

# FOCUS

a development and conservation strategy  
for the San Francisco Bay Area



# Application Guidelines for Technical Assistance Program

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FOCUS is a regional, incentive-based development and conservation strategy for the San Francisco Bay Area. FOCUS is led by the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission in coordination with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. It is partially funded by a regional blueprint planning grant from the State of California Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency.

FOCUS is a partnership of four regional agencies.  
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## I. FOCUS Technical Assistance Program Overview

Technical assistance services are now available to local jurisdictions through FOCUS to advance transit-oriented development (TOD) in Planned or Potential Priority Development Areas (PDAs).<sup>1</sup>

The objective of this flexible technical assistance program is to support discrete planning projects that will advance implementation of PDA-related plans in support of FOCUS goals. Customized in-kind consultant assistance will be provided to local jurisdictions seeking to overcome specific policy or planning challenges to the adoption or implementation of PDA-related plans.

Applications are being accepted for projects within Planned or Potential PDAs that call for creative, forward-thinking solutions for addressing typical barriers to the development of successful TOD and that can help to build a higher level of support for development of complete communities within the Bay Area.

For example, projects that research and find solutions for unique site challenges, foster community support for transit-oriented development, help to speed the development process by providing regulatory specificity to developers or transparency about the development process to community members, or otherwise support implementation of a PDA-related plan will be assisted by this program. A list of accepted technical assistance project categories is provided in Section III. Example technical assistance projects are outlined in the Appendix of this document.

*This technical support is not intended to support parcel-level development, nor is it intended to fund major portions of a station area, neighborhood, or specific plan.*

Projects eligible as described in Section III will be selected on a competitive basis. In general, this program seeks to award projects across a range of community place-types and technical assistance categories.

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<sup>1</sup> FOCUS is the San Francisco Bay Area's regional incentive-based development and conservation strategy that promotes a more compact land use pattern for the Bay Area by encouraging the development of complete, livable communities in areas served by transit and promoting conservation of the region's most significant resource lands. The FOCUS PDAs are locally-identified infill development opportunity areas within existing communities near transit that have been planned for or are being planned for more housing. A *Planned Priority Development Area* is part of an existing plan that is more specific than a general plan, such as a specific plan or an area plan. A *Potential Priority Development Area* has been envisioned as a potential planning area that is not currently identified in a plan or may be part of an existing plan that needs changes.

To learn more about the FOCUS Program and designated Priority Development Areas, visit the Focused Growth website at [www.bayareavision.org](http://www.bayareavision.org).

## II. Funding Availability

Technical assistance services will be provided free to awardees by an on-call consultant to MTC. MTC anticipates that this consultant will be available to begin selected projects in early 2010. Applications for technical assistance will be accepted on a rolling basis beginning September 1, 2009.

The maximum in-kind award per project is \$50,000. No local match is required.

## III. Eligibility for Applicants and Projects

Any town, city, or county government within the nine county San Francisco Bay Area can apply for technical assistance. Private, local not-for-profits and community-based organizations, and other public entities cannot be lead applicants but are encouraged to partner with or show support for the lead applicant. Multiple jurisdictions, transit agencies, or county congestion management agencies may also submit applications. In the case of multiple jurisdiction applications, each jurisdiction must be a co-applicant. In the case of transit agency or county congestion management applications, all impacted jurisdictions must demonstrate support for the application.

Proposed technical assistance projects must be in support of areas that have been designated as FOCUS Planned or Potential Priority Development Areas for which a neighborhood or specific plan has been adopted or is in process. Proposed projects must support adoption or implementation of the relevant PDA-related plan.

