

Date of Hearing: March 27, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

AB 980 (Friedman) – As Amended March 13, 2023

SUBJECT: Active Transportation Program: report

SUMMARY: This bill requires an applicant that receives funding under the Active Transportation Program (ATP) for a project to, within one year of completing the project, submit a report to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) describing how the project met active transportation goals.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Active Transportation Program within Caltrans for the purpose of encouraging increased use of active modes of transportation, such as biking and walking. (Streets and Highways Code (SHC) 2380)
- 2) Establishes the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) including the powers and duties to develop the full potential of all resources and opportunities that are now, and may become, available to the state and to regional and local agencies for meeting California's transportation needs. (GOV Code 14000-14005, 14030)
- 3) Establishes the California Transportation Commission, including the powers and duties to develop guidelines and project selection criteria for the ATP. (SHC 2382)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: In 2013, ATP was created by consolidating several existing state and federal programs into a single program and was originally funded at about \$123 million a year. The goals of the ATP include, but are not limited to, increasing the proportion of trips accomplished by walking and biking, increasing the safety and mobility of non-motorized users, advancing efforts of regional agencies to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals, enhancing public health, and providing a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of users including disadvantaged communities.

In 2017, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed the Road Repair and Accountability Act (SB 1). SB 1 directs \$100 million annually from the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account to the ATP, significantly augmenting the available funding for this popular program. In addition, in the 2022-23 Budget Act \$1 billion General Fund was provided for ATP on a one-time basis. The federal government's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), passed by Congress and signed by President Biden in 2022, also includes discretionary grants to help U.S. communities address significant gaps in their bike lane, sidewalk, and multi-use trail networks.

In addition, to the state's ATP program, active transportation projects such as bike lanes and sidewalks can be funded by other state and local programs. Local governments can use their local streets and roads funding for these types of projects. Other state funding programs that have similar goals can also fund ATP. These programs include the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, the Transformative Climate Communities Program, the Local Partnership Program, and the State Transportation Improvement Program.

Encouraging active transportation is important, but outcomes from investments unknown.

Promoting active modes of transportation is central to California's goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), managing traffic congestion, improving safety for non-motorized travelers, and increasing public health outcomes.

However, it has been very difficult to assess if the investments the state has made are resulting in the desired outcomes. In 2019, the Legislative Analyst's Office found that of the 776 total projects funded at that time, 584 projects (75%) are infrastructure projects, such as constructing bicycle lanes and sidewalk improvements. Additionally, 136 projects (18%) are non-infrastructure projects, such as educational initiatives to improve bike safety and funding the state's active transportation resource center. Lastly, 56 projects (7%) are to develop plans for improving active transportation within specific communities.

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) reviewed data provided by Caltrans about the outcomes of completed projects and found the data to be of such poor quality that "it is impossible at this time to make any meaningful determinations about whether the ATP is resulting in increased walking and biking."

In addition, as described above, the program has numerous goals that need to be met. The wide variety of goals may contribute to some of the challenges in assessing the benefits and outcomes of the program's investments.

This bill requires an applicant that receives funding from ATP, within one year after completing the project, to submit a report to the CTC describing how the project met active transportation goals and how the applicant measures project success.

This will provide the state with information to help measure the outcomes and cost-effectiveness of the ATP program. In addition, requiring reporting on results will help to hold applicants accountable for delivering projects that meet the program's goals. This could help the state to better identify which projects are most effective in different settings at achieving specified outcomes. This could help guide future scoring rubric amendments in line with what has been effective in the past. Currently, no required feedback component exists in the scoring rubric of the ATP.

According to the author. "The ATP is a key funding source for diversifying California's mobility options. This bill seeks to ensure projects funded by the ATP adhere to the stated goals of the program, and ensures the state tracks the impact of the program."

Previous legislation. SB 1 (Beall), Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017 increases several taxes and fees to raise roughly \$52.4 billion over ten years in new transportation revenues and makes adjustments for inflation every year; directs the funding to be used towards deferred maintenance on the state highways and local streets and roads, and to improve the state's trade corridors, transit, and active transportation facilities.

SB 99 (Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee), Chapter 359, Statutes of 2013 creates the “Active Transportation Program” which distributes funding for human-powered transportation projects and programs.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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