

Grant Assistance Priorities

In October 2019, the Metro Board adopted the ATP Cycle 5 Priorities Framework to guide the allocation of Metro's grant-writing assistance (File ID). This existing framework calls for the following:

- 75% of overall grant assistance to be directed to first/last mile projects sponsored by Metro and other local jurisdictions
- 25% of overall grant assistance to be directed to other state ATP-eligible projects including but not limited to Call for Projects, LA River Path, Rail to River, Regional Bike Share, and the I-710 Active Transportation Corridor—each of which helps implement the Metro Active Transportation Strategic Plan
- In all cases, if requests for grant writing assistance exceed available resources, first priority will be assigned to project sponsors that can clearly demonstrate resource/technical limitations that would hinder submission of a complete and competitive grant application and second priority will be assigned to project sponsors who are in compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy (i.e. have an adopted Complete Streets Policy, an adopted City/County Resolution supporting Complete Streets, or an adopted General Plan consistent with the California Complete Streets Act of 2008)

For ATP Cycle 5, Metro staff introduced a community engagement screening as part of the grant assistance project selection process. The purpose was to assess the extent and quality of community outreach performed in support of the project. Metro staff will continue this assessment as part of the grant assistance project selection process.

For ATP Cycle 6 Metro staff proposes to continue applying the approved framework to ensure the selection of projects which are likely to fit well with the State ATP selection criteria and contribute to implementing Metro plans and priorities. However, staff recognizes that modification is needed to reflect updated board priorities and strengthen implementation of Metro's Complete Streets Policy of 2014. The modifications proposed are as follows:

- Since ATP Cycle 5, the Metro Board adopted the Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) as a tool to help identify high-need, low-resourced communities. Metro staff proposes using EFCs as a first prioritization tool and making the current Cycle 5 priority method of evaluating the resource/technical limitations of local jurisdictions as the second priority. This change will shift the focus of the grant assistance selection process from local jurisdictions' staff/technical abilities to potential for projects to serve high-need communities. Using the EFCs will ensure that the process to select projects for grant assistance is informed by a tool developed with equitable outcomes in mind and will direct resources to projects that can help increase access to opportunity in high-need communities.

- The Metro Complete Streets Policy of 2014 requires that cities and the County of Los Angeles have an adopted local Complete Streets policy, an adopted City Council Resolution in support of Complete Streets, or an adopted General Plan consistent with the state's Complete Streets Act of 2008 in order to apply for Metro capital grant funding programs. Metro staff proposes to elevate Complete Streets compliance from a secondary priority to a requirement for grant assistance consideration. At the time the Board adopted the Grant Assistance Priorities Framework for ATP Cycle 5, staff stated the intent to make compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy a requirement for ATP Cycle 6 and future cycles. Deferring the requirement until ATP Cycle 6 was intended to allow all local jurisdictions the opportunity to adopt required policies or qualify documents. Metro staff hold an annual Complete Streets Policy training opportunity to assist local agencies who are non-compliant. Metro staff also make themselves available for individual meetings with local agencies to provide maximum scheduling flexibility. Nearly two thirds of local jurisdictions are complying currently. Grant assistance can serve as an incentive for noncompliant jurisdictions to become compliant. Staff will identify noncompliant agencies and target assistance and resources to help them come into compliance.
- Active transportation projects have the potential to have positive and negative, even unintentionally, impacts on communities. Staff proposes to encourage these considerations among local agencies by integrating descriptions of a project's potential benefits, harms, and mitigations into the evaluation process for grant assistance project selection. As part of the existing application process for grant assistance, local agencies are asked to describe expected project benefits, particularly for projects located in Disadvantaged Communities as defined by the ATP. Requesting applicants to also describe potential project harms and mitigations will encourage them to fully consider how a proposed project will impact the local community.

Table 1 summarizes the proposed framework for selecting projects for grant assistance for ATP Cycle 6.

Table 1: ATP Cycle 6 Grant Assistance Priorities

Requirement: Project sponsor must have an adopted Complete Streets Policy or other qualifying document in order to be considered for grant assistance.

- 75% of overall grant assistance directed to first/last mile projects sponsored by Metro and other local jurisdictions
- 25% of overall grant assistance to other state ATP-eligible projects that help implement the Metro Active Transportation Strategic Plan
- Should requests for grant writing assistance exceed available resources, priority will first be assigned to projects located within Metro Equity Focus Communities
- Should the number of projects located within Equity Focus Communities continue to exceed available resources or resources remain for projects that are not located within Equity Focus Communities, then Metro will apply a second priority to projects that are sponsored by agencies that can clearly demonstrate resource/technical limitations that would hinder submission of a complete and competitive grant application