

2025 Consolidated Call for Projects Evaluation Criteria

Below are the criteria for the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's 2025 Consolidated Call for Projects for the region's shares of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), SB1-Local Partnership Program (LPP), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)/Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX), State Transit Assistance (STA-99313), and Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds. State and federal regulations require state departments of transportation (Caltrans), regions (RTC and AMBAG), and transit agencies to establish and advance projects that meet performance targets. A performance-based approach to transportation planning and programming aims to ensure the most efficient investment of transportation funds, support improved decision-making, and increase accountability and transparency. Projects will be evaluated to ensure they meet the objectives and policies outlined in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), including meeting state and federal guidelines, legislative requirements, and executive orders.

Evaluation Criteria

Responses to the evaluation criteria must demonstrate how the project nomination meets the objectives and policies outlined in the Regional Transportation Plan. Project sponsors should respond only to those evaluation questions that are applicable to the nature and scope of their proposed project. Project applications will be evaluated, scored, and then prioritized based on how well the project nomination addresses and demonstrates the following criteria:

- Access for All
- Collisions and Safety
- System Preservation
- System Performance
- Climate Change and Resiliency
- Public Health
- Benefits to Equity Priority Communities
- Funding Plan
- Project Readiness and Delivery Risks
- Complete Streets Integration
- Public Participation
- Consistency with RTP (and other Plans)
- Scale of Benefits

Instructions for Project Sponsors

The questions under each evaluation category provide *examples* of ways a project sponsor can demonstrate the benefits of their project in the application. Project sponsors are not required to answer every question.

Access for All

Expand affordable and convenient multi-modal travel options and choices, especially to and within key destinations, to allow people to access their regular needs.

- Will the project expand affordable and convenient multi-modal travel options and choices, particularly to and within key destinations, to improve accessibility for all people to their regular needs?
- Will the project address the transportation needs of people with limited mobility?
- If the project aims to increase walking, describe the new sidewalks, crosswalks, or obstacle minimization efforts it will include. What is the anticipated increase in walking as a result of the project?

- If the project aims to increase bicycling, describe the new bicycle lanes/paths, network gap closures, or bicycle box installations at intersections. What is the anticipated increase in bicycling as a result of the project?
- Will the project increase public transit access or improve the quality of the transit rider experience? What is the anticipated impact on transit ridership?
- Does the project fill a gap in the complete streets network and increase network connectivity by closing gaps in the bike, sidewalk, and transit networks? If so, please describe the gap(s) being addressed. Are there currently no alternative routes for these modes of transportation in the project area?
- How will the project expand the bicycle and pedestrian network across physical barriers such as creeks, freeways, and private property? Describe the specific crossings or connections proposed.
- Does the project include any education and encouragement programs to promote walking, bicycling, or transit use?

Collisions and Safety

Reduce transportation related fatalities and serious injuries (crashes) and enhance healthy, safe transportation options.

- Is there a documented history of collisions in the project area? If so, how will the proposed safety measures in the project specifically reduce collisions or address identified hazards? Please provide relevant collision data.
- What specific countermeasures are incorporated into the project design to reduce collisions, with a particular focus on preventing fatalities and serious injuries? Please provide details on these measures and their anticipated impact.
- How will the project reduce the potential for conflict between bicyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles? Please describe the design elements that will improve safety for all modes.
- In what specific ways will the project improve safety for more vulnerable users, such as low-income individuals, seniors, people living with disabilities, people of color, and youth? Please provide data or analysis to support the claims.
- If the project involves transit, will it reduce or prevent major mechanical failures for transit vehicles? If so, how? What is the current rate of mechanical failures?
- Does the project address any perceived safety or security issues that currently discourage increased transit ridership, biking, or walking (e.g., lack of lighting at bus stops, unsafe crossings)? If so, please describe the issues and the proposed solutions. What is the anticipated impact on ridership or active transportation?
- If the project fills a gap in the bicycle or pedestrian network within the project area, how will this contribute to improved safety for these users?
- Does the project eliminate any existing hazards, such as trees in roadways, dips in roads, or drainage issues? If so, please describe the hazards and the proposed solutions.
- How will the project improve access to and for emergency services and emergency evacuation routes? Please provide details.

System Preservation & Infrastructure Condition

Maintain and improve the condition of transportation assets cost-effectively and responsive to the needs of all transportation system users.

- How will the project contribute to an increase in the percentage of transportation facilities in good condition? Please provide current condition data and anticipated improvement.
- If the project involves transit vehicles, how will it reduce the percentage of vehicles that have met or exceeded their useful life benchmark? What is the current percentage and the anticipated reduction?
- Will the project extend the useful life of a transportation facility or program? If so, by how much and what is the current estimated lifespan?
- How will the project ensure that transportation facilities are maintained in a state of good repair? Please describe the maintenance aspects of the project.
- Does the project incorporate sustainable pavement practices? If so, please describe the specific practices being used and their benefits.
- How will the project enhance the cost-effectiveness of the transportation system or its assets? Will it lead to lower long-term maintenance costs, operational efficiencies, or other sustained financial benefits? Please provide details and any relevant estimates.

