

MONTEREY COUNTY



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March 2, 2023

Todd A. Muck
Executive Director
Transportation Agency for Monterey County
55 B Plaza Circle
Salinas, CA 93901

SUBJECT: North Monterey County Safe Routes to School Plan Grant Support

Dear Mr. Muck:

On behalf of the County of Monterey, I write to express our support for the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's (TAMC) Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant for the North Monterey County Safe Routes to School Plan proposal. The County does not currently have a safe routes to schools plan and this project will address a critical need by increasing frequency and improving safety of bicycling and walking for students in north Monterey County's unincorporated communities of Castroville, Pajaro, Las Lomas, Prunedale, Royal Oaks, Oak Hills, Aromas, Moss Landing and Elkhorn.

This study will help ensure that all students have the opportunity to attend school safely regardless of their access to a vehicle. The communities in North Monterey County are small and rural with potential for walking or biking to school, parks and after-school programming. A large portion of students are bussed to school but lack infrastructure to access and wait at bus stops safely. Sadly, one in every seven bicycle and pedestrian collision victims in North Monterey County are children under the age of 19.

Castroville is the largest and most densely populated community in North Monterey County and largely Hispanic with nearly one in three households speaking solely or mostly Spanish. Students attending public schools in North Monterey County Unified School District represent higher concentrations of English language learners and students that qualify for free and reduced priced meals, compared to the state. The students attending these schools would benefit substantially from an investment in bilingual education, infrastructure and resources to support safe walking and biking.

The North Monterey County Safe Routes to School Plan will examine the needed infrastructure improvements, as well as pedestrian safety and education and programming needs to make the trip to school safer and healthier. The County of Monterey supports the proposed activities and looks forward to participating in this project to make our communities safer and healthier places for our children.

Sincerely,

Luis A. Alejo, Chair
Board of Supervisors