



## **Safe Routes for All: Creating Walkable Communities**

**Presentation to City of Sacramento Design Commission  
November 17, 2010**

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**What if we had Safe Routes for All?**

**What would it look like?**

### **WALKSacramento**

- Founded 1998
- Advocate for walkable, bikable communities through
  - Land use review
  - Transportation review
  - Involvement in local and regional planning
- Complete Streets Coalition
- Safe Routes for All Coalition – advocating for a 4<sup>th</sup> Scenario for the SACOG Region
- Safe Routes to School planning

### **Why is walking important?**

- Our bodies were designed to move
- Movement is needed to keep all our systems healthy
  - Respiratory system
  - Cardio-vascular system
  - Muscle system
  - Skeletal system
  - Intestinal system
  - Brain system
- Walking is our body's basic form of movement

**Walking is basic transportation:**

- Walking is the beginning and ending of all trips
- Good pedestrian accessibility is necessary for good transit
- Walking is critical to urban vitality
- In short – walking is good for us individually and good for us as community
- Walking is not an alternative mode

**WALKSacramento – We advocate for design that achieves:**

- Walkable, livable communities
- Separated sidewalks and safe pedestrian crossings
- Complete Streets – streets that all can use, young and old, pedestrian, bicyclist, transit riders and drivers too
- Safe, convenient, comfortable streets – well shaded, well lighted
- Streets designed for appropriate speeds
- Land uses designed to maximize eyes on the street
- A well connected street system

**WALKSacramento – What we do:**

- Review development proposals and recommend changes to maximize walkability
  - Write letters
  - Testify
- Develop plans for Safe Routes to Schools
- Walkability audits – to identify pedestrian needs
- Review transportation plans & projects
- Help individuals address pedestrian problem areas

**What we have helped accomplish:**

- City & County Pedestrian Master Plans
- Greater allocation of money for sidewalks and other ped improvements
- MLK Jr. Boulevard walk audits led to Streetscape Plan for MLK Jr. Blvd.
- Safe Routes to School – many schools including
  - 15 in Sacramento County unincorporated area (9 nearly complete)
  - 3 in Natomas Unified School District
  - Beginning a city-wide Safe Routes to School project for Citrus Heights
- Adoption of Complete Streets policies by the City of Sacramento, County of Sacramento, Sacramento Regional Transit District and SACOG

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## Accomplishments

### ***Complete Streets: WALKSacramento has lead the charge on Complete Streets***

- **Complete Streets Coalition** – formed by the Partnership for Active Communities in 2007, directed by WALKSacramento – includes SABA, AARP, Breathe CA, ECOS, SMAQMD, SACOG and others.
- Matsui Complete Streets Legislation introduced
- Complete Streets policies are now included in Sacramento Transit Master Plan, County Circulation Plan, City General Plan, and SACOG funding programs
- WALKSacramento & SABA awarded SACOG's Blueprint Excellence Award
- Advocated to include Complete Streets in SACOG's Stimulus Package grants

### ***Land Use Review: WALKSacramento advocates regularly in writing and in testimony to City and County planning and elected officials***

- Design Review Committee meets monthly
- Complete 20-40 reviews of proposed land developments and planning policies each year – leading to small and large improvements for pedestrian and bicycle access
- Major advocacy of pedestrian accessibility issues in update of Sacramento County's General Plan both the land use and circulation elements.

### ***Safe Routes to School: WALKSacramento is a leader in the Safe Routes to School Program***

- Safe Routes "5E" grant underway – 6 schools in the unincorporated area of the County have had initial audits, 4 more are underway.
- Second Sacramento Safe Routes to School Conference – November 2010
- Safe Routes grant for all schools in Citrus Heights to begin 2010

### ***Los Rios Transportation Connections Plan – April 2008 – This plan, drafted by WALKSacramento, argues for safe, convenient pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to all Los Rios campuses***

- Four campuses -- Involvement of faculty & staff & administrators
- Sac County awarded grants to implement two projects at American River College based on the plan – sidewalks on Orange Grove Avenue and a plan for a bicycle-pedestrian bridge access across Arcade Creek

