

Los Angeles County Metropolitan
Transportation Authority

Transit Oriented Communities

Grant Writing Assistance and
Technical Assistance Program Guidelines

I. TOC POLICY BACKGROUND

TOC POLICY

In 2018, the Metro Board approved the Transit Oriented Communities Policy (TOC Policy) which affirmed Metro's commitment to incorporate equity, community development and land use considerations in how Metro plans and delivers the public transportation system in Los Angeles County.

The TOC Policy did the following:

1. Defined the concept of TOCs for Metro and develop the goals and objectives of Metro's approach to enabling TOCs.

Transit Oriented Communities (TOCs) are places (such as corridors or neighborhoods) that, by their design, allow people to drive less and access transit more. A TOC maximizes equitable access to a multi-modal transit network as a key organizing principle of land use planning and holistic community development. TOCs differ from Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in that a TOD is a specific building or development project that is fundamentally shaped by close proximity to transit.

TOCs promote equity and sustainable living in a diversity of community contexts by: (a) offering a mix of uses that support transit ridership of all income levels (e.g. housing, jobs, retail, services and recreation); (b) ensuring appropriate building densities, parking policies, and urban design that support accessible neighborhoods connected by multi-modal transit; (c) elevating vulnerable users and their safety in design; and (d) ensuring that transit related investments provide equitable benefits that serve local, disadvantaged and underrepresented communities.

2. Defined "TOC Activities" that will be considered a "transportation purpose" and thus are eligible activities for funding under the Measure M guidelines, through Local Return (see Section 3).

3. Established a set of criteria to determine which TOC Activities Metro will fund and implement directly and which activities Metro will allow, enable, and incentivize local partners to fund and implement.

The TOC Grant Writing and TOC Technical Assistance Programs further described in these guidelines are programs that Metro has developed to enable and incentivize Los Angeles County jurisdictions to implement TOC Activities.

The TOC Policy establishes the following five goals:

1. Increase transportation ridership and choice

- *Ridership*: Increase system ridership and promote usage of alternate, non-motorized, modes of transportation.
- *Transportation Options*: Leverage land use and urban design to encourage non-single occupant vehicle transportation options both on and off Metro property, through enhanced first/last mile options, travel demand management, and seamless transit connectivity.

- *Safety*: Work to reduce collisions and create welcoming environments for all ages, abilities and protected classes in the planning, construction, and operation of transit-oriented community projects.
2. Stabilize and enhance communities surrounding transit
 - *Housing Affordability*: Prioritize development and preservation of transit-adjacent Affordable Housing.
 - *Neighborhood Stabilization*: Protect and support local residents and businesses from displacement.
 - *Sustainability*: Ensure that infrastructure investments are multi-beneficial, improving access to transit and enhancing communities' environmental resilience.
 - *Economic Vitality*: Promote sustained economic vitality directly benefiting existing communities.
 3. Engage organizations, jurisdictions, and the public
 - *Community Engagement*: Ensure that stakeholders across a broad spectrum, including those that are harder to reach through traditional outreach strategies, are meaningfully engaged in the planning, construction, and operation of Metro's transit system.
 - *Foster Partnerships*: Through planning, coordination, policy advocacy and funding, foster relationships and partnerships with local residents and businesses, labor, municipal and institutional entities, community-based organizations, workforce development providers, the private sector, and philanthropy, to realize TOC goals.
 4. Distribute transit benefits to all
 - *Equitable Outcomes*: Ensure transportation investments and planning processes consider local cultural and historical contexts and improve social, economic, health, and safety outcomes that serve and benefit local, disadvantaged, and underrepresented communities.
 - *Complete Communities*: Promote and realize complete communities that support a mix of incomes, land uses, transportation choices, and equitable access to safe, sustainable, and healthy living.
 - *Small Business*: Encourage the utilization of Small Businesses in the contracting opportunities generated by Metro's investments.
 5. Capture value created by transit
 - *Value Capture*: Capture increased value of properties surrounding Metro's transit investments and re-invest that value into TOC Activities.

II. TOC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The TOC Implementation Plan (TOC Plan) established a series of initiatives and strategies that Metro will pursue directly or as a partner to realize equitable TOCs across the County. Two of those strategies include the TOC Grant Writing Assistance and TOC Technical Assistance Programs (TAP), described in greater detail below.

