

Plan
Bay Area
2040

Bay Area Priority Conservation Area Grant Program
2019 Competitive Grants Guidelines and Call for Proposals



Photo: Noah Berger



In cooperation with

ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

The State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), in cooperation with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), is pleased to issue a call for proposals focused on the Bay Area's Priority Conservation Areas.



The SCC is a state agency with a vision of a beautiful, restored, and accessible coast for current and future generations of Californians. The San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy is a program of the SCC focused on protecting regionally-significant lands, restoring habitats for wildlife, providing regional trails, and connecting urban populations to natural areas.

MTC is the transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. In collaboration with ABAG, MTC develops the regional long-range transportation plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy, also known as Plan Bay Area 2040.

ABAG is a council of local governments that works to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among government agencies, and to implement innovative solutions for issues involving land use, housing, climate change, earthquake and disaster resilience, and economic equity.





Photo: Karin Betts

INTRODUCTION

The Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Grant Program funded through the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program, was initiated by MTC in 2013 to provide funding to cities, counties, park districts, utility districts and other agencies and non-profits to acquire, enhance or improve designated PCAs.

PCAs are open spaces that provide agricultural, natural resource, scenic, recreational, public health and/or ecological values and ecosystem functions. These areas are identified through consensus by local jurisdictions and park/open space districts as lands in need of protection due to pressure from urban development or other factors. PCAs are categorized by four designations: Natural Landscapes, Agricultural Lands, Urban Greening, and Regional Recreation.

In November 2016, MTC set aside \$16.4 million within the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG 2) framework for a second round of grant funding for the PCA Program. Similar to the first round, the OBAG 2 PCA Program is split into two components:

- 1. Peninsula, Southern, and East Bay Counties Program (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties):** This program is administered by the SCC in partnership with the MTC and ABAG, and is the subject of this call for projects. MTC directed \$8.2 million in OBAG 2 PCA Program funds to this regional competitive program, combined with additional funding from SCC, for a total of up to \$10 million available.
- 2. North Bay Program (Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma Counties):** This program is developed by the four North Bay county congestion management agencies to implement locally-identified PCA priority projects. MTC directed \$8.2 million to the OBAG 2 North Bay PCA program, which is managed separately from this call for projects.

Plan Bay Area 2040

The PCA Program is an important component of Plan Bay Area 2040, the integrated long-range transportation and land-use plan for the San Francisco Bay Area. Plan Bay Area 2040 includes the Bay Area's Regional Transportation Plan, which MTC updates every four years, and ABAG's demographic and economic forecast, which is updated every two years.

Plan Bay Area 2040's core strategy is to focus growth in existing communities along the existing transportation network. This strategy provides the best "bang for the buck" in achieving key regional economic, environmental and equity goals: it builds upon existing community characteristics, efficiently leverages existing infrastructure and mitigates impacts on areas with less development. Key to implementing the focused growth strategy are Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) which are identified, recommended, and approved by local governments.

Priority Development Areas (PDAs)

Plan Bay Area 2040 focuses growth and development in nearly 200 PDAs along the region's core transit network. These existing neighborhoods are served by public transit and have been identified as appropriate for additional compact development.

Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs)

The Plan also helps preserve over 160 regionally significant open spaces which have broad consensus for long-term protection but which face nearer-term development pressures.

PCAs and PDAs complement one another

By promoting compact development in established communities with high-quality transportation access, there is less development pressure on the region's vast and varied open spaces and agricultural lands.

ABAG manages the designation process for new PDAs and PCAs.



Photo: Karl Nielsen



Photo: Karl Nielsen



Photo: Courtesy of the Ridge Trail

Maps of PCA locations and designations are available at:

[Priority Conservation Area Maps](#)



Photo: Public Domain

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Available Funds

MTC has provided \$8.2 million in local and federal funds for this program.¹ In addition, SCC will contribute up to \$1.8 million in state resource bond funds to augment the program, for a total of \$10 million available. Grants may range from \$100,000 to \$1 million. Grant requests greater than \$1 million will be considered on a case-by-case basis, for projects of extraordinary regional significance.

Geographic Scope

Projects must be located in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, or Santa Clara. Multi-county projects are allowed and encouraged.

Eligible Applicants

Local governments (cities, towns, and counties), congestion management agencies, tribes, water/utility districts, resource conservation districts, park and/or open space districts, land trusts and other land/resource protection nonprofit organizations are invited to apply.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate and partner with other entities on project applications.

Eligible Projects

Projects must consist of one or more of the following activities within, or connected to, an existing PCA:

- 1. Protection or Enhancement of Natural Resources, Open Space, or Agricultural Lands:** Acquisitions or easements of natural landscapes, habitats and ecosystems, agricultural lands, parks and open space and natural resources. Enhancements for parks and open space, staging areas, environmental facilities, or natural resources such as listed species, identified priority habitat, wildlife corridors, watersheds, or agricultural soils of importance. Land acquisition projects must involve willing sellers.

1. Up to \$8.2 million in local funds are available; however, federal transportation funds may be awarded to projects that are eligible and well-suited to receive federal transportation funding – for example, the construction of a bike/pedestrian trail.

2. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities: Pedestrian and bicycle trails, on-road bicycle facilities, sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, pedestrian and bicycle bridges, traffic calming, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, improvements to trails to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, and conversion and use of abandoned rail corridors for pedestrians and bicyclists.

3. Urban Greening: Protection or enhancement of potential or existing green spaces in urban areas to increase habitat connectivity, improve community health, capture carbon emissions, and address stormwater.

4. Planning activities: Planning associated with the program goals: natural resource protection or enhancement, public access to open space and parklands, support for the region's agricultural economy, and provision or enhancement of urban parks and green spaces.

5. Visual Enhancements: Construction of turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas.

Screening and Evaluation Criteria

Proposed projects must meet the following criteria and will be ranked on how well they meet these criteria:

- **PCA Designation:** The project must be within, or connect to, an existing PCA. Maps of existing PCAs are available at: [Priority Conservation Area Maps](#).
- **Regional Significance:** Projects should serve a greater-than-local need. Indicators of regional significance include a project's consistency with and contribution to existing regional habitat, agricultural or open space plans (such as the Conservation Lands Network at [bayarealands.org](#)), countywide plans, bicycle/pedestrian plans, or ABAG's PCA designations.
- **Open Space Protection:** If the project does not include acquisition or easements, the project should link to, or be located in, an area protected from development by policy (e.g. zoning or urban growth boundaries) or by public land ownership. Land acquisition or easement projects for purposes of open space protection are permitted in areas without open space protection in place.



Photo: Paolo Vescia



Photo: Karl Kroeber

- **Match:** There is a 2:1 minimum match requirement for PCA funds, or a 66.6% match. Matching funds can be from any non-PCA source, including federal funds, but must be applicable to the current scope proposed, and not from previous work. Applicants are encouraged to have the full match secured or pending when submitting a letter of interest; the full match must be secured by the time the grant is awarded. Match can include staff time spent on the project. Prior grant awards on fully funded project elements cannot count toward the match.
- **Program Goals:** Projects need to meet one or more of the program goals:
 - Protect or enhance critical habitats, ecosystems, watersheds, and resource areas as defined in California Government Code Section 65080.01
 - Provide or enhance bicycle and pedestrian access to regional parks, trails, open spaces and recreation areas. Notable examples are the San Francisco Bay Trail and Bay Area Ridge Trail systems.
 - Protect farmland, grazing lands and timberlands or otherwise support the agricultural economy of the region.

- Provide or enhance parks and green spaces in urban areas to improve community health, increase habitat connectivity, capture carbon emissions, and address stormwater.

In addition to the criteria above, the application review committee will consider other factors in ranking projects, including quality of the proposal, cost effectiveness, partnerships, support for the project, capability of the project partners to implement the project, and geographic distribution of grant funds.

- **Fund Type Considerations:** After the evaluation, the application review committee will consider suitability of projects to receive federal, local, and/or state bond funding. Considerations for each fund source are detailed in Appendix A.

Environmental Clearance

Project sponsors are to comply with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Additionally, projects with federal funds must also comply with applicable federal environmental requirements (National Environmental Protection Act, NEPA).

Application Timeline and Review Process

2019

January 7	Issue Call for Proposals
February	Workshops for Potential Applicants Workshop 1 February 5, 2019, 1-3 PM, 1515 Clay St., Room 10 Oakland, CA 94612 Workshop 2 February 7, 2019, 10 AM-12 PM 700 Alma St., Oak Room Menlo Park, CA 94025
February 25	Letters of Interest Due
March	Evaluation Committee Review (MTC/SCC staff)
April 8	Invitations to Apply Sent
July 1	Full Applications Due
July / August	Evaluation Committee Review (MTC/SCC Staff) Staff recommendation for Program of Projects
October	SCC Program Action Approval of PCA Program, SCC recommendation to MTC
November	MTC Program Action Approval of PCA Program, MTC adopts MTC-funded projects
2020	
January → onward	Funds provided to sponsors on a reimbursement basis, according to availability of funds

APPLICATION PROCESS

The PCA Program follows a two-step application and evaluation process that will be overseen by an evaluation committee consisting of staff from SCC and MTC.

