SOLVING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S TRANSPORTATION CRISIS

Recommendations by the Coalition for Sustainable Transportation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Southern California is facing a transportation crisis. By the year 2025, our region's population will have grown by another 40%, adding congestion and air pollution problems to a region already labeled the nation's worst. Preparing for the future will require making public transportation a preferable mode of travel to the general populace and the development of land use patterns that favor livability and access to efficient transit services. New sources of funding will be needed to achieve these goals, requiring major commitments from both the public and private sectors and the genuine inclusion of private residents in the process.

To help meet this challenge, the Coalition for Sustainable Transportation recommends the following elements be incorporated into the Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan, L.A. County MTA Long Range Transportation Plan, and other County Transportation Plans in our region:

1. **Improved rail and bus transit services**, including increased speed, frequency and comfort, doubling capacity per capita, expanded routes and well-coordinated services among the various cities, counties and carriers. A number of key transit corridors also need to be added to the plans.
2. **Effective land use/transportation connections**, including transit-oriented development, mixed-use zoning, livable community performance indicators, developer incentives, transportation service requirements, location-efficient mortgages, etc.
3. **Expanded non-motorized transportation** facilities, including policies, incentives and funding to stimulate increased usage. A minimum of $1.5 billion regionally ($1 billion in L.A. County) is needed for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
4. **Expanded transportation demand management** (TDM) measures, including ridesharing, vanpools, park-and-ride, telecommuting, work at home, parking cash-out strategies and traveler information systems.
5. **Additional revenues** from small increases in taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels, as well as continuation of the County transportation sales taxes.
6. **Limit expansion of LAX** in favor of a regionally-dispersed plan to facilitate economic growth in areas where population is fastest growing. The impact of LAX expansion would fall 95% on non-whites, a large environmental justice issue.
7. **Sustainability of the transportation system** needs to be guaranteed for future generations, via long range planning, adequate maintenance of the existing system and conservation of oil.
8. **Improved air quality conformity calculations** that do not include Maglev, and other proposals that promise air pollution reductions, until such projects have fully secured funding. We need significant reductions in particulate matter levels, as human health studies show significant health consequences. Ultra-fine particles and tougher ozone requirements are also a factor now that the Supreme Court has ruled in US EPA's favor for new ozone and ultrafine particulate matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards.
9. **Long range plan charettes** to produce implementation plans on the above topics, including the greatly reduced world oil supply (and vastly increased fuel prices) expected before 2025.
10. **An expanded, broad-based, public input process** to solicit substantive public participation in and support for long range transportation plans.

Groups that have signed on to these recommendations include: the Southern California Council on Environment and Development, Coalition for Clean Air, Sierra Club Angeles Chapter Transportation Committee, Southern California Transit Advocates, Endangered Habitats League, L.A. County Bicycle Coalition, Los Angeles Walks, Southern California Transportation and Land Use Coalition, Cooperative Resources & Services Project, Southern California Federation of Scientists, Orange County Bicycle Coalition.

1247 Lincoln Bl. #253, Santa Monica, CA 90401 (310) 281-8534 Fax: 310-455-3011

INTRODUCTION

As we plan our transportation systems for the next quarter century, one thing is clear: the inability of our roads and transit to provide affordable, efficient mobility is stealing vitality from both our economy and our families. Commute times grow longer every year.

Projections for the future portend graver challenges still. By the year 2025, the population of our region will have grown by an additional 40%.[1] This growth will cause huge increases in congestion, with average peak period highway speeds being cut in half.[2] The MTA projects that morning peak highway speeds in L.A. County will drop from the current average 32 mph to 16 mph,[3] and that in 2025 transit trips to jobs will average nearly an hour,[4] implying that almost half of those taking transit will have to commute for well over an hour, further turning them off from transit. Slow transit drastically reduces the ability of the transit dependent to get to jobs and is an important environmental justice issue as discussed in section 10.

Another big concern is that the world demand for petroleum continues to grow, driving up the price of this rapidly depleting resource (see section 7). The threat of climate change due to greenhouse gas emissions[5] will almost certainly require major adjustments in fossil fuel use over the next 25 years. With our region's heavy reliance on crude and the private automobile, the increasing scarcity of oil will leave Southern California in an extremely vulnerable position subject to foreign influence if the status quo is not dramatically altered.

Still, we are hopeful. Solutions do exist. All we need is the will to take the bold steps required to transform the Southern California region into a region of the future. To prepare for the future will require making public transportation an inviting, desirable way to travel, even more so than traveling in individual automobiles. We must develop land use patterns that favor livability and transit efficiency, creating communities where we can live comfortably without the need to drive. Increased transit ridership will improve mobility for everyone, including those that must continue to drive on our roads and freeways. Major investments in existing and future transit infrastructure and services will need to continue for years to make up for lost decades of opportunity. New sources of funding will be needed. All this will require major commitments from both the public and private sectors, as well as broad-based inclusion of all residents in the process.

