

Background and Purpose

Under the most recent federal transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, several grant programs were consolidated so as to streamline federal transportation funding. Discretionary federal grant programs such as Transportation Enhancements (TE), Recreational Trails, and Safe Routes to Schools no longer exist but projects eligible activities under these programs are now covered under the new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Roughly two percent of the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund for Federal Aid Highways is reserved for TAP projects. This amount is divided among the states based on the state's proportionate share of TE funds from 2009.

In California, the Active Transportation Program (ATP) (Senate Bill 99, Chapter 359 and Assembly Bill 101, Chapter 354) was signed in to law on September 26, 2013. The ATP consolidates existing federal and state transportation programs, including TAP, Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA), and State Safe Routes to School (SR2S), into a single program with a focus to make California a national leader in active transportation.

The purpose of 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,
- ◆ Enhance public health, including reduction of childhood obesity through the use of programs including, but not limited to, projects eligible for Safe Routes to School Program funding
- ◆ 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.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) recently developed guidelines for the program, March of 2015. State and federal law require that ATP funding be distributed on a competitive basis as follows:

- ◆ 40 percent to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) in urban areas with populations greater than 200,000. A minimum of 25 percent of these funds must benefit disadvantaged communities.
- ◆ 10 percent to small urban (5,001 - 200,000 population) and rural areas (5,000 or less in population). Areas must bid competitively for funds and a minimum of 25 percent of these funds must benefit disadvantaged communities.
- ◆ 50 percent to projects competitively awarded by the CTC on a statewide basis

ATP projects must include an 11.47 percent match except for projects predominantly benefiting a disadvantage community, stand-alone non-infrastructure projects and safe routes to schools projects.

Eligibility and Project Selection Process

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include cities, counties, Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), transit agencies, natural resource and public land agencies, public schools, and tribal governments. Private nonprofit organizations may apply for recreational trail projects as long as it benefits the general public. All projects must meet one or more of the above listed program goals and can be both infrastructure (planning, design, and construction of facilities) and non-infrastructure (education, encourage, enforcement, etc.) type projects. There is a \$250,000 minimum request for funds for infrastructure projects. All projects must be consistent with the adopted Regional Transportation Plan. ATP project applications are submitted to Caltrans and final listing of projects is approved by the CTC. Over the first two ATP cycles, the program has been quite competitive and a large number of grant applications have not been successful.

Examples of eligible ATP projects include:

- ◆ Development of new or improvements to existing bikeways and walkways that improve mobility, access, or safety for non-motorized users
- ◆ Elimination of hazardous conditions on existing bikeways and walkways.
- ◆ Preventative maintenance of bikeways and walkways with the primary goal of extending the service life of the facility.
- ◆ Installation of traffic control devices to improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- ◆ Safe Routes to School projects that improve the safety of children walking and bicycling to school, in accordance with Section 1404 of Public Law 109-59.
- ◆ Safe routes to transit projects, which will encourage transit by improving biking and walking routes to mass transportation facilities and school bus stops.
- ◆ Secure bicycle parking at employment centers, park and ride lots, rail and transit stations, and ferry docks and landings for the benefit of the public.
- ◆ Bicycle-carrying facilities on public transit, including rail and ferries.
- ◆ Establishment or expansion of a bike share program.
- ◆ Recreational trails and trailheads, park projects that facilitate trail linkages or connectivity to non-motorized corridors, and conversion of abandoned railroad corridors to trails.
- ◆ Development of a community wide bike, pedestrian, safe routes to schools, or active transportation plan in a disadvantaged community.
- ◆ Education programs to increase bicycling and walking, and other non-infrastructure investments that demonstrate effectiveness in increasing active transportation, including but not limited to:
 - Development and implementation of bike-to-work or walk-to-work school day/month programs.

- Conducting bicycle and/or pedestrian counts, walkability and/or bikeability assessments or audits, or pedestrian and/or bicycle safety analysis to inform plans and projects.
- Conducting pedestrian and bicycle safety education programs.
- Development and publishing of community walking and biking maps, including school route/travel plans.
- Development and implementation of walking school bus or bike train programs.
- Components of open streets events directly linked to the promotion of a new infrastructure project.
- Targeted enforcement activities around high pedestrian and/or bicycle injury and/or fatality locations (intersections or corridors). These activities cannot be general traffic enforcement but must be tied to improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
- School crossing guard training.
- School bicycle clinics.
- Development and implementation of programs and tools that maximize use of available and emerging technologies to implement the goals of the Active Transportation Program.

