportation plan that encompasses or includes at least one disadvantaged community. See the CTC's 2025 ATP Guidelines, Appendix A, for Plan Project Guidance.
- Non-infrastructure Projects: Education, encouragement, and enforcement activities that further the goals of this program. See the CTC's 2025 ATP Guidelines, Appendix B, for example NI activities. SJCOG intends to focus funding for non-infrastructure on start-up projects. A project is considered a start-up project when no such program currently exists. An applicant must demonstrate how the start-up project will be sustained after ATP funding is exhausted. The program cannot fund

existing or ongoing program operations. Non-infrastructure projects are not limited to those benefiting K-12 students. Program expansions or new components of existing programs are eligible for funding if the existing program or program components will be funded through other means.

- Infrastructure projects with non-infrastructure components.

14. 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 funding request for infrastructure projects that will be considered is \$250,000. This minimum does not apply to non-infrastructure projects, plans, safe routes to school projects, and recreational trail projects.

15. Project Type Requirements

SB 99 specifies that at least 25% of funds must benefit disadvantaged communities within each of the program components. However, the ATP also includes other project types that must meet certain requirements. Below is an explanation of the requirements specific to the project types listed in SB 99.

A. Disadvantaged Communities

For a project to contribute towards 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 in 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 benefits must primarily target a disadvantaged community while avoiding substantial burdens to 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 Household Income: (Table ID B19013) is less than 80% of the statewide median based on the most current Census Tract (ID 140) level data from the 2018-2022 American Community Survey (<\$73,524). 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 2022-2023 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 criterion.
- 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](#).
- Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool: A census tract identified as disadvantaged in at least one of the tool’s ten disadvantaged community categories (climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, workforce development, Tribal overlap, and neighboring disadvantaged tracts). The [map](#) can be found on the federal Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool website.
- USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer: A census tract identified as among the most disadvantaged 25% in the state according to the ETC Explorer State Results (final index score must be greater than or equal to 3.43447). The [map](#) can be found on the United States Department of Transportation 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 do not need to meet the Recreational Trails Program requirements.

V. Project Application

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 appropriate application 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 to 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:

1. 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.

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.

SJCOG will not consider quick-build projects.

16. Scaled-Down Scope

SJCOG is offering applicants an opportunity to submit a project with a scaled-down scope than what was originally submitted in the State ATP application. If a jurisdiction decides to propose a project with a scaled-down scope, then a revised state ATP application must be submitted alongside the Regional ATP Supplemental Application. In the supplemental application, the applicant needs to provide an explanation of scalability and how the revised project will provide a proportionate level of benefits as the original project.

17. Application Submittal Requirements

State applications will be available and must be submitted on the ATP online application portal. The 2025 Regional ATP Application must be submitted as described below.

All project applications must include the signature of the Chief Executive Officer, or another officer authorized by the applicant's governing board.

If the project is to be implemented by an agency other than the applicant, then 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 to be included in the submitted application:

- Signed Cover Letter (electronic signature is accepted)
- Completed Supplemental Application
 - Project Information – Section I
 - Supplemental Questions – Section II
 - Existing Plans
 - Community/Neighborhood Impact
 - Safe Routes to Schools and Other Community Activity Centers
 - Leveraging of Other Funding
 - Transit Access
 - Supplemental Application Checklist – Section III
- Complete Appendix (in order)
 - State ATP Application
 - Leveraged Funding Letter of Commitment with Supporting Documentation
 - 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 TBD, to:

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

VI. **Project Selection Process**

18. Scoring Criteria

A project's ranking will be determined by its Statewide ATP score and Regional ATP score. The regional application will be reviewed and scored by SJCOG's Project Evaluation Committee while the statewide application will be reviewed and scored by CTC's Evaluation Committee. The regional application score will be added to the statewide score to determine a final score. A project can earn a total final score of 125 points, or the sum of the maximum regional and statewide scores. See the chart below to reference the scoring criteria and points allotted to the different project types. The chart below shows the maximum number of points for each scoring criteria based on project type. If a scoring criterion is left blank, it is not applicable to that project type.

SJCOG staff will form a multidisciplinary Project Evaluation Committee of volunteers to assist in reviewing and evaluating regional supplemental applications. SJCOG staff will add up each volunteer's score and divide the sum by the number of evaluators to get an average score. The average score from the regional application will then be added to the state application's score to get a final score.

Scoring Topic	Plan	NI Only	Infrastructure or Infrastructure with Non-Infrastructure (NI)		
			Small	Medium	Large
Benefits to Disadvantaged	30	10	10	10	10
Need	20	40	52	40	38
Safety		10	25	25	20
Public Participation & Planning	25	15	10	10	10
Scope and Plan Layout Consistency and Cost Effectiveness					7
Scope and Plan Layout Consistency		10	3	5	
Context Sensitive & Innovation		5		5	5
Transformative Projects					5
Evaluation and Sustainability		10			
Leveraging				5	5
Implementation & Plan Development	25				
Corps		(0 or – 5)	(0 or – 5)	(0 or –5)	(0 or –5)
Past Performance	(0 or – 10)	(0 or – 10)	(0 or –10)	(0 or – 10)	(0 or –10)
Subtotal (Statewide Scores)	100	100	100	100	100
Regional Supplemental Questions					
Existing Plans	5	5	5	5	5
Community/Neighborhood	5	5	5	5	5
Safe Routes to Schools and	5	5	5	10	10
Leveraging of Other Funding	5	5	5		
Transit Access	5	5	5	5	5
Total	125	125	125	125	125

The regional application will include the following 5 supplemental questions:

- A. Existing Plans: The applicant’s need for an active transportation plan or the proposed project’s alignment with existing active transportation plans.
- B. Community/Neighborhood Impact: Proposed project’s potential to transform non-motorized users’ mobility and accessibility and increase community connectivity.

- C. Safe Routes to Schools and Other Community Activity Centers: Proposed project's potential to provide or improve safe and secure access to schools and other key community activity centers.
- D. Leveraging of Other Funding: The leveraged funding that will be committed to the proposed project if ATP competitive funding is awarded.
- E. Transit Access: Proposed project's potential to promote transit access and ridership.

The scoring rubric for the supplemental questions can be found in Appendix A.

If two or more projects receive the same score and both projects are at the funding cut-off score, the following criterion will be used to determine which project(s) will be funded. Criteria are listed in priority order.

- a. Infrastructure projects.
- b. Project readiness including, but not limited to, completed environmental clearance documents.
- c. Benefit to Disadvantaged Communities as a minimum of 25% of ATP funding must be programmed to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities per CTC requirements.

19. Project Evaluation Committee

SJCOG staff will form a multidisciplinary Project Evaluation Committee of 5 to 7 volunteers to assist in reviewing and scoring regional supplemental applications. When forming the Project Evaluation Committee, staff will seek participants with expertise in, but not limited to, bicycling and pedestrian transportation and land use; Safe Routes to Schools projects; and projects benefiting disadvantaged communities. Staff will also seek to have a balanced representation of representatives from local jurisdictions and non-governmental organizations to promote geographic equity.

To support the implementation of the Measure K program, SJCOG will also seek participation from SJCOG's Citizens Advisory Committee.

20. Project Programming

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