

## MTA to Provide Ideas for SCAG's 20-Year Transportation Plan

(Dec. 15) The MTA will be taking a close look at the 20-year Regional Transportation Plan issued in draft form, Thursday, by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and will provide its own recommendations for incorporation into the regional plan early next year.

Read [SCAG Press Release](#): **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FACED WITH A LOOMING TRANSPORTATION CRISIS**

The SCAG plan - CommunityLink21 - estimates that by 2025, the region will generate some 700 million transit trips a year (up from 567 million in 1997), but notes that "...this number still falls far short of what is needed to effectively reduce congestion and vehicle emissions...over the next 20 years."

To address this need, the draft plan envisions dedicated bus transit corridors and new freeway lanes. It suggests expanding Metrolink, increasing facilities at LAX and other airports, and building high-speed Magnetic Levitation (MagLev) rail lines connecting points in Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Orange counties by 2025.

The MTA's Countywide Planning staff expects to complete a set of recommendations for transportation improvements later in December for presentation to the Board in January, said Keith Killough, deputy executive officer, Planning.

"This is part of our continuing collaborative effort to improve transportation," Killough said. "We'll be working closely with SCAG to get the plan adopted. The main thing is to come up with a plan that will entice people to use mass transit and carpools, or to avoid making trips by telecommuting and purchasing goods and services through the Internet."

### **\$110 billion spending plan**

SCAG's plan calls for spending \$110 billion for improvements aimed at easing traffic congestion and meeting the transportation needs of a six-county region that's expected to add seven million new residents and four million new jobs - the equivalent of two Chicagos by 2025.

SCAG acknowledged as "one of the most daunting dilemmas" facing the region is a \$10 billion shortfall in funds needed to maintain the current transportation system and a shortfall of \$40 billion in funding for the improvements outlined in the plan.

The plan recommends a series of initiatives to overcome the funding shortfalls, including a five-cent increase in gasoline taxes in 2005 and a cent per year from 2006 to 2025, extension of sales taxes in San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange counties beyond their "sunset" in 2010 and continuing the governor's plan to provide state funding for local transportation projects.

"Implementation of these funding alternatives would overcome the existing shortfall and allow for approximately \$30 billion in new strategic transportation investments," SCAG said in a news release.

In addition to input from the MTA, the SCAG plan now will be reviewed over the next two months by various committees of the agency, by county transportation commissions and by other participating agencies and the public.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 14, 2000**



## **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FACED WITH A LOOMING TRANSPORTATION CRISIS**

- Overcoming Major Funding Shortfall, Reforming Transit, Meeting Airport Demand Among the Challenges Raised by Southern California Association of Governments' 2001 Draft Regional Transportation Plan

[READ MTA REPORT: MTA to Provide Ideas for SCAG's 20-Year Transportation Plan](#)

**LOS ANGELES-** Citing a series of significant short- and long-term transportation dilemmas confronting the Southland, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) released ***CommunityLink21***, the 2001 Draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update today. Following today's release by SCAG's Regional Council, the Draft RTP Update will now undergo extensive public review and comment over the next several months, during which time a number of the region's daunting regional challenges will be discussed and addressed before SCAG adopts a Final RTP next Spring.

"***CommunityLink21*** presents a transportation blueprint that is flexible enough to meet the unique and diverse needs of Southern California while simultaneously meeting Federal and State requirements," said Lake Forest Councilman Richard Dixon, chair of SCAG's Transportation and Communications Committee that oversaw the Draft Plan's development. "Given the many challenges this plan raises, it is vital that the RTP Update undergo an extensive community review because we need a concerted regional dialogue over how best to proceed with developing our transportation infrastructure over the next 20 years."

***CommunityLink21*** is a comprehensive 20-year action plan for the future of Southern California transportation, analyzing and making recommendations on regional transportation facilities, services and strategies in the region, including mass transportation; roads and highways; ridesharing and other commuter alternatives; airports and seaports; goods movement-related facilities and services (air, truck and rail); bicycle and pedestrian facilities; and Intelligent Transportation Systems and related technologies.

The 2001 Draft RTP looks at all these various regional transportation facilities, services and strategies inclusively, assessing how current modes are performing and identifying new strategic investments to accommodate the forecasted growth in Southern California's population and employment base. By the year 2025, the region is projected to have seven million new residents and four million new jobs, the equivalent of adding two cities the size of Chicago to

## Southern California.

One of the most daunting dilemmas facing Southern California is a multi-billion dollar shortfall in available funding that will be required to develop, and in many cases maintain, needed transportation priorities. Specifically, dwindling gasoline tax revenues, the sunset of sales taxes in San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange Counties by 2010, and other factors will leave the region approximately \$10 billion short of the funds needed to maintain the existing system and institute short-term capital improvements. The funding shortfall under the existing transportation finance system also leaves no resources available for new strategic investments in key transportation priorities.

