



METROPOLITAN
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COMMISSION

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Memorandum

TO: Partnership Technical Advisory Committee

DATE: March 15, 2010

FR: Ashley Nguyen and Craig Goldblatt

W. I.

RE: Bay Area Climate Initiatives Program Competitive Grants

Background

In December 2009 the Commission adopted the New Surface Transportation Act Cycle 1 Project Selection Criteria and Programming Policy, which included, among other programs, an \$80 million Climate Initiative Program. The primary objectives of the Climate Initiatives Program, based on direction from an ad hoc Climate Initiatives Working Group made up of Commissioners, Partnership staff and stakeholders, are: (1) to make short-term investments that reduce transportation-related emissions and vehicle miles traveled, and encourage the use of cleaner fuels, and (2) evaluate these investments so that we may learn and build a knowledge base that will inform the most effective Bay Area strategies for consideration in the Sustainable Communities Strategy in the next Regional Transportation Plan, which is slated for adoption in spring 2013. The Climate Initiatives Program focuses on four primary elements: (1) \$10 million for public education campaign, (2) \$17 million for Safe Routes to Schools, (3) \$31 million for Innovative Grants, and (4) \$4 million for evaluation of the Climate Initiatives Program. It also includes \$3 million for Eastern Solano County air quality projects and \$15 million for SFgo. Consistent with other regional programs that MTC administers, MTC will deduct funds to cover administrative expenses over the three years of this program.

Climate Initiatives Competitive Grants

MTC, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and Joint Policy Committee staff have developed the program framework for two competitive grants program of the Climate Initiatives Program – (1) Innovative Grants and (2) Safe Routes to School Creative Grants. An overview of the program framework is outlined below.

General Process

- **One Solicitation:** MTC, in partnership with regional agencies, will issue one solicitation for both competitive grant programs.
- **Two-Part Selection Process:** In Step One, applicants first submit a 3-page Letter of Interest that will be evaluated by regional agency staffs, and as needed, the evaluation committee will follow-up with the applicant to clarify, add information or modify the proposal. The committee will consider how well the applicant responded to questions as to why this project is innovative, how the project reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and how the project might be replicated. In Step Two, applicants with projects that show the most promise will be invited to submit a more detailed proposal for further evaluation and funding consideration.

- **Eligible Applicants:** Public agencies are eligible applicants. However, interested non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations, businesses and community organizations may apply if they partner with a public agency.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** The evaluation criteria will be tailored to reflect the goals of each program, but in general, the proposals will be evaluated using a high, medium, and low rating against the following criteria: level of innovation, potential for replication at large scale, quality of the proposal, and potential for greenhouse gas emission reductions.
- **Funding Levels:** The Cycle 1 funding levels for the competitive grants are as follows: up to \$2 million for the Safe Routes to School Creative Grants and up to \$31 million for Innovative Grants.

Innovative Grants (up to \$31 million)

- **Purpose:** Funds roughly a dozen high-impact, innovative projects with the greatest potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to be replicated on a larger-scale around the region.
- **Objectives:** Projects funded must achieve as many objectives as possible: (a) measurably reduce emissions of GHG and criteria pollutants, (b) have greatest potential for replication, (c) employ multiple approaches to produce synergy, (c) remove substantial technical, financial or political barrier that impedes successful implementation, and (d) build collaboration and partnerships.
- **Basic Requirements:** Projects must meet basic requirements to be eligible for funding: (a) provide a clear connection to transportation and air quality improvements, (b) must support demonstrated high-impact project areas: parking management and pricing policies, cleaner vehicles, transportation demand management project, innovative transportation project from locally-adopted Climate Action Plan, or be a showcase project that innovatively combines a number of strategies together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, (c) must be implemented within two years, and (d) include a proposed approach for evaluating the project impacts. Sponsors are encouraged to collaborate and cost share with multiple partners and include higher local match in their proposals.

Safe Routes to School Creative Grants (up to \$2 million)

- **Purpose:** Funds roughly four creative school-related emission reduction strategies and determines their effectiveness and potential replication around the region.
- **Objectives:** Projects funded must achieve as many objectives as possible: (a) measurably reduce emissions of GHG and criteria pollutants, (b) have greatest potential for replication, (c) pilot new, innovative strategies that further best practices, and (c) remove substantial technical, financial or political barrier that impedes successful implementation.
- **Basic Requirements:** Projects must meet basic requirements to be eligible for funding: (a) provide a clear connection to transportation and air quality improvements, (b) pilot new, innovative strategies and approaches in SR2S field; (c) serve as a model project for other schools and communities, (d) include at least one of the five E's of engineering, evaluation, education, encouragement, and enforcement, (e) must be implemented within two years, and (f) include a proposed approach for evaluating the project impacts, and (g) demonstrate timely expenditure of previously awarded state or federal SR2S funds.

Next Steps

The key activities and completion dates for the review of the program guidelines, call for projects and selection and approval process for the Innovative and Safe Routes to School Creative Grant Programs are shown in the table below.

Activity	Completion Date
Review Draft Program Guidelines by:	
- Partnership Technical Advisory Committee	March 15
- Climate Initiatives Working Group	Week of March 29
Review and Approval of Program Guidelines by the Programming and Allocations Committee (PAC) and Commission	April 14 PAC April 28 Commission
Call For Projects	April 30
Outreach Workshops (3)	May 6, 13 & 14
Letters of Interest Due	June 1
Review of Letters of Interests by Evaluation Committee, including follow-up with promising applicants	June 30
Review of Candidate Projects Advancing in Evaluation Process by PAC (if needed)	July 14
Detailed Project Proposals Due	August 4
Review of Proposals and Project Selection by Evaluation Committee	August 20
PAC Approval of Draft List of Projects	September 8
Commission Approval of Draft List of Projects	September 22