



April 9, 2024

To: Atascadero City Council
6500 Palma Ave.
Atascadero, CA 93422
ATTN: Local Roads First Transportation Tax Ballot Initiative

COALITION PARTNERS:

Bike SLO County
Cal Poly State University
Caltrans District 5
City of San Luis Obispo
Community Action Partnership of SLO
First 5 of San Luis Obispo County
Los Osos Pickleball
Oceano Community Services District
SLO Council of Governments
SLO County Air Pollution Control District
SLO County Department Public Health
SLO County YIMBY
SLO Legal Assistance Foundation
Smart Share Housing Solutions

RESOURCES:

www.slohealthcounts.org

[Building Healthy Communities: Residential Checklist](#)

Dear Atascadero City Council,

We are writing to you today, on behalf of the Healthy Communities Work Group, in support of the Local Roads First Transportation Tax Ballot Initiative.

Our group has seen how bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvements have translated to better health for our communities. Safe neighborhoods that allow people to walk or bike to work, school, parks, and errands allow physical activity to be incorporated into everyday life, which may reduce obesity and other chronic conditions. Safe and connected neighborhoods also increase community connection, reduce social isolation and enhance the quality of life for residents.

We also recognize that the gas tax that has traditionally funded these kinds of active transportation projects has, and will continue to, decline in the years ahead.

The Local Roads First Self-Help initiative would allow our county to replace those declining revenues—with \$700 million over the next 20 years to invest in roads, bike and pedestrian improvements, and such valuable programs as public transit for seniors, persons with disabilities, and veterans, and Safe Routes to School.

It would also make SLO County eligible for millions more in competitive grants from both state and federal sources—money that we are currently losing to other counties throughout California. This local transportation tax would also be paid for by both residents and visitors alike, allowing SLO County to support the continued investment in our communities.

Notably, the tax excludes certain essentials such as housing, groceries, and medical expenses. This exemption emphasizes that the tax will reduce impacts on residents while ensuring that tourists also contribute their fair share.

For these reasons, HCWG recommends the Atascadero City Council to continue to move this initiative forward and give voters the ability to decide on a local transportation tax. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Bob Jorgensen, Healthy Communities Work Group Co-chair



Ke Ghiglia, Healthy Communities Work Group Co-chair

About the Healthy Communities Work Group

The Healthy Communities Work Group is a collaboration between public health officials, local planning and transportation officials, community-based organizations, academia, and community members, working to improve health through community design.