## Grants:

- **Partnership for Active Communities** –Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Five years, 2003 –2008 -- Final report completed.
- **Complete Streets Sustainability Grant** – a one year extension grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – ended Nov 09.
- **Los Rios Transportation Connections** – funded by Caltrans Community Planning Grant – Partnership of County of Sacramento DOT, Los Rios Community College District, and WALKSacramento. Completed April 2008.
- **Safe Routes to School “5E’s” Grant** – a 2 ½ year partnership of County of Sacramento DOT and WALKSacramento with a Caltrans Safe Routes to School. To fund 15 school walk/bike audits & plans and 3 annual Safe Routes to School conferences. Expect extension through 2011.
- **Safe Routes to School Citrus Heights** – a 2 year partnership between City of Citrus Heights, San Juan School District and WALKSacramento to fund 12-13 school walk/bike audits and plans. Getting underway 2010.
- **Clean Air Grant** –Funded by Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District -- supports involvement in land use review and public outreach. Extended for two years to June, 2012.
- **California Endowment** – Walkable Neighborhoods completed 2003.

## Awards:

- ECOS Environmental Organization of Year 2010
- APA (American Planning Association) Visionary Award 2009
- SACOG Salutes Blueprint Excellence Award 2007 – for collaboration with community on Complete Streets
- Active Living by Design Innovation Award – for development review 2006
- Anne Seeley Memorial Award, 2004
- American Lung Association Clean Air Award 2003



September 3, 2010

Ms. Kacey Lizon  
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RE: SACOG's 2010 Metropolitan Transportation Plan: A Fourth Scenario

Dear Ms. Lizon:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft 2010 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) scenarios. A quotation from our 2007 MTP comment letter is still apt:

*"As a driver, one is aware of what an incredible, vital transportation system we have in this region – that enables each of us who drive to easily and safely access all parts of this region at all times of the day or night.*

*Yet when we are pedestrians, bicyclists, or are disabled, this is not true. Access to all parts of the region (both near and far) is limited and incomplete when one is on foot, on a bicycle, or in a wheel chair."*

To address this significant gap, WALKSacramento recommends that SACOG develop a "4<sup>th</sup> Scenario" or a significantly strengthened Scenario 3. The purpose of this proposed scenario is to make the region transportation system whole and complete – so that children can walk and bicycle to school and people of all ages can walk and bicycle to nearby destinations.

SACOG is renowned for its Blueprint for encouraging compact growth. Walking and bicycling are fundamental to the SACOG Blueprint. Walking is critical to building an effective transit system. Walking is critical to the health of our brain and body.

**We propose the following guiding principles:**

1. **Complete the regional system of walkways and bikeways --** so that all can walk, bicycle or take transit to nearby destinations.

2. **Focus on community quality of life** rather than peak hour traffic flow. A focus on 24-hour community travel will provide greater transportation funding and system efficiencies while at the same time support walkable, livable communities. This focus will minimize road widenings with 6-lane roadways being the exception rather than the rule.
3. **Set ambitious targets for walking and bicycling** – such as 10% pedestrian mode share and 10% bike mode share. Model the impacts such mode shifts will have on VMT and emissions reductions.

### **Initiate Twelve Year Safe Routes to School & Regional Pedestrian Retrofit**

Yes, twelve years. The City of Sacramento and the County of Sacramento have both adopted pedestrian master plans. These two adopted plans identified approximately 1.12 billion dollars of pedestrian improvements including sidewalks, crossings, intersection treatments, and safe routes to school. However, each plan proposed a gradual implementation over many, many decades. Extrapolating, spending \$1,200 per person living today in the region over the next 12 years could significantly complete the regional system and have long term health, economic and environmental results. This would include pedestrian investments to support:

1. **Safe routes to school** projects throughout the region.
2. **Safe routes to transit** projects – to support efficient use of this region's growing transit investment.
3. **Sidewalks, walkways and crossings** on urban collectors, arterials and thoroughfares.
4. **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) required upgrades** completed throughout the system.

While this \$2.5 billion dollar investment will not cover every pedestrian infrastructure need, it will result in a profound shift in our transportation investment. In four years, every community in the region can then evaluate how far we have come and what is needed to complete the job in the next 8 years – the next two MTP cycles.

It would enable our children to walk to school in their own generation. It would enable each of us to walk rather than drive to conveniently located destinations.

Our health will improve. Walking is our built-in pump; the improved movement of blood generated by walking has many health benefits. Walking can not only reduce obesity, it improves blood and nutrient flow in our brains so that our thinking improves – think what that means to growing minds.

Our economy will also benefit from our greatly improved health. Reduced personal travel costs will enable us to spend our dollars on things other than transportation. Our air quality will improve. And we will be on the road to reducing our climate change emissions.

#### **What else should be included in Scenario 4?**

- Ambitious transit investments that expand compact, mixed use, walkable communities as outlined in SACOG's Blueprint.
- A complete regional bicycle network with connecting bridges as outlined by the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA).
- Proper treatments for new and existing interchanges to support walking and bicycling.

We appreciate the strong leadership that SACOG has provided supporting the adoption of Complete Streets policies and the increase in funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects. And more is needed! Now is the time to get the job done – to Complete the Streets in one generation rather than ten.

We look forward to working closely with SACOG and its member jurisdictions on achieving these ambitious yet very achievable objectives.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

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Attachment

**Cost for Twelve Year Safe Routes to School & Regional Pedestrian Retrofit for SACOG Region**

**2005 Population Numbers -- SACOG**

|                                     | <u>Population</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| City of Sacramento                  | 427,409           |
| County of Sacramento Unincorporated | 527,790           |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>955,199</b>    |

Estimate of investment needed to implement the City and County pedestrian master plans -- Estimated total \$1.118 B      \$      **1,170.44**      **Nearly \$1,200 for each resident**  
City of Sacramento - \$800 M  
County of Sacramento - \$318 M

What this would include:

- Sidewalks on major roadways -- arterials, collectors
- Safe Routes to School -- to elementary schools
- Some lighting
- Some upgraded signals (countdowns)
- Some intersection improvements

Applying \$1,200 to the 2005 regional population of 2,056,894 persons      \$      **2,468,272,800.00**

This assumes that new infrastructure will be built to meet latest Complete Streets criteria so will not need to be retrofitted for pedestrians.

Potential program requirements:

- Adoption of pedestrian master plans with project lists
- Prioritization of projects nearest transit and schools

Note:

If this were done, the amount needed could be recalculated for the next MTP to address things that might not have been included, or only minimally included.

For example, the County's plan is not comprehensive for including an assessment of all schools. This might be done in the next 4 years to get a better estimate.



**SAFE  
ROUTES  
FOR ALL**

## 4<sup>th</sup> Scenario “Safe Routes for All” Regional Pedestrian & Bicycle Retrofit in 12 Years

It's time for a “4<sup>th</sup> Scenario” for the **Metropolitan Transportation Plan**. Now is a critical time to shape our region's future. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is holding workshops on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2035. The workshops will influence how money is spent and our transportation future. Workshop attendees will review three different transportation scenarios with varying budgets for roads and transit. Initial drafts of the scenarios shortchanged walking and biking as transportation choices.

A coalition of organizations and individuals is forming to advocate for **Safe Routes for All** in walkable and bikeable communities throughout our six-county region.

- WALKSacramento
- Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates
- Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails
- Sacramento Walking Sticks
- Coalition On Regional Equity
- Ubuntu Green
- Environmental Council of Sacramento
- Safe Kids Greater Sacramento
- Gray Panthers of Sacramento
- Mothers' Support Network
- Bicycle Advocates of Rancho Cordova

We urge residents to support **Safe Routes for All** and attend one of the SACOG workshops being held from Oct 13 to Oct 28 throughout the region. Register online at <http://www.sacog.org/>.

Ask SACOG for **Safe Routes for All**:

- Create and analyze a 4<sup>th</sup> scenario that provides a complete network of bicycle and pedestrian routes throughout the region
- Safe Routes to School – throughout the region
- Safe Routes to Transit – throughout the region
- A system of bikeways and complete streets that are safe and accessible to everyone
- Vital new connections with new bridges and freeway crossings
- Funded, planned and completed in the next 12 years
- \$5 Billion for the region over 12 years -- an affordable 14 percent of the budget.

**Safe Routes for All** is critical for the health of our children and families, for our community and neighborhood quality of life – and for our freedom of transportation choice.