



June 8, 2016

Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Budget Conference Committee Members
State Capitol Rooms 5019 and 6026
Sacramento CA 95814

RE: LA County Support for Increasing Active Transportation Program by \$100 Million in Final Budget

President pro Tem de León, Speaker Rendon, and Members of the Budget Conference Committee:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations working in Los Angeles County to improve walking, bicycling, safe routes to school, and first and last mile access to our bus stops and train stations in order to support healthy, livable communities in Los Angeles County, especially for low-income and communities of color, we respectfully request that you **increase funding to the Active Transportation Program (ATP) by \$100 Million in the 2016-17 State Budget.**

The Los Angeles area has the state’s worst income inequality, and the significant gap between the region’s wealthy and low-income communities manifests itself spatially. In Los Angeles County, where one lives greatly affect their educational attainment, job access, health outcomes, public safety, environmental quality, and how they get around. Simply put, *place matters*.

Los Angeles County Communities Desperately Need Active Transportation Investments

For several years, we have been raising awareness on the importance of safe routes to school, sidewalks, crosswalks and bicycle lanes. For far too long, Los Angeles County has invested less than 1% of all its funding into active transportation (Metro 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan). State and federal funding for active transportation such as California’s ATP program is frequently the only source of funding for safe streets and sidewalks for many jurisdictions in the region, but also a source of funding highly oversubscribed because the need is great. Close to 40% of all roadway deaths in Los

Angeles County are people walking and bicycling — a statistic that spikes in our low-income communities and communities of color.

Regional inequities are apparent in our transportation network. A Metro bus rider's annual household income averages \$15,000. In Los Angeles County, carless households are overwhelmingly located in communities of color and low-income communities, like in the Southeast LA cities. Many families throughout our region rely on walking and bicycling as key ways to get around. Thirty-four percent of Los Angeles County K-12 students walk to school, but many of them do so with little or no safe routes to school investments in place. We need your help in changing this.

And this is something we know Los Angeles County registered voters want. The American Heart Association and Investing in Place in May 2016 commissioned a poll that consisted of 601 interviews in Los Angeles County in English and Spanish between May 18 and May 22, 2016 (<http://tinyurl.com/IIP-SurveyPressRelease>). The margin of error for results from 600 completed interviews is about plus or minus 4% at a 95% confidence level. Key findings were:

- 83% favor using transportation funds from to make it easier and safer for children to walk or bike to schools.
- 81% favor using ballot measure funds to improve crosswalks so they are safer for pedestrians.

Los Angeles County has the need, demand, and voter support for active transportation funds.

Active Transportation Investments Benefit Disadvantaged Communities

ATP projects benefiting low-income communities in LA County are in high demand, and evident in the successful Los Angeles County ATP applications, where more than 30% of ATP funding has been awarded to communities in LA County to projects such as:

- **Los Angeles Unified School District** comprehensive planning effort identified the highest-needs Safe Routes to School projects in collaboration with LA Metro, the LA County Department of Public Health, the LA County Bicycle Coalition, and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership. This resulted in a funded ATP application for a Safe Routes to School and bicycle education program, led by the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, in 30 LA middle schools.
- **Boyle Heights** Pedestrian improvements.
- **Union Station** Infrastructure improvements designed to make it safer to walk and bike to the station; a primary hub for people taking transit in LA County.
- **City of South Gate** Long Beach Boulevard pedestrian improvements.
- **Expo & Crenshaw Line** projects to improve the first and last mile to new transit stations in low income communities within the City of Los Angeles.
- Improvements to West Santa Ana Branch Trail within **City of Paramount**.
- **City of Cudahy** Safe Routes to School improvements citywide to public schools.

- **LA River bike path improvements** within low-income communities along the LA River.
- Cesar Chavez Ave pedestrian improvements in City of LA.
- Pedestrian access improvements to Willowbrook Station that serves the Blue Line.
- Pedestrian safety improvements in **Little Tokyo**.
- SRTS near high schools in **East Hollywood**.
- Pedestrian enhancements to Market Street in **City of Long Beach**.
- **City of Inglewood** Active Transportation Plan & Safe Routes to School Plan.

The Governor’s Budget proposed \$100 million of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) to establish a new “Low Carbon Roads Program,” which would fund many of the same types of projects as are already eligible for ATP funding. The ATP can more quickly and efficiently invest those funds in projects in communities this year that will have long-term benefits.

We urge you to redirect the \$100 million proposed for the Low Carbon Roads Program into the Active Transportation Program in the final GGRF Expenditure Plan. We are currently working with partners across Los Angeles County to increase local, state and federal funding for these critical needs. It is critical grow this funding from all sources, especially the ATP, a proven successful, valuable and critically needed program for our region — and source of funding that needs to expand significantly.

California’s Active Transportation Program has greatly benefited disadvantaged communities in Los Angeles County, especially the Southeast LA communities, as documented above. Making it safer for our families to walk, bike, and roll to get to their next destination (whether it’s to work, local businesses, home, or for errands) is not only what our low-income communities and communities of color deserve, but it’s what our communities need and want.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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 Prevention Institute

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