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Mr. Phillip A. Washington, CEO
Metro
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Policy Brief: Funding for Active Transportation in Los Angeles County
Advancing Health and Social Equity in Metro's LRTP and Expenditure Plan**

Dear Mr. Washington:

Investing in Place and the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC) are excited to welcome you to Los Angeles and look forward to your leadership at Metro in building and operating a world-class transportation system for the region. In recent years, Metro has made great strides in planning for multimodal travel, most notably with its award-winning Countywide Complete Streets Policy and First/Last Mile Strategic Plan. We applaud these efforts and support their implementation through the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update. The LRTP, and accompanying discussions of a potential new revenue measure, provides a critical opportunity to remedy active transportation's historical underfunding in Los Angeles County and ensure that future investments provide a safe, accessible and equitable transportation system for people of all ages and abilities. This brief summarizes three years of research on how best to achieve these objectives.

In 2013, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership (National Partnership) and the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC) published [Transportation Finance in Los Angeles County: An Overview](#), which examined current funding levels for walking and bicycling in Los Angeles County. Only one percent of Metro's 2009 LRTP was allocated to active transportation, despite these modes comprising 19 percent of all trips (2009 NHTS) and 39 percent of all traffic fatalities (2010 SWITRS). Nearly half of all trips are short—under three miles—but the overwhelming majority of these trips are driven due to a lack of safe and accessible infrastructure for mobility options. To address active transportation's chronic underfunding in Los Angeles County, the National Partnership and LACBC made a series of policy recommendations including adopting a complete streets policy and setting aside a significant amount of funding for walking and bicycling. In July 2014, the Metro Board adopted a motion directing staff to report back in six months with an Active Transportation Finance Strategy to quantify the funding need for walking and bicycling and begin an informed conversation about potential means to address it. Metro subsequently adopted its Countywide Complete Streets Policy in October 2014.

Earlier this year, the National Partnership and LACBC published [Best Practices for Funding Active Transportation with County Transportation Sales Taxes](#). While Los Angeles County is one of the strongest self-help counties in the nation for transportation investments, with close to 70 percent of the county's transportation funding coming from existing local sales taxes (Propositions A and C and Measure R), none of these existing three county transportation sales taxes dedicates a significant amount of funding towards improving safety and convenience for people walking, bicycling or accessing transit. Since 2000, several California counties have set aside as much as 11 percent of sales tax revenues for walking, bicycling and safe routes to school projects and programs, providing a potential model for Los Angeles County as Metro again considers an additional sales tax measure. In addition, many counties subject all funding from the taxes to complete streets policies that require incorporation of walking and bicycling improvements into all projects, while Alameda County requires a minimum percentage of each municipality's local return be dedicated to active transportation. Based on these best practices and our own needs assessment for Los Angeles County, the National Partnership and LACBC recommended that Metro allocate at least 10 percent of any future measure to active transportation, with a further stipulation that 20 percent of local return be dedicated to walking and biking.

Since 2012, the National Partnership, LACBC and Investing in Place have conducted about a dozen convenings with elected officials, policy makers, public agencies and community-based organizations across the Los Angeles region. Through these convenings we have found overwhelming support across the county and among the public, nonprofit and private sectors for increasing investments in active transportation. Stakeholders from public health, social and economic justice, environmental and business organizations have rallied around active transportation as a way to address the triple bottom line of environment, economy and equity. Moreover, participants in our convenings have expressed interest in expanding this agenda to address health and social equity outcomes from transportation generally. Our partners see active transportation not as an isolated goal, but as the entry point to expanding our focus on neighborhoods and communities. Walkable, bikeable and transit-rich communities are safe and accessible places to raise children and age-in-place, and equitable places where mobility doesn't depend on having access to a car. As one of the largest investors in public space in Los Angeles County, Metro is able to leverage its resources to enhance opportunity and quality of life for residents across the county, not just provide faster home-to-work trips.

Investing in Place and LACBC are excited to work with you to expand Metro's focus from commutes to communities and to ensure that transportation investments lift up those communities and families with the highest need. We look forward to engaging in the LRTP update and potential ballot measure expenditure plan development to ensure that active transportation, public health and social equity are appropriately prioritized. Please count us as partners in engaging nontraditional stakeholders in your outreach for the LRTP and ballot measure.

Thank you for your attention to these issues. If you have any questions, we can be reached at jessica@investinginplace.org and eric@la-bike.org.

Sincerely,


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