System Performance

Improve efficiency and enhance performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Includes improving goods movement, supporting economic development, improving travel times, and reducing congestion.

- Reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT): How will the project minimize vehicle miles traveled while maximizing person throughput? Please provide data or modeling to support the claims. What is the anticipated reduction in VMT?
- Reduction of Greenhouse Gases: How will the project reduce greenhouse gas emissions and criteria pollutants? Please describe the specific mechanisms and provide any relevant emissions reduction estimates or air quality benefits. How does the project advance air quality and climate goals?
- Potential for Mode Shift: How will the project encourage a shift from automobile travel to alternative modes such as bicycling, walking, transit, or carpooling? What is the anticipated percentage increase in trips made via these modes? Does the project involve increasing telecommuting options or coordinating land-use, housing, and transportation policies to reduce the need for travel? Please explain.
- System Reliability: How will the project improve the reliability and efficiency of the multimodal transportation system? Will it reduce variability in travel times, especially during peak travel periods and for transit? Please provide data or analysis to support the claims.
- Freight & Goods Movement: If applicable, how will the project improve freight and goods movement efficiency? Will it increase freight throughput on existing facilities or services? Please provide details and any relevant metrics.
- System Integration and Gap Closure: How will the project address existing gaps in the transportation network and contribute to downstream benefits or broader system improvements? (e.g., how a new parking lot relates to a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan, or how a new segment of a trail connects to an existing network). Please explain the broader impact and connections

Public Health

- **Improves Public Health:** Does the project directly target specific public health issues such as obesity, physical inactivity, asthma, or other health concerns? If so, please describe how and provide any relevant data or anticipated health outcomes.

Benefits to Equity Priority Communities

Ensure that plans, investments, policies, and transportation decisions will reduce disparities for historically and systemically marginalized, underserved, and excluded populations.

- **Reduce Disparities:** How will the project specifically reduce disparities in safety and access for people who are transportation disadvantaged due to age, income, disability, language, or race/ethnicity? Please provide data or analysis to support the claims.
- **Serves Disadvantaged Populations:** Does the project directly serve transportation disadvantaged populations? Will it avoid placing substantial burdens on a disadvantaged community? Please explain.
- **Demographics:** What is the estimated percentage of the population in the project area that identifies as minority or low-income? Please provide the data source.
- **Concentration of Underserved Groups:** Does the project area contain higher than average concentrations of traditionally underserved groups when compared to the surrounding area, city, or county as a whole? Please provide data to support the answer.
- **Disproportionate Impacts:** Are the areas where these populations are located currently subject to disproportionate negative transportation impacts (e.g., higher pollution, lower safety, limited access)? Please describe these impacts.
- **Increased Traffic in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods:** Will the proposed project potentially increase traffic in low-income and minority neighborhoods? If so, what measures will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts?
- **Impact on Minority-Owned Businesses:** Will minority-owned businesses that serve a minority or low-income population be impacted by the project? If so, please describe the potential impacts and any proposed mitigation measures.

Climate Change and Resiliency

Build a climate-resilient transportation system by preparing for, adjusting to, and reducing the effects of climate change. This includes making roads, bridges, and other surface transportation infrastructure more resistant to natural hazards like climate change, rising sea levels, floods, severe weather, and other disasters.

- **Wildfire and Emergency Evacuation:** How will the project increase safety and reduce emergency evacuation times in the event of a wildfire or other emergency?
- **Extreme Heat:** Does the project include measures to alleviate the impacts of extreme temperatures across the region (e.g., bus shelters with shade, improved ventilation)? Please describe these strategies and their anticipated benefits.
- **Flooding:** How will the project address increased rainfall, erosion, and flooding? Please describe the specific improvements.
- **Erosion:** How will the project mitigate slope erosion and flooding vulnerability? If applicable, describe any hillside stabilization efforts to prevent repeated slides.

- At-risk Coastal Infrastructure: If the project is located along the coast, how will it protect communities and natural resources from sea-level rise, with a focus on the adaptation of public infrastructure?

Funding Plan

- Overall Funding Plan: If the RTC approves the requested funds, will the project be fully funded? If not, how much additional funding is needed, and what is the likelihood of securing those funds? Please provide a realistic assessment of the project's overall funding security.
- Committed Funding: What other funding sources have already been secured for this project? Please provide details on the amount and source of each committed fund.
- Leveraging: Will the funds you are requesting from RTC be used to leverage other grants? If so, please identify those grants and the potential funding amounts. If RTC funding is not approved, will any of this other funding be at risk of being lost?
- Eligibility for Other Grants: Is this project eligible for any other competitive grants? If so, what other grants are reasonably available for this project, and what is the status of those applications?
- Funding for Cost Increases: What potential funding sources are available to cover unanticipated cost increases for the project? Identify potential sources and their likelihood of being accessible.

Project Readiness & Potential Delivery Risks

- Schedule: How quickly can the project be implemented to provide benefits to the community? Please provide a realistic project schedule with key milestones. Are there any potential risks that could impact the project schedule? Please identify these risks and proposed mitigation strategies.
- Deliverability: What is the agency's ability to complete this project on schedule and within budget? Please provide examples of the agency's performance on past grant-funded projects and discuss the timing of any other relevant projects that may impact deliverability. Are there opportunities to consolidate this project with other planned projects (e.g., timed utility upgrades, new development)?
- Mitigating Risks: Please describe the efforts undertaken to minimize risks to project implementation
- Other: Are there any other potential risks (financial, operational/asset, strategic/organizational compliance, political, etc.) that could delay the project? Please describe these risks and proposed mitigation strategies.

Complete Streets Integration

Complete streets are roadways designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all users of all ages and abilities. Complete streets expand transportation choices by making walking, bicycling, and public transportation more convenient and safer.

- Complete Streets Checklist: Has the project sponsor completed the project checklist in the [Monterey Bay Area Completes Streets Guidebook](#) (page 122)? Provide confirmation.
- Consistency with Guidelines and Policies: Is the project consistent with current complete streets guidelines and policies? Please cite the specific guidelines and policies.
- Integration of Components: How does the project integrate complete streets components appropriate for the project type and location to safely and comfortably accommodate all users of all ages and abilities? If the project does not incorporate complete streets design treatments,

please document why not and what alternative accommodations will be provided for pedestrians, bicyclists, and/or transit users (unless the project is exempt).

Public Participation and Community Engagement

Describe how the project was identified as a community priority. List any public outreach that has already occurred.

- **Community Priority:** Please describe how this project was identified as a community priority. What community needs or desires does it address? How have residents in the project area been involved in the decision-making or project information process to date? How will they be involved moving forward?
- **Prior Outreach:** Please list any public outreach that has already occurred for this project, including dates, methods, and key outcomes.
- **Planned Outreach:** Describe any planned outreach activities that will occur during project planning and/or implementation (e.g., outreach to stakeholder groups, advisory committees, other jurisdictions/agencies, transit, environmental groups, seniors, surveys, open houses). Please be specific about the methods and target audiences.
- **Ongoing Participation:** How will the project provide early and ongoing opportunities for meaningful public participation for all users throughout the project lifecycle?
- **Diverse Participation:** How will you ensure participation from diverse and historically underrepresented members of the public in project planning? Please describe specific outreach strategies. What specific outreach to low-income, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), etc., residents about this project has already been conducted or is planned?

Consistency with Plans

- **RTP Consistency:** Is the project included in the current Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Project List, which implements the SB375-mandated Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)? Please provide the RTP Project List reference if applicable.
- **Consistency With Other Plans:** Is the project consistent with other regional and/or local plans? If so, please identify the specific plans and describe the alignment:
 - Vision Zero/zero traffic fatalities, local roadway safety plans
 - Active Transportation Plans, Complete Streets Plans, Safe Routes to Schools Plans
 - Transit asset management, Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and other transit plans
 - General Plans
 - Capital Improvement Programs
 - Unmet Transit Needs
 - Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS)
 - Local Roadway Safety Plans
 - Safe Streets for All Plan

Scale of Benefits:

How many people could potentially benefit from this project? What is the estimated number of anticipated users for the facility, service, or program (e.g., number of cars, transit riders, bicyclists, and/or pedestrians)? Please provide data to support these estimates, such as:

- Current traffic volumes, transit ridership, bicycle and pedestrian counts (if available).
- A work plan for a program and the targeted number of people to use program.
- The key destinations served by the project (e.g., employment center, transit center, retail/commercial area, visitor destination, school).
- Modeling information for future use, if available.

Project Rating and Selection Process

Project nominations will be evaluated and ranked based on the established criteria. Each criterion will receive a rating of "High," "Medium-High," "Medium," "Medium-Low," or "Low." Projects that demonstrate strong performance across multiple evaluation criteria and offer a wider range of benefits to the community will generally be ranked higher. Projects that receive the highest overall scores will have provided data-supported responses to strengthen their narrative. These highest-rated project nominations will be recommended for inclusion in the program. While the evaluation score is a key factor in project selection, additional criteria may be considered if multiple projects receive the same score.

An applicant submitting multiple project nominations must clearly prioritize its project nominations. The Regional Transportation Commission may elect to only award the highest priority project nomination submitted by each applicant. To ensure a balanced distribution of transportation projects throughout the region, the Regional Transportation Commission may also take geographic balance into account when approving funding.