AGENDA
Thursday, April 20, 2023
1:30 p.m.

**In-Person Meeting**
SCCRTC Office: 1101 Pacific Ave, Suite 250
Santa Cruz, CA

**Remote Participation**
Remote participation available for a) members of the public, b) voting Committee members unable to attend in person due to an emergency or for cause per AB2449 (see item #3 and end of agenda for more information), or c) nonvoting members/alternates

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87482198801?pwd=TDNjZDF3aloyenFRRU5OQmZpKzBKdz09
Meeting ID: 874 8219 8801; Passcode: 250250
Alternately participants may dial-in: 1-669-900-9128

**SERVICIOS DE TRADUCCIÓN/ TRANSLATION SERVICES:** Si necesita información o servicios de traducción al español, llame por lo menos con tres días laborables de anticipo al (831) 460-3218 o email info@sccrtc.org.

**Accessibility:** See end of the agenda for details.

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call/Introductions
3. Consider any AB2449 request(s) for voting members to participate remotely
   
   Committee members that are unable to attend in person due to an "emergency" or "for cause" as defined in AB2449, may participate remotely only if at least a quorum of the members of the committee participate in person. (see end of agenda for more information)

4. Additions, deletions, or other changes to consent and regular agendas

**CONSENT AGENDA**

All items appearing on the consent agenda are considered to be minor or non-controversial and will be acted upon in one motion if no member of the Committee or public wishes an item be removed and discussed on the
regular agenda. Members of the Committee may raise questions, seek clarification or add directions to Consent Agenda items without removing the item from the Consent Agenda as long as no other committee member objects to the change.

5. Approve Minutes of the March 16, 2023 ITAC meeting

**REGULAR AGENDA**

6. Status of transportation projects, programs, studies and planning documents and Measure D 5-Year Plans
   a. Verbal updates from local agencies
   b. Bike Month Flyer
   c. METRO Dump the Pump/Earth Day Free Rides April 22 Notice

7. Health Program Updates – Receive updates
   a. Presentation from Arnold Shir and Theresia Rogerson, County Health Services Agency (HSA)

8. Caltrans Planning Updates – Receive updates
   a. Presentation from Paul Guirguis, Caltrans District 5

9. 2023 Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) – Recommend RTC program funds for METRO’s Youth Ride Free program
   a. Staff Report
   b. Santa Cruz METRO application

10. San Lorenzo Valley Schools Access Study – Designate ITAC members to review and make recommendations on the draft study
    a. Staff Report

11. Funding Program Opportunities and Updates – Receive and share updates
    a. Clean California – Applications due 4/28
    b. Caltrans Grant Updates
       • Local Assistance Funding Opportunities Workshop – 4/28 (register)
       • [Caltrans support letters procedures](#)
    c. USDOT grants: 2023 NOFO schedule (website)
       • Grant Prep Checklist (https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/fy-2023-discretionary-grant-preparation-checklist)
       • Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program, applications due 5/30
         o Request for Caltrans support letters due 4/21
       • Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), applications due 7/10
         o Webinars (https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A/webinars)
SS4A Rural/Tribal Applicants: 4/24, 12:30pm (register)
SS4A Action Plan Grants: 4/26, 10:00am
SS4A Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Grants: 4/27, 10:30am
SS4A Implementation Grants: 5/2, 10:30am
  • Request for Caltrans support letters due 5/19
  • Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program, applications due 8/1/23
d. CA Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards (RC:H2B) Pilot Program: Guidelines workshop 5/9 1:00pm (applications likely due late summer/early fall)
e. CTC-Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program (LTCAP), applications due June 28, 2023 (final guidelines to be adopted 5/17/23)
f. Other updates

12. Committee Member and Staff Oral Communications

13. Public Comments and Oral Communications on Matters Not on the Agenda

Any member of the public may address the Committee on any item within the jurisdiction of the Committee that is not already on the agenda. At the discretion of the chair, the amount of time for oral communications may be limited. Committee members will not take action or respond immediately to any Oral Communications presented, but may choose to follow up at a later time, either individually, or on a subsequent Committee agenda.

Speakers are requested to state their name clearly so that their names can be accurately recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

14. Next Meeting – The next ITAC meeting is scheduled for 1:30pm on May 18, 2023 at the RTC conference room, 1101 Pacific Ave, Ste 250. ITAC meetings will be canceled if there are no action items to be brought before the committee.

Adjourn

SERVICIOS DE TRADUCCIÓN/ TRANSLATION SERVICES: Si gusta estar presente o participar en juntas de la Comisión Regional de Transporte del condado de Santa Cruz y necesita información o servicios de traducción al español por favor llame por lo menos con tres días laborables de anticipo al (831) 460-3200 para hacer los arreglos necesarios. (Spanish language translation is available on an as needed basis. Please make advance arrangements at least three days in advance by calling (831) 460-3200.)

HOW TO REACH US: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1101 Pacific Avenue, Ste 250; Santa Cruz, CA 95060; phone: (831) 460-3200
email: info@sccrtc.org / website: www.sccrtc.org
AGENDAS ONLINE: Agendas are posted online (https://sccrtc.org/meetings/inter-agency/agendas/) at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Full agenda packets, including handouts and other documents relating to items on the agenda, are also posted online. To receive email notification when the Committee meeting agenda packets are posted on the RTC website, please fill out the e-subscription form on the website: https://sccrtc.org/about/esubscriptions/ or call (831) 460-3200.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION –Committee Members (AB2449)
This meeting is being held in accordance with the California Brown Act. Under traditional Brown Act rules, members of the committee may attend by teleconference if the location they are attending from is also open to the public to participate and the remote meeting location is listed on the agenda. Members of the committee may also attend via zoom up to two times per year due to an emergency or for cause according to requirements set forth in AB2449, as long as a quorum of the committee is present in person at a singular physical location identified on the agenda.

- AB 2449 defines “just cause“ as:
  o Care of a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner;
  o a contagious illness that prevents a member from attending in person;
  o a need related to a physical or mental disability as defined by statute; or
  o travel while on official business of the RTC or another state or local agency

- AB 2449 defines “emergency circumstances“ as a physical or family medical emergency that prevents a member from attending in person. The committee member must provide a general description of the circumstances relating to your need to appear remotely at the given meeting (not exceeding 20 words). Medical condition does not need to be disclosed. The committee must take action to approve the request to participate due to an emergency circumstance at the start of their regularly scheduled meeting.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION - Public
The public may participate in the meetings of the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and its committees in person or remotely via the provided Zoom link or teleconference number. If technical difficulties result in the loss of communication for remote participants, the RTC will work to restore the communication; however, the meeting will continue while efforts are being made to restore communication to the remote participants. Members of the public participating by Zoom or teleconference are instructed to be on mute during the proceedings and to speak only when public comment is allowed, after requesting and receiving recognition from the Chair.

PARTICIPACIÓN REMOTA – El público
El público puede participar en las juntas de la Commission Regional de Transporte (RTC) en persona o remotamente a través del enlace Zoom proporcionado. Si problemas técnicos resultan en la perdida de comunicación con quienes participan remotamente, la RTC hará lo posible por restaurar la comunicación. Pero, la junta continuará mientras se hace lo posible por restaurar la comunicación con quienes participan remotamente. A los miembros del público que participan por Zoom se les indica que permanezcan en silencio durante los procedimientos y que hablen solo cuando se permitan comentarios públicos, después de solicitar y recibir el reconocimiento del presidente del comité (ITAC).

Zoom Meeting Tips: Meeting attendees are strongly encouraged to use the Zoom app for best reception. Prior to the meeting, participants can download the Zoom app at: https://zoom.us/download. A link to simplified instruction for the use of the Zoom app is: https://blog.zoom.us/video-communications-best-practice-guide/

ACCESSIBILITY/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission does not discriminate on the basis of disability and
no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. This meeting location is an accessible facility. If you wish to attend this meeting and require special assistance in order to participate, please contact RTC staff at 460-3200 (CRS 800/735-2929) at least three working days in advance of this meeting to make arrangements. People with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format. As a courtesy to those persons affected, please attend the meeting smoke and scent-free.

**TITLE VI NOTICE:** The RTC operates its programs and services without regard to race, color and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person believing to have been aggrieved by the RTC under Title VI may file a complaint with RTC by contacting the RTC at (831) 460-3212 or 1101 Pacific Avenue, Ste 250, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 or online at https://sccrtc.org/about/title-vi-civil-rights-program/. A complaint may also be filed directly with the Federal Transit Administration to the Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590.
DRAFT MINUTES
Thursday, March 16, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

In Person: RTC Conference Room
1101 Pacific Ave, Ste 250, Santa Cruz, CA

Remote: Zoom

ITAC Members Present:
Capitola Public Works & Community Development Proxy Kailash Mozumder (AB2449)
Santa Cruz Public Works and Planning Proxy Josh Spangrud
Scotts Valley Public Works and Planning Proxy Phillip Linarte
County of Santa Cruz Public Works and Planning Proxy Casey Carlson
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments Heather Adamson
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Paul Guirguis
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District and 1 Proxy John Urgo

Committee Members/Alternates that Attended Remotely: non-voting/did not count towards quorum or meet AB2449 requirements
Chris Duymich, AMBAG (alternate)
Malinda Gallaher, Caltrans District 5 Local Assistance (alternate)
Georgina Arias, University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC)

Excused Absences:
City of Watsonville: Murray Fontes and Justin Meek
Ecology Action-Transportation: Piet Canin

RTC Staff Present - In Person: Sarah Christensen, Rachel Moriconi, Amy Naranjo, Guy Preston

RTC Staff Participating Remotely: Grace Blakeslee, Tommy Travers, Tracy New

Others Present:
Todd Marco, Nisene Rio Gateway
Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Faina Segal, Friends of the Rail & Trail
Miranda Taylor, AMBAG
Nadene Thorne, Greenway Committee

1. Call to Order: Chair Kailash Mozumder called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.
2. **Introductions:** Introductions were made.

3. **Consider AB2449 request(s) to participate in the meeting remotely –**

   The committee unanimously approved a motion (Adamson/Spangrud) for the following AB2449 requests from committee members to participate remotely:
   - Kailash Mozumder for just cause: A contagious illness that prevents a member from attending in person. He confirmed that no one over the age of 18 was present at his location.

4. **Oral Communications:** None

5. **Additions, deletions, or changes to consent and regular agendas:**

   Handouts for Item 10 (presentation) and Item 11 (public comments) were posted on the ITAC meeting webpage.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

*Committee members unanimously approved a motion (Spangrud/Urgo) approving the consent agenda (8-0).*

6. **Approved Minutes of the February 16, 2023, ITAC meeting**

7. **Received list of Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Amendments approved by RTC March 2, 2023**

**REGULAR AGENDA**

8. **Status of transportation projects, programs, studies, and planning documents**

   ITAC members and RTC staff provided updates on projects, programs, studies, planning efforts, and storm damage.

   **County of Santa Cruz** – Casey Carlson reported that the Soquel Drive buffered bike lanes and rehab project is out to bid. The County has over 150 storm damage sites from recent winter storms. The County is also planning to construct the San Andreas Road Resurfacing, Holohan/152 intersection and Green Valley Road multi-use path reconstruction projects this summer.

   **City of Santa Cruz** – Josh Spangrud reported on storm damage to West Cliff Drive and one-way traffic. The city received one bid for the Ocean Street paving project (Plymouth St. to Water St.). The city will also be repaving Laurel Street soon and installing flashing beacons at crosswalks in the city.
with a Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) grant. The Murray Street Bridge project right-of-way is completed and the city may go to bid this spring, pending approval of a National Marine Fisheries permit.

