

2011 SOLICITATION

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
PLANNING GRANT AND INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

FUNDED BY

**THE SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL,
RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND ACT OF 2006**

PROPOSITION 84, CHAPTER 9

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
with GUIDELINES
November 2011**

Applications Due February 15, 2012, by 5p.m.

Please direct questions to:

Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and Incentive Program

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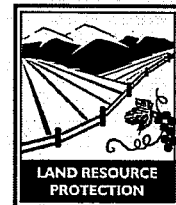


TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
I	Introduction	1
II	Purpose and Goal	2
III	Focusing Funds	2
IV	Threshold Requirements	4
V	Program Objectives	5
VI	Priority Considerations	5
VII	Evaluation/ Scoring Criteria	6
VIII	Proposal Summary	7
IX	Proposal Description (Evaluation Questions)	7
X	Examples of Eligible Proposals	10
XI	Examples of Ineligible Proposals	10
XII	Planning Grant Administration	11
Appendices		
	A. Glossary	13
	B. Application Checklist: What to Include	18
	C. Online Application Tool: FFAST	19
	D. Sample Initial Budget Proposal	29
	E. Sample Initial Work Plan	30
	F. Sample Indicators and Outcome	31
	G. Required Resolution Language	32
	H. Proposition 84, Chapter 9	34
	I. SB 732	35
	J. AB 32 Goals for Local Government	39
	K. Sea Level Rise Guidance	40
	L. State Planning Priorities	41
	M. Healthy Communities	42
	N. Regional or State Adopted Plans	43
	O. Online Resources	45

I. Introduction – Round Two

Grants - The Strategic Growth Council requests submittal of Proposals for the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and Incentive Program. Cities, counties, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs), Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), Councils of Governments (COGs), or combination thereof, are eligible to apply. It is anticipated that proposals funded under this solicitation will be not less than \$100,000 nor greater than \$1,000,000 each. The Council may consider higher grant awards for a joint proposal: an application submitted by one lead applicant with one or more eligible partner entities, coordinated by planning activities with defined shared outcomes. Partial funding may be considered to fully maximize grant awards.

Funding - The Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and Incentive Program is funded by Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006. It added Division 43 to the Public Resources Code, Chapter 9, Sustainable Communities and Climate Change Reduction Section 75065(a), authorizing the Legislature to appropriate \$90 million for planning grants and planning incentives that reduce energy consumption, conserve water, improve air and water quality, and provide other community benefits (*see Appendix H*).

Statutes - SB 732 Steinberg, (Chapter 13, Statutes of 2008) established the Strategic Growth Council (Council). The Council is composed of agency secretaries from the Business Transportation and Housing Agency, California Health and Human Services Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, the California Natural Resources Agency, the Director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and a public member, appointed by the Governor (*see Appendix I*). Under Section 75127 and 75128 of SB 732, Council shall do all of the following: (a) identify and review activities and funding programs of member state agencies that may be coordinated to improve air and water quality, improve natural resource protection, meet the goals of the California Global Warming Solution Act of 2006, encourage sustainable land use planning, and revitalize urban and community centers in a sustainable manner; (b) recommend policies and investment strategies and priorities to the Governor, the Legislature, and to appropriate state agencies to encourage the development of sustainable communities, such as those communities that promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment and promote public health and safety, and is consistent with subdivision (a) and (c) of Section 75065; (c) provide, fund, and distribute data and information to local governments and regional agencies that will assist in developing and planning sustainable communities; and (d) manage and award grants and loans to support the planning and development of sustainable communities.

Online Application – Round two of the Planning Grant and Incentive Program will be using the FAAST online application tool (*see Appendix C*). FAAST has been developed by the State Water Resources Control Board to provide an efficient means for project proponents to apply for state managed loan and grant programs.

II. Purpose and Goal

As mandated by Proposition 84 of 2006, this grant program implements the vision of the People of California to foster the development of sustainable communities throughout California. It is designed to help local governments meet the challenges of adopting land use plans and integrating strategies in order to transform communities and create long term prosperity. Sustainable communities shall promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment and promote healthy, safe communities.

The primary goal of this grant program is to develop and implement plans that reduce greenhouse gas emissions consistent with AB 32 and SB 375, and achieve the following Program Objectives:

- **Improve air and water quality**
- **Promote public health**
- **Promote equity**
- **Increase housing affordability**
- **Promote infill and compact development**
- **Revitalize urban and community centers**
- **Protect natural resources and agricultural lands**
- **Reduce automobile usage and fuel consumption**
- **Improve infrastructure systems**
- **Promote water conservation**
- **Promote energy efficiency and conservation**
- **Strengthen the economy**

These objectives are consistent with the State Planning Priorities, as defined by Government Code 65041.1 as well as Strategic Growth Council objectives.

III. Focusing Funds

Applications will generally be limited to a maximum of \$1 million and a minimum of \$100,000 per proposal. Partial funding may be considered to fully maximize grant awards. The Council may consider higher grant awards for a joint proposal (*see Glossary*) that is cooperative, scale-appropriate, and reflects the interdependence of environmental, economic, community health, and other requirements.

The Council shall fund proposals that fall within the following three focus areas:

- **Focus Area #1: Local Sustainable Planning**
- **Focus Area #2: Regional SB 375 Plus**
- **Focus Area #3: Regional Planning Activities with Multiple Partners**

The goal is to focus a minimum of 25% of funds in Focus Area #1, a minimum of 25% in Focus Area #2, and a minimum of 10% in Focus Area #3. No less than 20% of all Round 2 program funds will be dedicated to targeted planning efforts that address the direct challenges of economically disadvantaged communities. An applicant may submit two applications to Focus Area #1 provided that at least one of the applications proposes to address the needs of an economically disadvantaged community.

Focus Area # 1: Local Sustainable Planning

Eligible Applicants: Cities and Counties

Intent: Support the development and implementation of effective and/or innovative local plans that support the State's AB 32 GHG emission reduction targets and implement SB 375, while creating sustainable communities.

Examples of Eligible Proposals: (including, but not limited to)

- Specific Plans/Infill Plans/Zoning Ordinances
- Local Coastal Plan Updates
- Climate Action Plans (consistent with State CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5(b))
- Targeted General Plan Updates or Elements
- Community Basic Infrastructure (water and wastewater) Plans
- Other implementation instruments and plans needed for successfully meeting AB 32 greenhouse gas emissions reduction and implement SB 375, while improving community-wide sustainability

Collaboration Requirement: Provide a detailed explanation regarding how the Proposal is consistent with its region's goals, including implementing SB 375. A letter from the regional entity concurring with the explanation may be one way to satisfy this collaboration requirement.

Economically Disadvantaged Communities: At least twenty percent (20%) of each round of funding shall be awarded to Focus Area #1 projects that target economically disadvantaged communities (EDC). See the Glossary for EDC definition. Projects seeking EDC status must show that the planning to be funded would be targeted primarily or substantially within the geographic boundaries of an EDC. An EDC may be a community or neighborhood within a city or county.

Focus Area # 2: Regional SB 375 Plus

Eligible Applicants: MPOs

Intent: Fund MPOs to collaborate with local governments to implement SB 375 and/or AB 32 at the city or county level, within the context of the three E's of sustainable communities: healthy environment, economy, and equitable access to regional resources and amenities. The outcome of these efforts should support successful Sustainable Community Strategies that help meet the regional targets established by the Air Resources Board (*see Appendix O for links to additional information*).

Examples of Eligible Proposals: (including, but not limited to)

- Blueprint Plans
- Multi-Jurisdictional Corridor Plans
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plans
- Targeted General Plan Updates
- Specific Plans or other planning processes
- Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS)
- Alternative Planning Strategies (APS)
- Natural Communities Conservation Plans (NCCP)
- Regional Greenprint Plans
- Local Coastal Plan Updates

Collaboration Requirement: Submit a joint work plan between local governments and MPOs and letters of intent to participate in proposed activities from local government partners.

