



NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Planning Guidelines



San Francisco
County Transportation
Authority



The Neighborhood Transportation Improvement Program (NTIP) is made possible by the San Francisco County Transportation Authority through grants of Proposition K (Prop K) local transportation sales tax funds. Prop K is the local sales tax for transportation approved by San Francisco voters in November 2003.



PHOTO CREDITS:

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Overview

WHY CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (NTIP)?

The Transportation Authority's NTIP was developed in response to mobility and equity analysis findings from the San Francisco Transportation Plan (SFTP) and to public and the Transportation Authority Board's desire for more focus on neighborhoods, especially on Communities of Concern¹ and other underserved neighborhoods. The SFTP, which is the city's 30-year blueprint guiding transportation investment in San Francisco, found that walking, biking and transit reliability initiatives are important ways to address socio-economic and geographic disparities. The NTIP is intended to respond to these findings.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE WITH THE NTIP?

The purpose of the NTIP is to build community awareness of, and capacity to provide input to, the transportation planning process and to advance delivery of community-supported neighborhood-scale projects. The latter can be accomplished through strengthening project pipelines or helping move individual projects more quickly toward implementation, especially in Communities of Concern and other neighborhoods with high unmet needs.

WHAT TYPE OF WORK DOES THE NTIP FUND?

NTIP planning funds can be used for community-based planning efforts in San Francisco neighborhoods, especially in Communities of Concern or other underserved neighborhoods and areas with vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, children, and/or people with disabilities). Specifically, NTIP planning funds can be used to support neighborhood-scale efforts that identify a community's top transportation needs, identify and evaluate potential solutions, and recommend next steps for meeting the identified needs. NTIP planning funds can also be used to complete additional planning/conceptual engineering for existing planning projects that community stakeholders regard as high-priority. All NTIP planning efforts must be designed to address one or more of the following SFTP priorities:

- Improve pedestrian and/or bicycle safety
- Encourage walking and/or biking;
- Improve transit accessibility
- Improve mobility for Communities of Concern or other underserved neighborhoods and vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, children, and/or people with disabilities).

Ultimately, NTIP planning efforts should lead toward prioritization of community-supported, neighborhood-scale capital improvements that can be funded by the Transportation Authority's Prop K sales tax for transportation and/or other sources.

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

The NTIP Planning program provides \$100,000 in Prop K funding for each supervisorial district to use over the next five years (Fiscal Years 2019/20 - 2023/24). The \$100,000 can be used for one planning effort or multiple smaller efforts. No local match is required for planning grants, though it is encouraged.

The Transportation Authority has also programmed \$6.6 million in Prop K matching funds for implementation of NTIP planning grant recommendations during the next five years. During this second cycle of the NTIP, the capital match funds can also be used to fund other community-supported, neighborhood-scale projects that already have been identified and are being prepared for delivery in the next five years.

Eligibility

WHAT TYPES OF PLANNING EFFORTS CAN BE FUNDED?

Examples of eligible planning efforts include:

- District-wide or area-wide needs and prioritization processes (e.g., the District 10 Mobility Management Study, Balboa Area TDM Study).
- Site specific needs and prioritization processes (e.g., the Managing Access to the "Crooked Street" (1000 Block of Lombard Street), Alemany Interchange Improvement Study, Geneva-San Jose Intersection Study).
- Project-level plans or conceptual designs for smaller efforts (e.g., advancing conceptual design of a high priority project identified in a prior community planning effort, safety project concepts development, and transportation demand management planning including neighborhood parking management studies).
- Traditional neighborhood transportation plan development (e.g., Western Addition Community-Based Transportation Plan).
- Corridor plans (e.g., Valencia Street Bikeway Implementation Plan).

The expectation is that NTIP funds will be leveraged like other Prop K funds. This leveraging would be necessary to fully fund some of the larger scale and more intensive efforts listed above. (A traditional neighborhood transportation plan might run \$300,000; a corridor

¹ <https://www.sfcta.org/policies/communities-concern>

plan could be much more expensive, depending on the scope). Without leveraging, a \$100,000 NTIP planning grant could fund a smaller-scale planning effort.

All NTIP planning efforts must include a collaborative planning process with community stakeholders such as residents, business proprietors, transit agencies, human service agencies, neighborhood associations, non-profit or other community-based organizations and faith-based organizations. The purpose of this collaboration is to solicit comments from these stakeholders, review preliminary findings or designs with them, and to utilize their perspective in identifying potential strategies and solutions for addressing transportation needs.

WHO CAN LEAD AN NTIP PLANNING EFFORT?

NTIP planning efforts can be led by Prop K project sponsors, other public agencies, and/or community-based organizations. The grant recipient, however, must be one of the following Prop K-eligible sponsors: the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART), the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain) the Planning Department, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (Transportation Authority or SFCTA), the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), or San Francisco Public Works (SFPW). If a non-Prop K sponsor is leading the NTIP planning project, it will need to partner with a Prop K sponsor or request that a Prop K sponsor act as a fiscal sponsor.

HOW WILL PROPOSALS BE SCREENED FOR ELIGIBILITY?

In order to be eligible for an NTIP Planning grant, a planning effort must satisfy all of the following screening criteria:

- Project sponsor is one of the following Prop K project sponsors: BART, Caltrain, the Planning Department, SFCTA, SFMTA, SFPW—or is partnering with a Prop K-eligible sponsor (either as a partner or a fiscal sponsor).
- Project is eligible for funding from Prop K.
- Project is seeking funds for planning/conceptual engineering phase. A modest amount of the overall grant may be applied toward environmental clearance (typically for categorical exemption types of approvals), but this may not represent a significant portion of proposed expenditures.
- Cumulative NTIP requests for a given supervisorial district do not exceed the maximum amount available for each supervisorial district (i.e., \$100,000).
- Project will address at least one of the SFTP priorities: improve pedestrian and/or bicycle safety, encourage walking and/or biking, improve transit accessibility, and/or improve mobility for Communities of Concern or other underserved neighborhoods and at-risk populations (e.g., seniors, children, and/or people with disabilities).

- Project is neighborhood-oriented and the scale is at the level of a neighborhood or corridor. The project may be district-oriented for efforts such as district-wide prioritization efforts, provided that the scope is compatible with the proposed funding.
- Project must include a collaborative planning process with community stakeholders.
- Planning project is proposed to be completed in two years.

WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT?

Funds must be used only for planning-related activities. Eligible costs include: community surveys, data gathering and analysis, community meetings, charrettes, focus groups, planning and technical consultants, outreach assistance provided by community-based organizations, developing prioritized action plans, conceptual or 30% design drawings, cost estimates, and bilingual services for interpreting and/or translation services for meetings. Further details on eligible expenses are included in the Prop K Standard Grant Agreement that will be executed by the Transportation Authority and the Prop K grant recipient.

Project Initiation and Scoping

WHERE DO NTIP PLANNING IDEAS COME FROM?

The NTIP sets aside Prop K funds for each district supervisor to direct funds to one or more community-based, neighborhood-scale planning efforts in the next five years. Ultimately, the district supervisor (acting in his/her capacity as a Transportation Authority Board commissioner) will recommend which project(s) will be funded with an NTIP planning grant. All projects must be consistent with the adopted guidelines.

Anyone can come up with an NTIP planning grant idea, including, but not limited to, a District Supervisor, agency staff, a community-based organization, or a community member. There is no pre-determined schedule or call for projects for the NTIP planning grants. Rather, each Transportation Authority Board member will contact the Transportation Authority's NTIP Coordinator when s/he is interested in exploring NTIP proposals. Board members may already have an idea in mind, seek help from agency staff in generating ideas, or solicit input from constituents and other stakeholders. See below for how these ideas are vetted and turned into NTIP planning grants.

HOW DOES AN IDEA DEVELOP INTO AN NTIP PLANNING GRANT?

INITIATING A REQUEST: The District Supervisor initiates the process by contacting the Transportation Authority's or SFMTA's NTIP Coordinator with a planning proposal, a request to help identify potential planning project ideas,

or to help with a formal or informal call for projects for his or her respective district.

The Transportation Authority and the SFMTA have designated NTIP Coordinators who will work collaboratively to implement the NTIP Planning grant program. The NTIP Coordinators will work with the District Supervisor and any relevant stakeholders throughout the NTIP planning proposal identification and initial scoping process. They will be responsible for seeking input from appropriate staff within their agencies, as well as from other agencies depending on the particular topic.

