



SBCAG

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Cycle 7

**2025 Regional Competitive
Active Transportation Program (ATP)**

FINAL

SBCAG ATP LARGE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) GUIDELINES

**To be adopted by SBCAG Board of Directors in
May 2024**

**To be approved by the California Transportation Commission
(CTC) in June 2024**

2025 SBCAG ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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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 program is administered by the California Transportation Commission (www.catc.ca.gov).

The ATP distributes the total annual funding capacity between three components with:

- **Statewide:** 50% going to a statewide program eligible to all applicants;
- **Large Metropolitan Planning Organization (Large MPO):** 40% going to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in urban areas with populations greater than 200,000; and
- **Small Urban/Rural:** 10% going to small urban/rural areas with populations of 200,000 or less.

All funding must be competitively awarded, with the requirement that 25% of the funds in each program benefit disadvantaged communities. (Criteria to qualify as a disadvantaged community discussed in Section V.2. Scoring Criteria, below.)

The Active Transportation Program has two separate grant processes, one led by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and the other led by the ten Large MPOs including the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG).

The 2025 ATP Cycle 7 Guidelines were adopted by the CTC on March 22, 2024. These guidelines describe the policies, standards, criteria, and procedures for the development of the 2025 SBCAG Large MPO Active Transportation Program. The CTC Guidelines lay out the programming policies, procedures, and project selection criteria for the statewide competitive program, as well as for the Small Urban/Rural and Large MPO regional competitive programs.

Large MPOs, such as SBCAG, have the option of developing regional policies, procedures, and project selection criteria that differ from those adopted by CTC, provided CTC approves the Large MPO regional guidelines.

This document serves as SBCAG's Cycle 7 ATP Large MPO Component Project Selection Guidelines. These guidelines describe the policies, standards, criteria, and procedures for the development of the 2025 SBCAG Large MPO Active Transportation Program. Where silent, these guidelines will defer to the CTC's 2025 ATP Guidelines.

The guidelines substantially follow those of the CTC but include a number of differences based on the region's existing Measure A bicycle and pedestrian programs, which is a separate process. Measure A is Santa Barbara County's voter approved transportation sales tax measure. More information can be found at www.measurea.net. SBCAG will issue a call for projects for the Large MPO Component. Projects submitted to the CTC for consideration in the Statewide Component will be considered for funding under the Large MPO Component, but an applicant is not required to submit to the Statewide competition to be eligible for the SBCAG ATP Large MPO component.

2. Program Goals

Pursuant to statute (Sts. & Hy. Code, § 2380), 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 2025 SBCAG ATP Large MPO component will be for state fiscal years 2025/26 through 2028/29. The following schedule lists the major milestones for the development and adoption of the 2025 SBCAG Large MPO Active Transportation Program:

Milestone	CTC process	SBCAG process
CTC approves or rejects SBCAG ATP Large MPO Guidelines	6/28/2024	
SBCAG Call for projects		7/8/2024
Submit pre-application		7/31/2024
Applications due to SBCAG		9/16/2024 by 5 p.m. PT
SBCAG Scoring committee evaluates applications		October – November 2024
Present project recommendations to TTAC, Subregional Committees		December 2024
SBCAG Board approves projects		12/19/2024
Deadline for MPO draft project programming recommendations to the Commission	2/21/2025	
Deadline for MPO final project programming recommendations to the Commission	4/22/2025	
Commission Staff Recommendations for MPO Component posted	6/2/2025	
Commission adopts MPO selected projects	June 2025	

II. FUNDING

1. Sources

Forty percent of ATP funds must be distributed to MPO in urban areas with populations greater than 200,000. These funds must be distributed based on total MPO population. The 2025 ATP Fund Estimate was adopted at the March 21, 2024, Commission meeting. The regional share available for Santa Barbara County for Cycle 7 of ATP funding (FY 2025-26 through FY 2028-29) is \$2.811 million per the adopted 2025 ATP Fund Estimate ([Appendix A](#)).

(\$ in thousands)

Santa Barbara (SBCAG)	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	4-Year total
State	\$247	\$247	\$167	\$167	\$828
Federal	\$248	\$259	\$733	\$744	\$1,983
Total	\$494	\$505	\$900	\$911	\$2,811

2. Distribution

SBCAG will split this funding share between the North County and South Coast based on population share from the 2020 US Census.

- North County will receive an apportionment of \$1.469 million (52%)
- South Coast will receive an apportionment of \$1.341 million (48%)

A minimum of 25% of the funds distributed to SBCAG (\$702,750) must benefit disadvantaged communities. (Criteria to qualify as a disadvantaged community discussed in Section V.2. Scoring Criteria, below.)

3. Matching Requirement

SBCAG does not require a funding match for the Regional Active Transportation Program Large MPO funding, however, leveraging of funds is encouraged.

4. Reimbursement

The ATP is a reimbursement program for eligible costs incurred. For an item to be eligible for ATP reimbursement, that item's primary use or function must meet the ATP purpose and at least one of the ATP goals. Reimbursement is requested through the invoice process detailed in Chapter 5, Invoicing, [Local Assistance Procedures Manual](#). Costs incurred prior to Commission allocation and, for federally funded projects, Federal Highway Administration project approval (i.e., Authorization to Proceed) are not eligible for reimbursement.

III. ELIGIBILITY

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for the Active Transportation Program are specified in Section 11 of the 2025 ATP Guidelines as adopted by the CTC on March 22, 2024, and are listed below.

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.

2. Partnering With Implementing Agencies

Applicants are encouraged to partner with other agencies/groups, including private and nonprofit organizations, in applying for funds. Applicants require a sponsor if they are not an eligible entity listed in the section above.

3. 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. A new infrastructure project will not be programmed without a complete Project Study Report (PSR) or PSR equivalent. Quick-build projects are eligible under this scoring category.

- The application will be considered a PSR equivalent if it defines and justifies the project scope, cost, and schedule. Though the PSR or equivalent may focus on the project phases proposed for programming, it must provide at least a preliminary estimate of costs for all phases. PSR guidelines are posted on the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) page of the [Commission's website](#) under "Background Information." Feasibility studies are not considered PSR equivalent documents.
- Further guidance can be found in the [Caltrans Project Development Procedures Manual](#).
- The Commission expects collaboration and cooperation between the implementing agency and Caltrans for all projects on the state highway system. Applicants who are applying for projects on the state highway system should attach a completed State Highway System Project Impact Assessment Form to the application. This form can be obtained from the [Caltrans 2025 Active Transportation Program website](#).

b. Plans: The development of a community wide bicycle, pedestrian, safe routes to school, or active transportation plan that encompasses or is predominately located in a disadvantaged community. Priority of funding for plans will follow the statewide guidelines. Plan Project Guidance, including required plan components, can be found on Appendix A in the adopted statewide 2025 ATP guidelines.

c. Non-infrastructure Projects: Education, encouragement, and enforcement activities that further the goals of this program. 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.

4. Minimum/Maximum 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 **\$150,000**. This minimum does not apply to non-infrastructure projects, safe routes to school projects, plans, and quick-build projects.

The maximum request shall not exceed the funding apportionment available for the North County and South Coast found in Section II Funding, Section 2 Distribution.

IV. APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Pre-application

Project sponsors must complete a pre-application for each project by **July 31, 2024**. Pre-applications will be summarized by SBCAG and posted on the SBCAG website. The purpose of

the pre-application is to determine the amount of Cycle 7 funding that may be requested compared to funding available and to determine if a project meets eligibility criteria. Using this information, prospective project sponsors may then make an informed decision about the likelihood of their project receiving funding and decide whether to invest the time in completing a full project application. Entities that require a sponsor because they are not an eligible applicant, must declare a sponsor at the time of pre-application submittal by attaching a signed sponsor agreement to the pre-application.

2. Application

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

A project application must also include documentation of all other funds committed to the projects. The following contents are required to be submitted:

- Completed SBCAG Regional Application
- Project Programming Request (PPR) form
- Formal council/board/district resolution of local support for the ATP project
- Projects that will 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.

One (1) electronic copy must be submitted via email/file sharing site of the complete grant application no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 16, 2024 to:

***Jaquelin Mata, Transportation Planner II
Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
Jmata@sbcag.org
805.961.8900***

V. PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

Applicants are the sponsoring agencies for any project competing for SBCAG ATP Large MPO funding. To compete in the regional program, applicants are responsible for submitting a SBCAG ATP Large MPO application. Applicants are encouraged to discuss potential ATP projects with SBCAG staff and may identify a reduced scope version of their state-submitted project for the SBCAG ATP Large MPO ATP competition.

An *ad hoc* multidisciplinary advisory group will be established that will be responsible for reviewing, evaluating, and scoring the applications submitted to the Regional ATP.

1. Screening Criteria:

Before evaluation, project applications will be screened for the following:

- Consistency with SBCAG regional transportation plan.
- Use of appropriate application.
- Supplanting Funds: A project that is already fully funded will not be considered for funding in the Active Transportation Program. ATP funds cannot be used to supplant other committed funds.