Clearly, we are at a pivotal moment in our transportation future. We need solutions that match the scale of the problems we face. We need visionary thinking as never before. The directions we chart today will affect the economic, social, and environmental health of our region well into the future.

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[1] SCAG Appendix page A-7 says that more than 80% of this growth is anticipated from local births, with less than 20% from net domestic and foreign migration. Therefore even if there were no net influx, we would still have to accommodate massive growth.

[2] These congestion levels occur even when $40 billion in new, hoped-for revenue is allocated for additional projects. SCAG notes (Appendix page C-2) that the current morning peak period speed in the congested direction is less than 20 mph and will drop lower in the future. This means that the current average commuting times could double on the most congested routes. Congestion will also greatly slow bus speed on arterials, unless dedicated lanes are provided. SCAG also notes (Appendix page C-2) that its regional transportation demand model uses a Bureau of Public Roads function which tends to overestimate speeds. Models do not factor in the effect of accidents and other delay events. Therefore it is likely that highway speeds will be even less than presented in the draft plans. In addition, SCAG modeling staff has verbally reported that the congestion will be so severe that many people who need to drive to work will not be able to get on the freeways or arterials during normal commute hours, and will have to begin and end their work trips well before 6 am or after 7 pm.

[3] MTA Plan Appendix page 16.

[4] MTA Plan Appendix page 20.

[5] The Kyoto Treaty mandated rollbacks in greenhouse gas emissions. The details of implementation are currently being worked on by international negotiators.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SCAG AND THE MTA

To help us meet these challenges, the Coalition for Sustainable Transportation in Southern California recommends the following elements be incorporated into the SCAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the MTA Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), (and other County Transportation Plans, as appropriate):

1. **Improved rail and bus transit services**: Because of Southern California's overemphasis on the freeway system for the last half-century, the transit system has come to be regarded as second-class transportation. The SCAG Plan reinforces this by forecasting essentially no increase in the percentage of transit use between now and 2025.[6] Increasing transit usage is essential to avoiding the impending mobility crisis. This will require a major commitment to making public transportation an inviting, desirable alternative to the single-occupant vehicle. Improvements in comfort, speed and service will be critical to winning new riders. SCAG has calculated that to double the amount of transit use per capita would require approximately an additional $25 billion to expand service over the next 25 years.[7] If this doubling were to occur, MTA has calculated that the average morning peak period freeway speeds would remain at 33 mph (instead of slowing to 16 mph as forecasted).[8]

   Recommendations:

   a. A comprehensive multi-tier transit system. This would include rail, light rail, busways, rapid bus, local bus, community shuttles and jitneys, all of which are fed by safe, easy-to-use pedestrian and bicycle routes. A system of backbone rail corridors can provide fast, comfortable, high capacity service that can catalyze transit-oriented residential and commercial development throughout the region. This rail backbone must be complemented by comprehensive bus/shuttle services to serve all neighborhoods with effective transit, including welfare to work participants and the transit-dependent. We insist that any rail projects do not reduce the quality of existing bus services.

   b. More transit corridors: SCAG and the MTA have identified 18 major transit corridors, including the Pasadena Blue Line, Eastside light rail, Exposition light rail/busway, SF Valley busway, etc.[9] SCAG also lists 32 "post-2025" corridors or segments.[10] However, there are a number of critical corridors in L.A. County that are not mentioned, such as Wilshire Blvd. subway/light rail, Burbank Chandler extensions west and east, East Side north-south routes, Westside north-south routes (Route 405 and/or Lincoln Blvd.), etc. Making use of existing freeway medians for light rail lines is yet another option. The extension of the Green line a few miles to the Norwalk Metrolink station would close a key rail gap. An extensive public planning process should be used to identify these corridors. Data from model runs can determine the level and type of services that will be needed as our population grows.

   c. Expansion of Metrolink is needed beyond the three extensions proposed by SCAG. Double and triple tracking, as well as electrification to reduce pollution and use of oil, are also crucial.

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[6] SCAG Appendix Table J-2, page J-8, says that currently transit is 2.0% of all regional trips and forecasts an increase to 2.1%, even after spending an additional $40 billion of hoped-for revenue. In fact, SCAG projects on Appendix page D-17 an increase from 1997 to 2025 of only 88,000 local and rapid bus daily riders, a total which has already been achieved in 2000. MTA reports a current 3.4% transit mode share, with an increase to 4.9% under their constrained plan.

