



Board Agenda Item 46

DATE: August 20, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Retroactively Authorize FY 2024-25 Active Transportation Program Project Cycle 7 Funding Applications and Adopt Resolution required by Fresno Council of Governments

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Retroactively authorize the Department of Public Works and Planning's submittal of two FY 2024 -25 Cycle 7 Active Transportation Program applications to the California Department of Transportation for the Caruthers Sidewalk Project (\$9,994,769) and the Easton Sidewalk Project (\$7,994,760) in the total amount of \$17,220,608; and**
- 2. Adopt a Resolution required by Fresno Council of Governments regarding the County's support of and commitment to the project applications submitted to the FY 2024-25 Cycle 7 Active Transportation Program.**

Approval of the first recommended action will retroactively authorize two funding applications submitted by the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for Active Transportation Program (ATP) funding to meet the program deadline of June 17, 2024. Approval of the second recommended action will adopt a resolution required by the Fresno Council of Governments (FCOG) for the receipt of the ATP project applications for the regional bid program. The regional bid funding application will be submitted to FCOG on a later date, which will be announced. Should Caltrans not fund the projects, FCOG will review the applications and may fund the projects at the regional level. This item pertains to locations in Districts 1 and 4.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended actions are not approved, the ATP applications submitted to Caltrans will be withdrawn from funding consideration and will not be submitted to FCOG.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. If any of the applications are approved for ATP funding, 100% of the funding for the approved project will be awarded to the Department. In the event a local match is required, the Department of Public Works and Planning - Road Fund 0010 will cover those costs.

DISCUSSION:

The ATP was created in 2013 with Senate Bill 99, Chapter 359 and Assembly Bill 101, Chapter 354. The

ATP consolidated several existing Federal and state transportation programs, including the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA), and State Safe Routes to School (SRTS), into a single program with a focus on making California a national leader in active transportation.

In 2017, the passage of Senate Bill 1 (SB-1), the Road Repair and Accountability Act, added additional funding to the program.

The purpose of the ATP is to encourage increased use of active modes of transportation by achieving the following goals:

- Increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking;
- Increase safety and mobility for non-motorized users;
- Advance the active transportation efforts of regional agencies to achieve Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction goals, pursuant to SB 375 (of 2008) and SB 341 (of 2009);
- Enhance public health;
- Ensure that disadvantaged communities fully share in the benefits of the program; and
- Provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of active transportation users.

In addition to the statewide ATP competition, FCOG holds a separate call for applications for the regional ATP and has a regional evaluation process. ATP applications may be submitted to either the state or regional programs or both.

On March 22, 2024, Caltrans issued the Cycle 7 call for projects for ATP funding. In order to meet the application deadline of June 17, 2024, the applications were submitted for funding consideration prior to being brought before your Board for approval.

These project locations and scopes were prioritized because they are located in disadvantaged communities, have community support, and can be delivered within strict project timelines. Using the Healthy Places Index, CalEnviroScreen, and the Free or Reduced Priced Meals Plan, each community met the requirements that qualified them as disadvantaged communities. The identifying factors were characteristics such as clean environment, housing, education, social, and transportation conditions across the state. The residents of these communities are generally low-income, identify as Hispanic or Latino, and have limited access to grocery stores and/or fresh food, medical care, and public transportation.

The submitted project applications are as follows:

Caruthers Sidewalk Project (\$9,994,769)

In the disadvantaged community of Caruthers, CA, the project will construct sidewalks with curb & gutter and replace non-ADA-compliant curb ramps and driveway approaches in various locations. A storm drain system will be installed as part of the project to address drainage from the new gutters that will be installed. Roadway reconstruction or widening will be necessary to be able to correct the drainage pattern to the new storm drainage system. The total estimated cost of the project is \$9,994,769 which includes the Design, Right-of-way, and Construction phases. The Design and Right-of-way phases were requested in a grant application to the FY 2023-24 Mid-Cycle Carbon Reduction Program (CRP); however, it is not certain whether the project will receive the funding. It is the ambition of the Department to seek every possible avenue available to fund the County's underserved communities.

Easton Sidewalk Project (\$7,255,839)

In the disadvantaged community of Easton, CA, the project will construct sidewalks with curb & gutter and replace non-ADA-compliant curb ramps and driveway approaches. A storm drain system will be installed as part of the project to address drainage from the new gutters that will be installed.

Roadway reconstruction or widening will be necessary to be able to correct the drainage pattern to the new storm drainage system. The total estimated cost of the project is \$7,255,839. 100% of which would be provided by the ATP should it be selected for funding.

The ATP is an extremely competitive grant program, as reflected by the fact that, in the previous funding Cycle 6, 434 applications were submitted to Caltrans totaling \$4.3 billion in requested funds. but only 67 projects (15%) were selected for a funding total of \$1.149 billion. Every dollar of that funding (100%) benefitted disadvantaged communities because, per ATP guidelines, at least 25% of the funds must be awarded to disadvantaged communities. FCOG was then allocated \$18.6 million which they awarded to the highest-ranked regional projects, of which the County received funding for three more projects totaling \$3.8 million.

For the current Cycle 7, however, only \$568.7 million was available in funding, which raised the stakes even higher to compete for an already highly competitive program. As the total funding allocation is anticipated to continue to decrease for future cycles, the odds of being selected should also decrease as compared to the previous cycles. Applications will be reviewed and scored by the CTC, and the best scoring candidate projects will receive funding, to be announced on the Fall of 2024.

In addition to the statewide process, funds are allocated to each region, or Metropolitan Planning Organization, in order to conduct a competitive process. Any projects not approved for statewide funding will then be considered for the \$6.3 million in funds allocated to the region. FCOG will review and score the projects and the best candidates will receive funding at the regional level.

With your Board's approval of the second recommended action, the Department will be able to provide FCOG with a resolution, as required by their guidelines, that expresses the Board's commitment to, and support of, the ATP and the two projects the County submitted for ATP Cycle 7. The resolution confirms your Board's approval of the underlying program of the projects, as expressed in the ATP applications the County submitted to the ATP Cycle 7. This will ensure that the applications are eligible for consideration in the regional ATP cycle.

As reflected in the applications, letters of support for the project(s) were provided by the Caruthers Unified School District, Caruthers Elementary School, Caruthers High School, Caruthers Community Services District and Washington Colony Elementary School District. In addition, Department staff performed in-person community outreach in both Caruthers and Easton, and through the use of online surveys of active transportation needs.

In previous cycles, ATP Project funds have previously been awarded to the County for projects in the communities of Biola, Dunlap, Lanare, Laton, Riverdale, Del Rey, Calwa, Tranquillity, Cantua Creek, and El Porvenir.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Location Maps

On file with Clerk - ATP Application - Caruthers Sidewalk Project

On file with Clerk - ATP Application - Easton Sidewalk Project

On file with Clerk - Resolution

CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino