



January 30, 2018

Genoveva Islas, MPH
Program Director
Cultiva la Salud
2409 Merced Street, Suite 101
Fresno, CA 93721

RE: January 8, 2018 letter regarding the Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan.

Dear Ms. Islas:

Fresno COG has received and thanks the Cultiva la Salud for its August 18, 2017 letter addressing the 2018 Regional Active Transportation Plan (R-ATP) and the policies, practices and activities that have shaped it to date. Respectfully, Fresno COG offers the following response to the comments/suggestion in your letter:

First of all, thank you very much for all the work you and your staff have done as a mini-grant recipient to help make not only the Regional Transportation Plan a better plan, but the Regional Active Transportation Plan (R-ATP) as well. The outreach and community meetings your organization held in Orange Cove for the R-ATP were exceptional.

Fresno COG shares Cultiva la Salud's concern for disadvantaged communities. Even without a formal prioritization process 100% of the total award will benefit projects in disadvantaged communities in the previous (Cycle 3) Fresno COG Regional Competitive Active Transportation Program of Projects. In addition, 85% of Fresno COG's total award will benefit projects in disadvantaged communities in Cycle 2. Much of Fresno County (specifically almost all of the smaller incorporated cities) meets the criteria for Disadvantaged Communities as deemed by ATP applications. Disadvantaged communities receive extra points on project applications submitted for many funding programs including state-wide and region-wide ATP programs.

Fresno COG staff looks forward to working with Cultiva la Salud on other projects in the near future.

Thank you again for your comment/suggestions.

Sincerely,

Tony Boren

Executive Director

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City of Coalinga
City of Firebaugh
City of Fowler
City of Fresno
City of Huron
City of Kerman
City of Kingsburg
City of Mendota
City of Orange Cove
City of Parlier
City of Reedley
City of San Joaquin
City of Sanger
City of Selma
County of Fresno

February 1, 2018

Mariah C. Thompson, Staff Attorney
California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.
3747 E. Shields Ave.
Fresno, CA 93726

Ms. Thompson:

Fresno COG has received and thanks California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), Inc. for its January 8, 2018 letter addressing the Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan (R-ATP) and the policies, practices and activities that have shaped it to date. Respectfully, Fresno COG offers the following responses to the comments* raised in that letter.

COMMENT: "I. The ATP Should Identify and Analyze Additional Applicable Laws."

"The second chapter of the draft ATP describes the relationship between the ATP and other plans and policies. This chapter includes a section titled "State and Federal" that lists "state and federal plans and other documents [that] contain goals, policies, and requirements relevant to the ATP." Several state and federal laws are identified in this section and their relationship to the ATP is summarized in Appendix C. No federal or state civil rights laws or environmental justice laws are identified or summarized in these sections. The draft ATP also does not include SB 244, which specifically addresses infrastructure deficiencies in disadvantaged unincorporated communities. These laws should be included to comply with these laws.

A. FCOG should identify and summarize civil rights and environmental justice laws.

Fresno Council of Governments (FCOG) is subject to state and federal civil rights and environmental justice obligations in the development and implementation of the ATP and in the selection and prioritization of the active transportation projects included within it. Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating because of race, color, or national origin in the provision of their programs or activities. Title VI obligations extend to all programs and activities conducted by the funding recipient.

FCOG also is subject to federal legal requirements related to environmental justice, which originate from Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." Executive Order 12898 and implementing guidance from the Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Associations require that MPOs "identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of [their] programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. California Government Code §11135 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, mental disability, physical disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, or sexual orientation by any agency receiving state funding. FCOG is a recipient of state funding and must comply with Government Code §11135 in the development and implementation of its regional transportation plans. These legal obligations should be identified and analyzed in the ATP. Relevant civil rights and environmental justice laws include:

- *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*
- *Cal. Gov't Code § 11135*
- *Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations" (Clinton 1994)*
- *U.S. Department of Transportation, Updated Environmental Justice Order 5610.2(a)(amended 5/2/2012)*
- *FDWA, Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, Order 6640.23 (12/2/1998)."*

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RESPONSE: Fresno COG complied with all Title VI requirements in the development of the R-ATP. No person was excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or discriminated against on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age, as provided in the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and 49 United States Code Section 5332. Local jurisdictions included ATP projects from the R-ATP in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan program of projects. The Draft Environmental Justice Analysis of the 2018 RTP has determined the program of projects, which include projects from the R-ATP

- avoids disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations
- ensures full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision making process
- prevents the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income groups.