Scotts Valley – Phillip Linarte reported the city had storm damage/landslides on Green Hills and Bean Creek Roads and is working on near- and long-term repairs. The city is also working on high visibility crosswalk and Lockwood Lane projects. Repaving Bean Creek Road is scheduled to go to bid soon.

METRO – John Urgo reported there have been some service disruptions due to storms, that the River Street bus yard flooded during the January storms, and METRO continued to help with evacuations during the March storms. METRO launched the Youth Cruz fee-free rides for K-12 students program. METRO is holding a public workshop online on the “Reimagining METRO” plan and evaluating cost-neutral and two additional revenue scenarios for modifying METRO service. METRO is studying options to speed up service along bus routes 71, 69W, and 69X between Watsonville and Santa Cruz.

Caltrans – Paul Guirguis shared storm damage updates, noting that Highway 1 at the Pajaro River was the biggest closure. He also reported on the Highway 9/Holiday slide, with reopening on hold due to continued slide activity. He reported that planning grant applications were due to Caltrans March 9, with awards anticipated to be announced by the end of August 2023. Caltrans only received requests for about half of the funds designated for adaptation plans and there will likely be a second call for projects.

Malinda Gallaher reported that Caltrans awarded HSIP Cycle 11 funds to one project in the City of Santa Cruz. She noted workshops are being held on the Clean California program and encouraged agencies to contact her with any questions. Rachel Moriconi noted that Caltrans has a statewide cleanup planned in April, but no local jurisdictions in Santa Cruz County were participating; Paul Guirguis agreed to follow up on what outreach was done. [After the meeting Paul reported that District staff primarily contacted organizations that organize volunteer clean-up and will be doing additional outreach for next year’s event.) Malinda also reminded agencies to submit required paperwork to avoid losing funds for projects that are subject to a June 30 “reversion date”.

Capitola – Kailash Mozumder reported city staff have been meeting with FEMA to determine what storm damage is eligible for funds. The city anticipates starting construction on the Capitola Road-30th Ave to 41st Ave intersection paving project late summer. The city is seeking input from the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC) on the design for the Kennedy Road sidewalk project.

UCSC – Georgina Arias reported that UCSC had some significant power
outages and downed trees because of winter storms. She reported that
UCSC hopes to launch the new bikeshare program Memorial Day weekend.

SCCRTC - Sarah Christensen reported that vegetation clearing started for
the Highway 1 Soquel-41st Auxiliary Lanes/Bus-on-Shoulder/Chanticleer Ave
bike/ped project construction. The Highway 1 Bay/Porter-State Park project
is out to bid. The EIR for the Highway 1 Freedom-State Park plus Segment
12 Trail project is expected to be released soon. She also reported that
there were two washouts on the rail line due to January storms.

9. AMBAG 2023 Public Participation Plan Development Process

Miranda Taylor, AMBAG, presented information on the purpose, schedule,
and preliminary updates to the Public Participation Plan (PPP), which serves
as the federally mandated plan for AMBAG’s Metropolitan Transportation
Plan (MTP) and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)
and is also used as the RTC’s PPP for the Regional Transportation Plan
(RTP). The draft plan is scheduled to be released in June. AMBAG has sent a
survey to over 1500 people soliciting input on methods to involve the public
in transportation planning and projects.

Committee members provided information on public engagement efforts at
their agencies, including community engagement managers, consultants,
and social media managers working with project managers to share project
information with the public.

10. AMBAG 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)/Sustainable
Communities Strategy (SCS) Draft Work Program and Schedule

Heather Adamson, AMBAG, provided an overview of the work program and
schedule for the next Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)/Sustainable
Communities Strategy (SCS) update, highlighting key points during
development that local project sponsors will need to provide financial
estimates and project updates via SCCRTC. The draft plan is scheduled to be
released late fall 2025, with final adoption by June 2026. In response to
questions from Paul Guirguis, Heather Adamson noted that the California
Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document includes an environmental
justice analysis and Rachel Moriconi indicated that the RTC’s forthcoming
Equity Action Plan will be used to analyze and prioritize projects.

11. Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 (State Park Drive to Rio del Mar
Boulevard) design

Sarah Christensen, Sr. Engineer for RTC, presented and solicited input from
the committee on the draft design for the Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12.
She confirmed that drainage is being considered in the project design.
Public comments: Todd Marco stated that cyclists will likely use the rail trail to also access parks in Aptos and provided comments about access and interface with Aptos Village and Soquel Drive and leveraging Aptos Street. Brian Peoples stated he was frustrated by flooding at Pajaro River, shared photos, and expressed concern that the train tracks are located through wetlands and at risk.

12. Funding Program Opportunities and Updates

Committee members and staff discussed several funding programs identified in the agenda, including:

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC): Heather Adamson requested that agencies applying submit proposals several days in advance to AMBAG for its required review. The City of Santa Cruz is applying for funds the downtown library/housing project.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP): Only the City of Santa Cruz applied for funds in Cycle 11, with the County indicating it plans to apply in the future once its Safe Streets for All Plan (being prepared in partnership with Scotts Valley and Watsonville) is completed.

REAP: Heather Adamson noted that $2.5 million is available this cycle.

Caltrans updated State Highway Management Plan considers asset-based priorities and is integrating climate adaptation and resiliency.

MEGA/Rural: Sarah Christensen reported that the RTC plans to partner with the County and Santa Cruz METRO on a second application for the Watsonville-Santa Cruz corridor.

Several agencies noted that they have limited staff available to prepare grant applications.