VETTING IDEAS AND SCOPING: Once contacted by a District Supervisor, the SFCTA and SFMTA NTIP Coordinators will establish a dialogue with the relevant District Supervisor and agency staff to develop an understanding of the particular neighborhood's needs and concerns that could be addressed through a planning effort, to evaluate an idea's potential for addressing identified issues, and to explore whether complementary planning or capital efforts are underway, in the pipeline, or have already occurred.

This step in the process is necessarily iterative and collaborative in nature. It involves working with the District Supervisor to identify an eligible NTIP planning proposal and reaching agreement on the purpose and need, what organization will lead/support the effort, developing a summary scope, identifying desired outcomes and/or deliverables, and preparing an initial cost estimate and funding plan.

TABLE 1.

Checklist for Developing a Strong NTIP Planning Grant Proposal

DOES YOUR PLANNING PROPOSAL HAVE...?

- ✓ Clear purpose/need statement and goals
- ✓ Clear list of deliverables/outcomes
- ✓ Well-defined scope, schedule, and budget
- ✓ Clear and diverse community support
- ✓ Coordination with other relevant planning efforts
- ✓ Inclusive community engagement strategy
- ✓ Community of Concern or underserved community focus
- ✓ Appropriate funding/leveraging commensurate with proposed scope
- ✓ Implementation model (lead agency; agency and community roles defined)

NTIP planning grant funds are modest, but a great deal can be accomplished depending on how the planning effort is scoped and how it leverages other resources (e.g., existing plans, staff, other fund sources, concurrent planning and design efforts, etc.). The checklist shown in Table 1 reflects elements that are typically necessary to support a strong NTIP planning proposal.

As the project scope begins to solidify, another key aspect to address is determining the lead agency and identifying the roles of other agencies and stakeholders that need to be involved. The SFCTA and SFMTA NTIP Coordinators will assist with this effort, which requires consideration of multiple factors such as how well the NTIP planning proposal matches an agency's mission and goals, and current priorities; staff resource availability during the proposal timeframe; and availability of consultant resources to address staff resource constraints. The Transportation Authority is willing to provide access to its on-call consultants to assist with NTIP planning efforts if that is found to be a viable approach to a particular planning proposal.

Agreeing upon the lead agency and the timing of the planning effort are important outcomes of the scoping phase. Based on prior experience and feedback from project sponsors, it is clear that implementation agency participation in the project initiation and scoping process and involvement in some form in the planning effort (from leading the effort to strategically providing input and reviewing key deliverables) helps ensure that the recommendations stemming from the study will be prioritized sooner rather than later in that agency's work program.

The lead agency (or the grant recipient if it is a different entity) should prepare a Prop K allocation request (See next section).

REQUESTING ALLOCATION OF FUNDS: The designated grant recipient needs to complete a Prop K allocation request form that details the agreed-upon scope, schedule, cost and funding plan for the project. Transportation Authority staff will review the allocation request to ensure completeness. Once it is finalized the funding request will go through the next monthly Transportation Authority Board cycle for approval. This involves review and action by the Citizens Advisory Committee, and Transportation Authority Board.

What are the grant award terms?

All NTIP planning projects must adhere to the Prop K Strategic Plan policies and the requirements set forth in the Prop K Standard Grant Agreement. The sections below highlight answers to a few commonly asked questions.

ARE THERE TIMELY USE OF FUNDS DEADLINES?

Planning efforts must be completed within two years of the grant award. If a grant recipient does not demonstrate adequate performance and timely use of funds, the Transportation Authority may, after consulting with the project sponsor and relevant District Supervisor, take appropriate actions, which can include termination or redirection of the grant.

WHAT ARE THE MONITORING, REPORTING, AND ATTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS?

NTIP planning grants will be subject to the same monitoring, reporting and attribution requirements as for other Prop K grants. Requirements are set forth in the Prop K Standard Grant Agreement and include items such as including appropriate attribution on outreach fliers and reports which will be shared with the district supervisor, and submitting a closeout report upon project completion.

Upon completion of each planning project, project sponsors will report to the Transportation Authority Board on key findings, recommendations, and next steps, including implementation and funding strategy. The Board will accept or approve the final report for the NTIP planning grant.

How do I get more information?

Visit the Transportation Authority's website at:

www.sfcta.org/ntip

Or contact one of the NTIP coordinators:

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NTIP Planning Grant process Flow-chart