[7] SCAG July 2000 Decision Document, p. 26. It quotes the report from the Transit Task Force which says that enhancement actions will improve system performance (TSM), person access (TDM), and coordination with growth and development (GM). In some cases, these enhancements alone could be implemented for little or no cost (capital or operating) and improve transit service capacity by as much as 15%.

[8] MTA Plan Appendix pages 15 and 16 present the results of a Strategic Alternative with Pricing, further described on pages 6 - 7.

[9] SCAG Plan page 68 and Appendix page D-18-19, MTA Plan page 1-13-14.

[10] SCAG Plan page 135.

d. Zero-polluting electric buses should be made a priority since they can be powered by hydrogen fuel cells or electricity generated from wind, solar, geothermal and other sustainable power sources.

e. Universal fare card and reduced fares. Use of transit could be substantially increased by the adoption of a universal fare card or pass that can be used on all systems, as is done in San Diego County. As revenue is generated from the increased gas taxes we propose in section 5, it should be possible to reduce bus and rail fares and increase the availability of discount passes for seniors, students and lower-income residents.

f. Rapid Bus expansion. We applaud MTA's Rapid Bus demonstration and urge that all 16 additional Rapid Bus lines be implemented in the next 2-3 years.[11] More routes should be added before 2010. Additional lanes should be reserved exclusively for buses, especially during peak periods.

g. Improve the quality and service of buses. Frequent service, comfortable clean-fuel buses, pleasant bus stops and transit centers with traveler amenities are crucial for improving this vital transit service.

2. **Effective land use/transportation connections**: Our land use patterns greatly influence our travel patterns. If someone can walk to work or the store, or can easily walk or bike to transit, this greatly reduces the need for driving. Another important means for reducing commuting times is to achieve an appropriate balance of jobs and housing within communities.

   SCAG projects that 56% of the additional residents coming to our region will live in outlying areas, including North L.A. County, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.[12] The result will be an increasing number of commuters on the road over 100 minutes each way. We must encourage land use patterns that favor livability and location/transit efficiency.

   Recommendations:

   a. **Incentives**: SCAG and MTA should provide incentives for cities to better link their transportation and land use. Since transportation funds are highly coveted and land use decisions need to remain local, an incentive-based strategy is needed to allow cities to qualify for increased transportation funding if they make better land use decisions.[13] Numerous techniques can be utilized, including:
      - better linkages to transportation networks and corridors,
      - transit-oriented general plans to accommodate growth,
      - a holistic approach to siting public facilities,
      - mixed-used zoning,
      - developer incentives,
      - transportation service requirements for major developments,
      - location-efficient mortgages,
      - affordable housing plans, etc.

   Many of these approaches are mentioned in the SCAG and MTA plans,[14] but no funding targets are listed in the SCAG plan and only $8 million per year is targeted in the constrained MTA plan.[15]

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[11] MTA lists 23 corridors on page 2-42.

[12] SCAG Appendix page A-26

[13] This program is being implemented by Bay Area MTC. (See http://www.mtc.ca.gov/projects/livable_communities/lcindex.htm)

[14] Many of these are described in the SCAG Plan on pages 95-99.

[15] MTA plan page 1-19. Note that $8 million per year is less that 0.2% of total annual MTA spending.

b. Implement livable community performance indicators, including such measures as:

- Number of residences within walking distance of transit stops and community amenities (schools, stores, jobs, parks, etc.),
- Quality of transit service (frequency, speed, etc.)
- Affordability of housing.
- Jobs / housing balance
- Non-motorized share of trips
- Local air quality and ambient noise levels
- Traffic volume and speed in areas with high concentrations of pedestrians

SCAG should establish baseline measurements now and report on progress in the next RTP.

3. Expand non-motorized transportation: Since non-motorized trips, which now total nearly 10% of all trips, are completely pollution free and take little or no space on the roads, expansion would be very cost effective. Bicycles are an important way of increasing access to transit stops. For both bicycles and pedestrians, the lack of planning, inadequate funding and insufficient attention at all levels of government are major barriers to mainstreaming bicycling and walking as transportation modes.

