

I. The Vision

Where we live and how we get around provides a glimpse into our lives. The scale of the land uses in our neighborhood along with what safe, affordable, reliable and convenient transportation exists can either contribute to a stronger community or can marginalize and isolate people, especially those who do not have access to a car. In addition, public transportation is critical to improving our environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

CAUSE's vision of sustainability for our region is one of safe and walkable communities where we have access to our daily needs using public transportation that is accessible across income levels. We imagine a community where we wake up in the morning and can walk to buy a cup of coffee or a carton of milk. We envision these local stores surrounded by people, not by cars in a parking lot, a place where people have the choice to work in the community they live in. We see a world where taking the bus is an affordable, convenient and reliable way for people to get to work, school, or any other place they need to go.

This vision for a region of active communities where people can easily interact with each other builds upon the central coast's strengths of good weather, a beautiful coastline and some of the richest farmland. It values our diverse communities and preserving our agricultural and open space assets. It's rooted in the idea that making it easier to get around without a car will make communities and businesses more vibrant and is necessary to address climate change.

CAUSE Transit Equity Goals

1. Increased convenient, reliable, and affordable public transit is essential to combat climate change.
2. No raises in bus fares or decreases in bus service. Our communities can't afford higher fares or any loss in service given the number of people without access to cars that depend on public transit, the recession, and high unemployment rates.
3. Our region needs more funding for public transportation. When analyzing which modes to invest in, we must consider equity and cost effectiveness. Any new funding sources for transportation must dedicate funding for public transit operations.
4. Local jurisdictions must make land use and transportation decisions that promote bicycle, pedestrian, and transit friendly neighborhoods. We need safe and healthy communities where children have safe routes to walk and bike to school and public areas, and where people can get to the store without needing to drive.



Where We Need To Get To

- A region with effective and reliable public transit that links people, jobs, services and communities together
- Diverse, livable communities that are safe to bike and walk in where all income levels and ethnicities can afford to live and work
- Community and elected officials willing to lead the way by supporting development of affordable housing, quality jobs, shops, and services within convenient walking distance of transit stops and centers
- Better public transit, especially for those vulnerable populations that are too young, old, low-income, or disabled to drive
- Local policy and funding that supports public transit and livable communities
- Communities organized and actively participating in the transportation planning process with accountable decisionmakers



II. The Status Quo

Cars Pollute the Most

- Pollution from transportation sources including cars still account for about half of the pollution in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.
- Both Counties still violate state standards for ozone pollution every year with Ventura County violating 8 hour ozone standards 42 times in 2007 and Santa Barbara County violating the standards 18 times.

(Source: Ventura County Air Pollution Control District and Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District)

Not Enough Opportunities to Use Transit, Bike, and Walk

- In Ventura County, any where from one to 2.5% of work trips are by transit and from 2.4 to 3.1% are made by biking and walking.
- In the SCAG region, 40% of trips made by driving take less than 10 minutes. With safer, more compact neighborhoods, we could change this percent as less than 1% of all trips in the county are made using transit and 9% made by biking or walking.
- In Santa Barbara, approximately 4 to 4.5% of commuters use the bus and from 5% to 7.4% bike or walk to and from work. Projections show a 41% increase in transit use to 2030.

(Source: Analysis of 2000 Census Data, SBCAG 2007 Commuter Profile Report, and SCAG Year 2000 Post-Census Regional Travel Survey)

People Driving More

- In Ventura County the rate of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is projected to grow at the same rate as population over the next 25 years. In this same period congestion is projected to double on our highways and local streets.
- The situation is worse in Santa Barbara where over a 30 year period VMT is projected to grow at a rate twice that of the population.

(Source: California Air Resources Board 2009 Web Almanac, SCAG and SB-CAG 2008 Regional Transportation Plans)

Unhealthy Communities

- Like other areas across the country, obesity and overweight rates have increased. In Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, one out of four students are overweight or obese.
- The cities of Oxnard, Santa Paula, and Lompoc that are primarily made up of people of color have the highest overweight and obesity rates for students where one out of every three students are overweight.

