



Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
818 W. Seventh Street, 12th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

November 2, 2011

Dear SCAG Members,

Does the RTP for Southern California reflect the existing needs and resources of the region, while encouraging sustainable transportation?

This letter uses the City of Ventura as a microcosm to illustrate how, in our view, the proposed RTP may miss those two goals. We believe the proposed budget closes the door on bicycle transit; the cleanest, most economical, healthiest form of mid-distance transportation.

The Example Of Ventura City:

The proposed RTP budgets \$306M over the next 24 years for Ventura County's Active Transportation (combining both sidewalk and street traffic). That translates to \$153M for bicycles if we split the amount, giving the other half to pedestrians. Dividing that by 24 years of the plan, gives us \$6.4M annually for bicycle transit in Ventura County. Our County has 10 cities and many unincorporated towns large and small. If we divide the annual budget by 11 (10 cities and one share for the entire county), that leaves city budgets with \$579K annually for bicycle transportation, and practically no funds for unincorporated areas such as Newbury Park.

Ventura City's Bicycle Master Plan was adopted in May of 2011 and has a budget of \$44M. Projects were carefully selected during a three-year community input period, for high-use bicycle transportation. Under this RTP budget, Ventura's plan would take 76 years to implement – and provide no maintenance, education, or inflation coverage. By our calculations, this RTP budget does not support bicycles as a viable transportation option. It does not reflect city plans.

One could argue that we are struggling to budget maintenance for existing roads. I submit that bicycle transit reduces wear on our roads and parking expenses, and that bike lanes through neighborhoods are much cheaper than automobile lanes, to say nothing of the health expenses incurred by sedentary transit. If we are to avoid throwing our money down the rabbit-hole of private automobiles – we must carve out a realistic alternative. Happily, the bicycle does not require the kinds of operating funds of public transit, nor the escalating costs of increased auto traffic. It requires a relatively small investment – but it does require funds. I urge you to review these figures, and modify the budget accordingly so that it reflects our needs and desires for bicycle transportation to become a safe, viable option.

Sincerely Yours,

Rachel Morris
VCCool Executive Director / The Ventura Bicycle Union