

COMMUNICATION

To: SBCAG- 2-4-2006

Subject: Proposed Rail Link.

When you have only 14% of the route from Goleta to Los Angeles that is unwidened to **six lanes** just why would you even contemplate a rail system to solve the traffic problem caused by the bottle neck along that 14% narrow stretch of National Highway 101? How is the contemplated rail system going to solve that problem. The 14% bottle neck causes the traffic tie ups for the state and national users of this only highway artery on the coast of the nation. The commuter issue is a separate issue which can be solved with commuter busses using the existing widened 101 highway as is done from Lompoc to Goleta. Rail is not needed to solve that problem.

SBCAG is allowing a small, activist, south county group to totally distort the widening issue. It is weak leadership and a sympathetic staff on SBCAG that is causing this myopia to occur.

There is no proof that a large portion of the population in the south county would even support the cost of a rail system.

SBCAG must be responsible to the millions of the users of National Highway 101 and not just to a few local activists in making plans for the future widening of National Highway 101.

At the least, the feasibility of a highspeed rail commuter system in the 101 corridor must be evaluated by a serious engineering study to learn if such a plan is in anyway feasible. This can be done entirely separately for the widening of the remaining 14% of the National Highway that is not already six lanes wide and with separate funding and on a separate schedule.

The number one requirement for such a rail system is RELIABILITY. Delivering 99% of the time. Amtrak today does not meet that criteria on the present Union Pacific rite-of-way. This track is designed for slow, heavy freight not highspeed trains. The present Amtrak system is strictly "excursion" quality. Not dependable or safe.

A cursory study of high speed systems in Europe and BART show that none of these use freight tracks. They have separate rite-of-ways, that are guarded and fenced and built on a complete concrete road bed with few if any overpasses. Is there any possibility of such a system in the 101 corridor being at all feasible? One would also need the parking and bus systems at both ends of the rail line.

Busses need none of these because they already exist.

The taxpayers of the County deserve a better review of these considerations than SBCAG has delivered to date.

Concerned Taxpayers, I.N.C.

Justin M. Ruhge, Lompoc, 805-7379536,



P.O. Box 2495
Santa Barbara, CA 93120
805.875.3562
www.coast-santabarbara.org

To : SBCAG Board Members
Date : January 30, 2006
Re : Measure D Expenditure Plan

Dear SBCAG Board Members:

This letter is in response to Board Member Mariscal's request to also include the rural sales tax counties in our graph that shows the sales tax allocations for various counties. The graph below now includes those five counties, and splits out the counties that the UC study (Crabbe, et al.) classifies as urban, suburban and rural.

If there is any wish to model the Santa Barbara County expenditure plan on some of the most rural counties, there are some facts that should be kept in mind:

Of the sales tax measures in the five rural counties, two have already expired (San Benito and Madera), one will expire in 2007 (Fresno), and two will expire in 2010 (Imperial and San Joaquin). No rural county has been able to get their measure reauthorized. Both Fresno and Madera failed by a wide margin in 2002. In addition to those included in the graph, there are another nine rural counties (Kern, Monterey, Nevada, Placer, Sutter, Tuolumne, Yuba, Lassen, and El Dorado) that have tried to pass sales tax measures and failed. We do not have expenditure plan details on those counties, but we do know that most of them could not even obtain the 50% vote that was required before 1991.

Other than Fresno, none of the "rural" counties has a city as large as either Santa Maria or Santa Barbara. As an example, consider Imperial County, the only county with a current sales tax that allocates more than 70% to local roads. Imperial County has only 13 residents per square km, (compared to 56 in Santa Barbara County), and its largest town, El Centro, has only 30,000 residents. It is mostly desert, and has very little in common with any part of this county.

If any of the "rural" counties can be said to be similar to the Santa Maria area, it may be Fresno—a fast-growing city on a major highway surrounded by smaller agricultural communities. After getting only 51% of the vote for their 2002 re-authorization measure, Fresno County realized that they would need to allocate more of the budget to alternative modes in order to get enough public support. Their Measure C on this year's ballot allocates roughly 1/3 to local roads, 1/3 to highways, and 1/3 to transit and rail (see the recent news article attached).

Other counties have had to learn from past mistakes. We hope that we do not have to wait until after a failed ballot measure in Santa Barbara County before the SBCAG Board decides to listen to the public and realize that the time has passed for the current Measure D or anything like it.

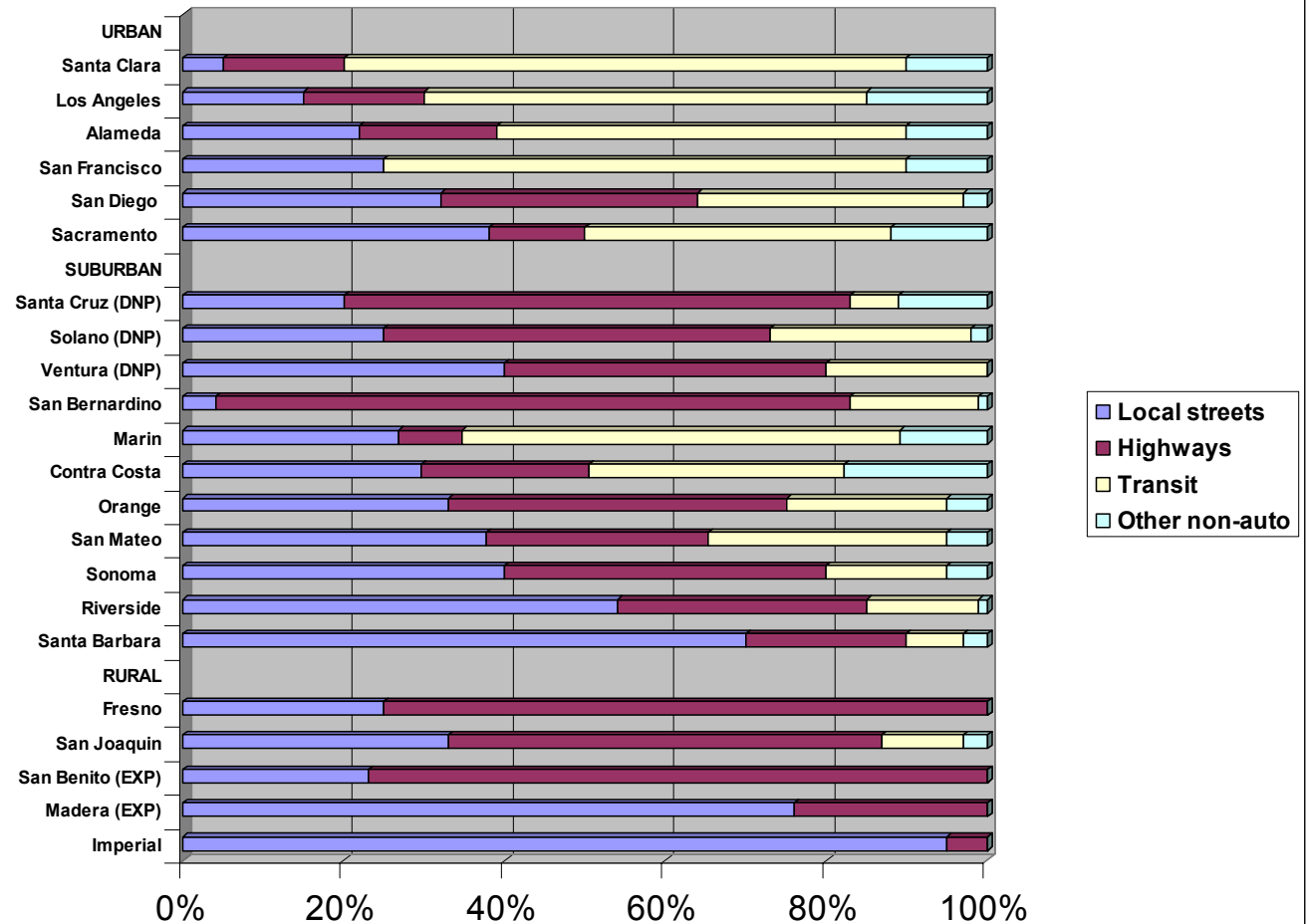
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark A. Bradley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "M" and "B".

Mark Bradley, President,
Coalition for Sustainable Transportation

CA County Sales Tax Allocation

(DNP = did not pass, EXP = expired)



Sources:

“Summary of November 2, 2004 Transportation Ballot Measures Statewide”. Tables compiled by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission.

<http://www.sccrtc.org/packet/2005/0501/0501-23b.pdf>

Crabbe, Amber E., Hiatt, Rachel, Poliwka, Susan D. and Wachs, Martin, "Local Transportation Sales Taxes: California's Experiment in Transportation Finance" . Public Budgeting & Finance, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 91-121, September 2005

<http://www.uctc.net/papers/552.pdf>

Fresno Co. hopes to boost Measure C funds by \$375m By Russell Clemings / Fresno Bee

With more highway projects on their wish list than money available from a proposed Measure C sales tax extension, Fresno County leaders now hope to sweeten the pot with an estimated \$375 million in state highway funds.

