



June 29, 2016

Susan Bransen, Executive Director
 California Transportation Commission
 Division of Transportation Planning, MS #32
 P.O. Box 942874
 Sacramento, CA 94274-0001

RE: Comments on RTP Guidelines Update

Dear Ms. Bransen:

Our organizations welcome the opportunity to engage in the recently announced process to develop an update to the California Transportation Commission’s (CTC) Guidelines for Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs). We write to share our initial recommendations about the process itself.

We are part of a broad constituency that supports inclusive, transparent, and accountable regional planning. Our support is based on our experience that good regional planning is crucial to the health and well-being of all the residents of our regions, including the most disadvantaged residents and neighborhoods, and to the protection of our environment and the strength of our economy. The new RTP Guidelines will shape regional outcomes that affect local communities throughout the state. We therefore believe it is crucial to ensure that your process includes the voices of those who are directly affected by regional planning.

We are well situated to assist you in developing and running a model process. Through our deep participation in MPO planning processes across the state, we have worked closely not only with MPO staff and board members, and with local city, county, and congestion management agency (CMA) officials, but also with many community groups and resident leaders who have seen the importance of engaging at the regional level.

In regions across the state, our groups have worked with these community members to bring forward constructive policy, investment, and civic engagement proposals, many of which have been found to be successful both in promoting an inclusive public process and in achieving multiple co-benefits for social equity, environmental sustainability, and shared economic growth, along with greenhouse gas emission reductions.

As a result of this experience, we and these many community members have built up a great deal of collective wisdom to share that can improve the processes by which regional plans are developed and adopted; the policy, investments, and performance of these plans; and implementation that can be more successful in achieving regional goals and the targets of SB 375 itself.

As at the MPO level, where the planning process begins with the adoption of a Public Participation Plan, **we believe that a simple but effective outreach plan** to ensure broad participation of affected communities around the state is important here. **We stand ready to assist you in both developing and implementing a successful plan.**

We note that the need for inclusive participation in this important update process **may mean extending the guideline adoption deadline beyond December 2016** to allow more time to receive feedback and include additional outreach to stakeholders. We ask that you keep an open mind to that possibility.

We look forward to contributing the lessons we have learned from our deep on-the-ground engagement in regional planning on a variety of issues and from a range of perspectives. The completion of the first round of plans under SB 375 by the MPOs in each of the major regions of the state, many of which have adopted or are well on the way to adopting their second plan, makes this an ideal time to learn the lessons of these early plans. We look forward to contributing our experiences to that discussion.

Sincerely,

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Safe Routes to School National Partnership

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