

Comments were received on the draft memoranda during the Needs Committee meeting on June 8, 2016. Additional comments were received in letters from the public. These comments are compiled and discussed below.

### **Comments on Task 1: Regional Gap Analysis for Bicycle and Trail Facilities**

- Lynne Ashbeck: Project 1 (Parlier/Reedley/Orange Cove): why wasn't South Avenue considered for bike improvements instead of Manning?
  - Improvements to Manning are already included in County plans. Additionally, there is no connection on South Avenue across Kings River; connection would require a 4,000-foot trail through farmland and construction of a bridge. The closest existing bridge is on Manning Avenue, which is one mile south of South Avenue. However, South Avenue has less traffic and would be a lower-stress bicycling route than Manning Avenue. A connection on South Avenue between Reedley and Orange Cove would be a good alternative to Manning Avenue. This option can be investigated further if this project is pursued.
  - A note was added to the fact sheet stating that South Avenue is an alternative route between Reedley and Orange Cove.
- Nick Paladino: Project 1 (Parlier/Reedley/Orange Cove) and Project 3 (Firebaugh/Mendota): why were five-foot cycletrack widths used instead of seven-foot widths as recommended by DIB 89?
  - Design Information Bulletin (DIB) 89 states, "The separated bikeway clear width should be seven feet, with five feet being the minimum width for one-way travel when adjacent to a roadway." The NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide similarly states "The minimum desired width for a cycle track should be five feet. In areas with high bicyclist volumes or uphill sections, the minimum desired width should be seven feet to allow for bicyclists passing each other." These roads are flat and not expected to have large volumes of cyclists. However, seven feet would provide a better user experience, but at increased cost. A solution using mostly five-foot widths with periodic seven-foot widths would allow for passing with lesser impact on cost. This option can be investigated further if this project is pursued.
  - A note was added to both fact sheets stating that seven-foot protected bikeways may be considered as an option for all or portions of cycle tracks.

### **Comments on Task 2: Transportation Connectivity and Accessibility Analysis**

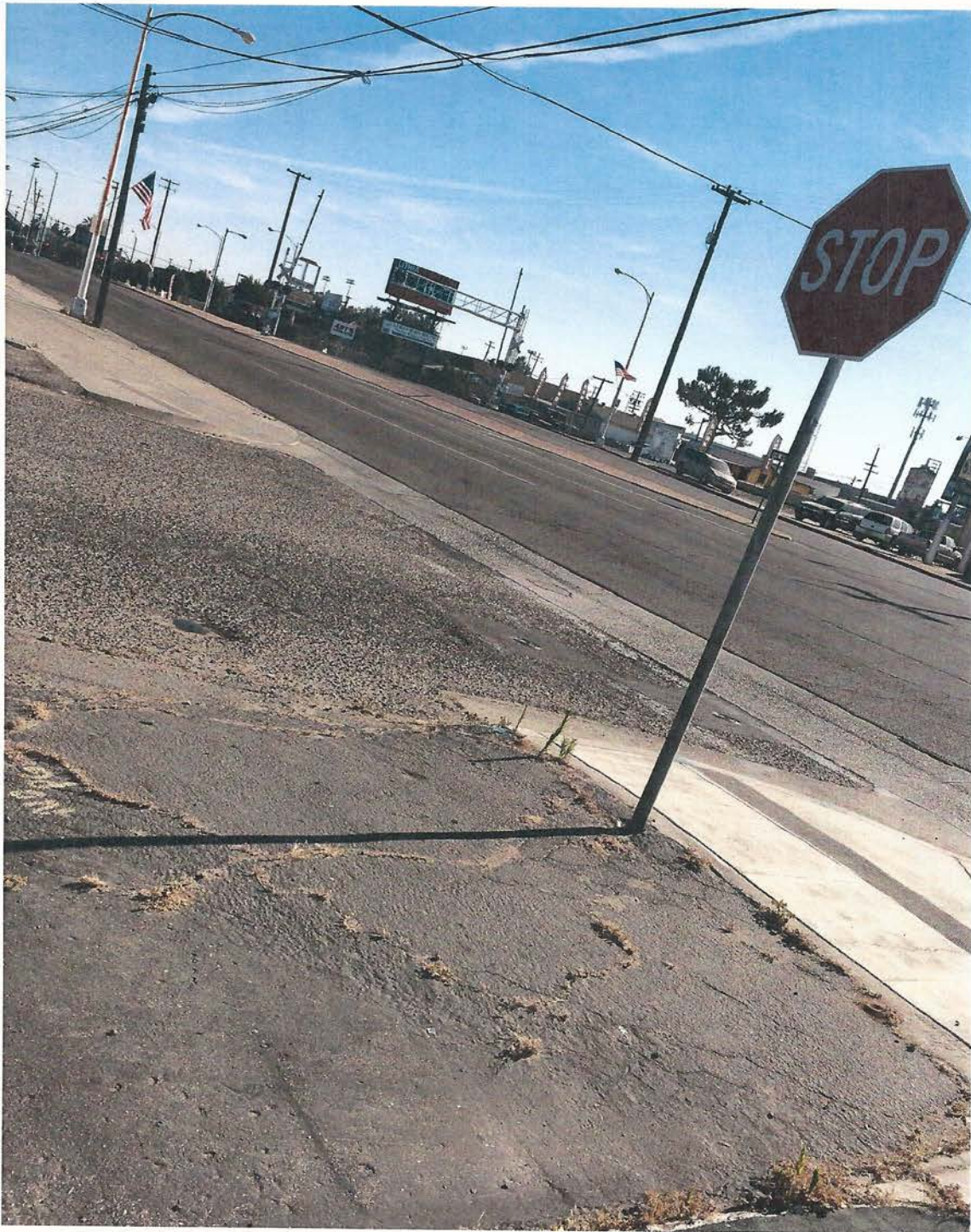
- Moses Stites: Adventist Medical Center: main bus stop at Reedley College is near the student center and has shelter and benches.
  - The recommendation to add shelters and signage at the stop near Reedley College was deleted.
- Moses Stites: Walmart, Kerman: main transit connections are to Mendota, Firebaugh, and Kerman
  - The report and web page were updated accordingly.

- Fresno Metro Ministries: Fresno City College: several comments delivered in the meeting, via photos provided in the meeting, and in a letter
  - Canals by Olive Avenue and Blackstone Avenue in the area of Susan B. Anthony Elementary School do not have proper fencing
    - This comment will be forwarded to the Fresno Irrigation District.
  - More crosswalks needed in the Blackstone Avenue corridor, on both sides parallel to Blackstone Avenue, and near Susan B. Anthony Elementary School, including at Home Avenue, Floradora Avenue, Hedges Avenue, Tyler Avenue, University Avenue, and Pine Avenue
    - This comment was forwarded for inclusion in the City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan process.
  - Curb ramps need to be properly aligned with crosswalks on Olive Avenue between Blackstone and Abby Avenue and at Blackstone Avenue and University Avenue
    - This comment was forwarded for inclusion in the City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan process.
  - Sidewalks needed on east side of Blackstone Avenue south of McKinley Avenue just over train tracks and between McKinley Avenue and Hammond Avenue
    - Data was updated data and this recommendation was added.
    - This comment was forwarded for inclusion in the City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan process.
  - Sidewalks needed in vicinity of Ratcliffe Stadium
    - Data was updated data and this recommendation was added.
    - This comment was forwarded for inclusion in the City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan process.

### **General comments**

- Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability: general comments provided in a letter
  - These comments were forwarded for inclusion in the City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan process.

**Handouts provided by Fresno Metro Ministries during June 8, 2016 FCOG Transportation  
Needs Assessment Committee meeting**



## **E Home Ave. & N Blackstone Ave.**

A crosswalk is needed at this intersection for the safety of pedestrians. (6/7/16)

