

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

October 20, 2011

Re: Ventura County Coalition recommends changes to the RTP Draft as related to Bicyclists.

Dear SCAG Members:

A coalition Ventura County organizations would like to raise three concerns about the current SCAG RTP draft for *Active Transportation*: funding, the distribution of that funding, and the lack of quality data collection as related to bicycle trips. We believe these need to be improved in the final SCAG RTP.

We are especially concerned that less than 1% of the budget is recommended for bicycle improvements. We believe this does not represent the needs of Ventura County and that it misses a great opportunity to move the SCAG region toward SB-375 goals. We would like to see this amount increased substantially.

1.) We need to invest in bicycle-friendly streets and infrastructure for many reasons: a reduction in VMT and CO2 emissions, savings in road infrastructure, economically equitable transportation options, important revenues from large recreational bicycle events and professional race teams, an affordable way to extend the practical reach of local bus lines, healthier youth, and reduction of school traffic congestion to name a few. According to a National Household Travel Survey, 40% of the trips people make are 2 miles or less (which equates to 10 to 15 minutes by bicycle). Add to this, our year-round clement weather, the ability to easily transport 25 to 30 lbs by bike, and the affordability and accessibility of bicycles to people of all income levels, and the bicycle provides an excellent alternative to the automobile for a large amount of transportation needs. The primary obstacle for increased bicycle use on short local trips is unsafe road conditions – the fear of being hit by automobiles. A fraction of 1% of the budget is simply too little to bring needed improvements for safe, usable bicycle routes.

2.) Bicyclists and pedestrians have completely different needs, and they should be budgeted as separate items. Cyclists are traffic on the road, following traffic signals and rules, and sharing space with cars and trucks. Pedestrians are on the sidewalk. Funds for one do not equal funds for the other. Putting these two groups together masks how very little each group is really getting, introduces lack of clarity in the budget, and creates unnecessary conflict and competition between groups.

3.) We are concerned that plans for bicycles are based on inaccurate, partial data. In Ventura County there have been *no thorough bicycle trip counts to date as confirmed by staff at a VCTC hearing*. We believe the current estimates are low, and we need systematic, regional data

collection for economic analysis, prioritization, and a base for viewing project results. Though this data will not be available in time for SCAG's 2012 RTP – we recommend funding such data collection so that future RTPs can be more informed and strategic.

We appreciate your consideration and support for this important form of transportation. We would be happy to meet with you and/or your staff if you feel further dialog would be helpful.

Sincerely Yours,

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Rachel Ulrich
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children who ride their bikes to school (1 of
which on a dangerous road with no bike
path!)
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Although these organizations are not from
Ventura County, they are in nearby areas,
feel strongly about the issue, and have
endorsed this letter.

Ed France
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