Metro will prepare TOC Corridor Baseline Assessments (Baselines) for all Metro transit corridors, starting with Measure M transit corridors. The Baselines will include a community snapshot and opportunities to leverage the positive benefits of the transit investments as well as strategies to guard against potential unintended consequences, especially within vulnerable communities. Jurisdictions for which Baselines have been prepared will be expected to utilize the TOC TAP and TOC Grant Writing assistance to carry out the TOC strategies recommended in the Baseline.

Jurisdictions for which a Baseline has not yet been prepared will have access to the TOC TAP and TOC Grant Writing program if they are seeking to carry out one or more of the following TOC activities:

- Affordable Housing Production, Preservation, and Tenant Protections
- Community Stabilization (including anti-displacement strategies-housing and small businesses)
- Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) compliance activities, aligned with TOC Policy Goals
- First/Last Mile, Metro Active Transport (MAT), and Transit to Parks Strategic Plan project implementation (for MAT, scope items that extend beyond MAT funding allocations).

EQUITY

Metro has defined equity as both an outcome and a process to address racial, socioeconomic, and gender disparities, to ensure fair and just access – with respect to where you begin and your capacity to improve from that starting point – to opportunities, including jobs, housing, education, mobility options, and healthier communities. It is achieved when one’s outcomes in life are not predetermined, in a statistical or experiential sense, on their racial, economic, or social identities.

It requires community-informed and needs-based provision, implementation, and impact of services, programs, and policies that reduce and ultimately prevent disparities.

Additionally, in 2019, the Metro Board of Directors approved Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) as a tool for Metro to utilize in programs and plans to help identify areas of need. EFCs are defined as census tracts where:

- At least 40% of households are low-income (\$35,000 or less), and
- At least 80% are households of color, or
- At least 10% of households have zero cars

Through the TOC Plan and the resulting TOC Grant Writing and Technical Assistance Programs, Metro calls on Program Recipients to incorporate equity as a process and an outcome in funding requests. Additionally, Metro will prioritize resources in EFCs¹.

¹ Metro will prioritize resources in EFCs and other high-need communities, based on socio-economic factors, as deemed relevant.

TOC GRANT WRITING ASSISTANCE

The TOC Grant Writing Assistance Program will be available to municipalities that seek to apply for grants to implement TOC Activities as defined in the Policy. Metro will make grant writers available to Los Angeles County municipalities that seek to implement TOC Activities in their communities, prioritizing EFCs.

TOC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

TOC Technical Assistance Program (TOC TAP) will support local municipalities, prioritizing Los Angeles County's EFCs, in building local capacity and securing funding to realize equitable TOCs.

The TOC TAP will make professional services available for municipalities to build staff capacity in TOC areas and/or explore the feasibility of implementing TOC programs through market studies, transportation or land use studies (including affordable housing and community stabilization), utility studies that can evaluate needed utility upgrades that may be required to accommodate land use planning, environmental remediation studies, and similar.

III. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND ACTIVITIES

Eligible applicants for Grant Writing and Technical Assistance include Los Angeles County jurisdictions with land use authority with exceptions noted below.

For the MAT component, cities, County of Los Angeles, Caltrans, State and Federal agencies, and transit agencies are eligible to receive funding through this program. Other transportation-related public joint powers authorities (JPAs) must be sponsored by one of the aforementioned public agencies for the MAT component. Additionally, eligible MAT scope items include those that extend beyond MAT funding allocations that a jurisdiction may have secured.

For the Transit to Parks component, cities, County of Los Angeles, transit agencies, and nonprofit organizations are eligible for the Grant Writing Assistance Program. Nonprofit organizations are eligible for grant writing assistance if the entity is eligible for the specific Transit to Parks-related grant for which grant writing assistance would be provided. Eligible Transit to Parks activities are defined in the Transit to Parks Strategic Plan.

The TOC Grant Writing Assistance Program will support eligible applicants pursuing planning or capital grants and the Technical Assistance Program will support planning activities (not capital projects). Eligible TOC Activities for which TOC Grant Writing Assistance and TOC Technical Assistance Program funding can be requested include the following:

General activities

- Community engagement that targets harder-to-reach communities around/regarding TOC Activities or transit
- Events or programs that promote multi-modal transit options
- Discounted transit passes
- Grants and/or technical assistance to support projects and programs that achieve TOC goals
- Transportation related workforce training and education

Within 3-miles of a Major Transit Stop²

- First/last mile improvements
- Complete Streets
- Land use planning that promotes TOC goals.
- Value capture studies and formation activities that support investment in TOCs. A value capture district must include at least one Major Transit Stop but may span a broader radius around that Major Transit Stop

Within half-mile of a Major Transit Stop

- Public improvements that create stronger and safer connections to transit and improve the transit rider experience recognizing vulnerable users and their safety in design.
- Affordable Housing: Programs that produce, preserve, and protect affordable housing through:
 - Preservation or development of Affordable Housing units.
 - Innovative anti-displacement strategies to protect and retain Low-income Households.
- Small Business preservation: Programs that support and protect Small Businesses.
- Neighborhood-serving Amenities: Programs that preserve, protect, and/or produce Neighborhood-serving Amenities.

