



Neighborhood Program Guidelines



San Francisco County Transportation Authority

Neighborhood
program

Approved July 2023

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The Neighborhood Program is made possible by the San Francisco County Transportation Authority through grants of Proposition L (Prop L) local transportation sales tax funds.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Cover photo courtesy of SFMTA Photography Department



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Overview

WHY WAS THE NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM CREATED?

The Transportation Authority's Neighborhood Program (also known as the Neighborhood Transportation Program) is intended to focus on community-based neighborhood-scale transportation improvements. The Transportation Authority developed the Neighborhood Program in 2014 under Prop K, the predecessor to Prop L. It was created in response to mobility and equity analysis findings from the San Francisco Transportation Plan (SFTP) 2040 and to the public and the Transportation Authority Board's desire for more focus on neighborhoods, especially in Equity Priority Communities and other underserved neighborhoods.¹ The SFTP 2050 (December 2022) reaffirmed the importance of the Neighborhood Program by including it in its investment plan, noting that neighborhood transportation plans establish a pipeline of grant-ready projects throughout the city that reflect community priorities, such as street safety, mode shift, transit accessibility, and mobility.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM?

The purpose of the Neighborhood Program 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 and helping move individual projects more quickly toward implementation, especially in Equity Priority Communities and other neighborhoods with high unmet needs.

WHAT TYPE OF WORK DOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM FUND?

Neighborhood Program Planning funds can be used for community-based planning efforts in San Francisco neighborhoods, especially in Equity Priority Communities or other underserved neighborhoods and areas with vulnerable populations (e.g. seniors, children, and/or people with disabilities). Specifically, Neighborhood Program Planning funds can be used to support neighborhood-scale efforts that identify a community's transportation needs, identify and evaluate potential solutions, and recommend next steps for meeting the identified needs. Neighborhood Program Planning funds can also be used to complete additional planning/conceptual engineering for existing planning projects that community stakeholders regard as high priority. Recommendations resulting from Neighborhood Program Planning projects should be eligible for Neighborhood Program Capital funds, other Prop L programs, and/or additional sources.

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

Neighborhood Program Capital funds can be used for implementation of Neighborhood Program Planning grant recommendations, or of other community-supported, neighborhood-scale projects that have already been identified.

All Neighborhood Program efforts must address one or more of the following SFTP priorities:

- Improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and/or other street users
- Encourage walking, biking, and/or transit use
- Improve transit accessibility and/or reliability
- Improve mobility for Equity Priority Communities or other underserved neighborhoods and vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, children, and/or people with disabilities)

Ultimately, Neighborhood Program efforts should prioritize and lead to the implementation of community-supported, neighborhood-scale capital improvements that can be funded by the Transportation Authority's Prop L transportation sales tax and/or other sources.

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE? ARE THERE LOCAL MATCH REQUIREMENTS?

The Neighborhood Program provides \$700,000 in Prop L funding for each supervisorial district to use over the next five years (Fiscal Years 2023/24 - 2027/28). The Neighborhood Program includes funds for Planning efforts and Capital project development and implementation. There is no prescribed proportion of funds between Planning and Capital; however, historically, \$100,000 has been programmed for Planning and \$600,000 for Capital for each district. Planning funds can be used for one planning effort or multiple smaller efforts. No local match is required for planning grants, though it is strongly encouraged.

The Neighborhood Program Capital program funds are intended as matching funds for implementation of Neighborhood Program Planning grant recommendations or to fund other community-supported, neighborhood-scale projects that already have been identified and are being prepared for delivery in the next five years. Neighborhood Program Capital funds must leverage other non-Prop L funds to help achieve the Prop L leveraging assumptions for the Neighborhood Program. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to, among other factors, whether other funding options exist and the status of overall Neighborhood Program leveraging to date.

Eligibility

Eligible project types are community-based neighborhood-scale transportation improvements that are eligible for other 2022 Transportation Expenditure Plan programs and result in public-facing benefits. Examples of eligible Planning and Capital efforts are described below.

WHAT TYPES OF PLANNING EFFORTS CAN BE FUNDED?

Examples of eligible planning efforts include:

- 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).
- Identification and advancement of design of low-cost enhancements (e.g. new crosswalks, sidewalk bulbouts) to coordinate their construction with paving projects.
- District-wide needs and prioritization processes (e.g. the District 1 Multimodal Transportation Study).
- Traditional neighborhood transportation plan development (e.g. Mission Bay School Access Plan, Western Addition Community-Based Transportation Plan).
- Corridor plans (e.g. Valencia Long-Term Bikeway Study, Alemany Realignment Study, Ocean Avenue Mobility Action Plan).

The expectation is that Neighborhood Program funds will be leveraged like other Prop L 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 plan could be much more expensive, depending on the scope). Without leveraging, a \$100,000 Neighborhood Program Planning grant could fund the smaller-scale planning efforts noted in the first three bullet points.

All Neighborhood Program 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 utilize their perspective in identifying potential strategies and solutions for addressing transportation needs.

WHAT TYPES OF CAPITAL EFFORTS CAN BE FUNDED?

Neighborhood Program Capital grants are intended to advance recommendations from Neighborhood Program Planning effort recommendations or other community-supported, neighborhood-scale plans and studies. For example, Neighborhood Program Capital funds could be used to fund design of a project that could then apply for construction funding from a competitive grant source.

Examples of eligible capital efforts include, but are not limited to, design and implementation of:

- Sidewalk bulbouts, crosswalks, and traffic calming measures (e.g. speed humps)
- New and upgraded bicycle lanes and paths
- New and upgraded traffic signals, including flashing beacons to improve safety for street users
- Bus stop improvements
- Transportation Demand Management pilots (e.g. to encourage walking, biking or transit use; to implement recommendations from a neighborhood parking management study)

The expectation is that Neighborhood Program funds will be leveraged like other Prop L funds. This leveraging would be necessary to fully fund some of the larger scale and more intensive efforts listed above.

WHO CAN LEAD A NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM EFFORT?

Neighborhood Program efforts can be led by Prop L project sponsors, other public agencies, and/or community-based organizations. The grant recipient, however, must be one of the following Prop L-eligible sponsors: the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (Transportation Authority or SFCTA), the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), San Francisco Public Works (SFPW), or the Planning Department. If a non-Prop L sponsor is leading the Neighborhood Program project, it will need to partner with a Prop L sponsor or request that a Prop L sponsor act as a fiscal sponsor.

HOW WILL PROPOSALS BE SCREENED FOR ELIGIBILITY?

In order to be eligible for a Neighborhood Program grant, a project proposal must satisfy all of the following screening criteria:

- Project sponsor is one of the following Prop L project sponsors: SFCTA, SFMTA, SFPW, San Francisco Planning Department – or is a community-based organization partnering with a Prop L-eligible sponsor that is the grant recipient and fiscal sponsor.
- Project is eligible for funding from Prop L.

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- If a 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 Neighborhood Program requests for a given supervisorial district do not exceed the maximum amount available for each supervisorial district (i.e., \$700,000 in each 5-year cycle).
 - Project will address at least one of the SFTP priorities: improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and/or other street users; encourage walking, biking and/or transit use; improve transit accessibility and/or reliability; and improve mobility for Equity Priority Communities 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 or be recommended by a collaborative planning process with community stakeholders.
 - Planning projects shall be proposed to be completed within two years.

Note that all proposed capital projects will be evaluated in accordance with Prop L prioritization criteria, specifically: readiness, urgency, benefits to disadvantaged populations, leveraging, cost effectiveness, and safety.

WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT?

Eligible Neighborhood Program Planning 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.