STEP ONE: All interested applicants must submit a Letter of Interest not to exceed three pages that includes the following:

- Identify the project title, name of applicant, project manager, and contact information.
- Name the project partners and supporters.
- Describe the proposed project, its regional significance, and how it meets the program goals and evaluation criteria.
- Describe how the project falls within at least one of the five eligible activities.
- Indicate the PCA(s) the project is in or touches.
- Describe status of CEQA and/or NEPA review.
- Identify the total cost of the project, the amount of PCA funding requested, and the amount and source of any secured and pending matching funds.



Photo: M. Bruce Grosjean

- Applicants are also asked to provide a weblink their project generated through the Bay Area Greenprint (bayareagreenprint.org). The Bay Area Greenprint brings together a wide range of conservation data through an easy-to-use tool, through which applicants will be able to download a standardized and shareable set of data that identifies and measures the existing natural characteristics of the project location and potential multiple benefits from the project. Data reported by the tool include biodiversity and habitat, agriculture, water, carbon, recreation, urban greening, hazards, and climate change.
- The Bay Area Greenprint is being tested as a potential tool to show the multiple benefits of a given project and it will be used only in an advisory role for the application process. The PCA project evaluation team may follow up with applicants to help assess the viability of using the toll in future grant opportunities. See Appendix B for further information on Bay Area Greenprint.

Does not count toward three-page limit:

- Attach a map of the project area and a photo, if appropriate (no more than two additional pages).

STEP TWO: Letters of Interest will be evaluated by an evaluation committee of SCC and MTC staff. The committee may contact applicants, as needed, for additional information, clarification, or modification. Based upon its review, the evaluation committee will select a limited number of applicants with the most promising projects and invite them to continue the

application process by submitting a more detailed proposal for further evaluation. The more formal proposal will include: Applicant Information, Project Information, Project Description, Scope of Work and Budget, Schedule, Additional Questions, GIS Shapefiles, and Maps and Photos.

Letter of Interest and Proposal Submittal

Letters of Interest and formal proposals (if invited) must be submitted electronically to the PCA Evaluation Committee at PCAgrants@bayareametro.gov

Attachments to emails cannot be larger than 5 MB.

2019 Regional Workshops	
<p>SCC and MTC will host two workshops to provide prospective applicants with an overview of the PCA Program.</p>	
<p>Workshop 1 February 5, 2019 1 PM - 3 PM</p>	<p>California State Building 1515 Clay Street, Room 10, Oakland, CA 94612</p>
<p>Workshop 2 February 7, 2019 10 AM - 12 PM</p>	<p>Arrillaga Family Recreation Center 700 Alma St., Oak Room Menlo Park, CA 94025</p>



Photo: MTC Archive

Program Process and Project Delivery

The PCA Program Evaluation Committee will develop project recommendations, including the recommended fund source for each project. The SCC Board will then consider approval of the PCA Program of Projects. Projects recommended to receive MTC funding (federal or non-federal) will subsequently be approved by the MTC Commission.

Non-federal grant awards will be administered by SCC following the program approval by SCC Board and MTC. Grant awardees receiving non-federal funds will need to enter into a grant agreement with SCC, provide a board resolution authorizing execution of the grant agreement, and meet other grant conditions (provision of a workplan, budget, and schedule, proof of insurance, landowner agreements if needed, proof of permits, a sign plan, etc.).

Additional project screening for state bond-fund eligibility may be required. Following program approval, projects may need to return to the SCC Board for specific funding authorizations, particularly if CEQA has not been completed prior to program adoption. SCC will act as a responsible agency under CEQA and make CEQA findings. Funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis, generally with 10% withheld until successful completion of the project.



Photo: J. Brosnan

Contact Information

Questions about the grant program or potential project ideas should be directed to the PCA Evaluation Committee at:

PCAGrants@bayareametro.gov



Photo: Noah Berger

APPENDIX A - ADDITIONAL FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Projects that are eligible and well-suited to receive federal transportation funds (such as a bicycle or pedestrian facilities) may be selected to receive federal funding. Projects recommended for federal transportation funds must be approved by MTC and included in the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Grantees receiving federal funds must go through the Caltrans federal-aid process.

For additional information and questions on the programming and delivery of federal-aid projects contact Mallory Atkinson at matkinson@bayareametro.gov or 415-778-6793.

LOCAL FUNDING

Projects recommended for local funds provided by MTC must be approved by MTC and included in the regional TIP for tracking purposes. Grant awardees receiving non-federal funds will need to enter into a grant agreement with either MTC or SCC, provide a board resolution authorizing execution of the grant agreement, and meet other grant conditions (provision of a workplan, budget, and schedule, proof of insurance, landowner agreements if needed, proof of permits, a sign plan, etc.).

STATE BOND FUNDING

Grant awardees receiving state bond funds will need to enter into a grant agreement with SCC, provide a board resolution authorizing execution of the grant agreement, and meet other grant conditions (provision of a workplan, budget, and schedule, proof of insurance, landowner agreements if needed, proof of permits, a sign plan, etc.).

The SCC will use additional evaluation criteria when determining whether to provide state bond funds for a project. In addition to meeting PCA program criteria, projects that receive state bond funds will need to advance the Goals and Objectives in the SCC's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, which is available here: scc.ca.gov/about/plan/.

Projects will also be evaluated using these Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines to determine SCC funding awards:

Required Criteria

- Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes
- Consistency with purposes of the funding source
- Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies
- Support from the public
- Location (must benefit coastal, ocean resources, or the San Francisco Bay region)
- Need (desired project or result will not occur without Conservancy participation)
- Greater-than-local interest

- Sea level rise vulnerability (Consistent with Executive Order S-13-08, for new projects located in areas vulnerable to future sea level rise, planning shall consider a range of sea level rise scenarios for the years 2050 and 2100 in order to assess project vulnerability and, to the extent feasible, reduce expected risks and increase resiliency to sea level rise)

Additional Criteria

- Urgency (threat to a resource from development or natural or economic conditions; pressing need; or a fleeting opportunity)
- Resolution of more than one issue
- Leverage (contribution of funds or services by other entities)
- Conflict resolution
- Innovation (for example, environmental or economic demonstration)
- Readiness (ability of the grantee and others to start and finish the project timely)
- Realization of prior Conservancy goals (advances previous Conservancy projects)
- Return to Conservancy (funds will be repaid to the Conservancy, consistent with the Conservancy's long-term financial strategy)
- Cooperation (extent to which the public, nonprofit groups, landowners, and others will contribute to the project)
- Minimization of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (project design and construction methods include measures to avoid or minimize greenhouse gas emissions to the extent feasible and consistent with the project objectives)

APPENDIX B - BAY AREA GREENPRINT

Project applicants will be asked to generate a project report through the Bay Area Greenprint. The Bay Area Greenprint provides an easy-to-use tool to gather standardized and shareable location data for all PCA grant applications. The Greenprint also provides a range of data about existing characteristics of the project location and potential multiple benefits from the project. The application review committee is evaluating whether such data could be used in future grant solicitations, but it will not be used for scoring projects in this call for projects.



Photo: Karl Nielsen

Quick Report How-to

1. Go to bayareagreenprint.org/report/
2. Identify the location of your project by drawing it manually, uploading an existing file, or selecting a predefined area.
 - a. Under **Draw an Area**, you have three options to identify your project location:
 - If your project is best defined by a polygon, use **Draw an Area Freehand** to capture the project coverage area. Example projects include land acquisitions or a new green space in an existing urban area.
 - If your project is best represented by a point location, use **Select a Point or Address**, select an appropriate buffer size (1/8 mile buffer recommended), and either manually drop a pin at the location or enter in the address. Example projects include staging areas or bicycle and/or pedestrian bridge.
 - If your project is linear, use **Draw a Path and Buffer**, select an appropriate buffer size (1/8 mile buffer recommended), and draw the extent of the project. Example project types include a trail project or creek restoration.
 - b. Use **Upload a File** if you have a Shapefile (GIS) or KML (from Google Earth) of your project area.
 - c. Use **Choose an Area** if your project is city- or county-wide or is best defined by an entire watershed or the entire coast or baylands.
3. After identifying the project location, click the green **Get Report** at the top right of the screen. Give the report a project name and then submit.
4. After generating the report, scroll to the bottom of the screen and click on the **Share & Compare** button. This generates a project unique weblink that can be pasted into your grant proposal.
5. Include the project weblink directly into your Letter of Interest.

Contact Information

Technical questions related to Bay Area Greenprint should be directed to Adam Garcia at: agarcia@greenbelt.org