

Fighting Climate Change... & Winning a Better Bay Area

The Transportation and Land Use Coalition's 2009 Regional Transportation Plan Platform



TRANSPORTATION
AND
LAND USE
COALITION

Working together for a sustainable
and socially just Bay Area

The Transportation and Land Use Coalition is a partnership of 110 groups working for a sustainable and socially just Bay Area. We envision a region with healthy, walkable communities that provide all residents with transportation choices and affordable housing. The coalition analyzes county and regional policies, works with community groups to develop alternatives, and coordinates grassroots campaigns.

© Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC)

Acknowledgments

Over 100 of TALC's member representatives and individual advocates – through work in four subgroups, surveys, and participation at regional meetings – collaborated to develop this Regional Transportation Plan platform. The working groups and their leaders were:

Bicycle-Pedestrian: Sabrina Merlo, Bay Area Bicycle Coalition

Transportation Equity: Bob Allen and Lindsay Imai, Urban Habitat

Land Use and Climate Change: Stuart Cohen, TALC staff

Projects and Performance Measures: Marta Lindsey and Ariana Milman, TALC staff

The final platform reflects the Coalition's top priorities for the 2009 Regional Transportation Plan. It has been approved by the Transportation and Land Use Coalition Board of Directors.

Cover page images by Tammy Tam, Susan Decker, Mukul Kundu and Mike Kahn (clockwise from top left). Thanks to Fran Taylor for editing and proofreading and to Miriam Sorell for layout.

Board of Directors

Rocky Birdsey <i>Marin Center for Independent Living</i>	Amanda Brown-Stevens <i>Greenbelt Alliance</i>	Winston Dong <i>Urban Ecology</i>	Juliet Ellis <i>Urban Habitat</i>	Sarah Karlinsky <i>SPUR</i>
	Rubin Lizardo <i>PolicyLink</i>	Geeta Rao <i>Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California</i>	Anita Rees <i>LIFETIME</i>	Roxanne Sanchez <i>SEIU, Local 1021 BART Chapter</i>
	Dick Schneider <i>Sierra Club</i>	Andy Thornley <i>Bay Area Bicycle Coalition</i>	Corinne Winter <i>Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition</i>	

Support

This report is part of TALC's World-Class Transportation initiative which receives support from foundations that support public policy initiatives for a sustainable environment and healthy communities: The San Francisco Foundation, Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, Firedoll Foundation, and the Surdna Foundation.

THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION

The Community Foundation of the Bay Area

Additional Copies

Additional copies of this platform can be downloaded at www.transcoalition.org or by contacting

Transportation and Land Use Coalition
405 14th Street, Suite 605, Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 740-3150 x 315

Fighting Climate Change...& Winning a Better Bay Area

The Transportation and Land Use Coalition's 2009 Regional Transportation Plan Platform

For ten years, organizations from across the Bay Area have come together with one voice to advocate for a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that supports exceptional, affordable public transit and healthy, walkable communities. As the Metropolitan Transportation Commission embarks on an 18-month process to develop the 2009 RTP, we again present a unified voice. Member and affiliate organizations of the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC) have spent several months analyzing the projects and programs needed in the RTP to improve our quality of life and reduce global warming pollution.

For this RTP, the stakes for the Bay Area are higher than ever. Sea levels are already rising in the Bay Area and around the world.¹ The climate is in crisis. Transportation is responsible for half of all global warming pollution in the Bay Area, mostly from private cars and trucks. Total emissions are anticipated to rise in California through 2030 even with cleaner fuels and more efficient cars, as we drive more and more each year. And, congestion in the region is the second worst in the nation.

The RTP's \$100+ billion worth of future transportation investments presents our best opportunity to understand which investments will help create a better Bay Area while reducing global warming pollution. The RTP also offers a chance to identify important new policies and programs that can help guide investments. TALC's platform presents details on how the RTP can:

- support a world-class regional transit system that is affordable and accessible for *everyone*, especially youth, elderly and low-income residents who depend on it most;
- promote vibrant, walkable communities near rail, ferry, and bus service;
- maximize the efficiency of our roads with pricing that reduces congestion *and* global warming gases; and
- make walking and bicycling safe and easy for many more trips.

Many of the same strategies that reduce global warming emissions will also make the Bay Area a better place for all of us to live. For example, over 20% of morning trips in the Bay Area are getting children to school. Through a focused effort, to get more drivers to walk, bike, and carpool, Marin County showed us that we can dramatically reduce congestion and global warming pollution, while freeing up time for parents and encouraging exercise among our youth. By making smarter choices about how we invest our region's transportation funds, we will waste less time in traffic, breathe cleaner air, enjoy safer streets, and live in more active, thriving communities.

The ten recommendations in this platform are ambitious; but, clear thinking and bold leadership can help us see the climate crisis and our transportation challenges as what they really are: "a series of great opportunities disguised as insoluble problems."² The rest of the country is looking to California for leadership on climate change. *It's time to lead the way.*

TALC's recommendations are outlined on the next page and in more detail, starting on page 7.

¹ San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. "Climate Change." <http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/index.php?cat=56>. Sea levels everywhere have risen 7 inches over the past 150 years. The IPCC and the 2006 California Climate Action Team Report project that by 2100, mean sea level will have risen up to 3 feet.

² Thomas Friedman quoting John Gardener in *The Power of Green*. New York Times. April 15, 2007.

To fight climate change and improve the quality of life for all Bay Area residents, the Regional Transportation Plan must:

REDUCE GLOBAL WARMING POLLUTION

PAGE 7

1. Establish a *Transportation Fund for Climate Protection* to reduce global warming pollution from the transportation sector through projects and programs, including those outlined in this platform, that help everyone emit less.
2. Spur innovative new projects and programs that reduce global warming pollution through a new *Climate Protection Grant Program*.

PROVIDE WORLD-CLASS TRANSIT FOR ALL

PAGE 8

3. Fix it first: make the region's existing public transit system as reliable and affordable as possible by prioritizing funds for operating and maintenance shortfalls.
4. Ensure low-income communities have access to mobility by closing identified gaps in bus routes and services and by funding high-priority projects in Community-Based Transportation Plans.
5. Achieve faster, more reliable, and cost-effective transit by fully funding Bus Rapid Transit along major corridors.
6. Support an integrated and expanded regional rail system by connecting Caltrain with a new Transbay Terminal and funding projects in the upcoming Regional Rail Plan that uphold the principles of this platform.

PROMOTE VIBRANT, WALKABLE COMMUNITIES

PAGE 11

7. Aggressively promote vibrant, walkable neighborhoods near bus, rail, and ferry service throughout the region by establishing and funding a comprehensive land use program at MTC.
8. Make walking and bicycling safe and convenient for all types of trips by:
 - fully funding all projects in the Regional Bicycle Network,
 - conducting a major revision of the 2001 Regional Bicycle Plan,
 - creating and funding a Regional Pedestrian Plan,
 - increasing funding for Safe Routes to Transit, and
 - creating a regional Safe Routes to School program.
9. Designate at least half of Local Streets and Roads Maintenance funds for where they are needed most: in the cities and counties planning for significant levels of new infill housing near existing or planned transit.

MAKE ROADS PART OF THE SOLUTION

PAGE 15

10. Maximize the efficiency of our current highway system using road pricing that:
 - reduces congestion,
 - reduces global warming pollution,
 - funds transportation choices, not more highway expansion, and
 - decreases the overall costs of transportation for low-income commuters.

The following organizations have endorsed TALC's RTP Platform:
(as of October 23, 2007)

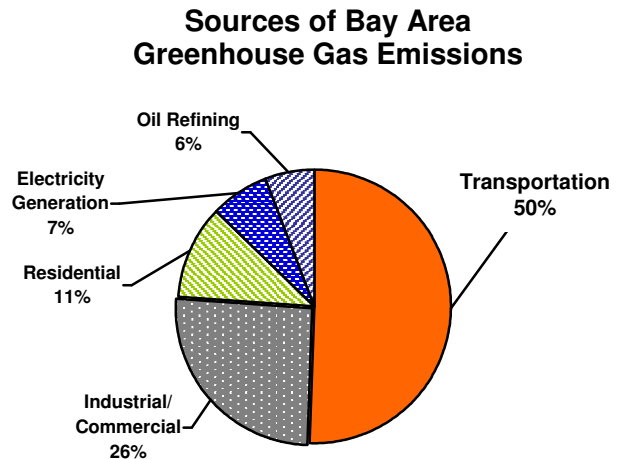
- Acterra
- AFSCME Local 3916
- Alameda Transit Advocates
- Albany/El Cerrito Access
- ATU Local 265
- Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility, NorCal Chapter
- Bay Area Bicycle Coalition
- Bay Localize
- BayRail Alliance
- BikeAlameda
- BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency)
- Breathe California
- CALPIRG
- Carfree City, USA
- CHAM Deliverance Ministry
(previously Community Homeless Alliance Ministry)
- City CarShare
- EAH Housing
- East Bay Asian Local Development Corp.
- East Bay Bicycle Coalition
- East Bay Gray Panthers
- Friends of BRT
- Friends of Livermore
- Greenbelt Alliance
- Greenlining Institute
- Green Party of Alameda County
- Hayward Demos Democratic Club
- Housing Opportunities Make Economic Sense (HOMES)
- Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy
- LIFETIME
- Livable Berkeley
- Marin Center for Independent Living
- Marin County Bicycle Coalition
- Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California
- Pedestrian Friendly Alameda
- Peninsula Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition
- People on the Bus
- Planning and Conservation League
- PolicyLink
- Public Health Law & Policy
- Rails to Trails Conservancy
- Regional Alliance for Transit (RAFT)
- San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
- San Francisco Housing Action Coalition
- San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR)
- Save the Bay
- Save Mount Diablo
- Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
- Sonoma County Transportation and Land Use Coalition
- Sustainable San Mateo County
- Urban Ecology
- Urban Habitat
- Urbanists for a Livable Temescal Rockridge Area (ULTRA)
- Walk & Roll Berkeley
- WalkSF
- Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club

REDUCE GLOBAL WARMING POLLUTION

1. Establish a Transportation Fund for Climate Protection to reduce global warming pollution from the transportation sector through projects and programs including those outlined in this platform.

We must act quickly and boldly to transform our transportation system to combat global warming pollution. But the region's current level of transportation funding is barely sufficient to maintain and operate our existing system, much less support the kind of world-class transit and walkable communities we need throughout the Bay Area so that people can choose to drive less.

MTC should raise additional funds by engaging stakeholders in a process to develop a *Transportation Fund for Climate Protection*. This fund could support projects and programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in both the short- and the long-term, in all parts of the region. Revenue for the fund could be raised through a climate impact fee on vehicle fuels. For example, a climate change fee of 20 cents per gallon would raise roughly \$530 million per year and help us take big steps toward achieving a sustainable transportation system.



Source: Bay Area Air Quality Management District. 2006
Source Inventory of Bay Area Greenhouse Gas Emissions

While gas prices may already seem high, inaction on climate change now will impose exponentially higher costs on the region in the future. A 20-cent fee would add less than 1.5% to the cost of owning and operating a vehicle for a year.³ The fee could also be structured so that it increases incrementally over three to four years. State legislators could pass enabling legislation that would allow Bay Area residents to vote to approve the fee.

Since low-income drivers may be most heavily impacted by this fee, it is critical that significant revenue generated from the fee be used for programs that will reduce overall transportation costs for these drivers. These might include transit fare reductions or vehicle trade-in programs that enable low-income people to access more fuel-efficient cars.

2. Spur innovative projects and programs to reduce global warming pollution through a new Climate Protection Grant Program.

In addition, we need new ways to reduce driving that build on the innovations that have emerged in the past 15 years such as car sharing, social marketing programs like *TravelChoice*, and real-time transit information. But cutting-edge approaches have trouble obtaining public funds, making great ideas much slower to be piloted, improved

³ American Automobile Association (2007). *Your Driving Costs*. Based on average operating and ownership costs of a sedan driving 15,000 miles per year at 25.34 mpg.

upon, and expanded. Given the urgency of the climate crisis, MTC needs to quickly spur innovation in the region.

MTC should establish a five-year *Climate Protection Grant Program* to award grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 for those innovative models and pilot projects estimated to produce the largest reductions in vehicle miles traveled. Eligible projects should include educational programs, novel bicycle and pedestrian approaches, pioneering transit-oriented development, computerized ridesharing technologies, and more. All projects should have a strong evaluation component so that we can learn how to most effectively reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Pilot projects that prove effective would then be better able to compete for transportation funding from traditional sources. This program can be modeled on, or simply contribute directly to, the Air District's excellent new "Climate Protection Grant Program."

In concert with funding innovations, we must support MTC's move toward a more fine-grained transportation model that will be sensitive to land use changes and transportation demand management. We need to expedite MTC's process of adopting a new model so that we can better understand the benefits from transportation projects and programs that can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

PROVIDE WORLD-CLASS TRANSIT FOR ALL

3. Fix it first: make the region's existing public transit system as reliable and affordable as possible by prioritizing funds for operating and maintenance shortfalls.

By increasing public transit ridership, we can reduce global warming pollution from driving, unclog our roads, and save taxpayers money. But this will happen only if transit is made reliable and affordable so that it meets the needs of everyone—but, especially seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income families, who rely heavily on transit.

The 2005 Regional Transportation Plan left eight transit operators with \$1.3 billion in operating shortfalls and four transit operators with unfunded capital replacement

**We must plan to ensure mobility
for our aging population.**



Photo by John Chapman

shortfalls of nearly \$250 million (on top of BART's replacement shortfall of over \$1 billion). Bay Area residents have suffered the consequences in the form of service cuts, fare hikes, increased breakdowns, and less reliable service overall. Golden Gate Transit, County Connection, and Benecia Breeze's service cuts have been upwards of 20%. For those who are dependent on transit to get around, the impacts have been especially painful.

While there are many pressing needs, MTC should prioritize funding for shortfalls in the existing transit system over transit expansion and highway projects. To do this, MTC should identify additional funding for maintenance and ensure that none of the funding available for operations is diverted to capital projects within the financially constrained element of the RTP. Additionally, transit operations need to be prioritized for new funding as part of the long-term “vision.” To enable MTC to have an equitable regional policy on transit maintenance that benefits all agencies, BART’s billion-dollar car replacement and rehabilitation costs should be placed into a separate category. (See page 17 for details on the RTP process.)

4. Ensure low-income communities have access to mobility by closing identified gaps in bus routes and service and by funding high-priority projects in Community-Based Transportation Plans.

Many people in low-income communities depend on transit to access jobs, services, education, and health care. Transit is not a choice – it’s a lifeline. A transit lifeline that is safe, affordable, and convenient allows low-income communities to have better access to opportunities and supports a more sustainable transportation system for everyone. Our regional economy also benefits when all of our workers have reliable access to jobs.

In 2001, MTC sought to identify all of the region’s transit routes that connect low-income communities with essential destinations, including employment centers, medical facilities, job training, schools, and civic centers. The subsequent “Lifeline Transportation Network Report for the 2001 RTP” identified routes needing more frequent service or night/weekend hours, as well as corridors needing new bus routes. Unfortunately, MTC’s current funding commitment to the Lifeline Transportation Network fills only a tiny fraction of the identified needs.

MTC should identify and provide funding so transit operators can fill critical gaps in Lifeline transit routes. Since the 2001 study is now out of date, MTC should reassess which gaps in fixed-route transit service will best meet the needs of low-income communities.

Many low-income families rely on public transportation to access education, jobs, and other opportunities.



Photo by Josh Apte, TALC

In addition to closing gaps in fixed-route service, MTC should ensure funding for priority projects in Community-Based Transportation Plans. Since the Lifeline report, MTC has been conducting Community-

Based Transportation Plans (CBTPs) in low-income communities, working with them to evaluate options and set priorities for filling essential transportation gaps. The 13 of the 25 CBTPs that have already been completed identify specific community needs for fixed-route service as well as shuttles, information providers, and programs to make transportation more affordable.

5. Achieve faster, more reliable, and cost-effective transit by fully funding Bus Rapid Transit along major corridors.

Because buses typically stop frequently and are victim to increasing amounts of traffic, their service can be slow and unreliable—leading people to abandon public transit. Creating light rail service in many urban areas, however, can be prohibitively expensive and logistically difficult to build. But it is now possible to dramatically increase the speed, reliability, and affordability of transit service thanks to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). BRT emulates many of the best features of rail, by using traffic signal priority, proof-of-payment systems, comfortable stations, and in most cases, dedicated bus lanes. Implementing BRT in key urban corridors can dramatically improve our current transit system to create the world-class and sustainable transportation our region needs.

**The proposed San Francisco
Bus Rapid Transit line would provide greatly
improved service on Van Ness Avenue**



Courtesy of San Francisco County Transportation Authority

MTC should ensure full funding for the major BRT and Rapid Bus projects proposed throughout the region and prioritize these projects in upcoming funding cycles. Key BRT and Rapid Bus projects in the planning phase include the International Boulevard/Telegraph Avenue corridor in Alameda County, the El Camino Real and West San Carlos/Stevens Creek corridors in Santa Clara County, and the Geary Boulevard and Van Ness Avenue corridors in San Francisco.

6. Support an integrated and expanded regional rail system by connecting Caltrain with a new Transbay Terminal and funding projects in the upcoming Regional Rail Plan that uphold the principles of this platform.

We need to integrate our rail, ferry, and bus systems to make transit faster and more convenient to enable riders to get around throughout the region. Extending Caltrain to a new downtown Transbay Terminal will close a major gap in the region's transit system by bringing Peninsula residents directly into downtown San Francisco, allowing quick connections to BART and express buses from throughout the region plus accommodating future high-speed rail. Besides creating a seamless transportation system, the new Transbay Terminal will spur increased jobs and a range of housing

options in one of our most transit-rich areas. Full funding for this critical project should be identified in the RTP.

Rail service should be integrated to create a seamless transportation system.

The Regional Rail Plan Study, released in 2007, identifies the costs and benefits of potential rail extensions, upgrades, stations, and more. MTC should work with stakeholders to prioritize the projects that serve the most riders at the lowest cost and that strengthen the densities and vitality of urban and suburban core communities. Once more detailed information is available from the



Photo by Mike Kahn- San Antonio Caltrain Station, Mountain View

Regional Transportation Plan process, the Transportation and Land Use Coalition will analyze the Rail Plan and identify the projects within it that support the goals of this Platform. These projects should be prioritized for funding both in the fiscally constrained portion of the RTP, and for future funding initiatives.

PROMOTE VIBRANT, WALKABLE COMMUNITIES

7. Aggressively promote vibrant, walkable neighborhoods near bus, rail, and ferry service throughout the region by establishing and funding a comprehensive land use program at MTC.

To fight climate change over the long term, we need to reduce the demand for driving by creating vibrant, walkable communities near transit where people can choose to take many of their trips without driving a car. Building new homes and jobs near transit will help tackle the housing crisis, keep our economy competitive, and maximize our investments in public transit. MTC's popular program, Smart Growth / Transportation for Livable Communities has proven successful in promoting well-planned growth; now we need to increase its impact and scope in the region.

MTC should increase funding for its current Transportation for Livable Communities programs, especially the Housing Incentive Program, plus establish four new programs:

Land and Infrastructure for Affordable Housing Assistance Program

The rising cost of land poses a huge challenge for developing affordable housing around transit stations, which is a critical part of creating thriving communities. MTC should establish a land acquisition program that will assist cities in identifying and purchasing land around transit hubs for the development of affordable housing and other community facilities. This program could also support infrastructure needs for affordable housing in transit-oriented developments.

**Strong land use programs and policies support our transit investments.
Station areas should offer a mix of uses.**



Photos by Kieron Slaughter. Left: Fruitvale Transit Village Farmers Market. Right: 12th Street City Center BART Station.

Expanded and Improved Station Area Planning Grants

MTC has provided Station Area Planning grants to help cities plan for areas around existing and future rail, ferry, and Bus Rapid Transit stations. But the limited funding available does not even begin to match the huge surge in interest in transit-oriented development, and cities rarely have the funding for comprehensive, community-focused processes. MTC should significantly increase the program's funding, develop clear guidelines to prioritize which stations receive funding, and implement other recommendations from MTC's recent evaluation of the program.

Smart Growth Incentive Program

MTC should strategically distribute Transportation for Livable Communities & Housing Incentive Program funds so as to encourage city and county adoption of a wide variety of smart growth policies. To accomplish this, MTC should establish a scoring system that ranks jurisdictions by the completeness of their policies and begin to prioritize funding by rank.

Smart Parking Planning Grants

Many cities currently require new developments to provide an excessive amount of new parking, which drives up the cost of housing, induces more driving, reduces the land available for economic development and public space, and reduces pedestrian safety. MTC's excellent new toolkit, *Parking Policies to Support Smart Growth*, will sit on a shelf unless cities have the resources they need to implement policy change. MTC should create a new grant program that would provide funding to cities to revise their parking policies. The grant program should be large enough to give grants of up to \$500,000 so cities can do the detailed studies necessary to develop well-tailored policies.

8. Make walking and bicycling safe and convenient for all types of trips by:

- fully funding all projects in the Regional Bicycle Network,
- conducting a major revision of the 2001 Regional Bicycle Plan,
- creating and funding a Regional Pedestrian Plan,
- increasing funding for Safe Routes to Transit, and
- creating a regional Safe Routes to School program.

According to the 2001 National Household Transportation Survey, 20% of all trips made in California are less than one mile in length,⁴ an easy distance to travel on foot or bicycle. Walking and bicycling are possible year-round in the Bay Area, affordable for everyone, and emission-free, which makes increasing these mode shares an essential and achievable part of combating global warming pollution. But getting people to switch modes requires infrastructure and education to support real—and safe—increases in walking and bicycling.

In 2001, MTC adopted the *Regional Bicycle Plan*, and in 2005 they began allocating \$8 million per year to help fund it. The *Plan* is in need of an update, and implementing the *Regional Bicycle Network* within the *Plan* is especially urgent, as the *Network* identifies the bicycle routes and facilities needed so that Bay Area residents can fully access the region's major businesses, activity centers, and transit hubs on bicycle. The RTP should designate full funding to fill these gaps. Additionally, the *Plan's* revision should further explore how education and encouragement can increase cycling.

The RTP also needs to initiate and fund a *Regional Pedestrian Plan*. Like Alameda County's award-winning pedestrian plan, this would identify and prioritize projects, programs, and planning efforts of regional significance. Safe and convenient pedestrian access, combined with strong educational efforts, can shift more trips to this healthy, sustainable mode. The focus would be on safety and access at major activity centers, arterials, transit lines, and trail systems.

The Bay Area's successful *Safe Routes to Transit* grant program awards funds for improving pedestrian and bicycle access and safety around transit hubs, but since its inception in 2005, grant requests have been 4.5 times the amount of available funds.

We need networks of safe sidewalks, bike lanes, and other supportive amenities to promote active transportation alternatives.



Left: Photo by Dan Burden, pedbikeimages.org. Right: Photo by Lea Brooks. Gary Gascoigne, CA Department of Health Services at a new bicycle facility in Richmond.

⁴ National Household Travel Survey (2001). In addition, 43.6% of all trips in California are less than two miles in length.

The program has funded secure bicycle parking, improved intersection design and signage, and connectors to multi-use paths. A sizable increase in *Safe Routes to Transit* funds would simultaneously spur walking, bicycling, and transit use.

Safe Routes to School is a proven approach to getting more children safely walking and bicycling to school. The program engages the entire school community in safety education, fostering safer driving near schools and improving local pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure. In our own backyard, Marin County's *Safe Routes to School* program has become a national model after the first two years of the pilot program increased the number of children walking and bicycling to participating schools from 21% to 38%. Although there is now state funding for *Safe Routes to School* programs, grant requests in the Bay Area have totaled four times the amount available. To build a new generation that embraces lifelong habits of healthy, sustainable travel, MTC should create a regional *Safe Routes to School* program with sufficient funding to make the program widespread.

9. Designate at least half of Local Streets and Roads Maintenance funds for where they are needed most: in the cities and counties planning for significant levels of new infill housing near existing or planned transit.

The region needs to give cities strong incentives to provide housing for all income levels, protect open space, support transit, and, ultimately, fight climate change. That is why regional agencies are encouraging cities to designate Priority Development Areas (PDAs) located near fixed-route transit that have planned, or are planning, for more housing (areas planning for greenfield development outside of existing communities are not eligible to become PDAs).

Cities planning for more housing growth deserve to get a greater share of funds to maintain their streets and roads.



Photo by Brandon Silar. Chinatown, San Francisco.

To support PDAs, MTC should split regional funding for local streets and roads maintenance into two distinct programs. One portion would be distributed to cities and counties according to the existing formula. Another portion, at least 50% of the total, would be distributed to cities and counties that voluntarily designate Priority Development Areas (PDAs) as part of the FOCUS process (led by the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and MTC). Initially, funding would be distributed based on the total anticipated number of future homes and commercial development in each city's PDA/PDAs. After the program has

been in place for a few years, the criteria should be revised to distribute funding on a performance basis; that is, based on the amount of new development approved since the designation of the PDA.

MAKE ROADS PART OF THE SOLUTION

10. Maximize the efficiency of our current highway system using road pricing that:

- reduces congestion,
- reduces global warming pollution,
- funds transportation choices, not more highway expansion, and
- decreases the overall costs of transportation for low-income commuters.

After 50 years of major highway expansions, it is clear that we can't build our way out of congestion in the Bay Area. Our congestion is second only Los Angeles as worst in the nation, and we face the reality that 50% of the Bay Area's global warming pollution is from transportation. Road pricing, however, offers a range of proven ways for MTC to get the most out of our current highway system and improve transportation for everyone, from solo drivers to transit riders. If done right, we can use variable bridge tolls on Bay Area bridges, HOT lanes, and congestion pricing to improve transit and reduce global warming pollution.

Fixing our pricing signals can help reduce congestion and fight climate change.



Photo from TALC Archives.

MTC has proposed a High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane system throughout the Bay Area. The system would complete the High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane network and allow single-occupancy vehicles to enter the lanes if drivers pay a toll. If demand is high enough, existing lanes could be converted to HOT lanes in the future.

But to meet the dual goals of reducing congestion and global warming pollution, HOT lanes must improve transportation alternatives and promote more carpooling and express bus use. MTC must prioritize funds raised by HOT lanes to implement operational improvements in those corridors and provide new transit alternatives. It is also critical that these lanes decrease the overall cost of transportation to low-income commuters through transit fare subsidies, free or discount use of the lanes at certain times, and other mechanisms.

While some HOT revenues may accelerate the construction of final segments of the HOV/HOT system, TALC would oppose the program if it anticipated building additional lanes beyond currently planned HOV gap closures.

Get involved in the RTP Campaign!

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission is embarking on an 18-month process to develop the 2009 Regional Transportation Plan. MTC's staff and Planning Committee are already working on the "vision," which establishes targets for reducing traffic congestion, vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions, and for making transportation more affordable for low-income individuals. MTC will analyze different transportation investment, land use, and pricing scenarios to determine what it would take to reach, or get close to some of the ambitious targets.

In late fall 2007, MTC will begin developing a "financially constrained plan," which defines projects and programs to be included given the funding available in the Regional Transportation Plan. This plan will rely on input from county-level agencies and other stakeholders.

During spring of 2008 MTC will adopt initial funding recommendations. A draft RTP will be complete by October 2008, and the final RTP will be adopted by MTC in February 2009.

For this long and extremely important process, we need individuals and organizations across the nine counties of the Bay Area to get involved and join us as we advocate for projects and policies that will create a more sustainable and socially just region!

INDIVIDUALS

Contact

Contact your MTC Commissioner and ask them to support TALC's platform for the Regional Transportation Plan. Find your MTC Commissioner's contact information at: http://www.mtc.ca.gov/about_mtc/commphot.htm

Stay up to date

Keep an eye on MTC's Planning Committee for their actions on the RTP at: http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/2035_plan/index.htm.

Participate

Be a part of TALC's campaign to fight climate change and win a better Bay Area by contacting Carli Paine, carli@transcoalition.org, 510-740-3150 x 315. We need volunteers, as well as supporters to attend key MTC and county meetings. We're also looking for financial support to expand the campaign.

ORGANIZATIONS

Endorse

Have your organization sign TALC's platform. Contact Carli Paine, carli@transcoalition.org, 510-740-3150 x315 to sign-on to the TALC RTP platform.

Join

Organizations that become a member or affiliate of the Transportation and Land Use Coalition add their voice to our partnership and help define our policies and positions. Contact Marta Lindsay, marta@transcoalition.org, 510-740-3150 x321

