Health & Active Transportation

Metro is partnering with SCAG and other concerned agencies on the development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) to reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the requirements of Senate Bill 375. Further, overarching benefits of this land-use and transportation planning effort could be a more efficient and effective transportation system for Los Angeles County and desired improvements in public health.

At present, the lack of integration of land-use and transportation planning creates environments with limited mobility options leading to congestion, poor air quality, physical inactivity, and significant health consequences. These conditions disproportionately affect historically disadvantaged and low-income communities, where obesity, respiratory disease, diabetes, and liver disease are now prevalent among adults and children.

A Sustainable Communities Strategy that establishes transit-supportive land-use patterns and invests in active transportation will improve regional accessibility and, as a by-product, create healthier communities.

As the primary funder and policy center for transportation improvements in Los Angeles County, Metro will largely define the transportation priorities for Los Angeles County in the Sustainable Communities Strategy and these priorities will significantly impact land use patterns. The agency also provides leadership for the development and implementation of the entire SCS and Regional Transportation Plan through participation in technical advisory groups, subregional planning workshops, and climate change working groups.

Critical to this leadership is the role of the Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee, which is providing oversight for the development of a Sustainable Communities Planning Framework that establishes principles, performance measures and tools to guide and assess the sustainability of Metro’s transportation plans and projects across modes and program areas. A component of the framework will be to evaluate the impact and opportunities to shape the built environment in support of active transportation and transit use and to define outcomes beyond greenhouse gas emission reduction by which the agency may assess the sustainability of the countywide transportation system.

I therefore move:

Consistent with policies in the Long Range Transportation Plan to develop a multi-modal transportation network throughout Los Angeles County and in conjunction with the development of the Sustainable Communities Planning Framework, Metro shall create an Active Transportation Agenda by November 2011. Included in the agenda will be a description of existing programs and short-term and long-term strategies for leveraging urban design, partnerships, and project development to create environments that promote walking and biking, transit-use, and public health.
The Active Transportation Agenda should, among other items, report on existing and consider new strategies to:

- Improve first and last mile connections to transit facilities.
- Promote walking and biking for short-trips to reduce congestion on streets and freeways.
- Partner with public health, housing, planning and environmental agencies on innovative programs and financing mechanisms.
- Ensure active transportation options are advanced through the land-use and transportation elements of the Regional Sustainable Communities Strategy.
- Increase countywide capacity for developing and implementing Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to Transit programs that target youth, senior and low-income populations whose transportation options are most impacted by community design.
- Plan and design Metro facilities to promote physical activity and health, through tools like health impact assessments and design guidelines.
- Ensure the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists are considered and addressed in planning and/or design of projects that Metro funds or implements.
- Promote the interim and permanent use of Metro-owned right-of-way for active transportation.