

***Transportation
Policy
Recommendations***
***The Olympic Legacy:
Let's Keep it Moving***

January, 1986

Southern California
Association of Governments
Regional Advisory Council

Introduction



During the 16 days of the 1984 Summer Olympics, more people were traveling on Southern California's freeways, streets and roads than ever before, but traffic congestion was lower than pre-Olympics peak hour travel.

Wanting to hang onto that legacy of the 23rd Olympiad, the Regional Advisory Council launched a campaign called, "The Olympics Legacy — Let's Keep It Moving," to get people to make small changes in their driving habits on a year-round, daily basis in order to permanently reduce traffic congestion in the region.

The centerpiece of the campaign is a 20-minute film produced by the Council with public and private donations. It warns that Los Angeles is going to stall and strangle on its own exhaust fumes unless people work together to change the way they live and drive.

A speakers bureau staffed by experts was formed to make the film presentations and lead discussions with targeted groups — business leaders, government officials, employers, labor leaders, and employee and public groups and associations.

While the Olympics Legacy film calls our attention to the transportation strategies that proved our existing system can, indeed, work, it does not really lay out an Action Plan. The Policy Recommendations in this document do.

The Regional Advisory Council is recommending 13 policies divided among six categories of action: freeway flow management, arterial flow management, truck delivery schedules, employer action for commute travel, public transit services, and urban form. Most of the policies are directed to SCAG as the region's forum for discussing and developing coordinated regional policies and programs.

To establish the framework within which that discussion can occur, the Council is distributing these recommended policies. We hope you will read them, consider them, and promote them as reasonable, effective actions.

The adopted Action plan that will follow will then be, consensus and commitment from government, from the private sector, and from the commuting public to accept the legacy of the 1984 Olympic experience and use it to improve the quality of our lives.

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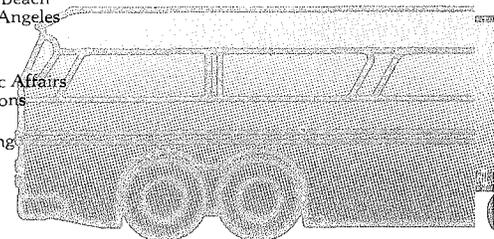
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Freeway Flow Management

Access Management and Incident Response

Introduction

The freeway network continues to be the most important element in the region's transportation system. Currently, over 200 miles (or 32%) of the urban freeway system in the SCAG region operates under 35 miles per hour during peak periods. Stop and go traffic means that the freeway carries significantly less traffic than it is actually capable of carrying. Freeway capacity is a scarce resource. Like other scarce resources, freeway capacity must be managed by setting priority for its use. The goal of freeway flow management is to keep freeway traffic moving. Failure to attain this goal means the freeway is not serving its intended purpose.

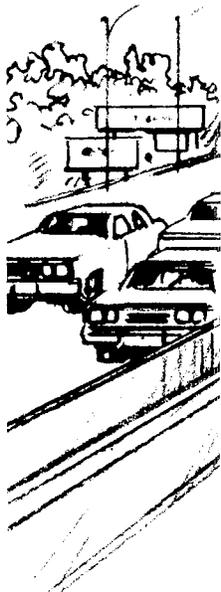
There are two major freeway flow management strategies. One is *Access Management*. This strategy uses ramp metering to regulate vehicle entry to the freeway and thus prevent freeway overload. The other is *Incident Response*. This strategy calls for timely clearance of freeway lanes in cases of accidents, road stoppages and any other incidents that impede traffic flow.

The Olympics Experience

Despite increases in daily traffic volumes during the Olympics (11% more than normal at its peak), the 700-mile regional freeway network experienced considerably less than normal congestion. One of the reasons for this was the high degree of attention that the California Highway Patrol and Caltrans gave to freeway flow management within the metropolitan Los Angeles area. Actions taken included strict monitoring of access to freeways; closure of certain on-ramps; instant towing of disabled vehicles; bus-only on-ramps; motorist advisories; and intense surveillance using helicopters and closed-circuit television.

Policy Recommendations

1. Strongly urge Caltrans, cities, and counties in the SCAG region to accelerate the provision of ramp meters, with adequate space for vehicles to wait, at affected freeway access points. SCAG should facilitate this effort through the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) process.
2. SCAG should provide leadership to the implementing agencies in the region to help secure the necessary funding as well as the political and public support needed to implement the access management and incident response strategies.



Arterial Flow Management

Institutional and Operational Needs

Introduction

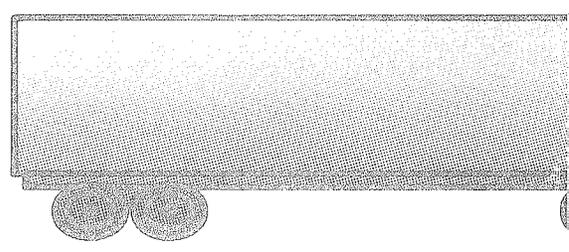
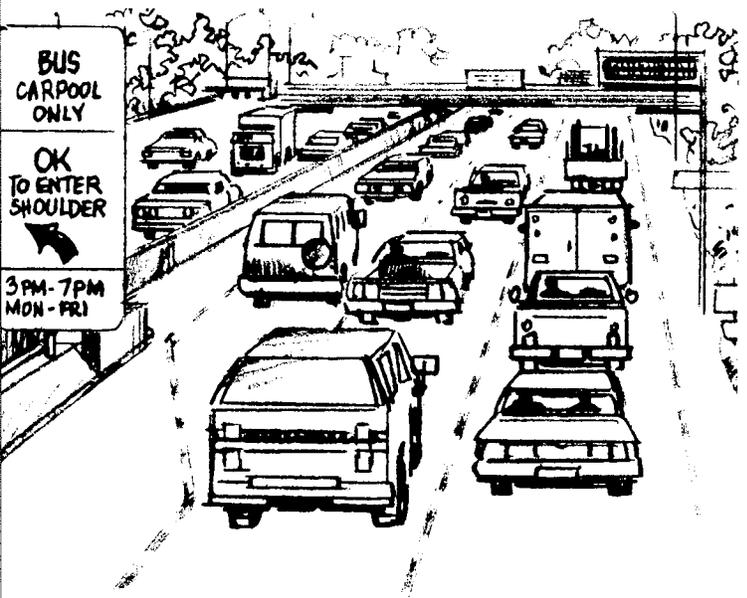
The surface street network is a key element in the region's transportation system. On an average week day in 1984, close to one-half of the 220 million vehicle miles travelled in the region used surface streets. A major part of this traffic was carried by the arterials, which mainly carry through trips, as opposed to local (short distance) trips. The way in which traffic is managed and operated on the arterials significantly affects mobility conditions in the Southland. Often, jurisdictional boundaries inhibit the implementation of actions that will improve traffic flow on the arterials. Synchronizing traffic signals and consistency in enforcing parking on curbside and restricted zones are but two examples of areas where improvements are necessary.

The Olympics Experience

The level of cooperation that existed among the planning agencies during the Olympics undoubtedly played a key role in bringing about the smooth traffic conditions that were experienced. In an environment where jurisdictional prerogatives were set aside, a number of actions were implemented that proved to be successful. Intersection management on streets and highways during the Olympics illustrated that gridlock can easily be prevented. A key strategy was the use of traffic control officers at congested intersections near venues to ensure order for motorists. Street parking enforcement increased street capacity as much as 30-50%. Traffic signal system management produced a 7-10% improvement in the traffic carrying capacity of affected streets.

Policy Recommendations

1. Recommend that SCAG encourage and help institutionalize countywide and regionwide cooperation in improving traffic flow on arterials on an ongoing basis. SCAG should take leadership and provide a forum for a representative body to undertake this effort. One immediate task that needs to be completed by this group is the development of an operational plan for traffic signals around the region.
2. Urge cities that are experiencing congestion on their arterials to enforce more strictly traffic-regulating measures, particularly parking and gridlock violations.



Truck Delivery Schedules

Introduction

The extent of traffic congestion problems caused by major truck accidents and truck deliveries warrants a program that would alter truck delivery schedules. By providing a forum for business, labor, trucking and government sectors, a program of institutional and operational changes can be implemented to replicate the experience established during the 1984 Olympics. Such a program would seek to encourage the above sectors to reroute through-trucks away from central business districts and major activity centers during peak commute periods and to either reschedule deliveries to off peak hours or restrict deliveries to certain freeway routes during AM and PM peak hours.

The Olympics Experience

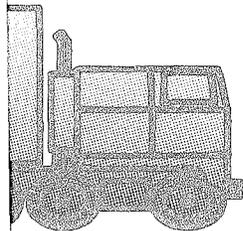
The California Highway Patrol (CHP), in conjunction with the California Trucking Association, successfully negotiated with the Teamsters Union a five-week labor contract waiver that allowed truckers in Southern California to shift their travel routes and schedules during the Olympics. Called "Operation Breezeway," the program encouraged truckers to reroute through-trucks away from central Los Angeles and to reschedule deliveries and local truck traffic during off-peak hours. Information packets containing forecasts about congestion by day, time, and location were distributed to trucking companies. Presentations on "Operation Breezeway" were also given.

Truck operations on the freeways were monitored at Caltrans traffic count stations and CHP weight stations. Observations made around central Los Angeles showed a 15% decrease in truck traffic. On an hourly basis, truck traffic was down 5% in the a.m. peak period, down 15% in the midday, down 23% in the p.m. peak period, and up 60% in the evening. A 42% reduction in truck-related accidents also occurred during the three week period. The fact that overall truck traffic was up significantly on the system indicates the success of the route diversion and rescheduling programs and the extent to which the provided congestion information was utilized.

Policy Recommendations

SCAG should take a leadership role to set up a forum among business, labor, trucking, and government sectors to facilitate the alteration of truck delivery schedules. SCAG should also actively seek individual commitments from these sectors to implement the necessary institutional and operational changes. Among the tasks necessary to implement the above recommendation, SCAG should:

- Present the Olympic Legacy Film at key business, labor, trucking and government forums as promotional background for the concept and benefits of altering truck delivery schedules.
- Create a task force composed of key participants in the trucking, labor, business, and government sectors.
- Through the task force, identify the changes needed to be made in the following two areas to allow for the alteration of truck delivery schedules:
 - local and state government regulations (i.e., local noise abatement ordinances, parking restrictions, and restrictions on alcoholic beverage deliveries);
 - behavioral and operational changes (i.e., modification of work hours for both receivers and shippers).
- Provide technical staff support in the development of the above recommendations with respect to trucking data from the Olympic experience and current trucking movements and routing in the region.
- Actively seek individual commitments via contracts with the task force to implement the recommended changes.



Employer Action For Commute Travel

Public And Private Sector Employers

Introduction

Peak hour commute related traffic continues to be a major cause of traffic congestion in the SCAG Region. There are many strategies employers can use to help alleviate this peak hour congestion. Employer action is the most effective way of reaching individual commuters. Therefore, it is imperative that employers in both the public and private sectors implement transportation plans for their employees.

The Olympics Experience

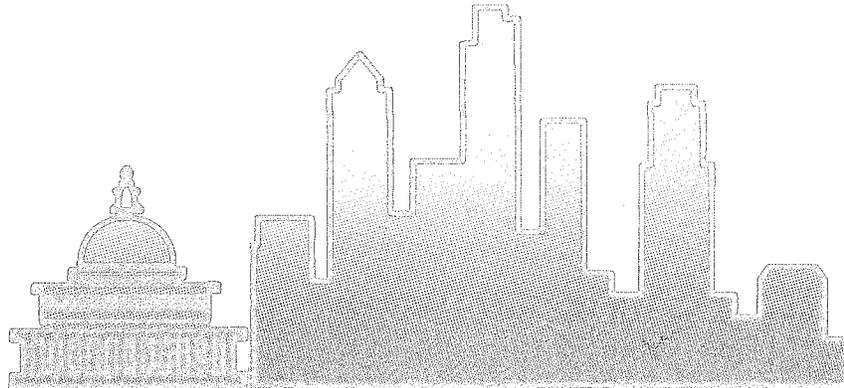
During the Olympics, a major transportation strategy that was successful was the spreading of the peak hour traffic. Many government agencies led the way in developing transportation plans for their employees during the Olympics (SCAG, State of California and County of Los Angeles are examples). Public and private employers throughout the region developed transportation and operational plans for their employees during the period of the games. Their successful transportation strategies included:

- examining work schedules and making changes where possible to avoid peak traffic periods for commuters;
- encouraging ridesharing;
- encouraging use of alternative routes for commuting; and
- employer-provided bus and shuttle services.

Another factor that helped reduce demand on the transportation system during the Olympics was the Olympic Committee's decision to provide their own separate transportation services for Olympics family, athletes, and media. This provided Olympic officials, as well as 12,000 athletes, 8,800 members of the news media, and the sponsors an efficient and reliable means of transport.

Policy Recommendations

1. Employers should be encouraged to:
 - use flex-time and modified work weeks or change work hours to avoid peak traffic hours;
 - provide opportunities for employees to work at home or at a remote work site;
 - develop rideshare programs and provide incentives to those who participate (free parking is a disincentive to rideshare); and
 - provide employee bus and shuttle services (as was done by the Olympics Committee).
2. Many of the transportation strategies used by employers during the 1984 Olympics should be continued on an ongoing basis to help alleviate some of the transportation problems in the SCAG region. SCAG, along with other agencies, should actively publicize and encourage the use of these strategies to employers.
3. SCAG should continue to support ridesharing programs currently undertaken by Commuter Computer and other similar agencies.



Public Transit Services

Introduction

The SCAG region relies upon a myriad of transportation options for people to use to get around. Not only are there millions of automobiles and thousands of trucks, but the Southern California area contains thousands of buses and vans that are specifically designed to carry large numbers of passengers. These components should be integrated to form a more effective public transit network.

Residents of the region do not perceive transit as a viable alternative to the private automobile. Currently, public transit is available primarily for the transit-dependent, and especially in those areas where transit-dependent populations are found. The exception is limited commuter services between outlying residential areas and a few employment centers.

Transit should be viewed as a viable option for urban residents. The public wants to understand that transit service exists throughout the region, i.e., is universally available. The basic building block for this public understanding is the regional freeway express transit concept. The message must be, "Transit can take you anywhere the freeways go."

The backbone of the regional public transit system is freeway express service. Equally important are transit services operating on surface streets, including fixed route/fixed schedule bus service on major arterials and community level services such as minibuses, taxis, dial-a-ride, jitneys, etc.

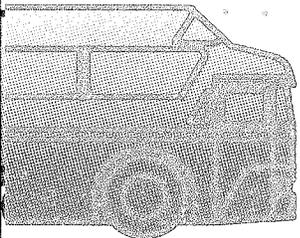
The Olympics Experience

During the Olympics, spectators were assured and accepted that their travel needs could be met via transit. Bus service was perceived as universally available and a viable alternative travel mode to almost all Olympic venues. High quality service, bus preferential measures on the road system, secure parking areas, and quick accommodation of rider demand were important factors. Public transit carried over 1.3 million passengers on either express or shuttle-type buses. These services relied on spectators driving their autos or taking regular bus service to specified bus loading areas. These areas were located far enough from the venues to not add to the congestion adjacent to the venues. Quick and efficient bus service to and from the venues was provided using the local street system and regional freeway network.

The preferential measures instituted for the Olympics shortened travel time. Spectators recognized that these measures contributed to the faster trip. This perception contributed in part to their acceptance of paying the actual cost of their trip. Thus, the Olympics taught us that people will enthusiastically use premium transit service and will pay premium fares.

Policy Recommendations

1. SCAG should provide leadership to the implementing agencies in the region to help secure the additional funding as well as the political support to implement the regional freeway transit concept.
2. Continue support for funding expansion of fixed route/fixed schedule bus service operating on major arterials.
3. Encourage community level transit services such as minibus and dial-a-ride operations to provide convenient supplemental service to regional freeway transit and arterial bus services.
4. Support preferential bus transit measures such as:
 - preferential access to freeways;
 - bus lanes on arterial streets;
 - signal preemption programs;
 - park/ride lots; and
 - transit transfer centers.



Urban Form

Introduction

Good progress has been accomplished towards developing a multi-centered region. Further progress will require continued cooperation of local government and the private sector. SCAG has supported the multi-centers concept through the Development Guide and the housing and jobs balance policy. SCAG's Development Guide presents a blueprint for shaping the region into a loose grid of many urban centers of varying sizes, which would presumably distribute transportation demand among these centers. However, implementation of a regional multi-centered urban form strategy to achieve transportation benefits is as yet not fully realized.

The Olympics Experience

During the Olympics, the region's existing dispersed urban form was both an opportunity for, and constraint to, managing transportation demand. It ultimately inspired the multi-venue format (resembling the multi-centers concept) for the events. The Olympics provided a successful, regionwide two-week demonstration of the way in which a dispersed urban form can so effectively influence the distribution of transportation demand when combined with appropriate implementation programs. The multi-venue approach took advantage of the region's emerging multi-center identity, rather than fighting against it. In the process, it validated the assertion that this region's relatively low density and dispersed population, infrastructure, and development — long assumed to be negative features — are actually an efficient mechanism for distributing transportation demand.

Policy Recommendations

1. Reaffirm SCAG's Development Guide concept of a multi-centered region form for the six-county region as a key strategy for distributing transportation demand.
2. SCAG continue leadership and information programs which reinforce the importance and value of the multi-centers scheme to transportation distribution.
3. Continue to urge local governments to carry out their individual land use and development plans in accordance with the multi-center urban form concept.
4. Urge the private sector when making location and investment decisions to consider the multi-centers concept and the related transportation effects.

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