Projects that address the following types of planning and development issues are eligible:

- a. Parking policy and demand analysis, with an emphasis on the use of *MTC's Parking Policies to Support Smart Growth Toolbox/Handbook*.
- b. Municipal financing mechanisms (both standard and innovative) for TOD, including public and private infrastructure, housing, and other related TOD improvements.
- c. Market demand analysis for retail, commercial, and residential development and supporting financial analysis such as development of pro-formas and return on investment analysis.
- d. Development of visualization, web-based, or other technical tool, such as GIS mapping or photo-simulations to reflect building types associated with adopted plans.
- e. Analysis of strategies to promote equitable development and minimize displacement, including comprehensive and targeted affordable housing strategies.
- f. Civic engagement strategies and public workshops/charettes.
- g. Infrastructure planning and design, emphasizing green infrastructure and low-impact development for energy efficiency, storm-water management, etc.
- h. Station access for new and existing development, emphasizing the needs of pedestrians, persons with disabilities, bicycles, shuttles, transit, drop-off, and local circulation.
- i. TOD-supportive zoning, form-based codes, and smart growth urban design guidelines to address building form and scale, urban character, connectivity and accessibility, and place-making.

- j. Sustainability analysis, including TOD-related carbon footprinting, evaluation of land use alternatives from an energy and resource efficiency/equity standpoint, etc.
- k. Financing mechanisms for acquisition and maintenance of urban parks and development of urban parks policies and needs assessments.
- l. Other technical assistance services considered on a case-by-case basis.

Projects with a budget of up to \$50,000 for in-kind consultant services are eligible. There is no minimum project size.

#### **IV. Application Review Process**

Upon receipt, applications will be assessed for completeness and eligibility. An Advisory Committee, composed of regional agency staff and regional stakeholders will then evaluate applications based on the criteria below, and if necessary, will select applicants to interview. The Advisory Committee will make project award recommendations based on program objectives. Regional agency staff will make a final determination of awards.

Regional agency staff will be in communication with applicants throughout the application process to discuss their applications.

#### **PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA (100 POINTS TOTAL)**

##### **1) Advancing Implementation (45 points)**

- Project is critical step towards implementation or adoption of the relevant specific/neighborhood plan for the Priority Development Area and/or helps to overcome specific challenge to successful implementation or adoption of the plan
- Applicant demonstrates local commitment to implementation of the relevant plan
- Applicant demonstrates community support for relevant plan (or project is intended to build community support)
- Project leverages other funding or planning efforts

##### **2) Focused Growth (25points)**

- Implementation of relevant PDA plan will help achieve FOCUS program goals of creating livable, compact, transit-oriented development and complete communities
- Implementation of relevant PDA plan will make significant contribution to regional and local housing needs (based on percent change in units) and improve local jobs/housing balance

##### **3) Regional Innovation and Replicability (15 points)**

- Project will demonstrate innovative planning techniques and/or will provide useful strategies that can be a model for other Bay Area cities and help build a higher level of support for development of complete communities within PDAs

**4) Project Feasibility (15 points)**

- Project can be completed within one year of award
- Project outcomes and process for completion are clearly defined

**V. Timeline**

Application made available	July 15, 2009
Application workshops for interested applicants	August 2009
Applications accepted on a rolling basis	September 1, 2009
Advisory Committee review of applications	September 2009
Regional agency staff select technical assistance projects	October 2009
MTC technical assistance consultant retained (anticipated) <sup>2</sup>	December 2009
Technical assistance projects begin (anticipated)	January 2010

**VI. Application Form and Submission Instructions**

The following are the basic steps in accessing and submitting an application:

1. Download an electronic version of the application (Application for Technical Assistance) from the FOCUS website: [www.bayareavision.org/technicalassistance](http://www.bayareavision.org/technicalassistance).
2. Fill out an application and compile the documents requested in the application form for the proposed project. An Excel template file for entering project timeline and budget information is also available on the FOCUS website.
3. Submit an electronic version of the application form and associated documents requested in the application for the project to [FOCUS@abag.ca.gov](mailto:FOCUS@abag.ca.gov).
4. Mail five (5) hard copies of the application and attachments for each area to the following mailing address:

FOCUS Program  
P.O. Box 2050  
Oakland, CA 94604-2050  
Attn: Sailaja Kurella

**Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis beginning September 1, 2009.**

**VII. Contact Information**

For questions regarding the Technical Assistance program guidelines or application process, please contact Sailaja Kurella, ABAG Regional Planner, at [SailajaK@abag.ca.gov](mailto:SailajaK@abag.ca.gov) or 510-464-7994.

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<sup>2</sup> The Technical Assistance application submission and review process is occurring simultaneously with MTC's selection of its on-call technical assistance consultant.