Civil rights and environmental justice laws will be listed in Chapter 2 and Appendix C of the R-ATP.

COMMENT: *"B. FCOG should identify and summarize SB 244 and local jurisdictions' SB 244 analyses.*

FCOG also should address California Senate Bill 244 (SB 244) in the list of policies and laws that interact with the ATP. SB 244 requires local counties and cities to address investment in disadvantaged, unincorporated communities with a recognition that Conditions within disadvantaged unincorporated communities evidence a distinct lack of public and private investment that threatens the health and safety of the residents of these communities and fosters economic, social, and educational inequality. Many of these communities lack basic infrastructure, including, but not limited to, streets, sidewalks, storm drainage, clean drinking water, and adequate sewer service.

SB 244 mandates local jurisdictions to identify disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) within their sphere of influence in general plans and LAFCo Municipal Service Reviews (MSRs) and annexation decisions. Jurisdictions must conduct a review of the infrastructure and services available in those DUCs and identify opportunities to improve services within them. SB 244 requires a jurisdiction to...

... prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

- (1) Growth and population projections for the affected area.*
- (2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.*
- (3) Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies including needs or deficiencies related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, and structural fire protection in any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.*
- (4) Financial ability of agencies to provide services.*
- (5) Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.*
- (6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.*

SB 244 interacts with the active transportation plan process by providing necessary information. The SB 244 analysis identifies infrastructure shortages in disadvantaged unincorporated communities. These shortages can be obstacles to active transportation usage when they prevent the development of active transportation infrastructure, such as how drainage infrastructure is a necessary precondition to sidewalk installation in Fresno County. It is important that the results of a jurisdictions' SB 244 analysis be considered in the ATP's analysis of current conditions as well as in the identification, scoring, and prioritization of projects. This will improve FCOG's understanding of the obstacles residents in disadvantaged communities face to utilizing active transportation and can assist with targeting investments into communities with the greatest need. Reviewing and considering a local jurisdiction's SB 244 analysis in the development of the plan also encourages cooperation between local government agencies, which is necessary to resolve infrastructure needs in low-income areas."

RESPONSE: One of the requirements of an ATP is the inclusion of "A map and description of existing and proposed land use and settlement patterns which must include, but not be limited to, locations of residential neighborhoods, schools, shopping centers, public buildings, major employment centers, and other destinations" (California Transportation Commission 2017 Active Transportation Program Guidelines March 17, 2016). General Plans from each of the 12 jurisdictions were reviewed and land use maps were included in each jurisdiction's chapter.

SB244 requires cities and counties to address the infrastructure needs of unincorporated disadvantaged communities in city and county general plans and LAFCo Municipal Service Reviews (MSRs) and annexation decisions. Identifying and summarizing SB 244 analyses is not a requirement of an active transportation plan and is above and beyond the scope of this project.

COMMENT: *"II. FCOG Must Include Additional Information to Accurately Describe Current Land Use Patterns."*

"The California Transportation Commission's 2016 Active Transportation Guidelines require that an active transportation plan for a disadvantaged community include, ". . .a description of existing and proposed land use and settlement patterns which must include, but not be limited to, locations of residential neighborhoods, schools, shopping centers, public building, major employment centers, and other destinations.

Appendix A of the draft ATP is a table listing the 2017 ATP requirements and identifying which sections of the draft ATP address these requirements. Sections 3-1 to 3-2, and 6-23 through 6-30 are listed as fulfilling the land use pattern description requirement. Sections 3-1 to 3-2 provide the following sections to describe current land use patterns: (a) "Climate;" (b) "Railroads and Historical Development Patterns," which states that development has occurred around historical railroad lines; (c) "High Volume Regional Connecting Roads," which describes roads with high volumes of traffic; and (d) "Other Factors," which describes poor lighting conditions, loose dogs, and gaps in active transportation networks. Sections 6-23 to 6-30 are a series of maps depicting Fresno County's unincorporated communities and unincorporated islands. The maps provide information on the location of the following within unincorporated communities: institutions of higher education, employment centers, government buildings, libraries, medical centers, retail, schools, transit stops, railroads, and water ways. Maps also include depictions of Fresno County zoning, median income, CalEnviroScreen scores, free or reduced school meal price eligibility, and zero automobile households.

FCOG must include additional information in this section to accurately depict current land use patterns and to assist FCOG in complying with federal and state civil rights and environmental justice obligations to direct investments to low-income and minority neighborhoods. FCOG should identify and describe racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty, patterns of segregation, and disadvantaged, unincorporated communities within Fresno County, as well as the historical development patterns that contributed to their creation. Additional maps should be included in section six that demonstrate concentrations of individuals by race, ethnicity, and national origin.

"Environmental justice" communities are defined under federal law as "low-income" and/or "minority" communities. While the draft ATP contains maps evidencing median household income throughout the jurisdiction, there is no map that delineates the population by race. This second map is necessary to provide a complete picture of whether investments are being prioritized in environmental justice communities. Maps created by Housing and Urban Development can provide this information, and can be found online through HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing portal."

RESPONSE: In an effort to accurately depict land use and settlement patterns, Fresno COG has added the 2018 SCS Preferred Scenario Land Use Map to the Final R-ATP.

COMMENT: *"The Draft ATP Fails to Fully Identify Obstacles to Active Transportation Use in Rural Communities."*

"Section 3-3 of the draft RTP contains a section titled "Other Factors" that lists "other local conditions [that] affect bicycling and walking in the Fresno County region." Three factors are listed: lack of lighting and loose dogs in some areas, and gaps in the active transportation network. These issues pose obstacles for the use of active transportation, but there are significantly more obstacles that must be analyzed and addressed before active transportation can be integrated into the daily lives of residents in Fresno County. The following is a nonexhaustive list of additional obstacles for the use of active transportation in the communities CRLA serves:

- Lack of storm-water drainage systems: Lack of a master drainage plan is the primary obstacle to the installation of sidewalks in unincorporated areas within Fresno County.*
- Lack of drainage also leads to flooding, which prevents residents from participating in active transportation by limiting safe, accessible places to walk within the community.*
- Lack of sidewalks and gutters: Many disadvantaged communities lack sidewalks or gutters, impeding safe transportation.*

- *Lack of speed control devices: Many rural areas experience problems with speeding and impaired driving. Fresno County requires curbs and gutters before installing speed humps, so residents of unincorporated areas that lack sidewalks are unable to obtain speed humps to address speeding problems. Fresno County's speed hump policy also mandates that residents pay several hundred dollars for speed hump installation, which is unaffordable for very low-income and farmworker residents. It is unsafe for residents and their children to walk or bike in areas that not only lack sidewalks but also have a high level of unsafe driving.*
- *High concentrations of air contaminants: Many low-income and minority communities are adjacent to truck routes, highways, industrial centers, packing plants, or agricultural production that results in a high level of air contamination. Siting these uses adjacent to residential communities creates an obstacle to residents engaging in active transportation; long-term exposure to these contaminants has significant detrimental health impacts and makes active transportation unenjoyable.*
- *Development Patterns: Development patterns substantially contribute to residents' ability to integrate active transportation into their daily lives. Employment centers, schools, commercial centers, transportation hubs, and services are generally concentrated in affluent, urban areas and largely non-existent in rural and low-income areas. This results in a discrepancy between where rural and low-income residents live and where they must go to purchase goods, work, and attend school and medical appointments. Residents in rural communities cannot easily integrate active transportation into their daily lives if most places that they need to visit are a great distance away.*