Eligible Neighborhood Program Capital costs include: final or 100% design drawings, construction-related activities, requests for contracting proposals, contracting bid selection, notice of construction, procurement of materials, and construction. Public engagement activities supporting the design and construction phases are also eligible costs.

Further details on eligible expenses are included in the Prop L Standard Grant Agreement that is executed by the Transportation Authority and the Prop L grant recipient.

Project Initiation and Scoping

WHERE DO NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM PROJECT IDEAS COME FROM?

The Neighborhood Program provides funds for each district supervisor to direct funds to community-based, neighborhood-scale planning and capital efforts. Ultimately, the district supervisor (acting in their capacity as a Transportation Authority Board commissioner) will recommend which project(s) will be funded with a Neighborhood Program grant. All projects must be consistent with the adopted guidelines.

Anyone can come up with a Neighborhood Program 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 Neighborhood Program grants. Rather, each Transportation Authority Board member will contact the Transportation Authority's Neighborhood Program Coordinator when they are interested in exploring Neighborhood Program proposals. Board members may already have an idea in mind, seek help from agency staff in generating ideas, and/or solicit input from constituents and other stakeholders. See below for how these ideas are vetted and turned into Neighborhood Program grants.

HOW DOES AN IDEA DEVELOP INTO A NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM GRANT?

Initiating a request: The District Supervisor initiates the process by contacting the Transportation Authority's or SFMTA's Neighborhood Program Coordinator with a planning or capital proposal, a request to help identify potential planning or capital project ideas, or to help with a formal or informal call for projects for their respective district.

The Transportation Authority and the SFMTA have designated Neighborhood Program Coordinators who will work collaboratively to implement the Neighborhood Program grant program. The Neighborhood Program Coordinators will work with the District Supervisor and any relevant stakeholders throughout the Neighborhood Program 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 Neighborhood Program Coordinators will establish a dialogue with the Supervisor and agency staff to develop an understanding of the particular neighborhood's needs and concerns that could be addressed through a Neighborhood Program project, 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 Neighborhood Program 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.

Neighborhood Program grant funds are modest, but a great deal can be accomplished depending on how the 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 Neighborhood Program proposal.

Agreement on Roles and Responsibilities: 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 Neighborhood Program Coordinators will assist with this effort, which requires consideration of multiple factors such as how well the Neighborhood Program proposal matches an agency’s mission and goals; 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 Neighborhood Program efforts if that is found to be a viable approach to a particular proposal.

Agreeing upon the lead agency and the timing of the effort are important outcomes of the scoping phase. Based on prior experience and feedback from project sponsors, it is clear that the implementing agency’s participation in the project initiation and scoping process and involvement in the effort in some form (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.

Requesting allocation of funds: The designated grant recipient must complete a Prop L allocation

Table 1.
**Checklist for Developing a Strong
Neighborhood Program Grant Proposal**

Does your 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
- Equity Priority Community or underserved community focus
- Appropriate funding/leveraging commensurate with proposed scope
- Implementation model (lead agency; agency and community roles defined)

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 and compliance with Prop L requirements. 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 Community Advisory Committee and Transportation Authority Board.

Grant Award Terms

All Neighborhood Program projects must adhere to the Prop L Strategic Plan policies and the requirements set forth in the Prop L Standard Grant Agreement (available upon request). 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 planning or capital 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?

Neighborhood Program grants will be subject to the same monitoring, reporting and attribution requirements as for other Prop L grants. Requirements are set forth in the Prop L Standard Grant Agreement and include items such as including appropriate attribution on outreach fliers and reports, preparing quarterly progress reports, 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. For Neighborhood Program Planning grants, the Board will accept or approve the project's final report.