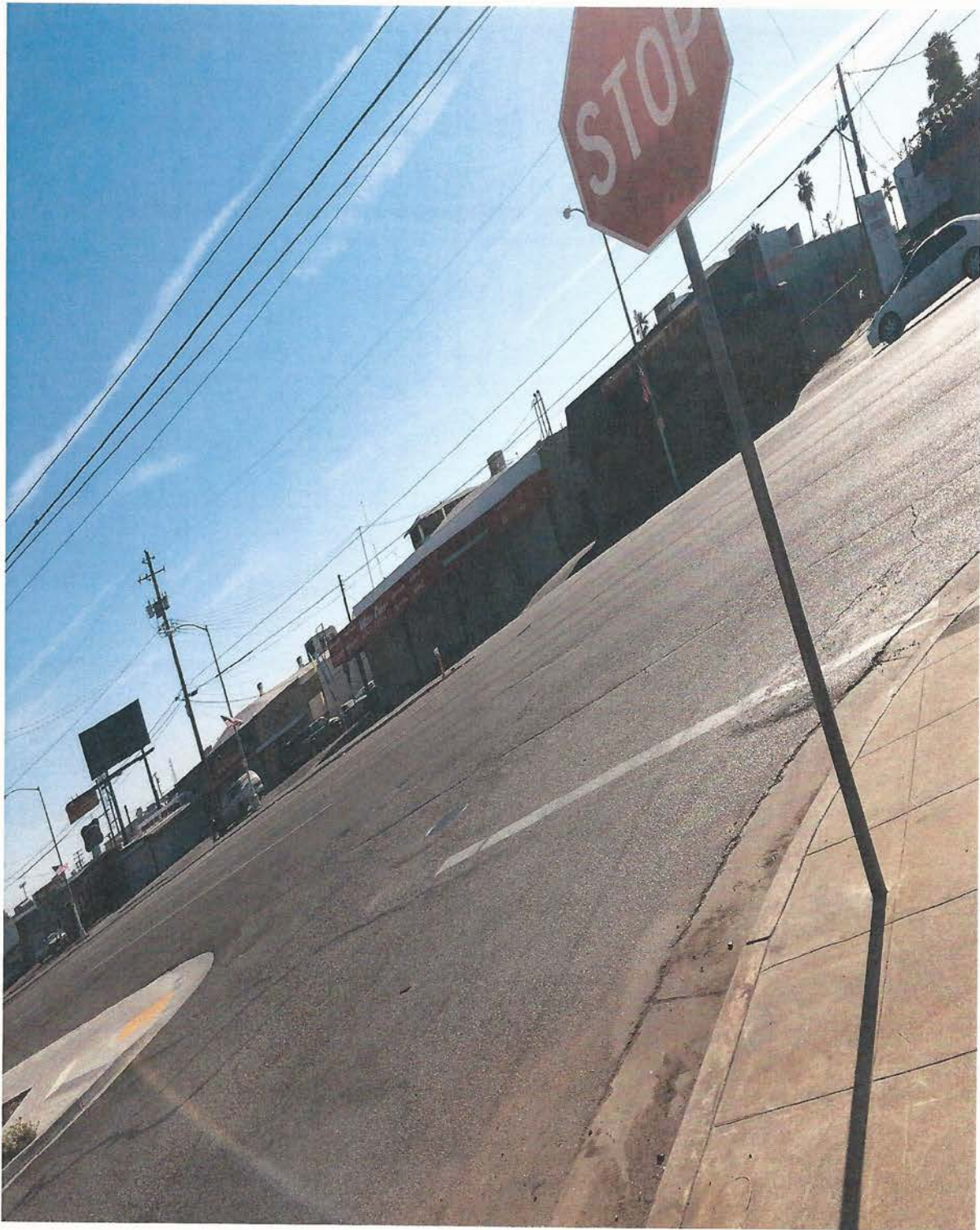




## **E Pine Ave. & N Blackstone Ave.**

A crosswalk is needed at this intersection for the safety of pedestrians. (6/7/16)





**E Floradora & N Blackstone Ave.**

A crosswalk is needed at this intersection  
for the safety of pedestrians. **(6/7/16)**





**E Hedges Ave. & N Blackstone Ave.**

A crosswalk is needed at this intersection  
for the safety of pedestrians. (6/7/16)





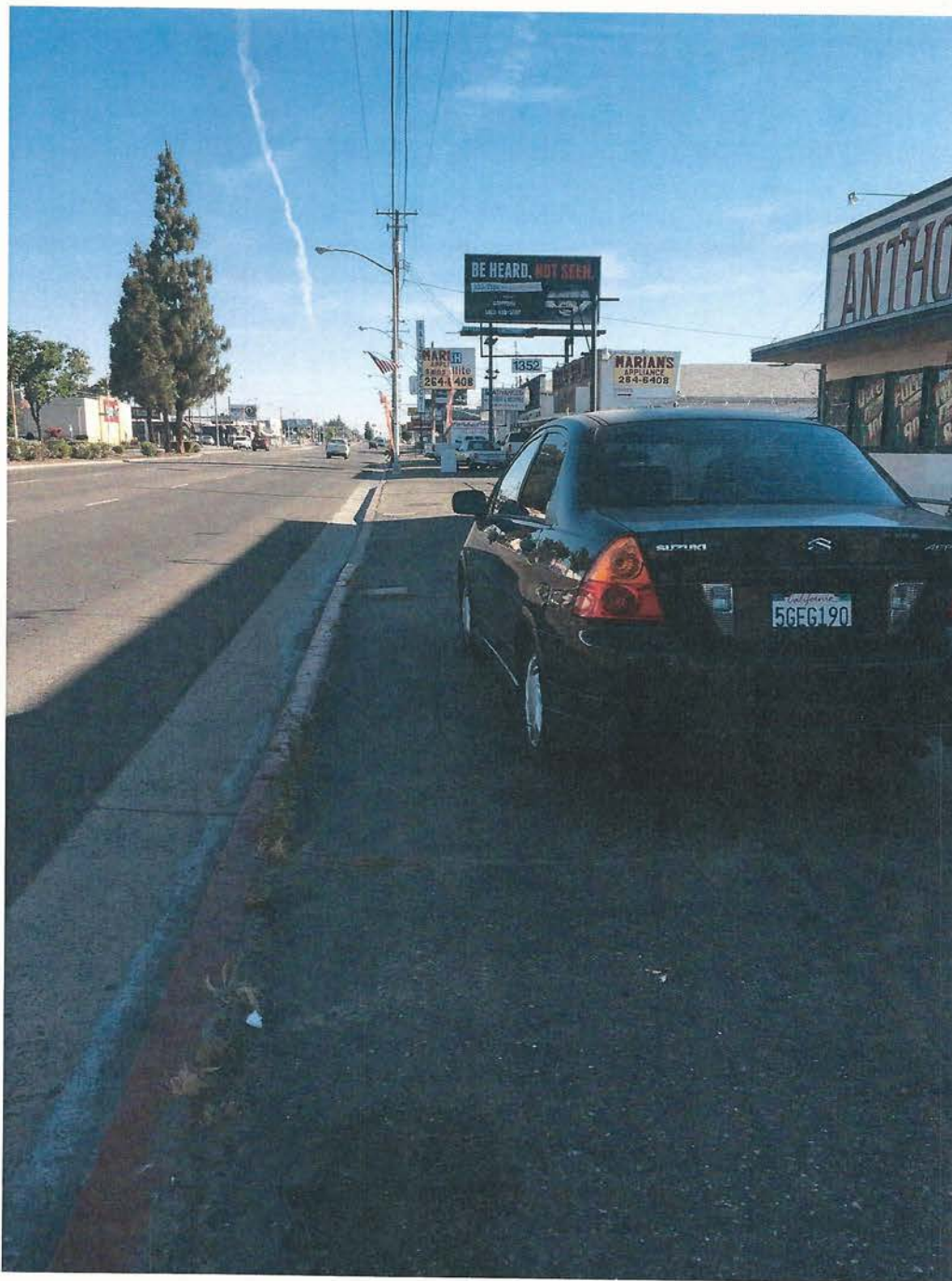
**Intersection of E University Ave. & N Blackstone Ave.**  
College students need sidewalks that lead to Ratcliff  
Stadium. (6/7/16)





**Bus Stop at E. Weldon Ave. and N Blackstone Ave.**  
Sidewalks make transit easier for the people that  
have to ride the bus. **(6/7/16)**