Section 4-4 of the draft ATP contains suggestions for local jurisdictions to improve the community environments to make accessing active transportation more feasible for residents. This section suggests that local jurisdictions add lighting improvements and enforce leash laws to improve safety for residents to promote active transportation use. While these improvements are necessary to encourage active transportation use, they are insufficient. Jurisdictions must do more to resolve the underlying systemic obstacles that prevent rural and low-income individuals in Fresno County from integrating active transportation into their daily lives. Examples include: investment in infrastructure that makes active transportation accessible such as investment in storm water drainage, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and speed humps; increasing law enforcement services in rural and low-income communities to counteract unsafe driving; re-routing truck routes to avoid residential areas; and prioritizing the integration of housing, jobs, and commercial centers within walking and biking range of each other."

RESPONSE:

- Lack of drainage and gutters discussed in Chapter 6, page 23
- Speed is discussed with respect to bicycle facilities in Chapter 1
- Air quality is discussed in the climate section in Chapter 3, page 1
- Chapter 1, page 1 notes that disadvantaged areas are less likely to have walking and biking facilities than other neighborhoods

COMMENT: *"The Prioritization Criteria for Project Selection Should be More Transparent and Must Prioritize Investment in Environmental Justice Communities."*

"The draft ATP states that transportation projects will be implemented and prioritized as either "high" priority or "other" (i.e. not high priority) based on the following criteria: (a) proximity to key destinations, including schools, parks, bus stops, and activity centers; (b) collision locations; (d) disadvantaged community indicators; (e) public comment; and (f) judgment of local jurisdiction staff.

The draft ATP contains no indication of how these criteria are weighted. It also does not indicate which criteria were determinative in ranking some projects as "high" priority on the current project list. It is impossible to know if certain projects on the list were categorized as "high" based on the significance of community need or staff preference. It also appears that criteria are applied inconsistently. Bike paths and sidewalk projects serving the unincorporated community of West Park, for example, are not ranked high despite meeting all prioritization criteria: they are safe route to school projects serving a severely disadvantaged community that currently contains no active transportation infrastructure. Collisions have occurred in the area. The projects were solicited during the public comment period, and the community meets all disadvantaged community and environmental justice indicators. The West Park projects are not classified as high priority, although other similar projects are classified as high priority. FCOG must have transparent and objective selection and prioritization criteria or communities that should qualify as high priorities based on FCOGs legal obligations and based on the ATP priorities are at risk of being left out.

FCOG must develop a transparent selection and ranking system that prioritizes development in environmental justice communities. The State Active Transportation Program guidelines are an example of such a system. The guidelines use a point-based system for project selection and prioritization that is designed to result in the most investments benefitting the communities with the greatest need. Scoring criteria require that projects benefit disadvantaged communities, with a higher number of points given to projects based on the severity of the need and the benefit provided to the community. The state criteria also prioritize projects that improve public health by targeting populations with the highest health risks, as well as projects that result from public participation processes. This system aligns with environmental justice obligations, which obligate jurisdictions to prioritize investment in low income and minority communities with the goal of redressing historical inequitable land use policies. FCOG must create an objective, transparent, selection and priority system to ensure that local ATP projects are chosen and prioritized in a manner that complies with FCOGs federal civil rights and environmental justice obligations by prioritizing investments in minority and low-income communities."

RESPONSE: Fresno COG shares CRLA's concern for disadvantaged communities. Even without a formal prioritization process, 100% of the total award benefits projects in disadvantaged communities in the previous (Cycle 3) Fresno COG Regional Competitive Active Transportation Program of Projects. In addition, 85% of Fresno COG's total award benefits projects in disadvantaged communities in Cycle 2. Much of Fresno County (specifically almost all of the smaller incorporated cities) meets the criteria for Disadvantaged Communities as deemed by ATP applications. Disadvantaged communities receive extra points on project applications submitted for many funding programs including state-wide and region-wide ATP programs. The prioritization process in the R-ATP described in Chapter 5 is based on several criteria:

- proximity to key destinations (usually within ¼ mi), including schools, parks, bus stops, and activity centers;
- collision locations;
- disadvantaged community indicators;
- public comment; and
- judgement of local jurisdiction staff.

Each jurisdiction has developed its own goals and priorities reflecting its community values, outlined in its General Plan. One size does not suit all, and the prioritization process relied on jurisdiction staff to reflect those values and provide input to align priorities with those goals and preferences. Because jurisdiction staff had the final say in the project selection and prioritization, any questions about a specific project should be directed to that particular jurisdiction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Boren". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Boren

Executive Director

February 1, 2018

Amanda Monaco, J.D.
Policy Advocate
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
764 P St., Suite 012
Fresno, CA 93721

RE: January 8, 2018 letter regarding the Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan.

Ms. Monaco:

Fresno COG has received and thanks the Leadership Counsel (LC) for its January 8, 2018 letter addressing the 2018 Regional Active Transportation Plan (R-ATP) and the policies, practices and activities that have shaped it to date. Respectfully, Fresno COG offers the following responses to the comments* raised in your letter.

COMMENT: "1. The RATP Vision and RATP as a whole should include a strong commitment to prioritize disadvantaged communities."

The current vision is: "A complete, safe, and comfortable network of trails, sidewalks, and bikeways that serves all residents of Fresno County and its cities." We recommend adding "particularly disadvantaged communities with critical infrastructure needs." Furthermore, the plan identifies several primary considerations in identifying projects, yet none of these primary considerations is disadvantaged communities. We recommend that investment in disadvantaged communities, especially those with urgent pedestrian safety needs, be among the primary considerations in project identification and plan development.

Due to lack of investment in disadvantaged, unincorporated communities, many neighborhoods confront urgent and long-standing active transportation infrastructure deficiencies. It is critical that this plan, in its vision, in its project selection, and in its implementation, prioritize these longstanding inequalities and barriers to health and safety."

Response: Fresno COG shares LC's concern for disadvantaged communities. Even without a formal prioritization process, 100% of the total award will benefit projects in disadvantaged communities in the previous (Cycle 3) Fresno COG Regional Competitive Active Transportation Program of Projects. In addition, 85% of Fresno COG's total award will benefit projects in disadvantaged communities in Cycle 2. Much of Fresno County (specifically almost all of the smaller incorporated cities) meets the criteria for Disadvantaged Communities as deemed by ATP applications. Disadvantaged communities receive extra points on project applications submitted for many funding programs including state-wide and region-wide ATP programs. The prioritization process in the R-ATP described in Chapter 5 is based on several criteria:

- proximity to key destinations (usually within ¼ mi), including schools, parks, bus stops, and activity centers;
- collision locations;
- disadvantaged community indicators;
- public comment; and
- judgement of local jurisdiction staff.

Each jurisdiction has developed its own goals and priorities reflecting its community values, outlined in its General Plan. One size does not suit all, and the prioritization process relied on jurisdiction staff to reflect those values and provide input to align priorities with those goals and preferences. Because

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jurisdiction staff had the final say in the project selection and prioritization, any questions about a specific project should be directed to that particular jurisdiction.

COMMENT: *"2. The RATP should include El Porvenir, Lanare, and Tombstone Territory in Chapter 6, and Chapter 6 should include in-depth descriptions of all unincorporated communities' biking and walking infrastructure needs*

At the RATP workshop in Fresno County headquarters Leadership Counsel staff notified Fresno COG and the RATP consultants that the Fresno County maps did not include Lanare, El Porvenir, or Tombstone Territory, and we see that the Draft RTAP still omits these communities. Not only are these neighborhoods important, but residents have been in engaged - some for many years - in discussions regarding active transportation needs in their communities.

Accordingly, FCOG should amend Chapter 6 and other related sections of the RTAP to include maps, descriptions, existing facilities, and planned facilities for El Porvenir, Lanare, Tombstone Territory and similar communities to ensure equitable and comprehensive plans, and implementation thereof."

Response: Decisions on the inclusion of specific unincorporated areas in the R-ATP were made by County of Fresno staff. Questions about those decisions must be directed to the County Public Works Department.

COMMENT: *"3. Fresno COG should provide greater detail regarding projects and clarify its project selection and prioritization process and criteria for the RATP*

The relative lack of planning for ATP infrastructure development in these communities who need it the most makes residents in these communities wonder how projects were prioritized and chosen in the Draft RATP. Because we worked both in Cantua Creek and El Porvenir, we would like to know why one made it to the Plan and the other was left out. Especially, as your research shows that there is an existing need to provide sidewalks so that children can pick up the bus to go to school to Cantua Creek.

Also, a section needs to be added that specifically describes how the high and low demand levels of pedestrian and bicycle trips are determined. If there is not a specific formula or pattern of identifying the level of demand by attractor destinations such as schools, parks, large employers or markets we would like to discuss possible ways of measuring and quantifying the determination, for identifying an area as having high, medium or low demand can determine investment for future infrastructure.

Based on our work in disadvantaged communities in Fresno County, we have found that it the lack of adequate infrastructure in these areas prevents communities from biking and walking to nearby destinations, so decision-makers may not think they would use such infrastructure when in fact residents would use them extensively. As a result there is lack of investment for new projects, improvement or further investment. Fresno COG should take this into account before assuming that ATP projects in small disadvantaged communities would have as much usership as similar projects in other areas.

Along these lines, this RATP will need a section that describes a comprehensive methodology and data-driven criteria for prioritizing projects in communities. Not only is the data very important, but so are the different criteria that are going to govern how the region prioritizes the investments. Significant work needs to happen to prioritize and identify projects in communities and ensure that the Fresno Region can continue to attract state funds so that active transportation infrastructure development actually happens."

Response: See response to #1.

(NOTE: The original LC letter contained no COMMENT #4)

COMMENT: *"5. The RATP should include projects submitted by community residents in disadvantaged unincorporated communities during the ATP and RTP workshops*

Leadership Counsel, Cultiva la Salud, and other community-based organizations participated as outreach mini-grantees in the 2018 RTP process to ensure meaningful participation of underrepresented communities and populations. The first round of workshops asked attendees for

project proposals, including ATP projects, based on their communities' needs. However, we see that many of the projects submitted by residents of communities at these workshops are not included in the Draft RATP's project list.

At the RTP workshop in Cantua Creek for residents of Cantua Creek and El Porvenir, El Porvenir residents submitted descriptions of projects to address their critical biking and walking infrastructure needs, but those projects were not included in the Draft RATP, and there is no mention of El Porvenir (also known as Three Rocks) in the document and no proposed projects in the community. Residents submitted a project to address their need for a sidewalk in El Porvenir starting at W El Progreso Ave and throughout W Hidalgo Ave. In regards to Cantua Creek, residents also submitted sidewalk projects to improve safe walking access in the mobile home sections of the community, and these projects were not included.

Lanare, in which we also hosted an RTP workshop, is not mentioned in Chapter 6, although the project along Mt. Whitney from Chateau Fresno to Marks will benefit them. Lanare residents had asked for sidewalks with curb and gutter along all four of the community's streets. Currently the land on either side of the road is rocky and uneven, so residents walk in the road to reach each other's houses and go to the Community Center. Since cars regularly speed down the roads in their neighborhood, walking in the road presents both a falling risk and a risk of getting hit by cars.

Tombstone Territory residents also came to the RTP workshop in Sanger and submitted sidewalk projects but these projects, which are critical to ensuring their children's safety in walking to and from the bus stop, are not part of the Draft RATP."

Response: Final decisions on the inclusion of specific projects in the R-ATP were made by local jurisdiction staff. Questions about those decisions must be directed to local jurisdiction staff.

COMMENT: "6. The RATP should include other priority projects identified by residents since the first round of workshops.

Since the RTP/ATP workshops, residents that we work with have expressed the need for even further ATP infrastructure in their communities. For example, El Porvenir residents identified a need for a bike path connector to Cantua Creek. Their children attend Cantua Elementary, and many adults in the community need to access the English classes and community events hosted in the elementary school. Many families in El Porvenir do not have cars, or can only afford one car that is used all day by the family's primary breadwinner, so families have a hard time accessing critical meetings and opportunities to advance their education at the school. The four miles without tree coverage is too long to walk for most, so the community has identified a bike path as the needed solution."

Response: See previous response.

COMMENT: "7. The RATP should include more data on projects in project lists including which projects benefit disadvantaged communities

We strongly recommend including estimated timelines and a column to note which projects are in disadvantaged communities, so that COG and members of the public can assess the extent to which projects and investments reflect priorities articulated in the RATP and identified by residents. The maps included in the RATP are helpful, however they do not clearly demonstrate which projects, and the investments tied to each project line up with different jurisdictions and the extent to which projects and investments are in disadvantaged communities. Similarly, an estimated timeline for project completion will help illustrate and track investments and investment priorities."

Response: Although the R-ATP identifies possible funding sources, the R-ATP projects have yet to receive funding. More precise timelines cannot be estimated unless a project has funding attached to it. Chapters 6 - 17 of the R-ATP each correspond to a different jurisdiction. These chapters include maps that clearly indicate the area within each jurisdiction considered to be a disadvantaged community and maps of each jurisdiction's bicycle and pedestrian projects.

COMMENT: "8. We recommend reviewing information on existing ATP infrastructure to correct inaccuracies.

In reading through information regarding existing infrastructure, we noticed an error in data regarding the presence of pedestrian facilities. Figure 6-28 (p.91-92) has inaccurate information regarding

present sidewalks in both sides between E. Central Avenue and E. North Ave on S Orange Ave and S Cedar Avenue. Currently, these streets do not have sidewalks or maintained roads. We are concerned that there may be more inaccuracies. Prior to adoption of the RATP Fresno COG must review its plans, existing infrastructure, and maps to ensure that the RATP reflects current conditions throughout the county."

Response: The mapping of all the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in an area the size of Fresno County is a huge undertaking. Thank you for helping to make the maps in the R-ATP as accurate as possible. Corrections have been made in the R-ATP.

(NOTE: The original LC letter contained 2 COMMENT #8s.)

COMMENT: *"8. The Draft RATP must be more specific about steps for implementing the plan and securing funding*

Chapter 5's description of implementation should be more specific, with timelines and discrete steps listed out. Although we recognize that there are many factors that impact implementation that are out of Fresno COG's control, we note that implementation of the Sustainable Infrastructure Grants program from the 2014 RTP was severely delayed because no funding sources were identified and the adopted plan had not set out a clear implementation process. We hope Fresno COG will ensure that the projects in the project list that benefit disadvantaged communities are not delayed by lack of funding, delayed permits, or lack of prioritization and political will by local government. We do not want to see another program that benefits disadvantaged communities be delayed.

We recommend that staff add detailed and concrete steps to implementation of projects, perhaps by jurisdictions. We also recommend that staff identify any obstacles they see to implementing projects, so that organizations like ours may collaborate with Fresno COG to overcome those obstacles. We would also like to see Fresno COG plan to invest more of its STIP funding and maximize the RTP funding for RATP projects."

Response: Although the R-ATP identifies possible funding sources, the R-ATP projects have yet to receive funding. More precise timelines cannot be estimated unless a project has funding attached to it. Furthermore, the decision on when to apply for funding for a project is not a Fresno COG decision, but a decision for the governing body of the local jurisdiction.

COMMENT: *"9. The Negative Declaration should identify the potential impact of continued under-investment in disadvantaged communities*

While the negative declaration notes that there will be no cumulative impact of the RATP, the RATP, if not amended, threatens to perpetuate a long history of underinvestment in disadvantaged communities. An RATP that forecasts ATP spending that does not equitably and fairly allocate funding to disadvantaged community forecasts continued deficiencies in disadvantaged communities and increased inequality between and among communities in Fresno County."

Response: The vast majority of the projects listed in the R-ATP are in disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, the topic of "under-investment in disadvantaged communities" is not an environmental issue in CEQA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Boren". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Boren, Executive Director