## **Appendix: Example Technical Assistance Projects**

The projects listed below are a small sampling of the discrete types of projects the Technical Assistance Program seeks to fund. These projects address typical barriers and challenges to the development of successful TOD, for example by finding sustainable and equitable development solutions that promote complete communities, fostering community support for transit-oriented development, and helping to speed the development process by providing regulatory specificity to developers. By tackling a challenging aspect of TOD, these example projects help to support the implementation of PDA-related plans.

### **Example Project: Form-based Code** **Redwood City Downtown Precise Plan**

An element of the Redwood City Downtown Precise Plan is a form-based code that sets forth explicit guidelines for building and site development and for open spaces within the Downtown area. It sets standards for massing, entrance design, landscaping, architectural style, and other design aspects of prospective development that will ultimately help to establish an active, attractive, and viable Downtown. The regulations set forth in the Plan will help to advance implementation of the Downtown Redwood City PDA by providing specificity to potential developers and creating a favorable climate for investment.

<http://www.redwoodcity.org/cds/planning/precise/preciseplan.html>

### **Example Project: Web-based Project Tracking Tool** **Redwood City Downtown Project Tracking System**

Redwood City has developed an innovative online tool, the Downtown Project Tracking System, to help the community easily learn about and keep track of the new developments in the Downtown PDA. The tool features an interactive map for locating projects and provides detailed project information, including illustrations and status. This tool can help ease implementation of a PDA plan by providing a transparent central project repository to help community members and developers stay up-to-date as the projects move through the City planning process.

<http://www.redwoodcity.org/cds/planning/precise/preciseplan.html>

### **Example Project: Innovative Affordable Housing and Equitable Development Strategy** **West Contra Costa County Community Land Trust Study**

The West Contra Costa County community land trust study, developed by the University of California-Berkeley's Center for Community Innovation in collaboration with the City of Richmond and the Richmond Equitable Development Initiative, sets forth a pioneering model for long-term preservation of affordable housing. This study analyzes the opportunities for acquiring and converting current foreclosed homes into permanent affordable housing through a non-profit land ownership and shared-equity trust. The strategy promotes equitable development by minimizing community divestment and displacement and stabilizing neighborhoods in the short term, thereby providing a strong community basis for future infill investment. This type of

analysis can advance implementation of a PDA by detailing financing mechanisms for the affordable housing component or the community amenities of a PDA plan, as well as by laying out a strategy for development without displacement, potentially encouraging community support for future development.

<http://communityinnovation.berkeley.edu/reports/CLT.pdf>

***Example Project: Low-impact Development Standards and Photo Simulations***  
**San Francisco Better Streets Plan**

The San Francisco Better Streets Plan is a comprehensive infrastructure plan that sets forth standards, guidelines, and implementation strategies that will govern how the City designs, builds, and maintains its streetscapes. While this Plan is a major planning effort, certain discrete elements of the plan may be appropriate for assistance from the Technical Assistance Program, such as the low-impact development guidelines and visualization tools. The Plan provides guidance on sustainable low-impact development techniques for the streetscapes, helping to balance the social and recreational needs of street users with the ecological needs of the City. In addition, the Plan provides photo simulations to illustrate the transformative effect of good street design on neighborhoods. Overall, this type of guiding document for the city's streets will provide consistency and speed the design development process for streetscapes as San Francisco's PDAs are implemented.

[http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/planning/Citywide/Better\\_Streets/index.htm](http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/planning/Citywide/Better_Streets/index.htm)

***Example Project: Feasibility Analysis, Parking Policy and Demand Analysis***  
**Marin Affordable Housing and Financially Feasible Development Regulations**

The Marin TPLUS Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design Toolkit provides a feasibility analysis of a hypothetical infill project in Marin County to illustrate the effect of parking requirements on the financial feasibility of a project and to demonstrate the impact that an additional floor of units can have on the affordability of a development. This type of analysis makes the case that higher densities combined with lower parking ratios can improve project feasibility and affordability of housing units, helping community members see the relationship between density, parking, and affordability, as well as helping planners determine appropriate parking ratios for their PDA plans.

<http://www.tam.ca.gov/index.aspx?page=80>