Recommendations:

a. Higher targets: We strongly recommend specific targets for improving cycling's transportation mode share in L.A. County from the current 2.4%[16] to at least 5% by 2025 and walking from the current 8.7%[17] to at least 14% by 2025.

b. More funding for planning and facilities: A minimum of $1.5 billion regionally ($1 billion in L.A. County) is needed for expanded bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The SCAG plan has almost no information on non-motorized strategies, but the MTA plan has some excellent goals, actions and program recommendations, including pedestrian oriented districts, safe routes to schools, and improved safe pedestrian environments on all roads (except freeways). The issue is the limited funding provided (MTA has only $10 million a year each for bicycles and pedestrians in its constrained plan[18], which is less than half of what is needed[19]). Additional funding is also necessary to ensure access for the disabled, especially those in wheelchairs. Funding is also needed to facilitate and assist municipalities in the planning and implementation of non-motorized infrastructure projects.

c. Accommodate bicycles and pedestrians on transit and roadway projects. For bicycles to be a viable mode of transportation, they must be able to ride safely on all roads and easily access the same destinations as automobiles. Desired features include bike lanes where possible or wide curb lanes, safe intersection designs and bike-sensitive signal detectors. Pedestrians need safe street crossings, as well as improved physical environments, including shade trees and safe sidewalks.

d. Require the maximum integration of bicycles into all transit facilities, including strategies for encouraging multi-modal trips, such as secure parking for bikes, "end-of-trip" facilities at major destinations and bicycle access to transit vehicles.

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16 MTA Plan page 5-1.

17 MTA Plan page 5-5.

18 MTA Plan page 1-20.

19 The MTA Strategic Plan says $20 million per year is needed. The L.A. County Bicycle Coalition sees $25 million as needed.

e. **Promote cycling and walking as transportation**, including measures such as: an ongoing, pervasive PR campaign; high-visibility pavement markings; signage; specific, high-profile bike and pedestrian projects; and priority bike parking areas at major destinations.

4. **Expand transportation demand management (TDM):** At the heart of our congestion problem is the excessive use of single-occupant vehicles. Encouraging those who drive alone to carpool, use transit or other alternatives is one of the best ways to improve the efficiency of our transportation system. There are many cost-effective ways to do this.

   Recommendations:

   a. **Expand non-motorized transportation** facilities and promotion (see #3 above).

   b. **Promote and support ridesharing**, vanpools, park-and-ride, telecommuting, work at home, and traveler information systems.[20]

   c. **Employer parking cash-out.** This program requires large employers to offer employees who do not drive the equivalent in cash of what a parking space costs the employer. This is mandated by state law but is not enforced. SCAG and MTA should require all jurisdictions to enforce this law as a condition for receiving transportation funds

   d. **Triple the funds** allocated to TDM and demonstration programs for congestion pricing and other measures.

   e. **Increase parking costs**: require jurisdictions to increase parking fees as appropriate and apply the revenue to shuttles and other transit improvements.

   f. **Require that new housing in transit-rich areas offer parking as an extra-cost option,** providing significant monetary incentive to buyers who do not own cars.

5. **Budget shortfalls demand additional revenue**: SCAG is projecting a deficit of $11 billion across the region,[21] which means that even current commitments to roads and transit cannot be honored without additional revenues. (We note that SCAG's forecast appears to differ with MTA's projection of $11 billion available for L.A. County for new projects.[22] However, staff of both MTA and SCAG state that their budget calculations are consistent.[23])

   SCAG has identified that an additional $40 billion of revenue is needed region-wide.[24] (MTA indicates that an additional $19 billion is needed for L.A. County for their Strategic Plan.[25]). SCAG proposes the additional revenue to come from:[26]

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[20] SCAG's projection of increasing the number of vanpools from the current 2,000 to only 5,000 by 2025 is well below the per capita rate in other major US cities and should be drastically increased.

[21] SCAG RTP Table 6.1, page 103.

[22] MTA Plan page 7-2.

[23] Conversation with Brad McAllester, Director of Planning for MTA.

[24] SCAG RTP Table 6.1, page 103.

[25] MTA Plan on page 7-9 notes that a regional fuel tax of 10¢ per gallon beginning in 2002 would raise $8 billion additional, and a $150 annual emission or distance-based fee per vehicle beginning in 2005 would raise $20 billion through 2025. However the MTA Plan does not recommend these options.

[26] SCAG RTP page 112.

- Sales tax extensions in Orange, Riverside, Imperial and San Bernardino Counties,[27] plus a new sales tax in Ventura County starting in 2005 (producing a total of $8 billion additional).
- Increase state fuel excise tax by 5¢ per gallon for the five-year period between 2005 and 2010 and by 1¢ annually thereafter through 2025 (producing $18 billion additional).
- Tax alternative fuels at the same rate as gasoline starting in 2010 ($8 billion additional)[28].
- Continue to dedicate state sales tax on gasoline to transportation ($6 billion additional).

The Coalition supports all SCAG revenue generation proposals, except the full tax on alternative fuels. However, the SCAG-proposed 1¢ per gallon annual gas tax increase barely keeps up with projected inflation and provides insufficient new revenue. More revenue is needed.

In addition, taxes on fuel and licensing fees cover only a fraction of the total public burden on society from cars and trucks. Studies calculate the subsidized costs of air pollution, uninsured accidents, "free" parking, congestion, road maintenance, noise, etc. total 20¢ to 35¢ per mile.[29] Thus a car averaging 20 miles per gallon inflicts external costs of $4 – $7 per gallon, which is what the tax should be to recover these costs.

Recommendations:

a. Capture additional revenues from fuel taxes while it is still possible.
When projected fuel shortages become reality in the next 10 years or so, skyrocketing commodity prices will leave no room for additional taxes exactly at the moment the revenue is needed to finance alternatives. Increases in fuel costs will go into the suppliers' bank accounts, not public treasuries. Therefore, we must begin generating and investing new revenues *now* to prepare us for this scenario.

The Coalition believes the gasoline tax must increase at a higher rate. An increase of 3¢ per year would raise an additional $40 billion by 2025 (if alternative fuels were taxed at only half the rate of gasoline, and not until 2010). The $40 billion would be dedicated to funding the transit, pedestrian, bicycle and other programs recommended in this policy paper. This revenue could also fund a tax rebate for low-income workers who must drive. The result would not only be fast, attractive transit services, but could even maintain current highway speeds, especially if land use measures were implemented.[30]

b. Public education campaign. New revenue generation is impossible without public support. Therefore, the ability to implement a long range plan that successfully meets the challenges outlined here hinges on effectively educating the public on the critical issues we face and gaining their support (see section 10, below). We appreciate the leadership of Governor Davis on transportation funding, and call for continued emphasis on this crucial issue by the Governor, legislature and all public officials.

6. Limit expansion of LAX in favor of a regionally-dispersed plan to facilitate economic growth in areas where population is fastest growing. LAX's expansion plan (estimated at $12 billion) leaves little money for expansion of other airports in the region. A strategy that focuses the majority of expansion on LAX

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[27] Transportation sales taxes in these counties will sunset in 2010 or 2012.

[28] At a Feb. 21, 2001, SCAG meeting, President Ron Bates said that a compromise to reduce the tax on alternative fuels to cover road maintenance and not new facility construction was being discussed.

[29] Todd Litman, *Transportation Cost Analysis*, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 1996, www.vtpi.org; MacKenzie, et al. *The Going Rate*, World Resources Institute, 1992; Mark Delucchi, *Annualized Social Cost of Motor Vehicle Use*, Institute of Transportation Studies, UC Davis, 1997

[30] . The MTA plan (page 4-11) states that roughly $60 billion in "pricing strategies" plus "instituting strategies to discourage auto use and implementing the [$40 billion] LRTP Strategic Plan improvements" would result in overall system travel speed and mobility to remain at about today's levels in 2025.

deprives other regions of airport-centered commercial activity and increases congestion on the Westside. In addition, SCAG admits that the biggest transportation environmental justice issue facing the region is the extreme disproportionate impact of LAX on the low income and minority communities surrounding it (95% of the increased noise impact will fall on non-whites).[31] It is the largest single source of NOx in the SCAQMD region,[32] located upwind of millions of people. Particulate matter and air toxicity emissions levels are also significant concerns, especially from all the trucks carrying cargo.

Increased LAX activity creates impacts on the most densely populated areas of the Los Angeles Basin. LAX is already over-crowded. It handles over 2200 takeoffs and landings daily resulting in approximately 64 million annual passengers (MAP) and the third-largest U.S. air cargo facility with 2.1 million annual tons. It has one of the highest percentages of delayed flights in the nation.

Los Angeles World Airports projects substantial passenger and cargo growth at LAX during the next twenty-five years. It expects LAX to be handling up to 79 million passengers and 3.1 million tons of cargo, even if facilities are not expanded, and much greater numbers if they are. The recently released LAX Master Plan draft contains a staff recommendation to spend many billions (perhaps $12 billion to relocate and expand terminals, runways, and cargo capacity to handle 89 million passengers plus 4.2 million tons of cargo. This will add many thousands of vehicles per day to an already congested area.

LAX expansion would:

- Increase air safety risks with more planes operating in close quarters.
- Dramatically worsen the already serious traffic congestion on I-405, I-105 and local arterials from thousands of additional passenger cars, vans, and cargo-carrying trucks.
- Result in greater air pollution, further endangering regional and local residents' health.[33]
- Create more airport noise, impacting a larger population, causing stress, illness, reduction of children's learning ability and degradation of property values.[34]
- Aggravate environmental justice issues. A disproportionate share of low income and minority populations are subjected to increased health and safety impacts and/or displaced from their homes.[35]
- Destroy local homes, schools, libraries, parks, and businesses to provide room for more airport support facilities.