13. Next meeting. The next meeting of the ITAC is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on April 20, 2023.

Chair Mozumder adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Rachel Moriconi

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Let's go Santa Cruz County! Ride a bike, reduce emissions, and win prizes all throughout the month of May. Explore the awesome line up of Bike Month events and activities at letsmodo.org/bike-month
Santa Cruz METRO Supports Earth Day with Free Fares Countywide

Saturday, April 22, 2023

Santa Cruz, Calif. (April 14, 2023): The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) is supporting Earth Day, by offering free fares countywide on all fixed-route, ParaCruz, and Highway 17 Express services on Saturday, April 22, 2023.

Since 2002, METRO has been a leader in adopting a more sustainable fleet of buses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by initially moving to compressed natural gas and hybrid vehicles. In the fall of 2021, METRO furthered its commitment to “going green” by deploying METRO’s first four zero emissions buses (ZEBs) into service and by the end of 2023 the agency will have nine ZEBs deployed in the county with more coming every year. Additionally, starting in 2022, METRO has pledged that all new bus purchases will be ZEBs.

“I’m proud to be part of an agency that is committed to protecting our local environment and giving back to our community,” said Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, METRO Board Chair. “METRO has a long legacy of being a leader in sustainability and by pledging to only purchase new buses that are zero emissions moving forward and with METRO’s recently launched One Ride at a Time program we are furthering that commitment. I encourage our community to try METRO’s services for free this Earth Day and log their rides via GO Santa Cruz to protect our local environment one ride at a time.”

METRO is celebrating and raising awareness of Earth Day by offering free fares countywide on April 22nd, to assist our community in getting to their Earth Day destinations while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This promotion is a simple reminder that everyone has a role in clearing the air and increasing the health of our community by using alternate forms of transportation whether it be public transit, riding a bike, or carpooling to our destinations.

METRO also gives riders the opportunity to protect Santa Cruz County’s extraordinary natural resources just by simply riding the bus via the One Ride at a Time program. Beginning in January 2023, every ride on a METRO bus donates to partners in protecting the environment, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and the Bay of Life Fund through the GO Santa Cruz ridesharing incentive program. To participate, riders simply need to log 25 rides to make a $10 donation to one of METRO’s local environmental non-profit partners.

If you have not used METRO services in the past we encourage you try us out free while reducing greenhouse gas emissions in support of Earth Day on Saturday, April 22, 2023.

For more information on METRO visit scmetro.org or to learn more about METRO’s One Ride at a Time program visit scmetro.org/onerideatatime.
RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC):

1. Recommend that the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) program Santa Cruz County’s population-formula shares (99313) of FY22/23 Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) (approximately $650,000) to Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District’s (METRO) Youth Ride Free pilot program; and

2. Identify any additional priority transit projects which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce vehicle miles traveled and increase transit mode share for consideration in future years.

BACKGROUND

In 2014, the California Legislature established the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) to provide operating and capital assistance for transit agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve mobility, with an emphasis on serving disadvantaged communities. Funded by Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds (GGRF) generated from the sale of carbon credits in the state’s Cap and Trade program, the State Controller’s Office (SCO) apportions revenue to transit operators and regional transportation planning agencies (including RTC) using State Transit Assistance (STA) population and revenue distribution formulas. As the regional entity designated under Public Utilities Code (PUC) 99313, the RTC can act as a lead agency on eligible projects or act as a “contributing sponsor” and pass funds onto public transit operators to support an eligible project.

Eligible projects for LCTOP include:

1. Expenditures that directly enhance or expand transit service by supporting new or expanded bus or rail services, new or expanded water-borne transit, or expanded inter-modal transit facilities, and
may include equipment acquisition, fueling, and maintenance, and other costs to operate those services or facilities.

2. Operational expenditures that increase transit mode share.

3. Expenditures related to the purchase of zero-emission buses, including electric buses, and the installation of the necessary equipment and infrastructure to operate and support these zero-emission buses.

In addition to using funds on eligible projects, recipients of LCTOP funds must demonstrate that each expenditure of program monies does not supplant another source of funds; at least 50 percent of funds must either be utilized within and benefit state-defined priority populations, unless the project is new or expanded service that connects with services to disadvantaged or low-income communities, transit fare subsidies, or to purchase zero-emission buses and supporting infrastructure; and agencies are required to conduct meaningful outreach and engagement to low income and disadvantaged communities ("Priority Populations") to ensure that funds are used to address important community needs.

If an agency is not prepared to initiate a project in the current fiscal year, they may roll funds over into a subsequent fiscal year, accruing LCTOP funds for a more substantial project. All funds must be applied to the project within four years. Approved projects must also be completed and funds expended within the subsequent four years.

**DISCUSSION**

The State Controller’s Office (SCO) estimates that approximately $192 million will be available for the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) statewide in FY22/23. The SCO estimates that RTC’s population-based formula share (per PUC 99313) will be $654,314 and METRO’s estimated revenue-based formula share (per PUC 99314) is $589,049 ($1.24 million total for Santa Cruz County projects). Annual shares vary based on projected and actual Cap-and-Trade auction proceeds, as well as population and revenue estimates in other counties and transit districts. Projects approved by the RTC and METRO are subject to Caltrans concurrence. Caltrans staff indicated that this year’s funds must be distributed to public transit operators, though in years past RTC has also programmed some LCTOP funds to Community Bridges-Lift Line projects.

**METRO has requested and staff recommends the committee recommend that the RTC program FY22/23 LCTOP funds to METRO’s new youth ride free pilot program (Youth Cruz Free).**

METRO plans to use LCTOP funds on its countywide Youth Ride Free Program to allow youth in grades K-12 to ride local METRO buses for free for two
additional years through April 3, 2026. (METRO initiated the first year of the free ride program in March 2023 using local funds.) This program supports METRO’s goal of increasing transit ridership, expand access to opportunities and resources for youth, and support equity goals by eliminating the fare burden for youth, many of whom come from low-income households. The program is also expected to help develop lifelong transit riders and shift trips currently taken in private automobiles to buses (increase transit mode share). Attachment 1 provides additional information about this project.

Compliance with LCTOP Guidelines
This project is consistent with LCTOP guidelines, serves state-defined low income and disadvantaged priority populations, and supports California and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) greenhouse gas reduction goals. Providing youth bus passes to low income households is also identified as a strategy in the RTC’s Unmet Needs List to provide “Transportation services for low-income families with children, including transportation for people transitioning from welfare to work.”

LCTOP guidelines require agencies to seek input from community-based organizations, especially those serving low-income individuals, on priorities for LCTOP funds. In addition to outreach conducted by METRO and RTC as part of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update, and other public outreach efforts, such as Youth for Climate Justice and transit equity events, staff recommends that the committee continue to identify priority public transit, paratransit, and/or community transportation services which could significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and/or shift trips from automobile to transit and reduce vehicle miles traveled. These could be integrated into the 2023 Transit Unmet Needs list (being considered at the May 2023 RTC meeting).

SUMMARY

The California Legislature has established a Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) to distribute revenue from the sale of carbon emission credits (Cap-and-Trade funds) for transit operations and capital projects that reduce greenhouse gases. Funds are distributed by formula to regional agencies and transit agencies. Staff recommends that the ITAC recommend that the RTC program FY22/23 funds to Santa Cruz METRO for its new Youth Free Ride pilot program.

Attachment:
1. Application from Santa Cruz METRO

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Project Nomination to SCCRTC for FY2022/23

Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP)

Approximately $654,314 available from RTC’s discretionary share (Sec 99313)

Please fill out a separate application for each project and return to SCCRTC via email to amarino@sccrtc.org by 1:00 p.m. on Monday April 3, 2023.

Note: If your project is recommended for funding, you will need to subsequently complete the Caltrans LCTOP Allocation Request Form and other Caltrans required documents.

1. Project Name: Youth Ride Free Pilot Program

Implementing Agency: Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO)

Contact Person: Wondimu Mengistu Email: Wmengistu@scmtd.com

2. LCTOP RTC-shares (PUC 99313) Requested: 100% - estimated $654,314

3. Project Description - Provide a comprehensive project description. For operations projects, include: number of trips, span, frequency of improvements, number of days of operation and marketing components (if applicable). For capital projects, describe project specifications and identify components proposed to be funded by LCTOP.

   METRO seeks to implement two year countywide Youth Ride Free Program to allow youth in grades K-12 to ride local METRO service fare free anywhere and anytime METRO operates (Highway 17 excluded). The Proposed Project is estimated to increase youth ridership by 100% of pre-pandemic levels. The intent of this program is to support METRO’s goal of increasing transit ridership to seven million trips within the next five years, expand access to opportunities and resources for youth, and support equity goals by eliminating the fare burden for youth, many of whom come from low-income households. Youth under the age of 18 currently comprise 9.7% of METRO boardings (2019 On-Board Survey) yet are 19% of Santa Cruz County residents, suggesting room for growth in this demographic.

4. Eligibility - Verify that the project will meet at least one of the following eligibility requirements (check which one applies to the project)

   | Expenditures directly enhance or expand transit service by supporting new or expanded bus or rail services or expanded intermodal transit facilities, and may include equipment acquisition, fueling, and maintenance, and other costs to operate those services or facilities. |
   | x | Operational expenditures that increase transit mode share. |
   | Expenditures related to the purchase of zero-emission buses, including electric buses, and the installation of the necessary equipment and infrastructure to operate and support zero-emission buses. |
5. Project planning – Describe the planning process, including the process that your agency used to identify community needs and identify this project specifically as a priority for disadvantaged communities. Include any public outreach efforts, engagement events, workshops and other efforts to solicit community input.

A key goal for the Youth Ride Free Program is to help develop lifelong transit riders, while meeting METRO’s overall goal of increasing transit ridership. Additionally, due to repeated requests from local organizations, it was determined that METRO implement two year countywide Youth Ride Free Program. The Santa Cruz County Unmet Transit and Paratransit Needs process, the MPO long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan and METRO’s Short Range Transit Plan documents encouraging mode shift in the short term and building lifelong transit riders as a high priority. Public outreach is a key requirement documented in every transportation plan. Feedback received from public outreach and engagement revealed an overwhelming support as the surrounding community would benefit directly and indirectly from this project. For those who use transit because of economic necessity, fare free programs also serve equity goals.

6. Greenhouse Gas Reductions – Describe how this project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions:

The Project will also result in a total GHG emission reduction of 886.96 MTCO2e. The Project will contribute to a sustainable transportation system that reduces VMT and congestion, improves the transit and active transportation network, and serves communities that are transportation disadvantaged. Given that public transit is the most efficient and equitable way for large numbers of people to access opportunities and resources, removing barriers to its use is critical to reducing car dependence and achieving climate goals.

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<tr>
<th>Ridership Increase</th>
<th>578,164</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Miles Reduced: What is the average automobile trip length (miles) that will be eliminated as a result of the ridership increase above? (average trip length/rider)</td>
<td>2,172,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project useful life (months and/or years)</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Which, if any, disadvantaged communities fall within your transit service areas? (Attach a map of their service area from the EPA website https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40. The Lead Agency must provide a map whether or not their service area includes a disadvantaged community.)

The county low-income youth have needs similar to those in DACs. For those who use transit because of economic necessity, fare free programs also serve...
equity goals. CARB identified common needs of disadvantaged communities based upon input from community advocates in spring 2014. Staff has worked with members of the community on many occasions including the public hearing held on January 27, 2023. Expanding access to opportunities and resources for youth, and support equity goals by eliminating the fare burden for youth, many of whom come from low-income households.

8. Priority Population Benefits - Describe how this project benefits LCTOP-defined priority populations (low-income, disadvantaged, or other priority populations – see Attachment A for additional instructions)

1. Expand access to opportunities and resources for youth, and support equity goals by eliminating the fare burden for youth, many of whom come from low-income households.
2. Improved Public Health: The project will improve air quality and reduce GHGs by removing SOV off the road reducing pollution.
3. Promotes Active Transportation: The project will encourage the use of public transportation, where people without cars are able to get from point A to point B. Our buses are also equipped with bicycle racks that fit two bikes, so bicyclists are able to put their bikes on our buses if their riding distance is too far for them to bike.
4. Promotes Integration w/other modes as we have bus stops.

| Is the project located within the boundaries of a SB535-defined Disadvantaged Community census tract? | Yes |
| Is the project located within the boundaries of a low-income community census tract? | Yes |
| Is the project located outside of a disadvantaged community, but within 1/2 mile of a disadvantaged community and within a low-income census tract? | Yes |
| Amount of proposed FY 22-23 LCTOP funds benefitting Disadvantaged Communities | $407,778 |

9. What outreach or engagement was done with disadvantaged communities for this project?

Public outreach is a key requirement documented in every transportation plan. Feedback received from public outreach and engagement revealed an overwhelming support as the surrounding community would benefit directly and indirectly from this project. Staff has worked with members of the community on many occasions including the public hearing held on January 27, 2023. Staff will conduct outreach to all school districts within Santa Cruz County to request assistance in notifying the public of the program. Additional outreach will be conducted including email notifications to METRO stakeholder groups and through METRO’s social media channels.
10. If project involves the demolition or rehabilitation of existing units occupied by lower-income households or businesses in disadvantaged communities, **how was this project designed to avoid substantial burden on any low-income, disadvantaged, and vulnerable populations?**

N/A

11. **Co-Benefits** - Check all additional Benefits/Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Safety</td>
<td>Coordination with College Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>x</strong> Improved Public Health</td>
<td><strong>x</strong> Coordination with K-12 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Operating/Maintenance Costs</td>
<td>Promotes Active Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase System Reliability</td>
<td><strong>x</strong> Promotes Integration w/ other modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Expand access to opportunities and resources for youth, and support equity goals by eliminating the fare burden for youth, many of whom come from low-income households</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. **Plan Consistency:** Describe how the project is consistent with local and/or regional plans? (*Short Range Transit Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, Long Range Transit Plan, etc.*)

The proposed Project is consistent with the Santa Cruz County Unmet Transit and Paratransit Needs process, the MPO long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan and METRO’s Short Range Transit Plan by encouraging mode shift in the short term and building lifelong transit riders as a high priority.

13. **Board Approval:** Is the project supported by your agency’s Governing Board? *(Attach approval resolution, meeting minutes, or the date approval is expected by May 1, 2023.)*

Date approval is expected by April 28, 2023.

14. **Project Schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Anticipated Start Date</th>
<th>Anticipated End Date</th>
<th>Environmental review (PA/ED)</th>
<th>Design (PS&amp;E)</th>
<th>Right-of-way (ROW)</th>
<th>Vehicle/Equipment Purchase</th>
<th>Construction (CON)</th>
<th>Operations/Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/1/2023</td>
<td>4/3/2026</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. **Project Cost/Funding Information:**
a. **Funding sources and amounts.** *(Double click on table to activate cells.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCTOP Allocation Year</th>
<th>Prior</th>
<th>FY 22-23</th>
<th>FY 23-24</th>
<th>FY 24-25</th>
<th>FY 25-26</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUC 99313 Amount:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$654,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$654,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUC 99314 Amount:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$589,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$589,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total LCTOP Funds:</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,243,363</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,243,363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other GGRF:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Funds:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost:</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,243,363</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,243,363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. **Describe how project cost estimates were developed:**

The project cost was developed by calculating the number of free rides that can be provided. In the first year, METRO estimates $491,664 at the average cost per ride $2 per rider, doubling youth ridership to 245,832 from 163,709 of pre-pandemic levels. Staff also estimates allocating 7% ($87,035) of funds for marketing and outreach component of the project. In the second year, cost estimate is $664,664, proving about 332,332 free rides. These cost estimates are based on FY19 youth farebox data $245,833. These estimates are very conservative as 19% of Santa Cruz County residents – 51,327 persons – are under 18 years of age, suggesting room for growth in this demographic. In recent years, a number of transit agencies in California have implemented both pilot and permanent free fare for youth programs and reported ridership exceeding 125% of pre-pandemic levels and continuing to trend upward.

c. **Project Readiness - Is the project fully funded and “ready to go?”**

$1,243,363 is needed to completely fund this project. With LCTOP funds, the project will be fully funded and ready to go.

d. **Will LCTOP supplant other funding sources?** *(yes/no – note LCTOP funds cannot be used to supplant other funds)*

No. METRO will not be supplanting funds for use of this project.

16. **Cost-Effectiveness and Increased Mode Share of the Project:** *Describe how the project meets industry standards for effectiveness and how the project will increase transit ridership. Is the project economical? Does it save operating costs or increase them?*

The Proposed Project is estimated to increase youth ridership by 100% of pre-pandemic levels. The benefits associated with supporting increased ridership, lowering the economic burden of taking transit for low-income youth, and building future transit riders outweigh the costs. Additionally, this project has typically targeted youth in an effort to encourage mode shift in the short term and build lifelong transit riders. This supports METRO’s goal of increasing transit ridership to seven million trips within the next five years, expand access to opportunities and resources for youth, and support equity goals.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the advisory committee receive an update on the San Lorenzo Valley (SLV) Schools Complex Circulation and Access Study and identify committee members to provide further input to the project team on the draft study.

BACKGROUND

In January 2022, RTC entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District (SLVUSD), Caltrans, Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO), and the County of Santa Cruz to coordinate delivery of the SLV Schools Access Project. RTC staff in conjunction with Caltrans and the SLVUSD identified the need to conduct more thorough analysis of circulation and access to the SLV High School, Middle Schools, and Elementary Schools in Felton, which was identified as a priority in the Highway 9/SLV Complete Streets Corridor Plan (SLV Plan).

The SLV Schools Access Study (Study) includes public input, needs assessment, traffic analysis, preliminary engineering, and feasible recommendations for the SLV Schools Complex on Highway 9 just north of Felton, as well as Highway 9 itself between Graham Hill Road and the southerly intersection of Glen Arbor Road. Recommendations will be provided to improve multimodal system performance within the SLV Schools Complex as well as circulation improvements, transit access improvements, and bicycle and walking facilities for students and other users on Highway 9.

Previously, the project team presented preliminary concept plans to RTC advisory committees for discussion and input.

DISCUSSION

The Study serves as the next step toward implementing the SLV Schools Access Project identified in the SLV Plan. The RTC, in collaboration with multidisciplinary partner agencies and stakeholders (Caltrans, County, SLVUSD, Metro), collaborated to carry out thorough analysis and public engagement for the Study as an addendum to the SLV Plan.
The Study proposes multimodal transportation recommendations on Highway 9 between Graham Hill Road and Glen Arbor Road, and site access and circulation improvements at San Lorenzo Valley High School, Middle School, and Elementary School (SLV Schools Complex). The draft Study is expected to be ready for review before the end of the month and staff is convening a workgroup composed of interested members from RTC advisory committees to review, provide input, and recommend approval of the document, with a meeting of that group expected to be held May 2, 3 or 4th.

SUMMARY

The draft San Lorenzo Valley (SLV) Schools Complex Circulation and Access Study will be ready for review soon and staff recommends interested ITAC members participate in a workgroup to review and provide input on the draft study.
Federal Transportation Funding: Fiscal Year 2023 Discretionary Grant Preparation Checklist for Prospective Applicants

Over $32 billion is available to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) in new Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Authority to provide competitive grant funding to local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, transit agencies, Tribal governments, U.S. Territories, and state departments of transportation. Some grant programs created in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) are also available to non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and private businesses that are doing work to advance community infrastructure projects, improve safety and economic development, or help to transition to a clean energy and more climate resilient future.

This checklist was created by DOT to help local governments prepare for the year ahead and chart a strategic pathway to take advantage of these historic infrastructure investments to build good projects well. Except for any statutes and regulations cited, the contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind prospective applicants or the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

Preparation Tips for FY2023 DOT Grant Application Success

1. **Coordinate Between Agencies and Stakeholders.** Within your local government ensure that finance, procurement, planning, and public works departments are working in alignment to submit grant applications, successfully execute grant agreements and deliver projects. This requires early and continuous coordination between local government and community stakeholders and with regional and state or other third party implementation partners to ensure that projects are set up for success. For information on successful proactive engagement activities, please review the Department’s *Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making.*

2. **Get Familiar with the DOT Calendar of Funding Opportunities** to see when different programs will be open and closed for applications.
   - Review NOFOs carefully. Each Program’s Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) typically provides additional resources, webinars, and frequently asked questions specific to that program to provide information on program eligibility, grant application requirements, and other useful information. The program page may also contain information on past grant recipients to help better understand the types of projects and applications selected for funding in previous years.
   - Prioritize and align projects and applications. It may not serve your community well to submit multiple applications for a single notice of funding opportunity such that you are competing against yourself. Think about which projects may be the readiest for funding, which may be the highest priority based on locally-defined needs, or which may be the best fit for federal funding versus other types of local or state funding.
   - Check out the ROUTES Applicant Toolkit for Competitive Funding Programs at USDOT. Created for rural applicants, this toolkit is useful to any organization unfamiliar with DOT grant process.

3. **Budget For and Secure Your Non-Federal Match**
   - In preparing and finalizing city or agency budgets, think about the needs that may arise during the coming year. Sponsors should develop a budget that demonstrates how the budget will be funded in full. As a condition for receiving funding, most DOT programs require a 10% or 20% non-federal match.

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1. [https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law](https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law)
2. [https://www.transportation.gov/public-involvement](https://www.transportation.gov/public-involvement)
3. [https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/key-notices-funding-opportunity](https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/key-notices-funding-opportunity)
4. [https://www.transportation.gov/rural/grants/toolkit](https://www.transportation.gov/rural/grants/toolkit)
5. [https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/understanding-non-federal-match-requirements](https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/understanding-non-federal-match-requirements)
Where may this match funding come from? What processes and timing are needed to confirm financial commitments as part of grant applications or if selected for a grant award? What steps can be taken in advance to ensure this process goes smoothly and your community doesn’t miss out on the chance to apply or find itself unable to finalize a grant award? These are questions that cities or agencies should consider when trying to secure a non-federal match.

- The DOT Navigator provides additional information to help understand non-federal match requirements\(^6\) and those programs that provide match flexibility:
  - Justice 40 non-federal match flexibility
  - Tribal government cost share flexibility
  - Rural cost share analysis

- Look at program specific NOFOs. Each Program’s NOFO describes its specific match requirements, including the percentage required, what can be considered as non-federal match, and if there are any waivers. If the FY2023 NOFO is not yet out for the program you may be interested in applying to, check the previous year’s NOFO as it is likely to be unchanged for the coming year since Congress often dictates these requirements.

- Consider strategies that may make communities in your region more competitive for funding. Some metropolitan areas, for instance, have begun to create pooled funding sources that localities can tap when a city applies for a project that supports broader regional goals.

4. **Ensure Your Project is on the TIP/STIP**

- Federally-funded transportation projects are typically included in metropolitan\(^7\) and/or statewide transportation improvement programs\(^8\) (TIPs/STIPs). TIPs/STIPs usually cover a four-year period of upcoming projects and are developed by the MPO and state DOT, respectively. These also can include planning or engineering studies or other pre-application technical analysis, such as a benefit cost analysis\(^9\) that may be required to prepare a project for construction. If these studies are not included in the TIP/STIP, identify how they may be locally funded so that projects have the required documents to be competitive for federal grants.

- Contact your metropolitan planning organization and state department of transportation\(^10\) to explore how and when your project can be included in the TIP/STIP. This will often entail a TIP/STIP amendment. Even if not a DOT program requirement to access the funds, your project’s inclusion in the TIP/STIP and other comprehensive transportation documents facilitates better outcomes for your community.

5. **Get Ready to Apply For and to Administer Federal Funding\(^11\)**

- Ensure that your organization is registered with Grants.gov\(^12\) and the System for Award Management (SAM) and has an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. Is the information provided to Sam.gov current? If there have been personnel changes in your agency, be sure that staff contact, phone number, and email are up to date. Start registration process early, as the SAM.gov process can take many weeks.

- If you receive funding, be familiar with the Federal 2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements\(^13\) that govern all DOT awards. This includes specifics for reporting, tracking and monitoring financial systems and grant activities that differ from state or local requirements.

- Be prepared for additional requirements. DOT grants are generally reimbursable funding, so plan and budget accordingly. Each program may have additional restrictions on eligible and allowable costs and

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\(^6\) [https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/understanding-non-federal-match-requirements](https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/understanding-non-federal-match-requirements)


\(^9\) [https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/what-is-a-benefit-cost-analysis](https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/what-is-a-benefit-cost-analysis)

\(^10\) [https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/transportation-contacts-near-you](https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/transportation-contacts-near-you)

\(^11\) [https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/federal-funding-right-fit-my-organization](https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/federal-funding-right-fit-my-organization)

\(^12\) [https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/how-navigate-grantsgov-submit-applications](https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/how-navigate-grantsgov-submit-applications)

activities. Lobbying is not an allowable cost, nor can DOT funds typically be used as a non-Federal match for other programs.

- Involve small and disadvantaged business enterprises \(^{14}\) in projects and applications. Are there opportunities to strengthen the participation of these types of firms in your grant application to help build community wealth? Are you familiar with your state’s DBE resources? \(^{15}\) Do these types of businesses need additional support within your community to have the capacity necessary to administer or receive federal funding, i.e., they are also subject to 2 CFR 200?

6. **Know your Justice 40 designated Census Tracts** \(^{16}\) as many discretionary grant programs give additional consideration to projects that benefit J40 census tracts. Find out which areas in your community qualify as J40 census tracts \(^{17}\) according to federal disadvantaged community tools, and which of the 39 DOT J40 covered programs \(^{18}\) may be especially beneficial to your community.

7. **Prepare Your Capital Project’s Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA)**
   - The DOT Navigator provides guidance on how to conduct BCAs \(^{19}\), and a list of the DOT capital grant programs for which they are required. The BCA is a systematic process for identifying, quantifying, and comparing expected benefits and costs of a capital investment. Are there BCAs you should be funding and executing in 2023 to prepare a construction project for a 2024 application?

8. **Budget for Meaningful Public Involvement** \(^{20}\)
   - DOT is looking for grant proposals informed by meaningful public involvement, in addition to a commitment to meaningful public involvement in the project delivery phase. DOT grant funds can be used to support a range of public involvement activities to ensure that the community is fully represented in the planning and project delivery process. DOT created this FAQ \(^{21}\) to provide more information about eligible and allowable activities that can be worked into grant applications.

9. **Build a Strong Workforce Development and Labor Plan**
   - Establish a strong workforce development and labor plan, and then highlight these efforts in your grant applications. Most DOT discretionary grants include selection criteria associated with creating good jobs and expanding workforce opportunities. DOT created a workforce and labor plan checklist \(^{22}\) that provides a number of suggestions for how to strengthen these provisions.

10. **Understand NEPA and Other Federal Requirements as you Consider Whether to Seek Funding**
   - DOT grant recipients must comply with a number of important civil rights and labor requirements, such as Title VI, the Americans with Disabilities Act and for capital projects Davis Bacon and Buy America are especially important federal provisions that may have different standards than state or local wage or procurement requirements.
   - Any transportation project that receives federal funding must comply with the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 (NEPA). \(^{23}\) This process involves several environmental planning policies and regulations that must be followed before the purchase of any right of way or other real estate.

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\(^{14}\) [https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/disadvantaged-business-enterprise/dbe-program-overview](https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/disadvantaged-business-enterprise/dbe-program-overview)

\(^{15}\) [https://www.transportation.gov/DBE%20State%20Websites](https://www.transportation.gov/DBE%20State%20Websites)

\(^{16}\) [https://www.transportation.gov/equity-Justice40](https://www.transportation.gov/equity-Justice40)


\(^{18}\) [https://www.transportation.gov/equity-Justice40](https://www.transportation.gov/equity-Justice40)

\(^{19}\) [https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/what-is-a-benefit-cost-analysis](https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/what-is-a-benefit-cost-analysis)


\(^{23}\) [https://www.transportation.gov/PermittingImprovementCenter](https://www.transportation.gov/PermittingImprovementCenter)
o Reach out to DOT staff in regional or division offices, if needed.\(^{24}\) For highway projects, contact your state department of transportation, and for transit projects, your Federal Transit Administration's Regional Office, as they are important NEPA implementation partners and may be able to advise on whether the project should be state sponsored.

o Visit the DOT Navigator for NEPA technical resources such as:
  - Environmental Review Toolkit
  - Real Estate Acquisition Guide for Local Public Agencies
    https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/real_estate/local_public_agencies/lpa_guide/
  - Federal-aid Essentials for Local Public Agencies: Right-of-Way
    https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/federal-aidessentials/catmod.cfm?category=rightofw

\(^{24}\) https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/transportation-contacts-near-you