For a project to be considered a Safe Route to Schools project, the project must directly increase safety and convenience for public school students to walk and/or bike to school and be located within two miles of a public school or within the vicinity of a public school bus stop. Other than traffic education and enforcement activities, non-infrastructure projects do not have a location restriction. Additional requirements exist for recreational projects. These are identified in the Recreational Trails Element.

Project Selection Process

ATP projects are selected for grant funding through a competitive process administered by Caltrans. Applicants must submit a nine narrative question application along with supporting documentation. Projects are scored by a project evaluation committee based on the applicant’s response to the following selection criteria:

- Potential for increased walking or biking
- Potential for reducing the injury and fatality rate of bicyclists and pedestrians
- Level of public participation and involvement
- Improved public health
- Benefit to a disadvantaged community
- Cost effectiveness
- Leveraging of non-ATP funds
- Use of the California Conservation Corps
- Performance on past grants

For the 2015 grant cycle, a total of 617 applications were received requesting a total of \$1 billion dollars. Only \$35.5 million was available under the small urban and rural component with only 27 successful projects. Nearly three-quarters of these funds will primarily benefit a disadvantaged community and half

are considered Safe Routes to School projects. For the statewide competition, 87 projects requesting a total of \$179 million in funds were successful. Roughly 88 percent of these funds will directly benefit a disadvantaged community.

Active Transportation Plan

The ATP guidelines state that a RTPA may prepare an Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and further specifies components which should be included in the plan. In an effort to be more competitive for the next ATP grant funding cycle, the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission (ICLTC) has hired LSC Transportation Consultants Inc. to prepare an ATP for Inyo County.

Per the CTC ATP guidelines, this document will include several elements:

- ◆ **Bicycle Element** – A minor update to the 2008 Inyo County Collaborative Bikeways Plan
- ◆ **Pedestrian Element** – A chapter demonstrating the need for pedestrian facilities in Inyo County, City of Bishop and tribal lands
- ◆ **Recreational Trails Element** – A chapter identifying potential recreational trail projects.
- ◆ **Safe Routes to Schools Element** – Create Safe Routes to Schools Maps for all public schools in Inyo County and update the existing maps for City of Bishop schools.

Appendix A presents a checklist of the required elements for an Active Transportation Plan as identified in Section III E of the California Transportation Commission 2015 ATP Guidelines.

Community Involvement and Coordination

In an effort to more completely understand the types of improvements needed to increase active transportation in Inyo County, the study team conducted a community involvement and stakeholder coordination program in conjunction with the Inyo County 2015 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update, as there is significant overlap between the two projects. As referenced in Table 1 a wide variety of agencies and groups were contacted to request input and invited to the public workshops. Additional outreach to each school district in the County was conducted in order to address safe routes to schools needs, particularly for disadvantaged students. Both the superintendent and the transportation coordinator were contacted for the larger school districts. Appendix B includes correspondence to and responses received from the various stakeholders for the RTP and ATP process.

An evening public workshop was held at the Bishop City Council Chambers on December 4th, 2014 to solicit input from northern Inyo County residents. A second workshop was held in the southern portion of the county at the Boulder Creek RV Park, just south of Lone Pine. The workshops were advertised in the Inyo Register and on the local radio station. At the workshops, the Consultant presented an overview of the ATP and RTP process. A significant portion of the workshop was dedicated to listening to input on transportation needs and issues and what attendees see as top priorities for Inyo County. Appendix B includes a public comment log from the public workshops and the public workshop flyer. There were roughly 16 attendees at the public workshop in Bishop, while only two Inyo County staff and the Caltrans representative attended the Lone Pine workshop. While this is not a statistically significant proportion of the total population of Inyo County, the responses indicated that Inyo County residents generally place a high level of importance on safety and connectivity in terms of active transportation. Overall, the responses were varied and were considered in the development of this ATP.

