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DATE

RE: Expansion of Transportation Services

Dear Councilmembers:

The Disability Advisory Commission (DAC) advises the City in matters pertaining to individuals with a wide range of disabilities. In this capacity we respectfully suggest an investment in the future of Fresno and recommend that you explore new funding options for the expansion of accessible and affordable transportation.

Be proud of our City Department of Transportation for their professionalism in working with the DAC, which has resulted in better understanding of the transportation issues that are important for maintaining independence for people with disabilities. As we succeed in providing services to this community we bring success and vibrancy to Fresno as a whole.

Individuals with disabilities represent 14 percent of our community. Fresno outstrips both state and national averages for the percentage of population identified as a portion of an overall community (11% and 13%, respectively). As the population continues to age these numbers are quite likely to increase. The time to plan for affordable and accessible transportation for this burgeoning population is now.

Public transportation is central to the success and growth of Fresno. This is a chance for the Council to be pro-active with expanding services that address the issues of the community of individuals with disabilities as they work, socialize, and address their medical needs. Fresno's growing population has always required the accommodation of necessary growth in public transportation options. This commission has heard testimony relating to transportation needs and desires, which primarily involves an expansion in the service area, service times, and frequency of service. The barriers to expansion always seem to come down to availability of funding. The commission has identified the need to solve these problems now for the disability community and all citizens of Fresno.

The investment in accessible and affordable public transportation is essential to the independence of people with disabilities and the older adult population of Fresno. Citizens with disabilities in Fresno are contributing members of our economy and wish to continue to do so. Accessible and affordable public transportation is essential to that goal. We strongly encourage the City of Fresno to explore any and all options for bringing in new funding for accessible and affordable transportation or reallocating existing funding to meet the needs of its citizens with disabilities.

Questions for the DAC can be addressed to Shannon M. Mulhall, DAC Secretary and Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator at 559-621-8716 or shannon.mulhall@fresno.gov. We would happily discuss any and all of the above issues.

Sincerely,

City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission