

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: December 5-6, 2024

From: TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

Reference Number: 4.3, Information

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Subject: Hearing on the 2025 Active Transportation Program – Statewide and Small Urban and Rural Components

Summary:

The purpose of this public hearing is to take final comment on the staff recommendations for the 2025 Active Transportation Program Statewide and Small Urban and Rural components prior to the California Transportation Commission's (Commission) adoption of the program of projects under Reference Number 4.4.

Statewide Component: Staff recommends 9 projects for funding, totaling \$84.3 million in Active Transportation Program funding and valued at approximately \$110.5 million. This includes:

- \$84.3 million (100 percent of available funding) for 9 projects benefitting disadvantaged communities.
- \$44.3 million (55 percent of available funding) for 5 Safe-Routes-to-School projects.

Small Urban and Rural Component: Staff recommends 4 projects for funding, totaling \$16.8 million in Active Transportation Program funding and valued at approximately \$59.6 million. This includes:

- \$16.8 million (100 percent of available funding) for 4 projects benefitting disadvantaged communities.
- \$8.8 million (50 percent of available funding) for 2 Safe-Routes-to-School projects.

The recommendations include a broad spectrum of projects that will increase walking and biking, improve the safety and mobility of non-motorized users, and enhance public health.

Examples include:

- **Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley – Big Pine Paiute Tribal Active Transportation Plan (\$0.25 million):** This project will develop a comprehensive active transportation plan for the Big Pine Paiute Reservation, which is bisected by U.S. 395. The community has little active transportation infrastructure and residents face major challenges accessing the community without a motorized vehicle. The plan will identify infrastructure improvements including installing sidewalks, ADA compliant curb ramps, bicycle lanes, pedestrian and bicycle crossings, improved street lighting, and a newly established all-electric shuttle service for high-use routes.
- **City of Inglewood – Westchester/Veterans Station Multimodal Connection Project (\$7.6 million):** This project will provide active transportation improvements for the Westchester/Veterans Station including a separated Class IV bikeway and pedestrian pathway to close the accessibility gap for residents traveling east-west to access the light-rail station. This community, of 16,000, faces some of the highest pollution burdens in the state. Other project elements include high-visibility crosswalks, ADA-compliant access ramps, sidewalk improvements, landscaping, new guardrail to separate the active transportation pathway and the light-rail track, leading pedestrian interval signal timings, a new traffic signal, and stormwater management best practices.
- **Mendocino County – Covelo/Round Valley Safe Routes to School (\$6.1 million):** This project provides safe, direct connections between intersections and crossings to and from multiple schools (Round Valley High School, Round Valley Elementary/Middle School, Eel River Charter School and Round Valley Continuation), community and activity centers, the library, the post office, residences, and other businesses and commercial areas that are frequented by students and other community members. It will connect to the new multi-use path along State Route 162, allowing connection from the town center to Tribal Health, Tribal offices, and community amenities. This is a community where the median household income is below the statewide average, 92.2% of students across all four schools qualify for free or reduced-price meals, and where there is a high level of obesity and heart disease.
- **City of Visalia – Highland Community Connectivity Project (\$5.4 million):** This project is intended to improve the existing multi-modal transportation infrastructure within the Highland Elementary School boundary. This is an older, historic community, within the City of Visalia that is bifurcated by State Route 63 where cars travel up to 50 miles per hour. The community needs improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities with an emphasis on traffic calming to accommodate walking and biking within the community. This project will incorporate infrastructure that will slow down vehicles, shorten crossing distances for pedestrians and bicyclists, and beautify the local streets to make them more accommodating to non-vehicular users.

The recommended projects will construct a broad range of active transportation infrastructure, including nearly 10.6 miles of new or improved sidewalks, over 11 miles of new multi-use trails, and over 11 miles of new bikeways. Other examples of improvements include:

- Enhanced crosswalks, with features that improve safety and visibility, such as median refuge islands, curb extensions, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, and lighting.
- Improved sidewalks that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).
- Intersection improvements, such as pedestrian hybrid beacons, raised intersections, and shortened crosswalks.
- Streetscape amenities, such as benches, landscaping, and shade trees.
- Traffic calming features, such as traffic circles and road diets.
- Non-infrastructure programs such as promoting new biking and walking facilities, educating community members on biking safety, providing resources such as helmets and bike locks, and in-class presentations at local schools to promote walking and biking safety.

