

Transportation Solutions Defense and Education Fund

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To: TAM Board
From: David Schonbrunn
Re: TAM Goals
Date: April 24, 2014

I think TAM would do well to take a cue from the external review of Caltrans now being conducted by the State Transportation Agency. One of the major findings of the report (well-worth reading) is that Caltrans is out of step with the State's policy goals of reducing GHGs and VMT, and that it needs a new vision, mission and goals.

Along these lines, I suggest you consider shifting TAM's goals away from the programmatic level to focus on the strategic level. Supervisor Sears wrote a Marin Voice (attached) that suggested that the sources of the traffic problems that plague Marin are:

- Inadequate local circulation
- Too much in-commuting

I think it would be valuable for the Board to have a workshop session to consider that analysis and its policy implication: realign TAM's resources to address these problems specifically. e.g., TAM's largest capital project (the Marin-Sonoma Narrows project) will increase in-commuting enough to actually worsen traffic LOS. Does that investment make sense from a strategic perspective?

A newly strategic TAM would have:

- A focus on operating the existing system, rather than building new infrastructure.
- Real-time monitoring capabilities (perhaps in collaboration with Caltrans and MTC) to know what is happening on its network.
- A real-time web presence, so that county residents know that someone is aware of the traffic problems they are experiencing.
- A visible presence in smartphone-based commute programs, including both the long-distance Carma program, and shorter distance taxi-like programs.
- High-tech tools to know where traffic is heading, making it possible for TAM to provide alternate modes of travel: vanpools, bike lanes, new transit routes.
- HOV lane operational hours that guarantee preferred treatment to carpools whenever 101 is typically congested.
- A slogan: "Tangible Results, Soon"

I've posted a variety of relevant proposals here: <http://transdef.org/Marin/Marin.html>

MARIN VOICE

Our growing problem with cars

TRAFFIC is on everyone's radar. If you find traffic congestion more prevalent during your commute, errands and weekends, you might conclude that our problem is population growth. You'd be mistaken...

While Marin grew significantly from 1950 to 1970, the growth rate has been modest since then. Between 2000 and 2010, the growth rate plunged to 2.1 percent, the slowest growth in 50 years. Going forward, Marin's population growth is expected to level off at just 0.3 percent per year (202 persons). The traffic problems we now experience are not the result of a growing population.

Cars, cars, cars.

In Marin, we don't have a population problem; we have a car problem. In the '60s, we had only one-third as many cars as people living in Marin. Even with the population "boom" of the '70s, Marin still had only half as many cars as people. By 2010, we had nearly an equal number of cars in our garages as people living here. And that includes all the nondrivers: children and older adults.

Our local transportation infrastructure cannot support four times as many vehicles as it was designed and built for. No wonder we are gnashing our teeth, looking for a way out of this mess.

Problem 1: Inadequate local circulation

We will never be able to build enough roads to make driving convenient again during commute hours. Because

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one-third of our trips are 3 miles or less, we don't have to depend on driving for all our trips. Bicycling and walking are viable (and healthy) replacements. We need to create safe and convenient alternatives for some of our trips: better bike paths, sidewalks and local transit options. To improve our quality of life, we need to develop these "car-free" choices for getting around our neighborhoods.

Problem 2: Too much in-commuting

We all notice the southbound morning back-up on Highway 101 exiting at Tiburon Boulevard/East Blithedale Avenue to get to the Strawberry/Tiburon peninsula and Mill Valley. And we've all gotten stuck in the northbound afternoon and evening commute traffic on 101 heading to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. Motorists trying to avoid that traffic cut through to Tiburon on Belvedere Drive, getting off

101 at Seminary Drive.

The majority of Marin's workforce, nearly 60 percent, now lives outside Marin. To get to work each day, Marin's workers drive farther on average than any other workforce in the Bay Area.

Marin has the highest percentage of in-commuting of any county in the Bay Area. Nearly all of Marin's in-commuters drive to work rather than take transit or bike, and more than 73 percent of commuters drive alone.

We can reduce the impacts of in-commuting by developing better transit connections to other counties and better carpool and vanpool options. Building workforce housing would enable people working in Marin to live closer to their jobs.

What can we each do?

Can we get all these cars off the road? Given our suburban geography, that's not realistic. But we can reduce the number of car trips. We are the traffic. Each of us, taking a small step to reduce our car trips, can make a difference.

Cut one car trip from your usual routine. Find one opportunity to carpool. Check out the bus schedule — you might find it is convenient for one of your trips. Take a bike-riding skills class. Press schools to restore or enhance school bus service.

Take your visitors on the Muir Woods Shuttle. Ride the ferry when you can.

Let me know your ideas about how to reduce driving and I will share them in my next community newsletter.