Focus Area # 3: Regional Planning Activities with Multiple Partners

Eligible Applicants: Cities, Counties, RTPAs, JPAs and COGs.

Intent: Support collaboration between cities and/or counties, JPAs, COGs or RTPAs to work with local governments to develop or implement regional plans that meet the intent of SB 732.

Proposal Examples: (including, but not limited to)

- County-Wide Climate Action Plans
- Local Coastal Plan Updates
- Regional Cap and Trade Plans or offset programs
- Rural Blueprint Plans or plans that voluntarily implements SB 375.
- Interregional Plans

Collaboration Requirement: Submit a joint work plan by partners and letters of intent to participate in proposed activities from all partners.

IV. Threshold Requirements

Proposals must meet the threshold requirements below. Proposals that fail to meet the following criteria will be considered ineligible for funding. This shall be at the sole discretion of the State.

1. Be consistent with (*see Glossary*) the State's Planning Priorities, in summary below, and identified in Section 65041.1 of the Government Code (*Appendix N*):
 - Promote infill development and invest in existing communities
 - Protect, preserve and enhance environmental and agricultural lands and natural and recreational resources
 - Encourage location- and resource-efficient new development
2. Reduce, on as permanent a basis that is feasible, greenhouse gas emissions consistent with:
 - California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Division 25.5 (commencing with Section 38500) of the Health and Safety Code) (*see Appendix J*)
 - Any applicable regional plan (*see Glossary*)
3. Meet the Collaboration Requirements of the focus area applicable to the Proposal (*See Section III*). Include all required documents in the application package.
4. Plan for Sea Level Rise, where appropriate, consistent with Ocean Protection Council Resolution on Sea Level Rise and related guidance (*see Appendix K*).

V. Program Objectives

Proposals must address the objectives listed below. Proposal should describe those objectives to be addressed with grant funds, as well as those being addressed by other means, and identify anticipated indicators that will be incorporated into the Proposal to measure the success of the objective. The final report must quantify the projected outcomes (*see Glossary*), to the extent feasible.

- **Improve air and water quality**
- **Promote public health**
- **Promote equity**
- **Increase housing affordability**
- **Promote infill and compact development**
- **Revitalize urban and community centers**
- **Protect natural resources and agricultural lands**
- **Reduce automobile usage and fuel consumption**
- **Improve infrastructure systems**
- **Promote water conservation**
- **Promote energy efficiency and conservation**
- **Strengthen the economy**

VI. Priority Considerations

Consistent with the goal of the program, the following areas have been identified as priorities in awarding grants. In evaluating proposals, the State may also consider factors including, but not limited to, geographic distribution of bond funds, environmental justice, and partial funding.

- Proposal demonstrates ongoing collaboration with state, regional and local, public and private stakeholders and community involvement;
- Proposal addresses climate change impacts;
- Proposal demonstrates strategies or outcomes that can serve as best practices for communities across the state;
- Proposal is leveraged with additional resources (in-kind or funds); and
- Proposal promotes equity and serves an economically disadvantaged community (*see Glossary*).

VII. Evaluation/ Scoring Criteria

All information submitted in the application package provides the grant review committee a basis for evaluation and should demonstrate how effectively the Proposal meets Threshold Requirements, the Program Goal and Objectives and Priority Considerations. Proposals will first be reviewed for completeness and eligibility. If judged complete and eligible, the proposals will be scored and ranked by a scoring committee whose members represent the breadth of the Strategic Growth Council. Eligible proposals receiving between sixty-five (65) and one hundred (100) points shall be considered for funding. Proposals will be scored on the following areas.

SCORING	
Program Objectives	0 - 60
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scope and number of objectives addressed in the Proposal; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve air and water quality ➤ Promote public health ➤ Promote equity ➤ Increase housing affordability ➤ Promote infill and compact development ➤ Revitalize urban and community centers ➤ Protect natural resources and agricultural lands ➤ Reduce automobile usage and fuel consumption ➤ Improve infrastructure systems ➤ Promote water conservation ➤ Promote energy efficiency and conservation ➤ Strengthen the economy ➤ Indicators identified to measure the success of the objectives ➤ Responses provided and supporting documents ➤ Proposal meets the intent of the applicable focus area 	
Priority Considerations	0-28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proposal demonstrates ongoing collaboration with state, regional and local, public and private stakeholders and community involvement ➤ Proposal addresses climate change impacts ➤ Proposal demonstrates strategies or outcomes that can serve as best practices ➤ Proposal is leveraged with additional resources ➤ Proposal serves an economically disadvantaged community ➤ Severely economically disadvantaged community (add 3 for 8 total EDC) 	5 5 5 5 5 3
Organizational Capacity	0-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organization demonstrates the ability to complete the Proposal within the schedule and budget ➤ Identify in the work plan how the Proposal will be implemented, including zoning updates if applicable 	
Total Available Points 100	

VIII. Proposal Summary Statement

Prepare a proposal summary statement for attachment to the online application. The Proposal Summary Statement should be **no longer than one full page, and saved as a PDF file**. The summary should describe:

- The need for the Proposal; and
- How the Proposal achieves the intent of the applicable focus area.

IX. Proposal Description (Evaluation Questions)

(Tips for using online application) The application uses an online application tool (FAAST) *(see Appendix C)*. You will be prompted to type information into text boxes, select choices from preset lists, and submit attachments (upload). It may be helpful to prepare answers in advance, in an unformatted Word document, in order to cut and paste information into the online application. You can save work-in-progress at any point, and return to your application at another time. (Be sure to save your work often!)

- Use only **basic formatting**. Extra symbols or layout designs can interfere with completion of the online application.

The questions below are designed to solicit specific facts regarding how the Proposed Project addresses the Threshold Eligibility Requirements, Program Objectives and Priority Considerations. Use these questions to prepare your draft proposal prior to entry into the online application.

Step 1: Threshold Requirements

Clearly label and address all of the following points:

1. Describe how the Proposal is consistent with the State's Planning Priorities, Section 65041.1 of the Government Code.
 - a. Promote infill development and invest in existing communities;
 - b. Protect, preserve and enhance environmental and agricultural lands, and natural and recreational resources; and
 - c. Encourage location- and resource-efficient development
2. Describe *(and include in work plan)* how the Proposal will reduce, on as permanent a basis that is feasible, greenhouse gas emissions consistent with:
 - a. California's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006
 - i. Identify how the Proposal will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
 - ii. Identify the indicators that will be used to measure whether the Proposal will meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets or requirements.
 - b. Any applicable regional plan
 - i. Cite any applicable regional plan(s).
 - ii. Describe how your Proposal will be consistent with the greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies in the applicable regional plan(s).

3. Meet the Collaboration Requirements of the focus area applicable to the Proposal.
(See Section III, Focusing Funds, for the Collaboration Requirements applicable to the Proposal.)
4. Plan for Sea Level Rise, where appropriate, consistent with Ocean Protection Council Resolution on Sea Level Rise and related guidance.

Step 2: Program Objectives

Identify and describe the Program Objectives projected to be achieved by the Proposal. The online application provides further guidance on questions to be addressed in the Proposal Description. The Proposal must identify anticipated indicators (*see Glossary*) that will evaluate the overall success of achieving each Program Objective that is projected to be achieved. The Program Objectives are as follows:

- Improve air and water quality;
- Promote public health;
- Promote equity;
- Increase housing affordability;
- Promote infill and compact development;
- Revitalize urban and community centers;
- Protect natural resources and agricultural lands;
- Reduce automobile usage and fuel consumption;
- Improve infrastructure systems;
- Promote water conservation;
- Promote energy efficiency and conservation; and
- Strengthen the economy.

Step 3: Priority Considerations

Address the following points, if applicable to the Proposal:

1. Proposal demonstrates ongoing collaboration with state, regional and local, public and private stakeholders and community involvement (*include in work plan*).
 - a. Describe tasks undertaken by all entities involved in the work plan.
 - b. Describe how other entities will be engaged in the development and/or implementation of the Proposal (e.g., local governments, state entities, designated Catalyst Projects, COGs, MPOs, transit agencies, health agencies, air districts, local businesses, landowners, general public, environmental groups, low income households and/or groups that represent them, etc).
 - c. Describe how the community will be engaged in the planning process.
2. Proposal addresses climate change impacts.
 - a. Identify the potential climate change impacts on the population, or human or natural areas, or systems most vulnerable to those impacts within the planning area.
 - b. How does the Proposal improve adaptation to the impacts for these populations, human or natural areas, or systems?

3. Proposal demonstrates strategies or outcomes that can serve as best practices for communities across the state. *Note: proposals funded by the grant will be posted on the Strategic Growth Council website.*
 - a. Does the Proposal include tools or processes that could easily be accessed and used by other government agencies to develop plans or strategies for sustainable communities?
 - b. How will your agency promote and share the Proposal's information, tools or processes?
4. Proposal is leveraged with additional resources, in-kind or funds. *Identify in Budget (Appendix D).*
 - a. Identify funding sources and amount already committed to the Proposal and expected timing of funds. Detail whether funds are in the form of cash contributions, in-kind services, volunteer effort, donated labor or materials, technical expertise, etc.
 - b. Identify potential future funding sources and the amount expected to be committed to the Proposal. Detail whether funds are in the form of cash contributions, in-kind services, volunteer effort, donated labor or materials, technical expertise, etc.
5. Proposal serves an economically disadvantaged community.
 - a. Describe the unique challenges faced by the economically disadvantaged community, or severely economically disadvantaged community (*see Glossary*), that this proposal seeks to serve.
 - b. How will this Proposal specifically work to address these challenges and improve the quality of life for residents in the targeted community (*see Glossary*)?
 - c. Discuss how the economically disadvantaged community has been and will continue to be engaged and participatory in the development of the Proposal.

Step 4: Organizational Capacity

Address the following points:

1. What is your organization's experience in completing this type of proposal or similar proposals? Is the expertise needed for the successful development of the Proposal available within the organization? If not, how do you plan to acquire it?
2. Do you have active partners that will help develop the Proposal? Who? How will they help?
3. How will the Proposal be kept on schedule and within budget?
4. If the Proposal goes over budget, explain your contingency plan to cover the cost.
5. Identify how the Proposal will be implemented, including zoning updates if applicable. This will appear in your workplan, as well as a more detailed response in the online application questionnaire.

X. Eligible Proposals

Eligible proposals include, but are not limited to, the development, update, adoption and/or implementation of a:

- Targeted General Plan Updates or Elements that incorporate the program goal and objectives throughout the General Plan or in a General Plan element;
- Specific Plans/Infill Plans/Zoning Ordinances;
- Local Coastal Plan Updates
- Climate Action Plans (consistent with State CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5(b));
- Regional Plans;
- County-wide Climate Action Plans;
- Regional Cap and Trade Plans or offset programs;
- Community Infrastructure Plans;
- Rural Blueprints plans or plans that voluntarily implement SB 375;
- Interregional Plans;
- Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS);
- Alternative Planning Strategies (APS);
- Natural Communities Conservation Plans (NCCP); or
- Regional Greenprint Plans.

XI. Ineligible Proposals

Ineligible Proposals that will not be funded under this program include, but are not limited to, proposals that:

- Do not meet the threshold requirements
- Do not contain adequate documentation and applicable materials
- Do not include objective(s) and indicator(s)
- Do not meet a minimum of 65 points
- Are not received by the 2011/12 application deadline, 5PM, February 15, 2012
- Request funding for any part of the CEQA process
- Request funding for the same proposal under another focus area
- Request funding for activities already funded by any other grant program