

January 23, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of First 5 Contra Costa and the West County Regional Group, I am happy to submit this letter of nomination for the City of San Pablo to receive ABAG's *Growing Smarter Together/On the Ground* Award.

The West County Regional Group (WCRG), sponsored by First 5 Contra Costa, is a volunteer group of low-income residents in San Pablo working to reduce childhood obesity rates and health disparities by increasing access to physical activity for families with young children. We were pleased to be invited by the City of San Pablo to participate in the *Complete Streets* project intended to assess the walking, bicycle, and transportation needs along the San Pablo avenue corridor. The WCRG members regularly use the route along San Pablo Avenue for daily activities and share the City of San Pablo's goals of increasing walking, biking, and transportation efficiency for the community.

We applaud the City of San Pablo's effort to lead a collaborative project that solicits the partnership and input of multiple stakeholders. Throughout the project, the City of San Pablo has organized the workshops and assessment to welcome meaningful resident participation and honor the diversity of the city's population. Spanish translation, childcare, and light snacks were provided at each event while materials were bilingual and accessible to a variety of literacy capacities. Similarly, the City has held project activities in the evening hours to facilitate participation among working residents. The City of San Pablo has been accountable and consistent, effectively communicating progress and following through with commitments to the project's partners. Overall, the WCRG members have felt heard and encouraged to offer their unique experiences and perspectives on the improvements needed to promote safety and physical activity along the route.

First 5 Contra Costa and the WCRG are inspired by the City of San Pablo's leadership to take steps towards creating a healthy environment for families and young children throughout the region. The improvements made to the San Pablo Avenue corridor can reverberate across neighboring cities, instigate changes to the built environment

throughout Contra Costa County, and serve as a model for effective partnerships between local governments and community residents. We are proud to be part of the *Complete Streets* project and commend the City of San Pablo for their innovative vision and commitment to building healthy communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like any more information.

Sincerely,

Rhea Elina Laughlin, MPH
Community Engagement Program Officer