If the move is approved Friday by a steering committee for the Measure C extension, it could boost chances for a proposed interchange on Freeway 99 at Veterans Boulevard, a long-planned link for rapidly growing northwest Fresno.

But it could also jeopardize two projects on Freeway 99 itself. One would widen the freeway from four to six lanes from Ashlan Avenue to the San Joaquin River. The other would add lanes for merging traffic between Fresno Street and Clinton Avenue.

"I think that's a consideration that the steering committee needs to think about," D. Alan McCuen, Caltrans deputy district director for planning, said Monday. "We need the [state] dollars to be able to pay for those projects."

The funds at issue come from the State Transportation Improvement Program, fed mainly by fuel taxes.

Three-quarters of that money is spent on projects selected by county transportation planning agencies such as the Council of Fresno County Governments. Over the 20-year term of the proposed Measure C extension, beginning in 2007, Fresno County expects to get \$500 million from that account.

Initially, the steering committee had proposed using half — \$250 million — for Measure C projects. The rest would have been saved for projects that didn't make Measure C's top priority list, including rebuilding the Freeway 99 interchange at Shaw Avenue and the two widenings.

But at a Dec. 22 subcommittee meeting, Fresno city officials insisted that Veterans Boulevard be made a top priority for the new Measure C. Combined with other proposed changes, the list of projects grew to exceed available funds.

Subcommittee members and the council's staff then worked out a new split of the state funding, proposing to devote 75% to Measure C projects, or \$375 million, instead of 50%. The full committee is scheduled to vote Friday on that proposal.

Reactions are mixed. Building Industry Association representative Jeff Roberts of Granville Homes said the addition of Veterans Boulevard achieves a main industry goal for Measure C. The other is the widening of Friant Road from Fresno to Millerton Lake, which made the top priority list for rural projects.

But Valley Taxpayers Coalition representative Jeff Reid, a former Fresno city manager, argued that funding for the Freeway 99 projects should be preserved, and said several rural projects — such as extending Highway 180 from Mendota to Interstate 5 — should be dropped from the Measure C project list instead.

"What this means is that we are now going to be another 20 years away from being able to fix the 99 and Shaw interchange and the 99 mainline from Ashlan to the Madera County line," Reid said of keeping the rural projects on the list.

McCuen said that the Shaw interchange is likely to be funded anyway. But the two widening projects may be in danger if the share of state funding devoted to Measure C projects is increased. He noted that a recent poll done for the committee found strong voter support for improvements on 99.

The committee will also review several other features of its proposed Measure C spending plan Friday.

One that remains murky is an impact fee for new construction projects. Cities and the county would be required to assess the fees or forfeit some of their Measure C funds.

The estimated \$100 million in proceeds is already included in the measure's highway projects budget. But details of the fee may not be known by the time voters are asked in November to vote on the extension. Instead, the Council of Governments and the Fresno County Transportation Authority would oversee studies to determine how the fees should be set.

"The legal details probably can't be fully known until the studies are done," said Barbara Goodwin, the council's executive director.

The committee will also review plans for a citizens committee to oversee how Measure C funds are spent, and will go over details of spending plans for pedestrian trails, bike lanes and public transit.

Under the committee's plan, about 25 cents of each Measure C dollar would be spent on buses and other transit, 35 cents on local uses such as street repairs, 30 cents on the major highway projects and 6 cents for moving Fresno's Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks to the Union Pacific corridor. The rest would go for minor projects and administrative costs.

(Updated Thursday, January 5, 2006, 5:10 AM)
rclemings@fresnobee.com or (559) 441-6371.
<http://www.fresnobee.com/local/sv/story/11655072p-12384375c.html>

From the Los Angeles Times

Ventura County Plans to Steer Its Transit Policy Away From Cars

Supervisors will include increasing the use of bicycles, buses, trains in area's growth guidelines.

By Catherine Saillant
Times Staff Writer

January 25, 2006

Can a Southern California county manage its growth without continually building new highways or widening existing ones?

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors would like to think the answer is yes.

On Tuesday, supervisors unanimously agreed that the county's transportation policy should embrace increased use of bicycles, buses, trains and carpools and move away from a dependency on cars.

Although the vote provides neither money nor specifics, it sends a message that Ventura County will address traffic congestion in ways different from the past, said board Chairwoman Linda Parks, coauthor with Supervisor Steve Bennett of the measure.

"We can't build our way out of the problem," Parks said. "We need to look at alternatives."

Supervisors did not address how the transportation goals, to be written into the county's growth guidelines, would fit into a broader regional transportation network that relies heavily on freeways and road building to accommodate growth.