As a result, **CommunityLink21** recommends a series of transportation funding alternatives to overcome the current system's serious shortfall including: 1) an increase in the gasoline tax by five cents in 2005 and by one cent each year from 2006 to 2025; 2) an extension of sales taxes in San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange Counties beyond 2010 and adoption of a similar revenue measure in Ventura County (Los Angeles County has a permanent sales tax for transportation); 3) the institution of a new revenue mechanism on alternative fuel vehicles; and 4) continuation of Governor Davis' plan to reallocate additional state funds for local transportation projects.

Implementation of these funding alternatives would overcome the existing shortfall and allow for approximately \$30 billion in new strategic transportation investments.

"Southern California needs to consider and institute fundamental reforms to its transportation system's development, maintenance and financing if we hope to sustain the lifestyle we've grown accustomed to during this time of economic prosperity and meet the needs of our ever-growing population," said Los Alamitos Mayor Pro Tem Ronald Bates, president of SCAG.

"What SCAG is proposing for alternative funding strategies is entirely consistent with historical increases in these kinds of revenue sources."

Another issue of major concern is finding regional solutions to managing anticipated air travel and cargo demand. Without developing additional capacity, SCAG's current projections indicate Southern California's airport system will experience a 33 percent shortfall for meeting future air passenger demand and 66 percent shortfall for cargo demand by 2025. The RTP predicts that failure to adequately address and plan for this significant growth would result in major air and ground congestion and could seriously jeopardize Southern California's long-term economy as a national and international trade center.

"The demand on Southern California's airport system is at a breaking point," said Ventura County Supervisor Judy Mikels, former chair of SCAG's Aviation Task Force. "We have the largest regional airport system in the world and demand is growing at a steady pace. Without a comprehensive regional plan to accommodate our growing population and airport demand in a fair and equitable manner, we run a serious risk of impacting Southern California's position as a national and international trade center."

The Draft RTP – along with a related Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) that will be released in January – analyze a variety of

aviation scenarios, including the development of a commercial air facility at the El Toro Marine Air Station, the impact of plans to expand capacity at Los Angeles International Airport, the effect of high-speed rail connections between certain airports, and the extent to which outlying airports in Palmdale, Ontario and the Inland Empire can meet the increasing demand for access to and from the Southern California region.

**CommunityLink21** also identifies systemic problems with the manner in which Southern California's transit systems are currently operated. While some individual transit operators are attracting great numbers of riders, the overall regional transit system is failing to keep up with the demand and attract enough riders to sustain overall operating costs.

More specifically, approximately 20 percent of Southern California's transit operators handle about 60 percent of the region's transit riders. By the year 2025, SCAG estimates that the region will generate approximately 700 million transit trips per year (up from 567 million trips in 1997), but this number still falls far short of what is needed to effectively reduce congestion and vehicle emissions based on the region's expected growth over the next 20 years.

**CommunityLink21** recommends a series of policies and actions designed to increase transit use by improving the regional system's overall efficiency and effectiveness, as well as enhancing the number of transit choices available to commuters. The Draft Plan calls for a significant increase in the capacity of the Metrolink commuter rail system, in addition to the development of dedicated transit corridors in a number of heavily congested areas throughout Southern California. It also recommends development of an intra-regional high-speed transportation system based on Magnetic Levitation (Maglev) technology that connects the region's major population and transportation centers. Finally, the Draft Plan calls for a series of institutional, operational and financial policy reforms to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of Southern California's transit network.

"In order to provide a strong, viable, and affordable transit system in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Southern California region needs to seriously focus on reforming our current transit service" said Los Angeles City Councilman Hal Bernson, chair of SCAG's Regional Transit Task Force. "Public outreach and dialogue is especially important in this sector due to the generally decentralized nature of transit service in Southern California. The implementation of these reforms will present numerous challenges and require a regional consensus building process."

**CommunityLink21** and the related PEIR will now undergo an extensive two-month period of review and comment, a continuation of ongoing community outreach efforts involving numerous public hearings, workshops and forums throughout Southern California. At the conclusion of this public outreach period and following the incorporation of comments and input, SCAG's Regional Council is scheduled to adopt a final RTP in the Spring of 2001, at which point **CommunityLink21** will be submitted for Federal approval.

# # #

[Back to Viewpoint Articles](#)