- Eligibility of project: Project must be one of the four types of projects listed in Section 13 of the adopted ATP Cycle 7 guidelines.
- Must be an eligible applicant or have a project sponsor.

2. Scoring Criteria:

Projects will be scored 0 to 100 points by the Scoring Committee based on the criteria described below. An additional 0-10 points will be applied in the event the 25 percent minimum benefit for a disadvantaged community is not met:

SBCAG Staff will confirm that a minimum 25% of available ATP funds are dedicated to projects and programs benefiting disadvantaged community residents. In the event the regionally defined minimum investment threshold is not met, the disadvantaged community benefit points (0-10) will be applied to the entire project list and the projects will be re-ranked by the Scoring committee. Discretion will be placed on the Scoring Committee to select a complete package of projects.

1) Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) (0-10 points):

- a) Applicant's ability to demonstrate the direct benefit to the disadvantaged community affected by the project; and
- b) Project is located within a DAC.

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 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 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).
- 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](#).
- SBCAG Regional Definition: As part of SBCAG’s Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), SBCAG established a regional definition of disadvantaged communities found in [Chapter 4](#).
- 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.

Scoring Criteria (0 - 100 points):

Infrastructure Projects Criteria

- 1) Safety (35 points)
 - a) Project will improve safety of pedestrians and/or bicyclists. Priority will be given to projects/programs that directly address demonstrated safety needs.
- 2) Local Support (20 points)
 - a) Project is in a locally adopted bicycle, pedestrian or general plan or is included in a regional bikeway or transportation plan.
 - b) Community outreach has been completed or is being completed.
 - c) Project has demonstrated other community support.
- 3) Demand (15 points)
 - a) Serves a high percentage of existing or potential pedestrians and bicycle riders relative to the size of the community.
- 4) Access and Connectivity (20 points)
 - a) Project provides or improves bikeway continuity to activity centers such as public buildings, transit terminals, business districts, shopping centers, schools, etc.
 - b) Project provides interface with other modes of transportation.
 - c) Project eliminates a gap or overcomes an obstacle in a bicycle or pedestrian facility, allowing more convenient and safer travel, including bike security and parking.
- 5) Project readiness and Schedule (10 points)

Submitted projects will be ranked based on project readiness. Priority will be given to:

 - a) Projects which are fully funded, if application is approved.
 - b) Projects which have considered and, if needed, resolved any foreseeable implementation issues.
 - c) Projects which need no right-of-way and need no utility relocations.

Plans Criteria

- 1) Safety (45 points)
 - a) Plan will focus on the safety of pedestrians and/or bicyclists.
- 2) Local Support (15 points)
 - a) Priority will be given to plans that have demonstrated coordination with regional or other locally adopted plans.
- 3) Plan Status (40 points)
 - a) Priority will be given to jurisdictions with no bicycle or pedestrian plan, over those with plans that are more than five years old, and thereafter to those with plans between three and five years old.

Non-Infrastructure Projects Criteria

- 1) Safety (45 points)
 - a) Priority will be given to programs that focus on the safety of pedestrians and/or bicyclists. Priority will be given to programs that directly address demonstrated safety needs.
- 3) Local Support (15 points)
 - a) There is demonstrated community support for the program.
- 4) Demand (15 points)
 - a) Priority will be given to programs that serve a high number of residents.
- 5) Effectiveness (15 points)
 - a) Program (or similar programs) has been shown to be effective at encouraging bicycling and/or walking or improving bicycle and/or pedestrian safety.
- 6) Implementation/Readiness (10 points)

- a) Priority will be given to programs that have considered and, if needed, resolved any foreseeable implementation issues, have partnering agencies (if any) that have fully coordinated on program implementation, and for which program details are substantially determined in order to allow quick implementation once funding is received.

3. Contingency List

SBCAG will adopt a list of contingency projects, ranked in priority order based on the project's evaluation score. SBCAG intends to fund projects on the contingency list should there be any project failures or savings in the Cycle 7 SBCAG ATP Large MPO component that occur prior to the adoption of Cycle 8. This will ensure that SBCAG will fully program all regional ATP funds and minimize the loss of ATP funds to the region.

VI. ALLOCATIONS/PROJECT DELIVERY/PROJECT REPORTING

MPO-selected projects must follow the same allocation, expenditure, and reporting policies as stated in the [statewide guidelines](#).

Applicants must work with Caltrans District Local Assistance to prepare the Allocation request for the Commission and the Request for Authorization process for obligation of the funds. Applicants must be able to comply with all federal and state laws, regulations, policies and procedures required to enter into a Master Agreement and follow the processes in the Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual: [Local Assistance Procedures Manual \(LAPM\) | Caltrans](#).