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[31] Presentation by Hasan Ikhrata, SCAG Manager of Planning on February 1, 2001. (See footnote 34 below.)

[32] LAX is the region's single largest source of smog-forming NOx emissions - greater than the next three largest sources combined, including two oil refineries and a power plant, according to the South Coast AQMD air emissions inventory.

[33] In addition to dramatically increasing automobile traffic, expanding LAX as proposed may more than double diesel truck traffic around the airport. According to the Washington Health Department Census data from 1991-95, infant mortality near the Seattle-Tacoma airport was 50% greater, cancer deaths 36% greater and life expectancy was cut by 5 years, compared to all the residents of the Seattle area. A study at Chicago O'Hare Airport estimated the cancer risk from air pollution was five times greater for people living near the airport, than for the region as a whole (Environ, 2000).

[34] The impact of airport noise can lead to psychological and physiological damage, contributing to hypertension, cardiovascular disorders and gastrointestinal disturbances (Bronzaft, et al., Environment and Behavior, Vol. 30, (1), 1998). The impact on school children is particularly devastating in terms of their ability to learn. Children living and attending schools in the LAX air corridor had higher stress levels (Evans and Lepore, Children's Environments, Vol. 10 (1), p. 31-51, 1993) and did less well with puzzle solving and math compared to children of similar socio-economic status, age and race living and attending schools in quiet L.A. neighborhoods (Cohen, et al. 1980).

[35] Relative to aviation noise, SCAG compares, on Appendix page I-28, Table I.12, the 1998 RTP Adopted Plan, in which LAX would rise to 94 million annual passengers (MAP) by 2020 (which is similar to the LAX Master Plan staff recommended Alternative C), with Airport Scenario 8 (in which LAX would be constrained to 78 MAP, its present maximum capacity). With LAX expanding to 94 MAP, the number of non-white persons affected by community noise equivalent levels (CNEL) of 65 or greater would increase by 19,000, while the number of white persons affected would increase by 1,000. Thus the burden of LAX expansion would fall 95% on non-whites (and especially disproportionately on African-Americans). This would clearly be environmental ***in***justice.

- Divert attention and funds from the expansion of other airport facilities where future population growth is located.

It is impossible for LAX to expand sufficiently to accommodate all the projected regional increases in passenger traffic and air cargo, no matter which expansion scenario is chosen. Even the sizeable LAX expansion being proposed would only accommodate 62% of the total air passengers projected for 2020. Air traffic at LAX has reached the point where much of it must be dispersed to the other airports operating in Southern California.

Recommendation:
Develop a regional plan to accommodate air traffic growth by expanding and better utilizing the eleven other commercial airports in Southern California. In fact, it is the outlying regions of North L.A. County, San Bernardino County and Riverside County that are expected to have the highest population and employment growth. By 2025, SCAG projects these areas to grow by 3.1 million people (80% growth rate) while areas near LAX will only grow by 1.4 million (21% rate).[36] Several of these airports are well isolated from large residential areas and can easily accommodate the additional flights without affecting local residents. This alternative would probably cost much less than $12 billion because it would not involve the costly moving of runways, purchase of right of way, etc.

7. **Sustainability of the transportation system** needs to be guaranteed for future generations. Our expenditures now should not remove viable options nor greatly increase the cost of transportation for future generations. Fuel supplies are projected to become increasingly scarce and expensive in the coming years.[37] If we do not implement more far-sighted solutions, SCAG and MTA plans forecast that over 80% of trips will still be made by private automobiles in 25 years, with little change in transit usage, resulting in over 22% **increase** in petroleum fuel use.[38] This will leave Southern California highly vulnerable to fuel supply disruptions and sustained price spikes, less competitive as a place to do business. We fear this current strategy may dramatically increase the cost of living in the Southern California region and reduce our quality of life economically, socially and environmentally.

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[36] SCAG Appendix page A-26.

[37] Published petroleum experts Colin Campbell, Jean Laherrére, A. Bartlett, R. Duncan, W. Youngquist all expect a "peak" followed by a severe decline in availability of "conventional oil" around 2005, according to a report presented by the US Geological Survey (http://geopubs.wr.usgs.gov/open-file/of00-320/of00-320.pdf). So-called “liquid gas” supplies may extend the date when global oil supply will be unable to meet global demand to 2010 (www.RunningOnEmpty.org), but severe country shortages are likely to appear sooner, according to the experts at the Hubbert Center of the Colorado School of Mines, one of the nation’s leading oil geology institutions (http://hubbert.mines.edu).

[38] SCAG Program EIR, page EN-17.

Recommendations:

a. **Long Range Planning**: True long range planning involves looking at the expected population growth and transportation needs over the next 50 years or more. This will enable us to put today's resources into building for the future rather than perpetuating current approaches to access and mobility.

b. **More funding for maintenance**: Inadequate maintenance of the road system could place huge economic burdens on future generations. SCAG has calculated future highway operations and maintenance costs based on historical expenditures as well as data in the 2000 State Highway Operations and Protection Plan.[39] We fear these numbers are too low and will result in further deterioration of our roads and damage to the vehicles using them. SCAG's $12.96 billion for roadway operations and maintenance over the 1997 – 2025 period[40] appears inadequate. SCAG is recommending $25,000 per freeway lane mile per year,[41] which requires $8.9 billion for the 12,270 miles of mixed use and HOV lanes,[42] leaving $4 billion for all 44,097 miles of arterials, which is only $3,100 per year per lane mile. There is no mention in the SCAG plan of any money for local street maintenance. The MTA plan has no information on costs of roadway operations and maintenance.[43]

   We believe that the maintenance funding for arterials and local streets is woefully inadequate, with the resulting pavement deterioration and other roadway hazards causing significant damage to cars and trucks. Several more billions of dollars are needed over the 1997 – 2025 period.

c. **Plan now for the end of cheap oil**:
   The looming oil shortage requires immediate actions to greatly reduce auto and truck use before 2010:
   - A major expansion in public transportation availability and improvement of service quality.
   - New goods movement strategies to reduce dependency on trucks.
   - Limit increases in road capacity.
   - Increases in parking fees and taxes, with revenues for expanding transit and non-motorized facilities.
   - Large increases in registration fees for high fuel consumption vehicles, with the income going to expanding transit and non-motorized facilities.
   - Parking cash-out required for all employers.
   - Large increases in taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel, to support transit services.
   - Expanded transportation demand management (TDM) measures described above.

8. **Improved air quality conformity calculations**: SCAG appears to have included non-viable projects in its air quality calculations. In addition, although other levels of emissions will be reduced in the SCAG plan, PM10, the most dangerous of all pollutants, will increase by 139%,[44] causing thousands of deaths. The USEPA estimated over 3,000 excess deaths and 52,000 respiratory episodes occur annually in Southeast L.A. County alone from current levels of particulates.[45]

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[39] SCAG Appendix page F-36.

[40] SCAG RTP page 65 and Appendix page F-37.

[41] SCAG Appendix page F-68.

[42] SCAG Appendix page C-8.

[43] MTA Plan Page 7-2 says that the $10.7 billion allocated for highways does not include state and local operations costs. However, the MTA plan provides $10.1 billion for "Local Return," but does not specify the use of these funds.

[44] The SCAG Plan states (Appendix page H-12) that the 2025 PM10 level for the South Coast Air Basin will be 265 tons per day, only slightly lower than the "no-build" scenario of 270 tons per day, and 139% greater than the 191 tons per day in 2000.

[45] U.S. EPA Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, "Review of the National Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter, April 1996, page VI-13a. If this death rate applied across the region, it would mean 25,000 annual deaths in 2000 and 35,000 in 2025.

Recommendations:

a. **Revise the SCAG air quality conformity calculations** without the following projects:
   - **Maglev/high speed rail is in jeopardy**: The Federal government is no longer considering Southern California for a $960 million seed money grant. With no federal grant readily available, and no assurance of private funding, Maglev cannot be forecast as a viable component of these plans.
   - **MTA has not included the 710 gap closure or truck lanes** in its plan, so these should not be included in air quality calculations.

b. **Specify New Technologie**s: The plan must clearly state how the region is going to implement "new technologies" to reduce emissions that are now in the so-called "black box."[46]

c. **Use the most recent emission models.** The air quality calculation must include the additional emissions that will be caused by the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) recently scaled-back zero emission vehicle program. It would be preferable to use the most current emission model for calculating mobile source emissions, EMFAC 2000, which was recently adopted by CARB as being more representative of mobile source in-use emissions.

d. **Improve air quality.** SCAG should show how it will attain a healthy standard for fine and ultrafine particulate matter (soot), PM10 and PM2.5 respectively, consistent with the aims of both the Federal and State Clean Air Acts. We applaud the South Coast Air Quality Management District's clean fuels program for public fleets and call for their extension to private centralized fleets as well. We also agree that low sulfur diesel fuel and particulate traps need to be required well *before* 2006 to help reduce air toxics and other air pollutants from diesel traffic (currently responsible for over 70% of the air toxic risk to the South Coast), especially in and around the region's ports and airports. Recommending the phase-out (or effective pollution control) of all diesel-fueled trucks, buses and other on- and off-road applications should be included in SCAG's plan. SCAG should also demonstrate how it will further reduce the region's levels of oxides of nitrogen (NOx), air toxics and global warming (CO2) emissions. Finally, with the Supreme Court's decision to uphold US EPA's tougher ozone and PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standards, it would be a mistake for MTA and SCAG to overlook these impending health protective standards.

9. **Long range plan charettes[47]** organized by SCAG and the Counties are needed to produce true long range implementation plans involving the above topics. MTA has announced that part of its long range planning process will be to convene a summit of government, business and environmental groups regarding land use and transportation issues. We recommend that charettes be held on all of the major issues facing the region to develop the best long term solutions. These should include academics, research institutions and consultants, additional experts and stakeholders, including grassroots and community-based organizations. Many good ideas are being demonstrated in other parts of the country and world. We need to analyze them and develop creative, workable solutions for our region. The groups signed on to this document are ready to participate in such a process.

10. **Meet environmental justice goals with an expanded, broad-based, public input process.** Substantive public participation is required in the long range planning process. The scale of solutions needed demands that the public and media embrace the process and support the goals. If they are not included, the plans developed will likely be met with skepticism and rejection. This requires broad-based outreach to all

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[46] The black box incorporates the anticipated emission reductions that will be created by the implementation of new, as yet unknown, technologies.

[47] The term "charette" is often used by architects and planners to describe a workshop in which experts from a variety of backgrounds come together to seek optimum solutions.

stakeholders, including private residents, businesses and the media. The process must explain the urgency effectively, elicit meaningful participation and generate public support for the ambitious solutions required.

According to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, the three fundamental environmental justice principles that federal agencies, state departments of transportation, MPOs and transit providers must abide by are:

(1) To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations;
(2) To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process;
(3) To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

A number of issues have been raised by Environmental Defense, Legal Aid Foundation and other organizations, focusing on the lack of meaningful public input -- especially from minority communities -- in the development of the draft plans. Our analysis indicates that SCAG's plan discriminates against poor people who do not have access to cars.[48]

Recommendations:

We call upon all the agencies to redouble their efforts immediately "to ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities," so that we can ensure the regional transportation plans not only meet environmental justice requirements, but improve the quality of life for all of us now and into the future. The agencies must begin to implement broad outreach processes to engage all communities, governments and businesses across the region in the development of new transportation plans that are creative and sustainable. This outreach should include materials and presentations in other languages in addition to English. Opportunities for meaningful and substantive input must occur early enough in the process to have real impact on the plans. We are ready to work with all agencies and groups to help make this happen.

[48] Relative to transit access to jobs, SCAG says on Appendix page I-19, Table I.9, that under the staff recommended plan, only 2.8% of all jobs in the region are accessible via low-cost transit (bus or subway) in 45 minutes, compared to 15% via the automobile in only 30 minutes. If you include expensive commuter rail and Maglev, the percentage of jobs accessible in 45 minutes rises to 7.8%. Using the 1990 census data applied to the 3100 SCAG traffic analysis zone, SCAG has shown that these access percentages are similar for whites and non-whites, and for all income groups. However, the SCAG calculation averages across all people in a traffic analysis zone. Even low income areas have many people with cars. Our concern is that the transit dependent, who include the poorest people and welfare to work clients, are heavily discriminated against, in that a person with a car has access to 540% more jobs and services in only 30 minutes compared to a person taking transit for 45 minutes. In other words, if a person with a car has access to 100 jobs, a transit dependent only has access to 19, if they take 50% longer travel time. This finding makes it a clear environmental justice priority for SCAG and MTA to boost transit services.

Conclusion

By 2025 we will know the result of the transportation decisions we are making today. The projections are very clear: conditions will reach a crisis stage if we don't change how we travel and grow today. If we accept the automobile-based paradigm of the past, there is little chance we will improve the fundamental congestion and quality-of-life problems we are facing. We will continue on the path to sprawl, ever-longer commutes, dismal streetscapes and dysfunctional communities. But if we target our investments and policies to favor the development of smart growth, efficient public transit and travel alternatives, we could be well on our way to a vibrant future – a future of streets alive with people, communities that work even for those without cars, and cities flourishing because they are pleasant, accessible places to live and work in.

The groups endorsing this document are committed to helping solve the transportation and land use issues facing our region. We offer our resources to create a cooperative, ongoing effort in partnership with government, business and the community to find solutions that will sustain and improve the quality of life for current and future generations.