



March 2, 2009

Hon. Scott Haggerty, Chair, and Commission Members
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Draft Transportation 2035 Plan

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area commends the Transportation 2035 Plan for giving emphasis to

- a regional land use vision for the whole Bay Area
- transit-oriented development, with affordable, accessible development near transit stations
- connectivity between regional transportation systems, with local access to major lines
- transportation services to those most dependent on transit—young, seniors, and the disabled.
- action on climate protection.

The sustainable regional growth plans mandated by SB 375, are beginning to be addressed in draft regional policies distributed by the Joint Policy Committee. It is not clear that these draft policies have been incorporated into the 2035 Plan at this time. We would hope that this plan would reflect the need to address SB 375 now and not wait until the next round.

We hope that the latest ABAG 2009 projections, which assume that future growth will be accommodated within Bay Area counties, are incorporated into this plan. It is always difficult to determine if new projections can or will affect plans already in circulation. The ABAG FOCUS program is a great beginning, but the latest projections may require even more attention to infill.

In the same vein, there is the issue of "committed projects" and we would hope that anything on the list that may not meet the new Climate Change/SB375 criteria would be reevaluated if possible.

Funding is critical for the T2035 Plan. The economy has declined, affecting both State revenues and local sales and property taxes. The Federal stimulus plan will help in the short term to fill the gaps. Now that the State Budget has been adopted for 2009-2010, without an increase in the State gas tax, we continue to support a consumption based charge on gasoline (price per gallon), similar to the Huffman/Feuer bill in the last session, to be adopted as a Climate change user fee.

We support funding commitments to programs that create and sustain alternatives to personal vehicle use, including increased funding for the Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) program, new funding for Safe Routes to Transit and Safe Routes to Schools, a Transit Priority Program, and a transportation climate program.

We continue to urge increased priority for “Communities of Concern” as many low-income and minority households have no options but to be served by transit for their daily work and non-work lives. These communities are more affected by the emissions within their locations, and the cost of service which must be affordable. We request that the proposal from the Minority Citizens Advisory Committee for more frequent and reportable updates of the equity situation should be adopted as policy.

Sincerely,

Marion Taylor
Vice President, Program/Action
League of Women Voters of the Bay Area