

New Funds for Active Transportation

Program Promotes Hundreds of Projects That Encourage Biking, Walking



Caltrans photo by Thomas Ritter

The Active Transportation Program funds projects that encourage Californians to walk and bike for everyday trips. Los Angeles Metro promotes its Bike Share program, with bikes conveniently located next to this Metro Rail station.

More than 500 projects are in various stages of delivery for a statewide program initiated in 2014 to encourage active modes of transportation — namely biking and walking. The first of those projects are beginning to cross the finish line, with several dozen more expected to be completed by year's end.

The Active Transportation Program (ATP), signed into law in 2013, funds projects in two- or three-year funding cycles. The projects now being completed are from Cycle 1 (2014-15-16). Cycle 2 (2017-18-19) projects are being allocated and design has begun on many of them.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) — responsible for approving funding for the program — is closing in on finalizing the 2017 ATP (Cycle 3), which will cover a two-year funding period (2020-21). At the December meeting, the Commission awarded \$131.8 million for 44 statewide projects and \$26.3 million for 10 small Urban & Rural projects.

In March, the CTC is expected to award an additional \$105 million for the nine largest projects se-

lected by metropolitan planning organizations. Between December 2016 and March 2017, the CTC is expected to award \$263.5 million for Cycle 3. At least one-quarter of ATP funds are designated to disadvantaged communities.

The CTC's adoption of Cycle 3 is not authorization to begin work on projects. Rather, it means the CTC can begin to allocate funding for those projects in March, pending technical changes and corrections that must be made before final approval is granted in May.

The ATP consolidated several federal and state transportation programs, including the Transportation Alternatives Program, Bicycle Transportation Account, and State Safe Routes to School, into a single program with a focus to make California a national leader in active transportation. The ATP is administered by the Caltrans Division of Local Assistance, Office of Active Transportation and Special Programs.

The bicycle and pedestrian projects funded by the ATP not only encourage increased use of active modes of transportation, they support sustainable communi-

The bicycle and pedestrian projects funded by the ATP not only encourage increased use of active modes of transportation, they support sustainable communities and healthier, low-carbon travel choices.

ties and healthier, low-carbon travel choices — ensuring that disadvantaged communities fully share in the program’s benefits. The ATP also strives to enhance public health, in part by reducing childhood obesity through programs for safe routes to schools.

The number of ATP applications Caltrans receives for each cycle far outweigh available funds, so each project is given a score based on the project’s potential for increased walking and biking, among other factors.

A \$7.2 million project in Chico received one of the largest allocations in December and is a good example of how many ATP projects focus on connectivity throughout a community using a combination of paths, sidewalks and technology. It will fund bike paths connecting downtown, Chico State University, a junior high, a high school, a regional hospital, adjacent neighborhoods and existing converted rail-

road to bike trail. The existing traffic signals will be outfitted with pedestrian signal crossing equipment, updated detection equipment and associated traffic signal timing plans and pedestrian refuge islands at uncontrolled crossings. Appropriate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramps and sidewalks will be included.

In the Small Urban & Rural Projects category, \$6.8 million was allocated for pedestrian and bicycle trails at the Ventura/Santa Barbara county line, filling a gap between established bike paths that are part of the California Coastal Trail. The project will construct a bike/pedestrian bridge over railroad tracks.

Another project in the small urban/rural category will construct 1.31 miles of a 12-foot-wide multiuse trail in Mendocino County to connect the north and south segments of the Fort Bragg Coastal Trail, part of both the Pacific Coast Bikeway and the California Coastal Trail, for a continuous, safe 6.3-mile multiuse facility through western Fort Bragg. The ATP will fund \$766,000 of the \$1.5 million project. **MM**

Source: Active Transportation Program Managers Teresa McWilliam and Ted Davini



Caltrans photo by Thomas Ritter

The bike path and pedestrian undercrossing at La Conchita, along U.S. Highway 101 in Ventura County, were completed in 2014.



Caltrans photo by Steven Hellon

Active transportation is a way of life in the city of Davis in Yolo County, which has improved many intersections for bicyclists' safety.