

# ECOS Transportation Policy

Passed by the ECOS Air Quality & Transportation Committee, March 4, 1998.

Approved by the ECOS Board of Directors on May 6, 1998.

The Environmental Council of Sacramento supports transportation policy and systems that:

1. Minimize the impacts on and use of land, airspace and waterways; minimize the consumption of limited resources, including fuel, and reduce pollutant emissions and noise;
2. Provide everyone with pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to jobs, shopping, services and recreation;
3. Provide adequate and efficient goods movement and substitute local goods for those requiring long distance movement, where feasible;
4. Encourage land uses that minimize travel requirements;
5. Protect and strengthen local communities, towns and urban centers from the corrosive effects of traffic, and promote equal opportunity;
6. Eliminate transportation subsidies which handicap achievement of the above goals; and
7. Ensure vigorous and effective public participation in transportation planning.

## GUIDANCE

### Mode

We recognize that we have built an automobile-dependent community over the last 50 years and that correction will take decades. However, we must begin now to correct this imbalance and provide choices for the twenty-first century. Transportation investments should be directed towards the long term development of rail, bus, pedestrian and bicycle systems and land use patterns that support them and not towards solving immediate and localized congestion problems.

ECOS favors the most energy and land con-serving, and least polluting systems and vehicles.

Accommodation of pedestrians, bicycles and public transit should be given priority over private automobiles. Automobile vehicle speeds and volumes shall not be increased.

Walking and bicycling are best, along with electronic communications to reduce trips.

Next are buses, minibuses, light rail and heavy rail as corridor trips increase; electrified wherever feasible. Rail systems are most effective in stimulating compact development patterns, increasing public transit patronage and reducing motor vehicle use. Station

access should be provided by foot, bicycle and public transit, with minimal but full priced, public parking. Public transit service should use timed transfer scheduling to minimize waiting times when making connections with other routes. Transit facilities should facilitate intermodal transfers, including convenient and safe bicycle access to public transit vehicles, and secure bicycle storage in public places and stations.

Multiple occupancy vehicles should be favored over single occupancy vehicles.

Roads and traffic laws should be designed and enforced to enhance safety.

Freight railroads, especially electrified, are preferred over highway or air freight to save energy and land, and cut noise and pollutant emissions.

Amtrak and high speed intercity rail which afford comparable city center access times, or which offer comparable overnight convenience, are preferred to air travel because they save energy, use less land, cut noise and pollutant emissions, and allow some airports to be closed. Therefore, new or improved rail facilities, and electronic communications, are preferred to new or expanded airports. Discourage private airports near urban and natural areas to reduce noise impacts.

## **Highway Expansion**

No limited access highways or high velocity roads ("freeways") should be built or widened, especially in urban-suburban areas or near threatened natural areas.

High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes should come from converting existing highway lanes rather than constructing new lanes. This avoids constructing new lanes which are mixed-flow much of the day, or are converted to full-time mixed-flow after construction.

Implement Transportation Control Measures rather than increasing road capacity for vehicles.

Intelligent Vehicle/Highway Systems (IVHS) should not be designed to increase highway capacity and stimulate additional traffic, off-highway congestion, sprawl, energy consumption and pollution.

## **Land Use**

Transportation systems have substantial impact on the quality of neighborhoods, neighborhood centers and commercial districts. Pedestrian safety and aesthetic quality shall always be the priority and primary focus of transportation expenditures. Land use patterns should be designed to improve pedestrian access, encourage shorter trips, increase public transit use, enhance the economic viability of public transit and decrease private motor vehicle use (auto mobility). Therefore zoning, financing, land use controls and other policies should:

1. Concentrate higher intensities of all forms of public and private sector development including employment, housing, retail and government services near transit stations or stops;
2. Densify residential areas to allow shorter trips;
3. Integrate pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commerce (markets, restaurants, services, etc.) into residential neighborhoods;
4. Provide pedestrian amenities such as complete regular pedestrian street grid; sidewalks on both sides of the road; slow streets (traffic calming), speed limits and stop signs or lights to keep traffic safe and comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists; auto-free town and urban centers; street furniture and comfortable transit shelters; and buildings that front onto the sidewalk (preferably with arcades for rain and sun protection) rather than be isolated behind parking or landscaped areas;
5. Reduce parking requirements and eliminate parking subsidies with the exception of those for bicycle parking and free parking for electric vehicles. All parking should be fully and directly charged;
6. Provide strategically planned tree plans and plantings and other amenities for pedestrian sun shielding; bus stop comfort; and building, sidewalk, parking lot and road cooling;
7. Limit urban sprawl and protect agriculture and natural resource areas by protecting land outside the County of Sacramento's Urban Services Boundary from development;

Existing communities should be revitalized or retrofitted, as necessary, to achieve their qualities and to enhance their quality of life.

### **Planning and Public Participation**

Urban transportation systems and land use should be planned for whole regions.

Transportation and land use computer models should fully project the reduction in driving and increase in transit and pedestrian trips when transit is improved and areas are made more pedestrian accessible.

Compact transit oriented alternatives should be provided and examined with technical studies in all specific and community plans and environmental documents.

The National Environmental Policy Act, and the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts should be complied with fully.

Meaningful public participation means early and informed participation. It requires an understanding of the value of working out solutions to problems with those who are most affected by those problems, therefore meaningful public participation must take place from the start of development of state and regional, county and municipal transportation plans and local community and specific plans. Opportunities for participation should be enhanced, encouraging the participation of environmental, public transit, neighborhood

and low income community groups. This assistance should include planning, research and legal help and should be publicly funded.

## **Funding & Subsidies**

Federal and local subsidies should be provided to urban transportation systems and equipment (including walking, bicycling, public transit, passenger and freight railroads and ferries) that go furthest toward achieving accessibility, convenience, efficiency, cleanliness and equity goals, and denied to the other modes. Such subsidies are especially needed to correct the history of heavy subsidies to motor vehicles, including trucks.

Direct subsidies and costly externalities of motor vehicle use include: police, fire and ambulance services, road construction and maintenance; property taxes lost from land cleared for highways; subsidized parking; air, water and land pollution; noise and vibration damage to structures; health damage from noise and pollution; global climate change; petroleum production subsidies, trade and infrastructure deficit; sprawl and loss of transportation options, uncompensated auto accident costs; and congestion.

These subsidies should be publicly scrutinized and eliminated by appropriate fuel and carbon taxes, parking and road user charges, annual vehicle fees, and elimination of tax credits and deductions for motor vehicle use.

The capital and operating costs of airports, air traffic control, pilot training and waterways, including dredging and navigation uses, should be charged to the use of such systems.