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. TOC Policy Goal Alignment.
 - Does the proposed project align with the TOC Policy goals?
 - What is the TOC-need that the project will address?
2. Equity Focus Communities.
 - Is the proposed project in an EFC?
 - If not, is the proposed project in a high-need area as defined by another equity-based methodology? If so, which one?
3. Is the proposed project implementing a Baseline recommendation or is it advancing one or more of the following TOC priorities?

² Major Transit Stop, per California Public Resource Code 21064.3, which may be amended from time-to-time, is defined as:

(a) An existing rail or bus rapid transit station (PRC 21060.2).

(b) A ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service.

(c) The intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.

Per the intent of the TOC Policy, Major Transit Stop shall also include an environmentally-cleared fixed-guideway transit station. A planned fixed-guideway station may also be considered if its location is the only alternative under consideration for a transit corridor in the planning stages.

- Affordable Housing Production, Preservation, and Tenant Protections
 - Community Stabilization (including anti-displacement strategies-housing and small businesses assistance)
 - Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) compliance activities, aligned with TOC Policy Goals
 - First/Last Mile, MAT project implementation, or Transit to Parks Strategic Plan
4. Equity as an Outcome.
- What community disparities will the project help reduce or eliminate?
 - How will the project specifically benefit marginalized, vulnerable, and/or underrepresented groups in the community?
 - How will the project reduce negative impacts for marginalized, vulnerable, and/or underrepresented groups in the community?
5. Staffing Commitment and Demonstrated Past Performance.
- Does the applicant have the staffing commitment to manage and deliver the project?
 - Does the applicant have a successful performance history on prior grants and/or similar efforts?
6. Equity as a Process: Demonstrated commitment to inclusive and meaningful stakeholder engagement.
- How have stakeholders been engaged to-date?
 - Who has been engaged?
 - How will stakeholders be engaged in the project implementation throughout the process?
 - How will the jurisdiction involve and engage residents who are historically underrepresented in land use planning and development processes?
 - How will the jurisdiction involve and engage residents who face community disparities identified above?
7. Transit Corridor Timing
- Description of the transit corridor project that will be associated with this effort and whether it is existing, planned, and/or environmentally cleared.

The following sections are only applicable to TOC TAP.

V. ELIGIBLE COSTS

Applicants will develop and submit a budget as part of the application. Funds awarded will not exceed the budget submitted and may be less if the key objectives can be achieved at lower costs. Any cost overruns shall be the responsibility of the applicant. The grant can fund:

- Third party consulting costs directly providing services with respect to the project will be eligible for funding. Such eligible costs shall not include overtime costs.
- Costs associated with community outreach may include food, and non-cash incentives. Such proposed expenditures must be approved by Metro in advance of incurring costs.

VI. NON-ELIGIBLE COST

Staff time and third party consultants and contracted staff costs for equipment, furniture, rental vehicles, mileage, food, office leases or space cost allocations.

Applicant staff overtime costs, mileage reimbursements, food and use of pool cars.

VII. GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS

- a. **Duration of Grant Projects.** Projects' schedules must demonstrate that the projects can be completed, including related actions by the governing body (if any), within 36 months of award.
- b. **Funding Agreement.** Each awarded applicant must execute a Funding Agreement with Metro. The Funding Agreement will include the statement of work, including TOC objectives to be achieved, the budget reflecting grant amount and any local match, if applicable, as well as a schedule and deliverables. The schedule must demonstrate that the project will be completed within 36 months from the date of execution.
- c. **Funding Disbursements.** The Program is reimbursement-based. Funding will be disbursed on a quarterly basis subject to satisfactory compliance with the budget and schedule as demonstrated in a quarterly progress/expense report supported by a detailed invoice demonstrating the staff and hours charged to the project, any consultant hours, etc. An amount equal to 5% of each invoice will be retained until final completion of the project and audits. In addition, final scheduled payment will be withheld until the project is complete and approved by Metro and all audit requirements have been satisfied.