For More Information

Visit the Transportation Authority's website at sfcta.org/policies/neighborhood-program or contact one of the Neighborhood Program coordinators:

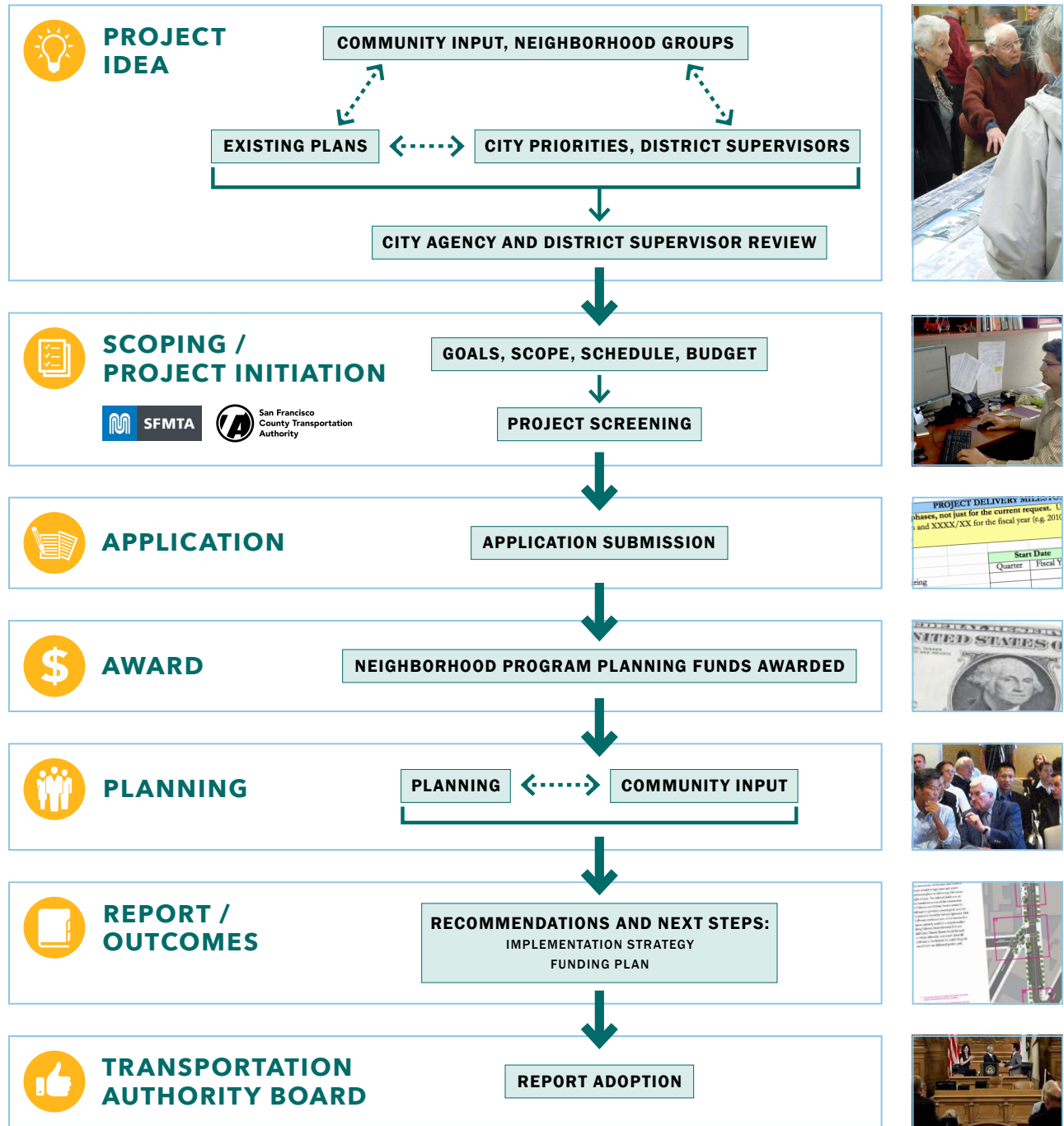
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Neighborhood Program Planning Grant Process Flow-chart



The Neighborhood Program is funded by grants of Proposition L local transportation sales tax funds.

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