



November 20, 2007

Mr. Dave Franke
Principal Civil Engineer
County of Sacramento
906 G ST. Suite 510
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Comments on Transportation Development Fee Update

Dear Mr. Franke,

WALKSacramento is pleased to offer the following comments regarding the proposed Sacramento County Transportation Development Fee schedule and authorizing ordinance. The updated Development Fee is an opportunity to move forward toward Complete Streets safe and accessible for all transportation users, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, the disabled, as well as motorists at all times, in Sacramento County. We thank the County for its hard work in applying “Complete Streets” principles and guidelines, complemented by Measure A’s “routine accommodation” requirement, to plans and projects funded by the Development Fee.

We strongly support the changes to the Development Fee Schedule and Ordinance that incorporate pedestrian and bicycle improvements as improvements that would add capacity to roadways that are operating at congested levels. Additionally, we support the provisions that include the “regionally significant” walkway and bikeway projects for the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, including 19 miles of walkways and 26 miles of bikeways in the unincorporated areas of Sacramento County.

The report notes that about 33 miles out of 74 miles of roadways projected to be operating at LOS F in 2032 would be widened and that the widenings would include new or upgraded sidewalks and bike lane facilities. We are very pleased that these widenings would include bike lanes and sidewalks.

However, we remain concerned about the widenings. We urge that the decision to widen roadways be based not only on the congested LOS during peak periods but also consider the impact on speeds in the off peak. We further urge that the Development Fee Schedule and Ordinance not tie the County’s hands in making the decision to widen prematurely. For this reason, we urge that the ordinance provide flexibility and

specify that widenings on the specific 33 miles of roadways will be one potential option for increasing capacity but that other approaches may be used as well.

We are concerned that widening many roads to six lanes as proposed creates high vehicle speeds during off peak hours that in turn creates a challenging environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. We believe that roadway widening should be considered an option of final resort when addressing increased transportation demand. We urge that the Development Fee Schedule and Ordinance provide flexibility in how to use the Development Fee funds including considering pedestrian and bicycle-friendly options to road widening where appropriate. This is particularly relevant given the high number of trips which are local in nature, which could be made by foot or bike if the infrastructure supported and encourages it.

The Development Fee nexus analysis report notes that Levels of Service will remain at congested levels even with the proposed roadway improvements. The report recognizes that we can't "widen" ourselves out of congestion. Relief will come through offering alternatives that will take cars off the road. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodation can play an important role in providing additional mobility capacity.

The current slowdown in the housing and construction business cycle is reflected in the building industry's request to phase in any fee updates, which will result in lower revenues. *WALKS* Sacramento requests that phased new fee schedule should not result in reduced pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on identified projects. Any reduction in originally anticipated revenues must not allow "incomplete streets" as a consequence. Any reduction in the improvements identified and described in the project list must be made "complete" or not at all.

Again, we appreciate the recognition given to pedestrian and bicycle accommodation as a legitimate roadway improvement whether or not done in conjunction with a roadway widening. As we build a network of Complete Streets the impact of these Complete Streets will be realized with reduced vehicular demand.

We look forward to working with you in this regard. If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me or Terry Preston, Complete Streets Project Coordinator, at 916-446-9255.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Anne Geraghty
Executive Director

Cc: Walt Seifert, SABA