

What is the Carfree Mobility Network Grant Program?

The Carfree Mobility Network Grant Program is a competitive grant program that funds entire networks of walkways and bikeways, intersection safety improvements, and related facilities. Funded at up to \$50 million with calls for projects every two years, it will support four \$25 million grant awards each cycle.

What are the Program's Goals?

The goal is to foster comprehensive and equitable development of a connected network of travelways for biking, scooting, walking, etc. that link neighborhoods, transit, schools, employment centers, and other key destinations within a community as efficiently as possible. The network grant would enable a community to make everyday mobility safer, more comfortable, and very convenient without reliance on the car. Its other goals include:

- Encourage communities to expedite their safety projects by considering the issue as a community-wide problem resolvable with a single network project rather than as spot-specific problems addressed by an unwieldy number of small projects;
- Incentivize solutions to dangerous locations even where those solutions require political courage due to their considerable impact on parking and traffic;
- Provide support for related non-infrastructure programs to complement the physical infrastructure and help mitigate the political obstacles that typically accompany big infrastructural changes;
- Prioritize neighborhoods where residents suffer the highest risks of traffic violence and due to racial and economic disadvantages have the least access to affordable, safe transportation options;
- Increase use of public transit by improving access to transit stops and stations;
- Realize efficiencies in planning and project delivery by combining many smaller projects into one;
- Develop such strong public support for complete networks that those projects that are not funded by this program find funding from other sources due to public pressure;
- Incentivize local sustainable community policies that will prioritize walking and bicycling in other development and transportation projects that will realize improvements beyond the grant investments;
- Increase active transportation and transit use, decrease vehicle-miles traveled, and contribute significantly to reaching our state and regional climate goals.

What Components of a Walk and Bicycle Network are funded by this grant?

A competitive walk and bicycle network provides low-stress, safe biking and walking routes connecting all destinations in a defined geographic area. "Low-stress bike routes" include neighborhood streets with slow speeds and low traffic volumes, bike paths and multi-use trails, and protected bike lanes on busy streets. "Comfortable and safe walking conditions" include well-lighted sidewalks and paths, amenities where appropriate (shade trees, benches, public art, sound barriers), safety-enhanced crossings utilizing best practices such as sufficient signal timing, countdown timers, and automatic walk cycles (no pushbuttons), and access for people with disabilities. The most successful proposals will also meet the following criteria:

- Every key destination in a community is connected via low-stress bike routes and comfortable and safe walking conditions, including all schools, community centers, senior centers, grocery stores, health care, significant shopping districts, transit stations, hospitals, libraries, parks, and other key community destinations.
- Transit stations--including bus stops, transit center and intra- and inter-city rail stations--are connected with safe and comfortable routes in a ½-mile radius for walking and a 3-mile radius for bicycling.
- At least half of the census tracts in the defined community are disadvantaged neighborhoods;
- At least \$1 million invested in non-infrastructure education, encouragement and engagement programs, including Safe Routes to School programs in low-income schools;
- Community resident-identified streetscape and walkability improvements, including but not limited to shade trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, wide sidewalks, public art, and parklets;
- Thorough and high-standard wayfinding systems for bicycling and walking;
- Universal design to ensure access for people with disabilities

How will communities apply for this funding?

Funding will be provided in two phases, a planning phase and an implementation phase. In phase one, potential recipients will be invited to apply for substantial planning grants that will support community outreach, engineering, environmental analysis, and public meetings as necessary to develop plans that can be approved by the local government and be ready to be constructed (“shovel-ready”) when funding is available. In phase two, applicants who have completed phase one with ambitious approved plans that meet the criteria identified above will submit those plans for a specific and predetermined level of funding to build the networks. The program may be divided into two tiers of eligibility, one that provides grants of \$40-\$50 million for larger communities and another for smaller communities.

Each application will identify the geographic area to be served and key destinations within that community. Destinations shall include all schools, major transit stops or stations, residential districts, significant retail and employment centers, community centers, senior centers, health care facilities, parks and key recreation destinations, etc. Destinations shall be weighted to reflect the varying number of trips to and from each destination (i.e. a busy transit station will get more weight than a small residential neighborhood) or the community-identified priority of a particular destination. The most important criterion is the degree to which the trips between the identified and weighted destinations are improved to provide a low-stress, safe and convenient walk and bicycle connection. Other proposed criteria are below:

Local adopted policies (required as a threshold for eligibility)

- a. Complete streets policy for roadway maintenance and improvement projects.
- b. Comprehensive sidewalk repair policy.
- c. Update to VMT reduction Level of Service update implementing SB 743 OPR Guidelines compliance.
- d. Is the implementation plan feasible?

Connectivity improvements

- a. What is the change in proportion of micromobility trips that can be made between destinations via low stress routes?
- b. Is the wayfinding system based on best practices?
- c. Are intersections upgraded to support safe and convenient navigation by pedestrians with high-visibility crosswalks, automatic walk signals, countdown signals, and convenient timing.

Benefits to disadvantaged communities

- a. To what extent do the newly connected destinations provide mobility benefits as identified by disadvantaged residents in the community?
- b. Does the proposal address physical, cultural, social, and economic barriers faced by disadvantaged residents of the community that prevent them from walking or bicycling?
- c. Does the proposal include workforce training or jobs components in implementing the network that is targeted toward disadvantaged residents in the community that face barriers to employment?
- d. Anti-displacement measures for residents and small locally-owned and operated businesses.

Successful public outreach

- a. What was the involvement of the public, including non-English speaking public, youth, seniors and people with disabilities, in the development of the plan, especially in identifying key destinations and priority improvements?
- b. Letters of support indicating successful outreach.

Quality of the Non-Infrastructure Component

- a. Will the non-infrastructure component reach all residents? If not, how will implementation of the non-infrastructure component be implemented in a socially equitable manner?
- b. Is the non-infrastructure component culturally-, linguistically-, and socially-appropriate for the target community?
- c. Does it involve local community organizations?