



# ECOS

ENVIRONMENTAL  
♦ COUNCIL ♦  
OF SACRAMENTO

Post Office Box 1526 | Sacramento, CA 95812-1526

February 7, 2022

ECOS letter in advance of Sac City Council transportation workshop 2/8/22

Dear Mayor Steinberg and members, Sacramento City Council:

The Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) thanks the Mayor and City Council for sponsoring this workshop, and to city staff for their thoughtful and thorough preparation.

The Council has acknowledged the need to address the impacts of climate change by declaring a climate emergency in December 2019. However, we are far from meeting the City's carbon neutrality goal – we need plans and funding. The City is making progress on building electrification, but the most important sector for meeting our climate neutrality goal is transportation, which accounts for over half of our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

It is imperative that the City immediately transform its transportation priorities to deal with our ongoing climate emergency. We must drastically reduce dependence on automobiles, and prioritize investment in other modes, chiefly walking, rolling, and transit. In doing so, we must be mindful of accommodating historically disadvantaged communities – ethnic, economic, and mobility limited. Their concerns must be fully addressed in our planning.

The City Council must prioritize investment in active transportation and public transit. The Mayors' Commission on Climate Change recommended changing course to a multimodal transportation policy that prioritizes active transportation as the healthiest and most efficient option, public transit and shared mobility for longer trips, and finally zero emission vehicles for trips where transit or active transportation is not an option. We need more than just electric vehicles – it will be decades before all vehicles will be electric, and we would still face unacceptable traffic congestion, safety, and equity issues.

The new transportation policy must focus on how people move from place to place, not just on cars. The plan should include complete streets, comprehensive multimodal corridors, interconnected low-stress and pedestrian networks, car-free zones, slow streets, a safe and attractive environment, accessible and affordable mobility, clean air, and reduced GHG emissions. A city where streets are for people and not just for cars provides:

- Healthier air, with reduced asthma and cardiovascular disease
- Less traffic congestion
- Fewer collisions
- Improved equity from affordable, accessible transportation

To make the most of these transportation policies, the City should promote infill development, particularly new housing, retail and business near light rail stations and major bus corridors. Our affordable housing crisis, which especially impacts disadvantaged communities, is best addressed in this way. This will also lessen pressure for development in areas further from transit, which otherwise would result in much higher vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) and GHG emissions. To achieve urban densities, these new developments

around and along transit should consist of buildings at least five stories tall, that enclose public outdoor space to create memorable and enjoyable places. Increased urban development will reduce the pressure for greenfield development, and further reduce vehicle travel in the entire Sacramento region. Implementation of the above plan will induce more people to live in the urban core, thereby increasing the use of active transportation and transit, and also strengthening the City's economy.

We are encouraged by the City's commitment to affordable housing as part of the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) for Aggie Square. Commitments to funding public transit, such as bus-rapid-transit along Stockton Boulevard, would accelerate the progress being made there. The City Council should adopt a CBA ordinance that provides funds for affordable housing and public transit in other areas to be developed. The City Council should consider that single-family zoning is an impediment to affordable housing and development that minimizes VMT and GHG, and adjust accordingly. City Council members on SACOG's board should ensure that federal transportation funds are provided for infill, rather than encouraging sprawl.

We wholeheartedly support the staff proposals; they are an important first step and we hope to see continued progress towards a comprehensive active transportation and transit approach for the city. The Council has declared a climate emergency, and adopted policies to prioritize active transportation and reduce vehicular travel and GHG emissions. Now is the time to put these words into action. We urge you to:

Fund the projects proposed by staff through allocations in the 2022-27 Capital Investment Plan  
Set aside additional funds in the mid-year and the 2022-23 budget to make the city eligible for federal and state grants/funding for a comprehensive active transportation and public transit approach  
Allocate sufficient staff and resources to develop, fund, and implement these programs

We are counting on you to take action, NOW, to ensure the sustainability of our city so that it is livable for generations to come.

Susan Herre



ECOS President