Proposal for Revision to the Needs Assessment for Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership appreciates the opportunity to participate in the Statewide Needs Assessment Work Group and provide comments for the revised report. We support the effort of the Work Group to address the revenue shortfall identified in the 2011 Statewide Transportation Needs Assessment report with recommendations for proposed efficiencies, performance outcomes, and new revenue options. In addition, we believe the Work Group should consider a major revision of the bicycle and pedestrian need estimate identified in the 2011 report. The 2011 report significantly underestimates the need for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure over the next ten years, citing only $4.5 billion in system management and expansion, and zero dollars for preservation of the existing system. Instead, we estimate the statewide need for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure over the next 10 years at approximately $18 billion. The inadequacy of the 2011 estimate and our revised estimate are based on the following:

- **Preservation Need:** Maintenance costs for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure were assumed in the 2011 report under roadway maintenance costs. Subsuming preservation costs under roadway costs does not account for dedicated bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure including pathways, bridges, tunnels, etc., that also require rehabilitation and routine maintenance. The East Bay Regional Park District estimates the combined costs of resurfacing and routine maintenance for separated pathways at $25,000 per mile per year. California proudly boasts several decades of aging dedicated bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure requiring maintenance, therefore an estimate of zero dollars for preservation of that infrastructure is inaccurate.

- **Expansion Need**: The 2011 estimate of expansion need for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure was compiled based on Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) for the 22 Regional Transportation Planning Agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) that were adopted prior to SB375. Since that time regions have put much greater emphasis on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in their RTPs in order to both meet greenhouse gas emission targets and in response to increasing demand for these modes. Three of the four big MPOs – SACOG, SANDAG, and SCAG – have increased the funding estimate for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure by approximately four times the pre-SB375 RTP estimate. Due to this exponential increase, the new RTP values should be used to estimate bicycle and pedestrian need and extrapolated statewide, assuming that other regions also must increase their support of active transportation to meet SB375 targets. The following table outlines this shift in future funding priorities at SACOG, SCAG, and SANDAG, and calculates a more than 400 percent average funding increase.

Revised RTP estimates	SACOG[1]	SCAG[2]	SANDAG[3]
New RTP adopted	2012	2012	2012
Years included in RTP	23 (to 2035)	23 (to 2035)	38 (to 2050)
Estimate for bike/ped in new RTP			
System Expansion	$2.8B	$6.7B	$3.8B
Preservation and System Management	$600M	-	-
Cost estimate for first 10 years of new RTP	**$1.5B**	**$2.9B**	**$1.0B**
Cost estimate used in 2011 Statewide Needs Assessment Report[4]	**$255M**	**$620M**	**$412M**
Percentage increase	***590%***	***470%***	***240%***

- Based on the significant increase in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure investment reflected in the revised RTPs for three of the big MPOs across the state and the additional cost of preservation of the existing dedicated system that is still discounted, we estimate **the statewide bicycle and pedestrian need is approximately 400 percent greater than the estimate stated in the 2011 report, or $18 billion statewide.** We contend that this revised estimate should continue to increase with rising demand for active transportation modes.

- Regions are also in the process of creating and adopting visionary bicycle plans, pedestrian plans, Safe Routes to School, and safe routes to transit plans that will identify the gaps in the existing system and areas of critical safety need. Significant areas of need for Safe Routes to School infrastructure improvements have been identified in the vicinity of schools, especially in lower-income and rural areas. Bicycle, pedestrian, safe routes to transit and Safe Routes to School plans, once completed, will require additional consultation and revision of the needs estimate.

- **Safety Needs:** Due to several decades without significant investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure[5] during which motor-vehicle infrastructure expanded rapidly, regional bicycle and pedestrian networks are incomplete and contain dangerous gaps in the system. The result is an alarmingly disproportionate percentage of fatalities and serious injuries to bicyclists and pedestrians relative to the total from auto-related crashes. 22.7 percent[6] of fatalities and serious injuries are inflicted on bicyclists and pedestrians compared to 15 percent[7] of trip mode share. This percentage is exacerbated when you consider the risk of serious injury or fatality *per mile traveled,* considering that pedestrians and bicyclists travel many fewer miles per trip than the average car trip. Therefore, a focused investment is required to close the dangerous gaps and complete active transportation networks to reach a relative level of safety comparable to other modes.

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[1] http://www.sacog.org/2035/files/MTP-SCS/MTPSCS%20Executive%20Summary.pdf
[2] http://rtpscs.scag.ca.gov/
[3] http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=349&fuseaction=projects.detail
[4] http://www.catc.ca.gov/reports/2012%20Reports/Trans_Needs_Assessment_corrected_01172012.pdf
[5] http://www.walkinginfo.org/funding/history.cfm
[6] http://www.chp.ca.gov/switrs/
[7] http://www.travelbehavior.us/Nancy-pdfs/Walking%20and%20Biking%20in%20California%20Final.pdf

- **Performance Outcomes and Efficiencies:** The project prioritization list for the Needs Assessment based on Streets and Highways Code Section 167 should make an exception for active transportation infrastructure in order to include closing dangerous gaps in regional bicycle and pedestrian networks and improvements for bicycle and pedestrian access along major arterials with the greatest safety risk. Completing the bicycle and pedestrian networks should be on par with rehabilitation of decaying bridges and roadway infrastructure. Significant efficiencies can be achieved due to the high benefit/cost ratio of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in areas of high safety risk.

We request that the revised Needs Assessment Report include our revised estimate for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure of $18 billion over the next 10 years, as well as include an exception in the project prioritization list to close dangerous gaps and complete active transportation networks.

It is critically important that we include an accurate estimate for the bicycle and pedestrian needs assessment for the future of transportation decisions in California. Safety for all Californians continues to be the top priority for the state, and requires a focused effort on active transportation to address the inequitable safety risk for bicyclists and pedestrians. State goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, addressing congestion and air quality issues, and improving health will also be achieved through prioritization of active transportation.