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We think Contra Costa needs to adopt a new transportation vision. It has outgrown its past as a suburban area that relied on drive-alone commuting to other counties. It needs to now see itself as an integral part of a vibrant metropolitan region, where excellent transit is the preferred way to get around.

TRANSDEF recommends that the vision for the TEP be anchored to what we see as the most important sentence in the Draft Countywide Transportation Plan: **"Expanding roadway capacity to meet demand is no longer an option in Contra Costa."** (p. 1-37) The TEP needs to acknowledge that pursuing congestion relief through road widening does not increase mobility in the long-term, yet it worsens the climate impacts of transportation, contrary to state policy.

We applaud the forward-looking [thinking of the Los Angeles City Council](#) in adopting Mobility Plan 2035 this month, to encourage alternatives to driving alone. "City leaders say the plan reflects a new-found view that simply widening streets is no longer feasible or, in many cases, desirable."

Contra Costa's Priority Development Areas (PDAs), already worked out with MTC/ABAG in Plan Bay Area, are an important step forward in Growth Management. The TEP should invest heavily in the development of the PDAs (in cities that are eager to cooperate), to help them attract as many as possible of Contra Costa's expected 300,000 new residents in the coming 20 years. Because Transit-Oriented Development is a significant change in the County's culture, significant TEP support will be needed to make available examples of these new communities.

Among their benefits, PDAs tend to relieve development pressures on valuable open space. The TEP should fund the development and upkeep of the rail and bus transit needed to make PDAs work. We envision frequent bus rapid transit service on major arterials. Residents have transit passes from work or their place of residence, and can hop on and off buses without the impediment of cash payment.

It is particularly important to encourage the strongest form of PDA, where housing and economic activity for a wide middle-income spectrum of the population are grouped within easy and attractive walking/biking distance of high-frequency transit stops and neighborhood retail. This is a major change from the region's practice of placing large parking lots around transit stations and encouraging linkage to the station by automobile.

Planning future growth around high-quality transit will avoid further burdening existing roadways. The Growth Management Plan needs to incorporate explicit disincentives for development that further increases VMT. The county should work to exceed its GHG

reduction goals; major gains could come from programs that speed conversion to battery electric vehicles.

Congestion is the result of too many cars driven by solo drivers. Much technological innovation, including Intelligent Highways and self-driven vehicles, will encourage even more solo driving, making congestion worse, not better. A more effective answer is real-time ride-matching, in which travel time savings in HOV lanes incentivize drivers to share their cars. Because HOT lanes facilitate solo driving, they should be vigorously opposed for exacerbating the very source of the congestion problem.