Funding Award Tie Breaker Necessary

The Active Transportation Program uses a sequential project selection process based on the scores the project applications received during the evaluation process. The project recommendation scoring threshold was 96 points for the Statewide component. There is not sufficient funding to fully fund all three projects that achieved this scoring threshold. Therefore, consistent with the 2025 Active Transportation Program Guidelines, Commission staff used a secondary ranking system to determine which projects to recommend. This secondary ranking consisted of first prioritizing project readiness and then prioritizing projects that scored the highest on Question 2 of the application – Potential for Increased Walking and Biking. The results of the secondary ranking system are as follows:

- The Los Angeles County Public Works' West Rancho Dominguez Walks: Providing Safer Access to Schools/Parks project placed first in the secondary ranking system.
- The Stanislaus Council of Governments' Church Street Mobility Enhancement project placed second in the secondary ranking system.
- The City of Stockton's Citywide Stockton Bicycle-Pedestrian Connectivity Project – W. 8th St./Manthey Rd./Houston Ave. Phase placed third in the secondary ranking system.

While sufficient funding is available to fully fund the Los Angeles County Public Works' request, there is not sufficient funding available to fully program the Stanislaus Council of Governments' \$7.795 million request. Therefore, staff recommends programming the remaining \$4.537 million in funding to the Stanislaus Council of Governments' project at this time. Commission staff will work with The Stanislaus Council of Governments to determine how the project can be delivered with the available funding. Funding is not available to program the City of Stockton's request.

The project recommendation scoring threshold was 95 points for the Small Urban and Rural component. Four projects went through the secondary ranking system, before the programming capacity was reached, to determine what order the projects would receive funding. The placements of the secondary ranking system are as follows:

- The Big Pine Paiute Tribe of Owens Valley’s Big Pine Paiute Tribal Active Transportation Plan project placed first in the secondary ranking system.
- Mendocino County’s Covelo/Round Valley Safe Routes to School project placed second in the secondary ranking system.
- Inyo County’s Connecting Tecopa: Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Corridor project placed third in the secondary ranking system.
- The City of Visalia’ Goshen Visalia Corridor Connection project placed fourth in the secondary ranking system.
- The City of El Monte’s Valley Boulevard Complete Street project placed fifth in the secondary ranking system.
- The City of Coachella’s Connecting Coachella project placed sixth in the secondary ranking system.

There is sufficient funding to fully program the three highest ranked projects in the secondary ranking system. However, there is not sufficient funding available to fully program the City of Visalia’s \$43.3 million request, so the project will be partially programmed with \$2.636 million in funding at this time. Commission staff will work with the City of Visalia to determine how the project can be delivered with the available funding. Funding is not available to program the City of El Monte’s and the City of Coachella’s requests.

Quick Build Recommendations

Under the 2025 Active Transportation Program Guidelines, the Commission has the discretion to fund several quick-build projects or none. None of the Quick-Build Project Program applications met the funding recommendation scoring threshold of 96 points for the Statewide component. Therefore, no quick-build projects are recommended for funding.

Programming Recommendations

The following table provides a summary of proposed programming recommendations. The funding amounts are represented in thousands:

Component	Projects	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	Total ATP Funding	Total Project Costs
Statewide	9	\$6,537	\$5,224	\$42,431	\$30,158	\$84,350	\$110,534
Small Urban and Rural	4	\$1,562	\$2,512	\$0	\$12,796	\$16,870	\$59,609

Needs Surpass Available Funding

The Commission received \$2.5 billion in funding requests for 277 projects for the 2025 program cycle – about 15 times the available funding. Staff recommendations include the fewest recommended projects of any Active Transportation Program cycle to date. In addition to the limited available funding, the Program’s continued oversubscription means hundreds of high-quality, urgently needed projects are not recommended for funding, highlighting the continued unmet demand for active transportation improvements around the state.

Projects not selected in the Statewide component that are located in one of the ten large Metropolitan Planning Organizations will be considered for funding through the applicable Metropolitan Planning Organization component, which has \$67,480,000 available in funding.

Background:

The Active Transportation Program was created by Senate Bill 99 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 359, Statutes of 2013) and Assembly Bill 101 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 354, Statutes of 2013) to encourage increased use of active modes of transportation, such as biking and walking. Senate Bill 1 (Beall, Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017) directs additional funding from the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account to the Active Transportation Program. Along with the program’s overall purpose of encouraging walking and biking, the program aims to increase the share of walking and biking trips, increase safety and mobility for non-motorized users, help regional agencies achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals, enhance public health, ensure that disadvantaged communities fully share in program benefits, and provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of active transportation users.

In November 2023, the California Transportation Commission (Commission) began the process of developing the 2025 Active Transportation Program Guidelines. The Commission held 10 workshops on topics related to revising and updating the guidelines, applications, and scoring rubrics. Additionally, the Commission held 10 regionally focused workshops centered on program education and technical assistance, as well as 122 in person and virtual site visits. During the site visits, Commission staff toured 175 potential projects and provided tailored technical assistance to prospective applicants.

In March 2024, the Commission established the 2025 Active Transportation Program as a four-year (fiscal years 2025-26 through 2028-29) program with \$568.7 million in programming capacity. However, the Budget Act of 2024, signed into law on June 29, 2024, included a \$400 million reduction to the \$1.049 billion one-time funding augmentation from the General Fund to the Active Transportation Program appropriated in the 2022 California State Budget. In order to maintain the funding commitments to the 2023 Program, it was necessary to reduce the funding available to the 2025 Active Transportation Program by \$400 million, leaving the current capacity at \$168.7 million. The budget agreement stipulates that the \$400 million may be restored through legislative action in future years.

Under Senate Bill 99 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 359, Statutes of 2013), Active Transportation Program funding is distributed into three components: the Statewide component (50 percent of the funds), the Small Urban and Rural component (10 percent of the funds), and the large Metropolitan Planning Organization component (40 percent of the funds). The Commission released staff recommendations for the Statewide and Small Urban and Rural components on November 1, 2024. The large Metropolitan Planning Organization component recommendations will be released in Spring 2025.

Development of Staff Recommendations

The Commission recruited 82 volunteer evaluators to score applications, who were divided into teams of two individuals. Each team reviewed six to seven applications and scored them based on the screening and evaluation criteria set forth in the Commission's adopted 2025 Active Transportation Program Guidelines. The evaluator teams consisted of active transportation stakeholders with a wide range of expertise from a variety of organizations, including local government agencies, regional transportation planning organizations, state agencies, and advocacy organizations.

Evaluators were required to attend a training session and sign a conflict-of-interest form. They were also provided with detailed scoring rubrics, score sheets, and program guidelines. Evaluator teams agreed on a consensus score for each question within each application and were required to provide constructive comments on all score sheets. Concurrently, Commission staff conducted validation score evaluations on applications, and Caltrans staff reviewed the applications for eligibility and deliverability. Once the evaluations were complete, Commission and Caltrans staff met with each evaluator team to discuss any scoring differences and significant technical issues.

The 2025 Active Transportation Program included a Quick-Build Project Program with up to \$7 million in funding available from the Statewide component. For quick-build projects, the evaluation team was comprised of Commission and Caltrans staff. Commission staff reviewed and scored the quick-build project applications individually based on the evaluation criteria set forth in Appendix D of the 2025 Active Transportation Program Guidelines. Caltrans staff reviewed the projects for quick-build eligibility and deliverability. Once individual evaluations were complete, the evaluation team held a meeting to reach a consensus on scores for each application by question and to discuss eligibility issues.