All quarterly reports will be due on the last day of the months of October, January, April, and July. Project expenditures that reach 75% of budget will be put on suspension when they are behind in submitting a series of quarterly reports and deliverables. Recipients are responsible for submitting on-time completed quarterly reports and invoices. Reports that are delayed or incomplete will result in payments being suspended until the work is on schedule and deliverables are provided according to the Scope of Work and Schedule.

- d. **Audits.** All program funding is subject to Metro audit. The findings of the audit are final. At the Senior Director's discretion, informal audits will be administered by the project staff.
- e. **Contract Management.** Program and contract management shall be administered by the Recipient staff. Recipient staff must clearly define roles of staff administration and management and may budget through the grant to hire contract staff to assist in managing the program. The contractor or consultant must be defined in the TOC TAP application and scope of work. Contractor or consultant staff shall not be associated with the hiring of consultants to perform the development of the work product.
- f. **Design Guidelines.** Program outreach activities will adhere to Metro's logo and design requirements and standards by clicking on the following link:
[https://media.metro.net/projects_studies/tod/images/Metro Logo Guidelines.pdf](https://media.metro.net/projects_studies/tod/images/Metro_Logo_Guidelines.pdf)
- g. **Program Conditions.** Delivery of draft work products at significant milestones and quarterly project briefings will be coordinated with Metro staff.

- Grant recipients are required to share their proposed draft RFP, draft consultant contract and draft regulatory documents with Metro project staff prior to Recipient approval to ensure alignment with TOC Policy Goals.
- Recipient shall demonstrate that it can meet project milestones and stay within the budget identified in the Funding Agreement. If at the time Recipient has expended seventy-five percent (75%) of the Funds and Recipient has not demonstrated that the work is sufficiently complete consistent with Funding Agreement, LACMTA's Senior Director will notify Recipients Project Manager through written notice that payments will cease until a mutually agreed-to cost control plan is in place. In the case of insufficient Funds to complete the Project, no further payments will be made, and Recipient will identify and secure additional funds to complete the project identified in Attachment A.

VIII. DEOBLIGATION OF FUNDS.

Grantee must demonstrate timely use of the funds and effective implementation of project scope of work by:

- i. Executing the Funding Agreement within sixty (60) days of receiving formal transmittal of the Agreement from LACMTA.
- ii. Meeting the Project milestone and deliverable due dates as stated in the Project Schedule and Budget, and Scope of Work.
- iii. Timely submitting of the Quarterly Progress/Expense Reports as defined in Part II, Section 2 of the Agreement and the Reporting and Expenditure Guidelines; and
- iv. Expending funds within thirty-six (36) months from the date the Funding Agreement is fully executed.
- v. Procuring contract/consultant to complete grant Scope of Work within six (6) months of agreement execution with LACMTA.
- vi. Notifying LACMTA as soon as grantee is aware of any changes and circumstances which alter the eligibility of the approved project.

In the event that timely use of funds and effective implementation of the project scope of work is not demonstrated, the Project will be reevaluated by LACMTA as part of its annual budget recertification of funds deobligation process and the Funds may be deobligated and reprogrammed to another project. Grantees will receive a letter by LACMTA notifying them of the opportunity to appeal. Grantees interested in presenting their appeal should reply to LACMTA's Senior Director.

Administrative extensions may be granted under the following conditions:

- i. Project delay due to an unforeseen and extraordinary circumstance beyond the control of the project sponsor (legal challenge, act of God, etc.).
- ii. Project delay due to an action that results in a change in scope of work or project schedule that is mutually agreed upon by LACMTA and the project sponsor prior to the extension request.
- iii. Project fails to meet completion milestone, however public action on the proposed regulatory change(s) has been scheduled and noticed to occur within 60 days of the scheduled completion milestone.
- iv. Administrative time extensions longer than 6 months will require a formal written

amendment of the grant agreement.

Informal administrative amendments may be granted under the following conditions:

- i. Project that requires a one-time 6-month time extension based on the Administrative extensions conditions noted above may be eligible for an informal administrative approval. Informal administrative approval will be provided via a signed letter from Metro Senior Director. The Metro Senior Director must secure concurrence from the Senior Executive Officer.

Upon full execution of agreement, Recipient has committed to having the staffing necessary to fulfill the scope of the project. Therefore, inadequate staffing shall not be considered a basis for administrative extensions or appeal of deobligation of funds.

If Recipient does not complete an element of the Project, as described in the Scope of Work, due to all or a portion of the Funds lapsing, the entire Project may be subject to deobligation at LACMTA's sole discretion. If all the Funds are reprogrammed, the Project shall automatically terminate.