No mention was made of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's \$222-billion plan to beef up California's aging infrastructure by widening freeways and building new roads, among other things.

Ventura County was left out of transportation funding in the proposal unveiled by the governor earlier this month. But county transit officials have said portions of one of the plan's projects, widening the 101 Freeway in Santa Barbara, may extend into Ventura County.

After the vote, Bennett said an emphasis on mass transit and alternative transportation projects ought to play a big role in any long-range planning for California.

But he cautioned that he does not know enough about Schwarzenegger's proposals to judge how much they include such projects.

The adopted goals call for a countywide system of convenient mass transit; increased train service, possibly including new commuter lines, between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara counties; and a system of bike lanes linking all 10 of Ventura County's cities.

"The board is not saying, by any means, that they are opposed to any one project," Bennett said. "But it is saying that at least here in Ventura County we need to accelerate our thinking about becoming less reliant on cars."

Some progress has already been made, Supervisor John Flynn said. A 15-mile, tree-lined bicycle trail connects Ventura and Ojai. And transit officials have for years tried to increase bus and rail ridership, he said.

Any long-term solutions for Ventura County will require the cooperation of cities and the Ventura County Transportation Commission, which prioritizes and distributes transit funding, Flynn said.

A handful of speakers applauded the supervisors for taking a stand.

"I'm very appreciative of this," said Clyde Pratt, spokesman for a group that has been critical of past road-widening plans near rural Somis. "It's the type of thinking and approach that will lead to a county that we all want to see."

Patricia Arkin of Somis called it a "rare opportunity" to attempt new solutions to traffic congestion.

"If the discussion doesn't start and leadership is not provided, nothing happens," Arkin said. "Let's not be the last county to do it the wrong way, but the first county to do it the right way."

From: Robert Bernstein [<mailto:rdb@silcom.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 13, 2005 10:07 AM
To: Councilmember Ed Skytt; Mayor Eugene Boyle; Mayor Jonny Wallis;
Jack Hawxhurst; Mayor Lupe Alvarez; Councilmember Donna Jordan;
Councilmember Joe Armendariz; Councilmember Russ Hicks; Victoria
Pointer; Mayor Marty Blum; Councilmember Dan Secord; Mayor Dick
DeWeese; Councilmember Janice Keller; Councilmember Marty Mariscal;
Councilmember Bob Orach; Supervisor Joni Gray; Supervisor Joe Centeno;
Supervisor Susan Rose; Supervisor Brooks Firestone; Supervisor Salud
Carbajal
Cc: Ada Babine; Ed Easton; Gregg Hart
Subject: Sierra Club Policy on Measure D

To All Board Members/Alternates of the Santa Barbara County
Association of
Governments:

On November 17, the Sierra Club - Santa Barbara Group - mailed a letter
to you with our policy statement on renewal of Measure D. It has just
come to our attention that this statement somehow did not make it into
the record.

Following below is the full text of what was mailed to you.

Please accept this e-mail as our official statement. Because of the
short time before the hearing on Thursday, we wanted to be sure you had
time to review this in advance. Thank you very much for your time and
attention.

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Santa Barbara County Association of Governments Chair and all members
of the Board 260 North San Antonio Rd, Suite B Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Dear Members of the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments,

As you review Measure D, please consider the following:

- 1) The new Measure D must pay for transportation that reduces
dependence on private motor vehicle use. This will benefit motorists
by reducing traffic congestion and competition for parking spaces.
Alternate transportation choices will be encouraged. And it benefits
the one third of residents who do not drive.
- 2) The new Measure D must guarantee specific major allocations for
regional transit, including long-distance buses and rail. Both capital
and operating expenses are to be covered.
- 3) It must guarantee specific major allocations for local transit
covering both capital and operating expenses.
- 4) It must guarantee specific major allocations for pedestrian and
bicycle infrastructure and maintenance, including Safe Routes to
School programs.
Currently bicyclists and pedestrians pay more than motorists do for
roads per mile travelled, due to current sources of funding. A new
Measure D must make these figures fair.
- 5) Some money may be allocated for adding more crossings of the

freeway that accommodate motor vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians. These additional crossings would reduce motor traffic volume at existing crossings, which would be a benefit to all road users.

6) Measure D is a sales tax, not a fuel tax. It is paid by all, whether they own cars or not.

7) Projects that serve private motor vehicle use should be paid for through motor vehicle user fees, primarily fuel taxes. This is a matter of environmental justice and of economic justice.

Thank you for your public service and for your attention to these comments.

Sincerely yours,

Ada Babine, Santa Barbara Group
Los Padres Chapter, Sierra Club