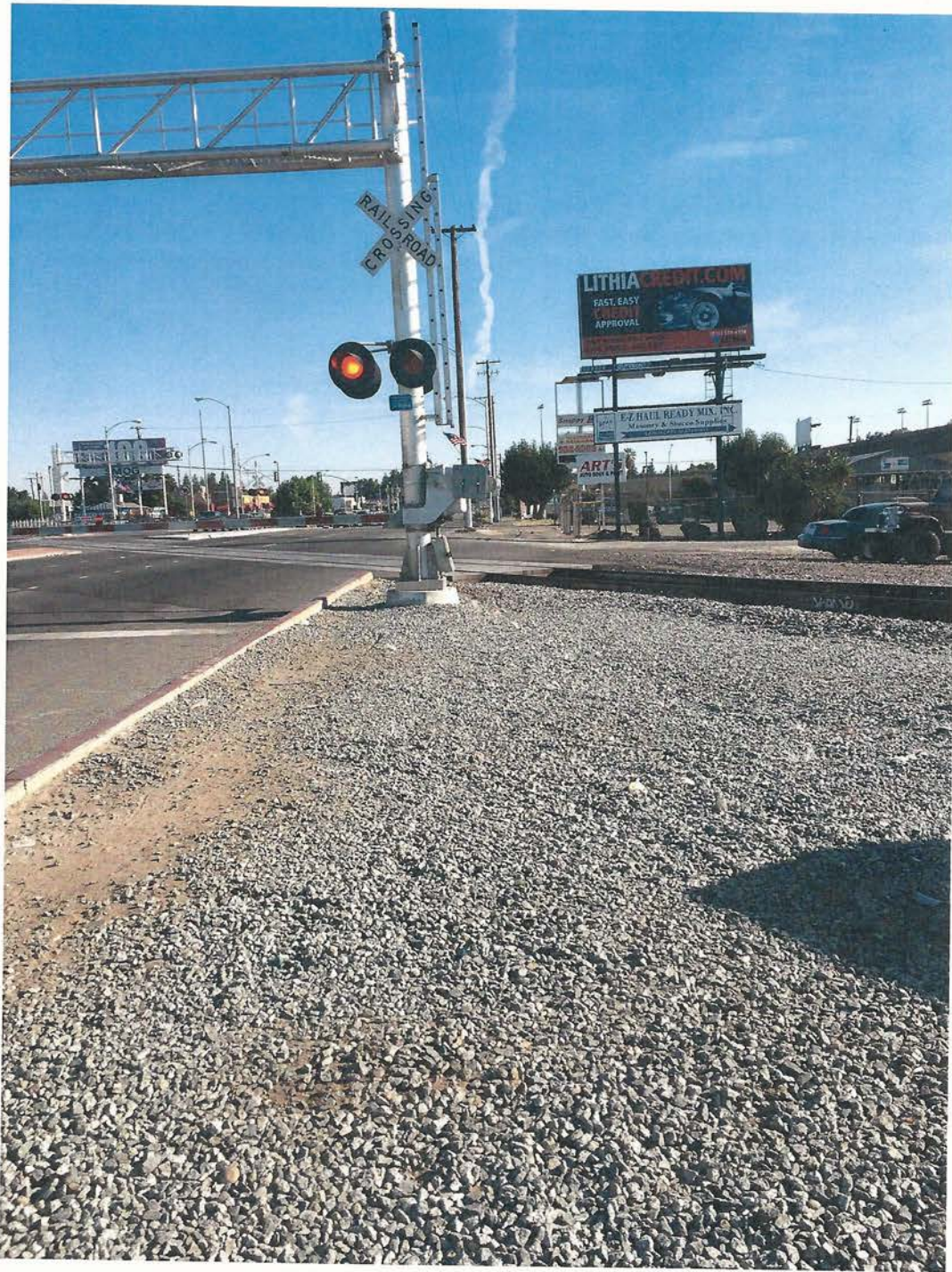




**Blackstone Ave.—North of Hammond Ave.**

Pedestrians need designated sidewalks on  
Blackstone between McKinley Ave. and  
Hammond Ave. **(6/7/16)**





## **Blackstone Ave.—South of McKinley**

The gravel makes it difficult for pedestrians to get around. Those with strollers and in wheelchairs would have to risk using the street. **(6/7/16)**





**Intersection of E University Ave. & N Blackstone Ave.**

Thank you City of Fresno for properly aligning the crosswalks with the curb ramps! **(6/7/16)**





**Intersection of E University Ave. & N Blackstone Ave.**

Thank you City of Fresno for properly aligning the crosswalks with the curb ramps! **(6/7/16)**



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June 2, 2016

Ms. Kristine Cai  
Principal Regional Planner  
Fresno County Council of Governments  
2035 Tulare Street  
Suite 201  
Fresno, CA 93721

Dear Ms. Cai:

We write to offer formal comment as part of the Fresno COG's Community Needs Assessment process. We appreciate the time that COG staff, its hired consultant Fehr + Peers, and the Community Needs Assessment Committee have spent assessing the bicycle and pedestrian needs in Fresno County, both between cities and to certain identified traffic "hot spots" in incorporated cities. We understand that a particular focus of this analysis has also been the needs of disadvantaged populations within Fresno County.

