



September 3, 2010

Ms. Kacey Lizon
Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG)
1415 L Street, Suite 300
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RE: SACOG's 2010 Metropolitan Transportation Plan: A Fourth Scenario

Dear Ms. Lizon:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft 2010 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) scenarios. A quotation from our 2007 MTP comment letter is still apt:

“As a driver, one is aware of what an incredible, vital transportation system we have in this region – that enables each of us who drive to easily and safely access all parts of this region at all times of the day or night.

Yet when we are pedestrians, bicyclists, or are disabled, this is not true. Access to all parts of the region (both near and far) is limited and incomplete when one is on foot, on a bicycle, or in a wheel chair.”

To address this significant gap, WALKSacramento recommends that SACOG develop a “**4th Scenario**” or a significantly strengthened Scenario 3. The purpose of this proposed scenario is to make the region transportation system whole and complete -- so that children can walk and bicycle to school and people of all ages can walk and bicycle to nearby destinations.

SACOG is renowned for its Blueprint for encouraging compact growth. Walking and bicycling are fundamental to the SACOG Blueprint. Walking is critical to building an effective transit system. Walking is critical to the health of our brain and body.

We propose the following guiding principles:

1. **Complete the regional system of walkways and bikeways** -- so that all can walk, bicycle or take transit to nearby destinations.

2. **Focus on community quality of life** rather than peak hour traffic flow. A focus on 24-hour community travel will provide greater transportation funding and system efficiencies while at the same time support walkable, livable communities. This focus will minimize road widenings with 6-lane roadways being the exception rather than the rule.
3. **Set ambitious targets for walking and bicycling** – such as 10% pedestrian mode share and 10% bike mode share. Model the impacts such mode shifts will have on VMT and emissions reductions.

Initiate Twelve Year Safe Routes to School & Regional Pedestrian Retrofit

Yes, twelve years. The City of Sacramento and the County of Sacramento have both adopted pedestrian master plans. These two adopted plans identified approximately 1.12 billion dollars of pedestrian improvements including sidewalks, crossings, intersection treatments, and safe routes to school. However, each plan proposed a gradual implementation over many, many decades. Extrapolating, spending \$1,200 per person living today in the region over the next 12 years could significantly complete the regional system and have long term health, economic and environmental results. This would include pedestrian investments to support:

1. **Safe routes to school** projects throughout the region.
2. **Safe routes to transit** projects – to support efficient use of this region's growing transit investment.
3. **Sidewalks, walkways and crossings** on urban collectors, arterials and thoroughfares.
4. **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) required upgrades** completed throughout the system.

While this \$2.5 billion dollar investment will not cover every pedestrian infrastructure need, it will result in a profound shift in our transportation investment. In four years, every community in the region can then evaluate how far we have come and what is needed to complete the job in the next 8 years – the next two MTP cycles.

It would enable our children to walk to school in their own generation. It would enable each of us to walk rather than drive to conveniently located destinations.

Our health will improve. Walking is our built-in pump; the improved movement of blood generated by walking has many health benefits. Walking can not only reduce obesity, it improves blood and nutrient flow in our brains so that our thinking improves – think what that means to growing minds.

Our economy will also benefit from our greatly improved health. Reduced personal travel costs will enable us to spend our dollars on things other than transportation. Our air quality will improve. And we will be on the road to reducing our climate change emissions.

What else should be included in Scenario 4?

- Ambitious transit investments that expand compact, mixed use, walkable communities as outlined in SACOG's Blueprint.
- A complete regional bicycle network with connecting bridges as outlined by the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA).
- Proper treatments for new and existing interchanges to support walking and bicycling.

We appreciate the strong leadership that SACOG has provided supporting the adoption of Complete Streets policies and the increase in funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects. And more is needed! Now is the time to get the job done – to Complete the Streets in one generation rather than ten.

We look forward to working closely with SACOG and its member jurisdictions on achieving these ambitious yet very achievable objectives.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

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Attachment