



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

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2024 IDEA TSP Technical Assistance Program Guidelines

IDEA TSP Program Overview

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) invites eligible Bay Area public agencies to submit applications for consideration under a regional initiative called Innovative Deployments to Enhance Arterials: Transit Signal Priority (IDEA TSP).

The Bay Area has over 3,500 miles of arterials, many of which carry heavy traffic and experience significant congestion during the weekday peak periods. The IDEA TSP Program focuses on providing transit signal priority on these arterials to make transit faster and more reliable. TSP on arterials improves transit travel time and reliability while minimizing impacts to general traffic, by modifying the signal timing to favor transit only when a transit vehicle is present. By reducing red light delay for transit vehicles, TSP will help buses and light rail vehicles move more quickly, predictably, and reliably.

When applied across a network of arterials, TSP can lead to:

- shorter transit travel times
- more competitive transit service that attracts new riders,
- more reliable travel times allowing for seamless transfers
- lower operating costs and more revenue for transit agencies.
- fewer bus-automobile conflicts, improving safety
- faster response times for emergency vehicles, when combined with emergency vehicle preemption.

When transit is given priority on our roadways, buses are enabled to transport more people to destinations in a less stressful, less polluting, and less costly manner than private vehicles. Making buses faster and more reliable also helps to address some of the inequities embedded in the current transportation system.

2024 IDEA TSP Call for Technical Assistance

The 2024 IDEA TSP Call for Technical Assistance will provide technical assistance through consultant services in two categories:

- **Planning and Design to Prepare for Implementation:** Support developing TSP projects through planning and design to create “shovel-ready” projects that could compete for capital funding grants.
- **Systems Engineering and Integration:** Support in the design, systems engineering and integration of a cloud-based TSP system and/or the communications network required to support traffic signals with transit signal priority.

The 2024 IDEA TSP program has approximately \$2 million in federal funds available for technical assistance, but additional funding may be allocated depending on the number of applications received.

This Call for Technical Assistance aims to further the project-readiness of conceptual Transit Priority Projects by developing them into shovel-ready projects that would be more competitive for capital implementation funding. MTC’s has over \$20 million reserved for near-term capital Transit Priority projects through its BusAID (Bus Accelerated Infrastructure Delivery) and IDEA programs, and anticipates funding opportunities in the future.

Eligible Projects:

Eligible projects in the IDEA Technical Assistance Program must further the development or implementation of a transit signal priority project on an Arterial as defined in the [Caltrans Functional Classification System](#)¹. Potential projects can apply for technical assistance with planning and engineering services, and/or with systems engineering and integration. Some example project types by category include:

¹. For more information about the Caltrans Functional Classification System go to <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/research-innovation-system-information/office-of-highway-system-information-performance/functional-classification>. If you are uncertain of a roadway classification, refer to the California Road System (CRS) maps linked on that webpage. Other Principal Arterial (shown in red) or Minor Arterial (shown in green) are eligible arterials.

Project Category	Examples Project Types
<p>1) Planning and Engineering Services:</p> <p>to identify and design projects aimed at improving the speed and reliability of public transit operations on arterials through TSP, dedicated transit phases, signal timing optimization for transit, or other signal-related transit priority measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an implementation plan and conceptual engineering designs to implement new TSP system or upgrade existing TSP on corridors or route network. May include coordination and partnership with other transit agencies or local jurisdictions to promote system interoperability. • Develop corridor TSP engineering plans, specifications and estimates to make a TSP project “shovel-ready”. Could include transit stop optimization (e.g. moving nearside stops to the farside at signals that will receive TSP) • Perform corridor or hotspot needs assessment at locations that have significant transit red-light delay and develop an improvement plan, including transit data collection recommendations and analyzing impacts of traffic congestion on transit operations, • Upgrade TSP (e.g. convert existing infrared TSP to GPS) • Evaluate existing TSP operations and develop plan to optimize TSP and identify additional improvements • Develop optimized signal splits and offsets for transit to provide passive or active TSP
<p>2) Systems Engineering & Integration</p> <p>for ITS planning (for new TSP or signal control systems), and consulting services supporting testing and implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System development and integration of a cloud-based TSP system on a specific corridor or broader network • Evaluation of existing ITS infrastructure to identify needs and opportunities to improve TSP. May include coordination and partnership with other transit agencies or local jurisdictions to promote system interoperability. • Implementation and evaluation of cloud-based TSP versus intersection-based TSP (<i>IDEA TSP Technical Assistance Program grants are limited to consultant services and cannot be used for capital expenses, but the sponsor agency can apply software/hardware/staff time expenses as local match</i>). • Develop and/or design a communications network required to support traffic signals with transit signal priority (e.g. wireless, fiber, cellular).

Projects are encouraged to also implement other signal timing measures as part of the project in consideration of other modes, such as upgrading pedestrian signal timing, adding leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs), installing pedestrian or vehicle actuation, etc.

Projects that will benefit [Equity Priority Communities](#)², or [Priority Development Areas](#)³ will receive funding priority.

Eligible Applicants

Public agencies (cities, counties, and transit agencies) in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area are eligible to apply for technical assistance under IDEA TSP. Project Sponsors are encouraged to partner with other agencies, for example a local jurisdiction with a transit agency, or multiple transit agencies where transit routes overlap. Projects that include multi-jurisdictional partnerships will receive funding priority. Projects sponsored by agencies with a population or monthly ridership under 500,000 will be prioritized.

Project Delivery and Partnership with MTC

The 2024 IDEA TSP program will not provide direct funding to jurisdictions, but rather provide technical assistance to jurisdictions through MTC-led consultant services contracts. MTC will lead the inclusion of the projects in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and pursue a programmatic Authorization to Proceed (E76), to minimize the administrative process for grant recipients in receiving the funds. MTC will also lead the procurement of consultants to provide planning, engineering, and/or systems engineering and integration consultants through its existing Consultant Benches designed for this purpose, with the public agency project sponsor(s) as partners. MTC shall play an active role in delivering all project work by co-managing and providing input on the scope of work and reviewing deliverables. MTC reserves the right to request changes to the scope of work and selectively fund certain project elements. Deviations from this general pattern would be approved by MTC on a case-by-case basis. After Committee approval of grant awards, MTC will begin the procurement process for consulting services.

² A map of Equity Priority Communities (EPCs) can be found here: <https://mtc.ca.gov/EPC>

³ A map of Priority Development Areas (PDAs) can be found here: <http://mtc.ca.gov/pda>

Grant Details and Requirements

- 1) **Funding source:** The IDEA TSP Technical Assistance Grants are funded by One Bay Area Grants Cycle 2 (OBAG 2), and as such are subject to the funding requirements as detailed in Attachment 1.
- 2) **Award Amounts:** Grant awards may be up to \$1,000,000. The minimum grant amount is \$100,000, but may be lowered to \$50,000 for agencies that meet these thresholds (use appropriate metric for the lead agency):
 - Monthly transit ridership under 500,000
 - City population under 500,000, or
 - County population under 1,000,000
- 3) **Local Match:** There is no requirement for cash local match. However, projects are encouraged to provide in-kind match, such as sponsor-purchased hardware (signal controller), software, or staff time.
- 4) **MTC/Sponsor Agreement:** All jurisdictions will be required to sign an agreement (e.g. cooperative agreement, funding agreement, etc.) which will include a scope of waiver of claims and indemnification in favor of MTC.
- 5) **Evaluation:** All systems engineering and integration projects with implementation elements must include before/after evaluation.
- 6) **Complete Streets Checklist:** All projects with a total project cost of \$250,000 must submit a Complete Streets Checklist.

Application and Evaluation Process

All applications for eligible projects received by the due date will be reviewed by an evaluation committee convened by MTC. See [Technical Assistance Portal](#) for project application. MTC reserves the right to reject any incomplete application, i.e., an application that does not include sufficient information that will enable the evaluation committee to adequately score the application based on the criteria described below. Completed applications must be submitted via email to Britt Tanner, IDEA TSP Program Manager, at btanner@bayareametro.gov. Applicants will receive a confirmation email upon submittal.

The following evaluation criteria will be used to score each completed application:

<p>Project Concept (30 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project or project concept is a transit signal priority or related project on a principal or minor arterial (see Caltrans Functional Classification System webpage). While the majority of intersections included in the project scope should be on principal or minor arterials, non-arterial intersections may be included if they are served by the same transit route that runs along the arterial.
<p>Project Impact (25 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to improve transit travel time and reliability (potential time savings) • Potential to provide benefits to a large number of users (transit ridership affected) • Project includes considerations of other users/modes (e.g. pedestrian and bicycle signal timing, emergency vehicle preemption, etc.) • Potential to provide regional or corridor-level benefits • Potential to benefit an Equity Priority Community • Potential to benefit a Priority Development Area
<p>Implementation (30 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to complete project within two years upon receipt of grant award • Commitment of specific and sufficient staff • Demonstrated project management capacity • Demonstration of support from project partners (e.g. transit agencies, roadway operator)
<p>Other Factors (15 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 5 points will be given for in-kind local match over the minimum (1 point for each 4% of project cost) • 5 points will be given to projects that include multi-jurisdictional coordination (e.g. multiple transit agencies, or local jurisdiction and county/state agency, Caltrans, etc) • 5 points will be given to projects sponsored by an agency that has <i>(use metric for the appropriate lead agency)</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly transit ridership under 500,000 • City population under 500,000, or • County population under 1,000,000

IDEA TSP Technical Assistance Timeline

Date*	Activity
June 25, 2024	MTC Issues Call for Projects
July 16 and August 15, 2024	Virtual Workshops for potential applicants
July 18, July 30, August 21	Office hours
September 12, 2024 at 4 pm	Applications Due
November 2024	Projects awarded; OBAG2 funding allocated to awarded projects by MTC Commission
Fall 2024 to Spring 2025	MTC pursues TIP inclusion and Programmatic Authorization to Proceed (E76) from Caltrans
Spring 2025	Projects Initiated (<i>pending Caltrans approval of E76</i>)
Winter 2026 to Summer 2027	Projects Completed (18 to 24 months after initiation)

**Dates subject to change*

Informational Workshops, Office Hours & Staff Contact

MTC will be hosting two virtual workshops to provide prospective applicants with an overview of the IDEA TSP Technical Assistance Program and to answer any questions applicants may have.

<p>Informational Workshop #1 Tuesday, July 16, 2024 10:00 am click here to register</p>	<p>Informational Workshop #2 Thursday, August 15, 2024 2:30 PM Click here to register</p>
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MTC staff will be available for drop in virtual office hours.

- Virtual Office Hours #1: July 18, 1 – 2 PM ([click here to register](#))
- Virtual Office Hours #2: July 30, 2 – 3 PM ([click here to register](#))
- Virtual Office Hours #3: August 21, 9 – 10 AM ([click here to register](#))

For any questions about the grant application requirements or to discuss potential project ideas in advance of submitting an application, please reach out to:

Britt Tanner, IDEA TSP Program Manager
 415.778.4414
btanner@bayareametro.gov

Attachment 1. OBAG Funding Requirements

The IDEA TSP Technical Assistance Grants are funded by One Bay Area Grants Cycle 2 (OBAG 2). Sponsors awarded funds are subject to all applicable requirements detailed in MTC Resolution No. 4202 and associated policies⁴.

By accepting OBAG funds, sponsors commit to deliver the project scope as detailed in the sponsor's grant application. Projects that receive federal funding for preliminary engineering must proceed out of preliminary engineering within 10 years, or may be required to apply for an extension or repay the funds⁵.

Required Documents if selected:

After preliminary selection (anticipated in October), OBAG applicants will be required to complete the following prior to funding award (anticipated in November):

- Air quality improvement calculation inputs
 - Template available at <https://mtc.ca.gov/digital-library/5023742-supplemental-project-inputs-air-quality-improvement-calculations-version-12>
- MTC's Complete Streets Checklist
 - Projects over \$250,000 must complete the Complete Streets checklist. The checklist and additional guidance are available on MTC's Complete Streets webpage at <https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/complete-streets>
 - Projects may be subject to project review by a local Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

⁴ All references and templates (except current USC references) are available on MTC's OBAG 2 website at <https://mtc.ca.gov/funding/federal-funding/federal-highway-administration-grants/one-bay-area-grant-obag-2>. Applicants should refer to MTC Resolution No. 4202 for complete OBAG 2 requirements.

⁵ For additional information see <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/projects/preliminary-engineering-phase-over-10-years>