As a group of neighborhood residents surrounding Susan B. Anthony Elementary School we have conducted our own walk audit along South Blackstone Avenue, and have been engaging in public meetings to improve pedestrian facilities used by our families. We have also reviewed the documents prepared for the Community Needs Assessment including Fresno COG's Sidewalk Inventory, as well as the two memos prepared by Fehr + Peers, the "Regional Gap Analysis for Bicycle and Trail Facilities", dated March 11, and the "Transportation Connectivity and Accessibility Analysis", dated May 26. We are impressed by the level of specificity of the few sidewalk gaps noted in the study by the consultant and want to highlight additions to the gap list from our neighborhood along Blackstone. Based on our own walk audit, and our daily experience as pedestrians, we want to suggest the following pedestrian improvements for the area around Fresno City College:

- Sidewalks are needed on the east side of Blackstone, between McKinley and Hammond Avenues
- Sidewalks are needed on the east side of Blackstone by Ratcliff Stadium
- Crosswalks are needed on BOTH the east and west side of Blackstone, parallel to Blackstone, at the intersection with the following streets: Tyler, Hedges, University, Pine and Home
- Curb ramps need to be properly aligned with crosswalks on Olive Avenue between Blackstone and Abby, as well as at Blackstone and University.

Each of these items is a high priority for us, as we seek to improve pedestrian safety and walkability in our neighborhood. We understand that inclusion of an improvement project in the Community Needs Assessment document will not guarantee construction of a project as the final



decision about what projects to include in the RTP will rest with individual cities- and then be subject to funds available. But, we believe that inclusion in the Fresno COG's Community Needs Assessment will cause the City of Fresno to look more seriously at these significant pedestrian needs.

We ask that you give these proposed additional pedestrian improvements your strongest consideration, and thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

- Benita Vasquez Rios.  
- Juana Meza  
- Sara Salgado  
Tablola Felix  
Beatriz Gonzaga



Kristine Cai  
Principal Regional Planner  
2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201  
Fresno, CA 93721

Re: Comments on Transportation Connectivity and Accessibility Analysis

Dear Ms. Kristine:

Thank you for the extension and opportunity to submit our comment letter on Fresno COG's Transportation Connectivity and Accessibility Analysis. In preparing these comments, we drew from our knowledge and experience gained through direct collaboration with residents.

As proponents of the development of a needs assessment, we hope that this study will lead us in identifying current health and infrastructure conditions in disparities that will help inform the development and associated project list of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy.

#### Community Engagement

We appreciate your efforts in prioritizing disadvantaged communities (DACs) and their needs, however, we would like to emphasize the importance of community engagement to truly provide real transportation choices to Fresno County communities. Since this study is meant to analyze current and planned transportation connectivity and accessibility especially for DACs, these residents who frequently walk, bike, and take the bus should have the opportunity to weigh in on this analysis.

#### Incorporating Public Health

We understand that Fresno COG is currently working with Fresno County Public Health to meaningfully integrate public health metrics with this assessment. As we have stated in the past health benefits of walking or biking not only better our health by making us more physically active, it also improves our air by reducing emissions. We recognize that this is a challenging study and the first of its kind by Fresno COG that will take us in the right direction to improve connectivity and accessibility for all Fresno County communities. We look forward to participating in this discussion.

#### Address gaps within disadvantaged communities and across jurisdictions



While the analysis provides valuable information, our original intent was to demonstrate transit and active travel needs and land use opportunities within and across communities to better inform development of the 2018 RTP/SCS.

The maps demonstrate dire public transit improvements, especially in most disadvantaged communities given time in transit to reach destinations. We recommend that the analysis further identify opportunities to address significantly long travel times. While pedestrian, transit, and biking information in immediate vicinity of hot spots is provided, there is a need to identify similar infrastructure needs within communities to work towards building healthy, walkable, transit friendly neighborhoods. This information may already be included in local City and County plans. We suggest this information be integrated to provide for a robust analysis supported by community needs that can result in real shifts of transit mode to address reduction of greenhouse gases. A meaningful change in transit mode will not occur unless we provide Fresno County residents with real transportation choices.

Finally, we recommend that the final assessment further flesh out connectivity between jurisdictions.

