



September 8, 2015

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia
State Capitol, Room 4162
Sacramento, CA 94249

The Honorable Autumn Burke
State Capitol, Room 5144

The Honorable David Chiu
State Capitol, Room 2196

Re: SUPPORT – ABX1-23 (Garcia, Burke, Chiu): Active Transportation Program and Disadvantaged Communities Investment

Dear Assemblymember Garcia, Burke, and Chiu:

Pathway's to Right-of-Way's strongly supports Assembly Bill 23 in the 1st Extraordinary Session, which will increase funding to the state Active Transportation Program (ATP) and prioritize significant state road expansion and maintenance funding to improving mobility and safety in disadvantaged communities. We applaud your leadership in making sure active transportation and the needs of disadvantaged communities are addressed in the Extraordinary Session.

To this purpose, our understanding focuses on all faucets of awareness and achievement to this goal.

Despite minimal state investments --less than 2% of the transportation budget--, nearly 1 in 5 trips in California are now on foot or by bike. The Caltrans Strategic Management Plan 2020 intends to triple bicycling and double walking trips again by 2020, while significantly improving safety for people walking and bicycling. 23 percent of traffic fatalities and serious injuries are inflicted on people walking and bicycling, with higher rates in low-income communities of color. Based on years of underinvestment and neglect, disadvantaged communities lack safe infrastructure for walking and bicycling, and are often bisected by freeways and high speed arterials, and tend to be the first to see cuts in transit service during tough economic times. Residents in these communities have the highest needs for affordable, safe and healthy transportation options.

The state Active Transportation Program (ATP) was created in 2013 to increase walking and bicycling and improve safety for people walking and bicycling by providing grants to local agencies for infrastructure such as sidewalks, bikeways, trails, and improvements to crossings and intersections, and programmatic investments in safety education and encouragement programs. A minimum of 25 percent of ATP funding must provide meaningful benefits to residents in disadvantaged communities based on household income, EnviroScreen, and a school-based low-income metric. The ATP has been significantly underfunded in the first three years at roughly \$120 million per year, despite over \$2 billion in grant applications for shovel-ready projects in the first two funding cycles.

ABX1-23 would appropriate \$125 million from the State Highway Account to the Active

Transportation Program, and invest a portion of the new funds into larger 'network' grants for transformative investments in creating connectivity across a community that address the least safe corridors and intersections with a priority toward disadvantaged areas that lack safe walking and bicycling infrastructure. Increasing funding to the ATP will provide alternatives to get people out of their cars, reduce congestion and wear-and-tear on roads, reduce greenhouse emissions, vehicle-miles traveled, and poor air quality in our neighborhoods, and ultimately contribute to achieving our state climate, health, and equity goals. In addition, ABX1-23 would require a process to prioritize new investments in road maintenance, rehabilitation, and expansion through the State Transportation Improvement Program and the State Highway Operations Preservation Program to improving safety and mobility, and reducing negative impacts of transportation projects on disadvantaged communities. By shifting the focus of roadway investments toward addressing the mobility and safety need of low-income Californians, ABX1-23 establishes a new paradigm for spending transportation dollars.

We strongly support ABX1-23 and commend your authorship of this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Odie L. Dancer.