(Source: The California Center for Public Health Advocacy, Overweight Children in California Counties and Communities, 2004)

Unsafe Streets

- In Ventura County 13 bicyclists and pedestrians lose their life each year and another 500 injured.
- In Santa Barbara County 9 bike and pedestrian deaths and over 350 injuries occur on average every year.

(Source: CHP 2002 to 2006 Annual Report of Fatal and Injury Motor Vehicle Traffic Collisions)



Beyond the Commute

In addressing transportation access it is important to understand that focusing only on the commute will not solve regional and local transportation problems for a large part of our population. Only one quarter of all trips we make are to and from work and only one third of transit trips are for this purpose.

The Importance of Transportation Access

Transportation connects where we live with places of everyday needs including school, work, child care, health care services and the supermarket. Providing access to these lifelines helps to keep our community healthy and is an important component of an equitable transportation system.

For many in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, the only way to get to these needs is to drive. Even so, some rely on other alternatives such as public transit, biking and walking, especially those most vulnerable who cannot drive. Considering the average cost to own and operate a car is over \$8000 per year according to AAA, providing public transportation alternatives is important in our region for those too young, old, low-income, or disabled to drive.

III. Innovation and New Ideas in Funding, Planning, and Providing Public Transportation

A More Effective and Efficient 101

A carpool lane during peak hours should be encouraged from Los Angeles to Santa Maria. First, this would lead to the possibility of rapid bus transit so that buses on the 101 wouldn't have to be stuck in traffic during peak times while encouraging carpool use. Second, the region would have a new opportunity to develop a new funding source such as planning for a high occupancy toll lane where drivers traveling alone could pay to use the carpool lane during the peak commute. Then this money could be used to improve public transit alternatives.

Make New Funding Sources Flexible and Promote Linking Transportation and Land Use

Our region needs to develop funding sources that helps local jurisdictions to promote transit oriented development that encourages biking and walking. Competitive funding should be made available through local sales tax measures or other funding sources for good development that lowers the carbon footprint of households. One example of such a funding program is the Transportation for Livable Communities program in the San Francisco Bay Area developed and implemented by MTC.

Cities and Agencies Must Plan Better

Local and regional jurisdictions must increase the percentage of population that reside within a quarter mile of transit stops. Households in compact neighborhoods that are closer to transit have a transportation carbon footprint one-quarter to one half less than other households. Special attention must be made to ensure that affordable housing is built close to public transit. Equally important is existing affordable housing must be provided with accessible transit. Important services such as medical and food stores should be developed in transit accessible areas. Areas with high job concentrations should be transit accessible as well. One important opportunity for better planning is the SB 375 process for the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Improving the Effectiveness of Public Transit

Transit providers need to work directly with communities who lack transit access or who seek to improve existing transit within their community. Transit agencies must improve their service by recognizing the challenges of providing transit in our spread out central coast. New ideas such as using smaller buses that can deviate from a fixed route to drop people off and serve a wider population and other innovations should be evaluated and implemented.



Local, State and National Policy

Decisions made at the state and federal level greatly affect our local and regional transportation system. Regionally, CAUSE is part of the Alliance for Sustainable and Equitable Regional Transportation (ASERT) working to improve public transit, and biking and walking options within and between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. CAUSE works with TRANSFORM in a statewide coalition to restore state transit operating funds recently eliminated and continues to look for alternative sources to fund transit operations. Nationally, CAUSE works with the Transportation Equity Network (TEN) and the Labor Community Strategy Center to ensure the reauthorization of the federal transportation bill in 2009 addresses transit equity and supports better public transit for the Central Coast.

Action and Involvement

- Participate in the process of developing and passing a Ventura County Sales Tax for Transportation ballot measure and in developing other transportation funding measures.
- Educate public agencies and elected officials on the need for mixed use development, mixed income housing, and building affordable housing in transit accessible areas. Work with CAUSE to monitor development in our communities and cities.
- Improve transportation access and safety in your community. Identify projects for Safe Routes to School funding and work to ensure that your local General Plan and redevelopment plans are good plans that we hold elected officials and planning commissions accountable to. Work with your local transit provider to make service more effective.
- Include transit equity in planning the SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Understanding Equity Issues: Making Difficult Decisions About Public Transit



The private automobile dominates our transportation system leaving those without access to a car to struggle on an uneven playing field. An undervalued and underfunded public transit system along with biking and walking are the modes filling the gap for those who do not drive. Privately we spend approximately six billion dollars every year in

Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties to own and operate our cars ignoring others costs to society such as the cost to maintain streets and highways, the cost to public health from air pollution, the cost to the environment from passengers vehicles contributing almost 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in California, and the cost in bodily harm each year from traffic accidents which account for over 100 deaths and 9,000 injuries each year in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

Meanwhile because of misplaced priorities, funds to operate public transit are becoming scarcer in our current recession and state budget woes. This means different transit service providers are trying to use limited funds from the same pot of money. Unfortunately this often puts different modes of public transit at odds with each other to secure funding to maintain their service since spending for roads and highways is for the most part a separate pot of money.

CAUSE believes analyzing equity by geography and mode reveals some of the most difficult issues facing public transit in the region. Taking equity issues into account when making transportation decisions must be part of setting priorities for how we spend limited transit operating funds and in how we spend new sources of revenue such as from sales tax funding. We must understand who uses what types of transit service, the costs to provide the services, and the affordability of services across different income levels, ethnicities, gender, and ages.

For example, people who ride the bus tend to be low income people, people of color, women, and those without access to a car while those who ride rail tend to have higher incomes and be more affluent (Polzin and Chu, Public Transit in America: Results from the

2001 National Household Travel Survey, 2005). Using current transit operator plans, the SCAG 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (2008 RTP) projects that almost half of the operations and maintenance expenditures for public transit in Ventura County to the year 2035 will be spent on Metrolink. Yet Metrolink provides only 4,000 trips each weekday almost exclusively in the East County while other transit services in Ventura County provide four times more trips. The SCAG 2008 RTP illustrates how rail service can consume transit funding while not providing as widespread access as bus service. If SCAG's projections come to be a reality, then this would create a large geographic funding inequity between the east part of Ventura County and the west part of the county.

Equity also must be a key issue analyzed in considering implementing any commuter rail service between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. The first equity question is how would the funding required to implement and operate such service impact funding for other transit providers? According to the LOSSAN North Corridor Strategic Plan for coastal rail, operating such rail service would include a four to five million dollar operating subsidy per year and provide a projected 2500 trips per weekday. With an average passenger fare over \$10 for a one way trip, the projected farebox recovery ratio for rail service is 40% or less. The second equity question is would VISTA Coastal Express bus service that provides a similar service remain viable or would it be forced to operate with less service? Currently the service is effective and affordable at \$2.00 per ride (rising to \$2.50 later this year) with 700 to 1000 trips provided each weekday and an operating subsidy of about \$200,000 per year (VISTA service indicators for 2007/2008 and 2008/2009). With a 66% recovery from the farebox, this bus service is far more cost effective and affordable than rail service. In pursuing expanded rail alternatives, we must proceed cautiously to ensure bus service is not sacrificed.

With new opportunities to fund transportation such as a countywide half cent sales tax in Ventura County, we must find a more equitable balance of transportation funding. Priority must be placed on finding the most cost effective and equitable ways to improve public transit and non-motorized options within the County and between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

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CAUSE's Mission is to build grassroots power to realize social, economic and environmental justice for the people of the Ventura and Santa Barbara counties region through policy research, leadership development, organizing, and advocacy.

CAUSE's Vision is that together we can create a global community where we all contribute to, and benefit from, a sustainable economy that is just, prosperous and environmentally healthy.

CAUSE

2021 Sperry Ave. #18,
Ventura, CA 93003

Phone: (805) 658-0810

Fax: (805) 658-0820

www.coastalalliance.com