#### Additional Factors to Include in Travelshed Metric

While reading through the analysis, it is easily read and does a great job at capturing the hotspots. It used its chosen resources thoroughly and identifies the missing links in sidewalk and bike lanes. However, we find that not all options were considered when evaluating the *Missing Connectivity and Barrier Analysis* on page 2, Section #4. These are all common concerns we hear amongst the DACs. The following issues were not taken into account for each mode of transportation:

- a. Pedestrian accessibility to cross often wide trafficked streets safely by crosswalks was not considered. Are there enough outlined pedestrian crosswalks directly across the hotspot and within the 1.5-mile walking perimeter? At the very least, are there crosswalks clearly marked at every light intersection with a walking signal? Ease of walking to the designated hotspots on fully paved complete sidewalks is important, however, as a safety precaution this is equally important.  
A concern we often receive from community residents is lack of proper lighting. Often times, residents don't feel safe walking once it begins to get dark, and even less let their children walk, because of the lighting. Common complaints we hear are that there aren't enough light posts, the existing light posts do not work, or the lighting is very dim. During the day this is clearly not an issue, but once it begins to get dark, especially in the shorter winter days, parents will refuse to walk as a result.

Additionally, residents also have issues with a strong presence of stray dogs. At first thought this may seem irrelevant, however, several parents have had instances where they or their children were attacked, or were close to being bit. If residents do not feel safe as a result of stray dogs, then regardless of how many sidewalks are completed or light posts installed residents will choose alternate modes of transportation.

- b. First, we note that completion of bus stops (i.e. shelter, bench, trash can) is a request we often receive on behalf of residents. Nobody wants to stand in direct sunlight or rain, while they wait anywhere from 5-30 minutes for a bus, and we appreciate your consideration into this factor. The idea of having these complete bus stops is frequently overlooked even though it does encourage individuals to use alternate modes of transportation.

As with our comment in the previous pedestrian section, not enough lighting is a concern for residents especially in these disadvantaged communities, and even more so those in rural areas. Individuals don't feel safe waiting for a bus in the dark and even less, walking the approximate 0.75 miles to and from the bus stop.

- c. We'd like to see information utilized to identify populations most likely to utilized hotpot.
- d. Assuring good connectivity for cyclists through proper bike lanes and trails is an important aspect to make it safer for those who do not have the means to drive or take public transit and also motivate others to bike. A few missing elements to this portion of the assessment are: proper lighting along bike lanes/trails, accounting for stray dogs, properly paved roads, and having an educated population on bike safety. These are all features that will encourage everyone to bike to their job, doctor's appointment, shopping centers, etc. and also ensure they arrive safely.

Having properly lit streets, particularly at night, is important as cyclists who have to bike out of necessity may not have the means to acquire reflective gear or other proper accessories that help enhance their visibility. This is particularly prevalent in disadvantaged communities where there may only be one functioning car, or in some cases no car at all, in a family where more than one person works.

As mentioned in the pedestrian commentary, accounting for stray dogs is important as residents do not feel safe biking themselves and even less, allowing their children to bike. Making sure residents are safe from being attacked is important and will continue to be an issue until this is addressed. Assuring a properly paved road is important for various reasons. When individuals have a smooth comfortable bike ride they are encouraged to continue riding their bike. Riding your bike on roads that are cracked and not smooth is uncomfortable and damages your bike, especially if you're continuously riding on it. If a resident is riding their bike to their job or appointments out of need, then paying to fix a flat tire or broken rim is often not feasible for them. Most importantly, bike riders are



more likely to get in a collision if the road is cracked and has potholes. Cyclists are either paying attention to the road trying to avoid potholes and large cracks to not ruin their bicycle rather than looking up ahead; or vice versa they may not see a gap in the pavement from looking at the upcoming traffic and end up falling off their bike. Increased bicycle riding not only reduces emissions and car congestion during traffic hours, but it also enables and promotes a healthy lifestyle, which in turn has its own added benefits. Obesity and type II diabetes is especially prevalent in low income communities of color where there isn't easy access to affordable healthy food. Having lit, paved roads, and bike safety education encourages residents to get out and bike, consequently creating a healthier community. Lastly, having an educated public on bike safety and rules is an important feature. This is key in improving bike safety because when cars know bike rules they will be able to respect their cyclist counterparts on the road and vice versa, cyclists will respect a vehicle. Each will know when it's the others right of way.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact Grecia Elenes at (559)369-2790 ext.1010 or [gelenes@leadershipcounsel.org](mailto:gelenes@leadershipcounsel.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

Grecia Elenes  
Policy Advocate  
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability