



Bike San Gabriel Valley

2410 West Valley Blvd.
Alhambra CA, 91803

www.BikeSGV.org

March 5, 2013

California Air Resources Board
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, CA 95812

RE: Support for Active Transportation Funding, Increased Investment in Disadvantaged Communities and Scientific Review of Controversial Projects

Honorable members of the California Air Resources Board,

On behalf of the members of Bike San Gabriel Valley (BikeSGV), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on the landmark decision before you. As you know land-use planning and transportation infrastructure have a major influence on air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and public health. Decades of auto-centric planning and development in Southern California have resulted in polluted air, a massive carbon footprint, and sedentary lifestyles, with tragic consequences for health and safety.

Investing in Clean, Healthy, Active Transportation

Interest in projects to make walking, biking and public transportation safer and more pleasant are sprouting up across California, and a growing number of communities are developing comprehensive Pedestrian, Bicycle, Traffic Calming and Safe Routes to School plans.

In the San Gabriel Valley, Temple City is in the midst of developing two of the most ambitious "Complete Streets" projects in the state of California - the Rosemead and Las Tunas Boulevard Projects. After years of planning, the Rosemead Project is finally moving forward thanks to the assistance of 14 different funding streams. Improvements will include:

- Class-I on-street, "protected" bicycle lanes (a.k.a. cycletracks)
- Class-II Bicycle Lanes
- Bulb-out street corners with high visibility crosswalks and shorter crossing distances
- Wider sidewalks to allow for outdoor dining or mini-parks (a.k.a. parklets)
- New, mid-block pedestrian crossings
- Lane reduction or "road diet"
- Narrower travel lanes (12' to 10'/11')
- Transit stop shelters and benches
- Shade/canopy trees
- Drought resistant landscaping
- Reverse-in car parking stalls

Once realized, these improvements will pay long term dividends to the health and well-being of the residents of this community and the broader region. They will also reduce the number of short trips Temple City residents take by automobile by making walking and biking a genuinely safe alternative for the first time in the City.

Yet this innovative project and others like it are contingent upon access to limited federal and state grant monies for “Complete Streets” projects. Current funding streams for such improvements are woefully inadequate and on the decline. Presently only 1% of all transportation dollars are spent on projects to improve conditions for walking and bicycling, despite the fact that an estimated 19% of all trips are done by foot or bicycle.

Recommendations

- Require that at least 33% of all funding allocated for transportation projects be allocated to the development of bicycling and pedestrian networks to reduce dependence on automobiles and mitigate decades of non-investment in such projects.
- Incentivize the use of “best practices” by scoring projects that utilize road treatments proven to increase safety.
- Prohibit the use of auction proceeds for new roadway/widening projects. Dollars should be focused on improving public transportation, encouraging active transportation, and repairing existing roadways and bridges.

Prioritizing Active Transportation Investments in Disadvantaged Communities

In the aggregate bicyclists and pedestrians in disadvantaged and low-income communities suffer from higher rates of fatalities and injuries. In particular, youth, seniors, and minorities are at far greater risk of being killed by motorists while biking or walking.

Making matters worse, disadvantaged communities also suffer from severe health disparities, including the state’s highest rates of chronic illnesses associated with a lack of physical activity (e.g., obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease). Such health disparities carry a heavy financial burden to taxpayers: statewide, about \$41 billion is spent annually on medical costs related to obesity and lost productivity due to chronic diseases caused by physical inactivity.

Recommendations

- Spend at least 40% of all funds set aside for pedestrian and bicycle projects in disadvantaged communities.
- Prioritize funding for projects in communities suffering from the highest health disparities and rates of childhood obesity.
- Prioritize projects that promote first/last mile connections to transit, as well as safe routes to schools, recreation areas, libraries and other community facilities.

Scientific Review of Controversial Projects

Due to the large sums of money that will become available through this program, BikeSGV urges the California Air Resources Board to set up an independent scientific oversight panel to review funding applications from controversial projects that purport to significantly reduce GHG emissions, but rely on tenuous research.

Recommendations

- Require that an independent panel of scientists be utilized to review projects, especially contentious ones, to ensure they will in fact significantly reduce GHG emissions. The members of



2

this review panel shall be selected by CARB, the UC Regents, and the state agency tasked with disbursing funds based on their expertise in the field.

- Grant the public the opportunity to weigh in on the system for distributing funding from the state agency level, once allocation levels are determined.

Making the Healthy and Sustainable Choice, the Easy Choice

Bike San Gabriel Valley urges CARB's decision-makers to accelerate our trajectory towards a more sustainable, bicycle, transit and pedestrian-friendly California by making healthier, less carbon intensive choices and lifestyles easier for residents. In order to do so, CARB needs to allocate specific funding for active and public transportation projects, as well as set up safeguards to ensure that monies are spent effectively and efficiently. On behalf of the communities and constituents BikeSGV serves, I hope you will take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vincent Chang". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Vincent" on top and "Chang" below it, both starting with a capital letter.

Vincent Chang, President
Bike San Gabriel Valley
www.BikeSGV.org