



Dear Mr. Governor, Legislators and Committee Chairs,

The undersigned support a \$2 Billion augmentation to invest in active transportation infrastructure and programs out of the General Fund. We recommend that these funds be split between augmentation of Cycle 5 of the Active Transportation Program (ATP) so that all projects scoring 80 can be funded; and pilot programs for bicycle highways and complete walking and biking networks.

The Active Transportation Program has been oversubscribed since its creation, but the situation has grown particularly acute in the last two cycles. We believe that the program should have enough resources in every cycle to support the funding of all applications receiving a score of at least 80 out of 100, and have consistently advocated for realigning state transportation dollars from other programs in order to achieve that sustainability.

We estimate that, after accounting for projects that are funded through the ATP's MPO component, funding all remaining applications that scored 80 or higher will require between \$900 million - \$1 Billion (168 applications received such a score but were not funded in the Statewide or Small Urban/Rural components). Agencies should feel assured going into each ATP Cycle that their projects will receive funding if their applications score at least an 80 out of 100 possible points. Many of us have reviewed ATP applications in one or more cycles, and can attest that while there are certainly projects scoring below 80 that would make fine investments, funding down to that score would accomplish the twin goals of ensuring that a large range of projects from across the state are realized; and that the projects in question not only serve predominantly disadvantaged communities and school populations, but do so rooted in superlative community engagement and the most thorough planning, scoping and analysis of safety and public health needs. Just as importantly, we believe funding Cycle 5 through a score of 80 sets a strong marker for what the Active Transportation Program should be able to comfortably fund in future cycles, when sustainable funding solutions are agreed upon.

We recommend that a further \$1 Billion then be allocated to two pilot projects: \$500 million to the Strategic Growth Council to create a program enabling communities to build complete walking and biking networks; and \$500 million to the Department of Transportation (CalTrans), to build regional bicycle highways, removed from traffic, that will enable cyclists to travel between communities at up to 25 miles per hour.

While the ATP does a superb job of supporting critical walking and biking improvements throughout the state, it would be a poor fit for the 15-minute city program and bicycle highway programs; reserving large portions of the ATP for such projects would undermine the exemplary process of soliciting feedback that goes into the development of the guidelines and application of the ATP every cycle, the work of more than 100 committed volunteers every cycle who review a dozen applications apiece, and the staff at agencies large and small that conduct painstaking community engagement to produce excellent proposals. Therefore, we recommend that the pilot programs be developed as follows:

\$500 million should be granted to the Strategic Growth Council to develop guidance on the land-use and infrastructural changes and investments needed to create communities in which every daily need is accessible in a 15-minute bike ride; and then create and manage a competitive grant program, similar to Transformative Climate Communities, through which jurisdictions could apply for funding to implement such networks, with a prioritization for Disadvantaged Communities.

\$500 million should be granted to CalTrans to create the bicycle highway pilot program. Because such highways would link different jurisdictions and likely even different counties within a metropolitan area, we believe that the most efficient allocation of the funds would be directly to CalTrans to create the pilot program with the input of a stakeholder advisory committee; the projects wherein would be subject to approval by the California Transportation Commission similarly to the State Transportation Improvement Program or State Highway Operations and Protection Program.

Finally, we wish to reiterate that all proposals for an augmentation of the ATP this year, including ours, are no substitute for the long-term funding needed to put the program on more stable financial footing and align the state's transportation investments with its stated goals for slashing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing vehicle miles traveled. While some increase in federal funds for walking and biking is anticipated this year with the next version of the FAST Act, even the most optimistic estimates do not envisage an increase of more than 40%; however, the ATP must be at least doubled from its current size in order to consistently support the best applications received every cycle. Therefore, we will remain active in working with legislators and the California Transportation Commission to identify the most equitable realignment of our transportation spending.

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