TABLE 1 : Participation Process During ATP/RTP Development

Participant	Activity	Date
Study Steering Committee	Project Kick-off Meeting	10/10/2014
Tribal Governments (NAHC, Benton Paiute, Big Pine Paiute, Bishop Paiute, Fort Independence, Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone, Timbisha Shoshone)	Contacted Requesting Input and Invite to Public Workshop	11/19/2014
Natural Resource Agencies (BLM, USFS, NPS, CA Fish & Game, WQCB, APCD, LADWP)	Contacted Requesting Input and Invite to Public Workshop	11/19/2014, 11/20/2014, 12/08/2014
Private Sector Truck traffic generators, private transportation operators	Contacted Requesting Input	12/10/2014
Adjacent RTPAs Mono LTC, Kern COG, SANBAG, Nye County	Contacted Requesting Input	12/8/2014, 12/09/2014
Public and Human Service Transportation Operators ESTA, IMHA, ESAAA	Contacted Requesting Input and Invite to Public Workshop	11/19/2014, 12/09/2014
Transportation Advocacy Groups Aerohead Cycles, Adventure Trails, Eastside Velo, Eastern Sierra Shuttle	Contacted Requesting Input and Invite to Public Workshop	11/20 - 21/ 2014
Inyo County Schools	Contacted Requesting Input and Review of Safe Routes to Schools Maps	11/2014

This ATP is consistent with the 2015 Regional Transportation Plan, City of Bishop General Plan and Inyo County General Plan.

In addition the public input process continued throughout the course of the ATP development. A public hearing on the Draft ATP and associated environmental document will be held as part of a regularly scheduled ICLTC meeting. Many of the projects identified in this ATP come from the Inyo County Collaborative Bikeways Plan which included its own public input process as follows:

- ◆ General Public – Public meetings held in Bishop and Independence in January 2006
- ◆ Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce – Interview with Executive Director

- ◆ Bicycling Community – Email to California Association of Bicycling Organizations, email to Eastern Sierra Cyclists, Interview with staff of Aerohead Cycles (Bishop bike shop)
- ◆ Tecopa Hot Springs – Interview with concessionaire manager
- ◆ Bishop-area schools – Meeting with City-School-Tribe working group
- ◆ Bishop Paiute Tribe – Meetings with grants writer/planner and environmental manager
- ◆ Lone Pine Paiute Tribe – Meeting with tribal administrator

Additionally, residents of the City of Bishop were engaged through a series of four meetings. The purpose of the first set of meetings was to identify all active transportation needs. The purpose of the second set of meetings was to refine and prioritize the Active Transportation Projects which were conceptualized or suggested in the first meeting. Public and stakeholder input at these meetings identified the following active transportation projects as high priority:

- ◆ Diaz to School Bicycle Path
- ◆ Fowler Sidewalk
- ◆ Sierra St. to School Bike Path
- ◆ Home Street School Connection Path
- ◆ Reconstruction of the bike path between Sierra Street and North Sierra Highway in the City of Bishop
- ◆ Construction of a Class I bicycle path between Hobson to Coats street in the City of Bishop

Outreach to Disadvantaged Communities

According to US Census data, the census tracts which include the City of Bishop and the Bishop Paiute Reservation, Lone Pine, Shoshone, Valley Wells and Furnace Creek are considered disadvantaged. Schools in Big Pine are also considered disadvantaged. Environmental justice is a key component of the Active Transportation Program. As part of the community involvement program for this ATP, the Study Team reached out directly to each Native American Tribe in the County. The Bishop Paiute Tribe responded and provided copies of their most recent Transportation Plan and proposed projects. The Study Team also individually contacted agencies who provide services to residents who may be financially and/or transportation disadvantaged such as Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA), Eastern Sierra Area Agency for the Aging (ESAAA) and Inyo Mono Association for the Handicapped (IMAH). Stakeholders indicated that a larger network of sidewalks in the City of Bishop would help make boarding and alighting of ESTA demand response buses easier for residents with disabilities who use a wheelchair. Additionally, the *Inyo County Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan* was reviewed in development of this RTP to ensure that this document addresses the mobility needs of the low income and elderly population.

Native American Tribes

As indicated above, the *Bishop Paiute Tribal Transit and Transportation Improvements Plan, 2013* was reviewed. The plan identified mobility and active transportation needs for the tribe. The reservation is conveniently located within walking/bicycling distance of Bishop schools, hospital and commercial

facilities. However, tribal roads have only dirt shoulders with no street lighting. Often the shoulders are muddy or overgrown with vegetation making it difficult for people to walk or ride off the travel way. Street lighting would also greatly increase the safety and visibility of bicyclist and pedestrians travelling on the interior of the reservation. Bicycle and pedestrian paths have been constructed and more are planned in the Conservation and Open Space area (COSA) in the southeast corner of the reservation. Perhaps the most important active transportation improvement is to pave commonly used unmaintained trail (the Indian Trail) through the reservation and LADWP land used as a shortcut to access the schools and the hospital to the east.

Other tribal reservations in Inyo County communities are not located as closely to services and schools as the Bishop Paiute Tribe. The Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Reservation and Fort Independence residents must travel anywhere from a half mile to two miles along US 395 to reach goods, services, and schools in the main community. Extending sidewalks and shoulders along the stretch of highway from the reservation to the communities is an important active transportation need for these communities.

Outreach to Bicycle and Pedestrian Advocacy Groups

In regions with a low population and dispersed communities, the best outreach methods are often through advocacy groups. As part of the ATP/RTP effort, the Consultant Team contacted:

- ◆ Aerohead Cycles- This bike shop did not respond but had previously provided input for the Inyo County Collaborative Bikeways Plan.
- ◆ Adventure Trails – Adventure Trails promotes ATV trails and use in Inyo County. The organization is promoting a linked network of trails and county roads which can be used by ATV enthusiasts to reach goods and services from recreational trails. Currently some of these connections are located on County roads and illegal for this type of vehicle. This type of project could be partially funded with Recreational Trails Program related funds.
- ◆ Eastside Velo – Representatives from the Eastside Velo Cycling Club attended the public workshop in Bishop. Comments from Eastside Velo are included in the public comment log (Appendix B) and summarized below:
 - US 395 through Bishop is dangerous for cyclists
 - Bicycle facilities should be more visible
 - Need more bike racks
 - Sidewalks will reduce conflicts with bicyclists in bicycle lanes
 - Yaney and Home Street are important bicycling routes
 - Roadway maintenance such as chip sealing is dangerous for cyclists.
 - Keep up maintenance of bicycle facilities
 - The Club can take the lead for bicycle education
 - Proponent of Lower Owens River Projects
- ◆ Eastern Sierra Shuttle – This private transportation operator transports clients between mountain trailheads and Inyo County communities. Some of the trailheads can only be accessed using four wheel drive vehicles and the roadways leading to the trailheads can sometimes be intimidating for visitors. Eastern Sierra Shuttle Service identified the following roadways which are considered in poor shape:
 - Taboose Creek Road – Access Taboose Pass trailhead
 - Foothill Road and Forest Service Roads – Access Shepherd Pass trailhead

- North Fork of Oak Creek Road – Access Baxter Pass trailhead
- Division Creek Powerhouse Road – Access Sawmill Pass trailhead
- North Lake Road – Narrow roadway with steep drop offs – Access fishing and the Paiute Pass trailhead
- Mc Murray Meadows Road and Forest Service Roads to access Red Lake trailhead

The operator also indicated a need for a parking/loading zone area at Whitney Portal, as this area can get congested on peak weekends. Road closures as part of the Whitney Portal Road resurfacing project may also cause some issues.

Outreach to Natural Resource Agencies and Public Land Owners

Only two percent of Inyo County land is under private ownership. Therefore input from natural resource agencies and other public land owners such as the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) is important to the development of an Active Transportation Plan.

Death Valley National Park

National Park Service (NPS) holdings in Inyo County include Death Valley National Park and Manzanar Historic Site. Death Valley National Park encompasses over 3,000,000 acres and receives around 1,000,000 visitors per year. Death Valley National Park provided detailed input to both the development of the Regional Transportation Plan and the Active Transportation Plan. In terms of bicycle circulation and safety, park staff supports the proposed bicycle projects along SR 190 and 178 in the Inyo County Collaborative Bikeways Plan. If constructed, the park requests that any new signage align with existing NPS signage themes and designs as well as provide access for persons with disabilities. In terms of pedestrian circulation/safety, there are traffic congestion and pedestrian safety issues in the Furnace Creek area, Stovepipe Wells, and Panamint Springs Resort. NPS is also concerned about the proliferation of illegal OHV trails. Potential Recreational Trails Program projects include upgrades to the current Salt Creek Boardwalk.

Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bishop Field Office manages hundreds of miles of routes and trails along with dozens of facilities across 750,000 acres in Inyo and Mono Counties. The Field Office performs periodic maintenance on high-use routes and trails as funding permits. The BLM's Facility Asset Management database hosts a complete inventory of trails and facilities along with their current condition. Facility condition assessments are conducted on a regular schedule and determine where BLM directs federally appropriated maintenance and engineering funds. The BLM is always open to input from various user groups such as mountain bikers, climbers, and OHV users as to how to improve recreational transportation facilities. Funding from federal and state transportation grant programs is always helpful in accomplishing recreation objectives on public land. The BLM hopes to qualify for such funds in the future so that they can continue to improve transportation and recreation infrastructure to best meet public needs.

One particular area of interest in Inyo County is the Alabama Hills Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) which attracts a wide variety of users from movie buffs to climbers. The Alabama Hills Interpretive Plan sets forth guidelines and recommendations for interpretation and environmental education at the Alabama Hills SRMA. High priority strategies in the interpretive plan which fall under the umbrella of active transportation projects include maps, signs and kiosks and are identified in the Recreational Trails Chapter.

Owens Valley Area and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power LADWP

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is the primary land owner in the Owens Valley in Inyo County, with over 310,497 acres. Much of LADWP land is available for public day use and/or is leased to other entities such as the City of Bishop or ranchers. Bicycling, hiking, and OHV use is permitted on existing trails except where posted.

The Lower Owens River Project (LORP) was identified in a 1991 EIR as mitigation for impacts related to groundwater pumping by LADWP from 1970 to 1990. The primary goal of the project was to release water to the lower Owens River and to restore the ecosystem while providing for sustainable recreation, livestock grazing, agriculture and other activities. The LORP area includes 77,656 acres near Lone Pine and Independence and includes nearly 62 miles of river. The return of water flow in the Lower Owens River has enhanced recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors. The Lower Owens River Project Recreation Use Plan was drafted to minimize conflicts between recreation users, resource conservationists, water providers, and ranchers.

The LORP Recreation Use Plan proposes several projects which are relevant to this ATP:

- ◆ Lower Owens River Trail – A multi-use trail for motorized and non-motorized users along almost the entire length of the river in the project area using established roads and trails. Some of the USFS roads will require maintenance and grading.
- ◆ Kiosks and Staging Areas – Six locations including kiosk, gravel driveway and parking area
- ◆ Directional Signage – Along US 395 at LORP gateway locations to direct users to the appropriate staging areas
- ◆ Other hiking, biking trails and signage throughout the interior of the project area

Representatives from LADWP were contacted for input and invited to the public workshop. LADWP responded with a letter voicing concerns with bicycle and pedestrian projects identified in the 2008 Inyo County Collaborative Bikeways Plan. Copies of this correspondence are presented in Appendix B. LADWP's concerns can be summarized as follows:

- ◆ Right of way acquisition or dedication will be required for many of the proposed bicycle projects.
- ◆ Marketing and promotion of bicycle paths on LADWP land may lead to liability issues.
- ◆ Projects should not interfere with LADWP operations and routine maintenance activities
- ◆ It will be important to establish who will be responsible for maintenance of paved bicycle paths
- ◆ Projects should not interfere with LADWP lessee activities
- ◆ Some proposed bicycle projects are located in wetlands and will require careful environmental analysis

As the various entities consider implementation of the bicycle and pedestrian projects listed in the Inyo County Collaborative Bikeways Plan and this ATP, more detailed analysis should be performed in collaboration with LADWP so as to provide the greatest safety and mobility for Inyo County residents

with the least negative impact on the environment and private land holders. The Inyo County RTP contains a policy which addresses LADWP concerns.

Outreach to Schools

Each school district in Inyo County was contacted multiple times to request input on the most commonly travelled routes to school, determine an approximate percentage of students who walk/bike to school, and identify safety issues on school routes. If applicable, both the superintendent and transportation coordinator were contacted. Specific responses are summarized in the Safe Routes to School Chapter.