From: Mike Swire
To: Board (@smcta.com); cacsecretary [@smcta.com]; cac@sfcta.org; Mima Crume
Subject: NYT - Colorado's Bold New Approach to Highways — Not Building Them
Date: Thursday, June 6, 2024 9:59:29 AM

Dear Peninsula transportation decision makers,

I hope that you will take five minutes to read this excellent article from the NY Times (no paywall) on Colorado's recent shift to funding transit and active transportation projects instead of widening highways. Here are some highlights:

- In 2019, Gov. Jared Polis signed a law that required the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 90 percent within 30 years. As the state tried to figure out how it would get there, it zeroed in on drivers. Transportation is the largest single contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, accounting for about 30 percent of the total; 60 percent of that comes from cars and trucks. To reduce emissions, Coloradans would have to drive less.

- Colorado's Department of Transportation, or CDOT, had canceled two major highway expansions, including Interstate 25, and shifted $100 million to transit projects. In 2022, a regional planning body in Denver reallocated $900 million from highway expansions to so-called multimodal projects, including faster buses and better bike lanes.

- The basic principle linking wider highways to more carbon emissions has been well understood since the 1960s. Back then, an economist rebutted the prevailing assumption that adding lanes would fix traffic, showing instead that wider roads only increased the number of cars and made congestion worse. This phenomenon came to be called "induced demand."

- State transportation departments nonetheless consistently underestimate how highway expansion leads to more driving. In 2019, a team led by Susan Handy, a professor of environmental science at the University of California, Davis, developed an induced demand calculator to help others translate how specific expansions led to more cars on the road.

- The (Denver) widening was also unlikely to fix traffic: Years earlier, the agency had spent $800 million to expand another stretch of Interstate 25 in south Denver and ended up with worse congestion than before construction began.

- Housing and transportation, in other words, are intertwined. Unlike most state transportation directors, Ms. Lew did not study engineering. She has a master's degree in American history and a background in finance. Transportation represents

most of the federal investment in cities, she said. But until recently, investing in transportation largely meant following a playbook written in the 1950s, building grand concrete structures that efficiently swept cars from one side of a city to another.

I hope that we will follow Colorado's lead and reconsider whether spending money on highway widenings is the best use of precious transportation dollars provided by taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Mike Swire
Chair, C/CAG Bike & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Appointee, SMCTA Citizen Advisory Committee
(writing as an individual)

From: Giuliano
To: cacsecretary [@smcta.com]
Subject: Please share with CAC and TA
Date: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 1:35:56 AM

CAC: full member comment from tonight. I summarized, saying that I would forward the full comments.

TA: please add to packet as a public comment.

I encourage the CAC members, TA Board members, and the general public to read Measure A, its Expenditure Plan, and Measure W. See below for excerpts.

I reached out to staff a couple of months ago to get TA council's - or staff's - feedback, and correct any errors in my thinking. I'd love to hear of any case law, AG opinions, or appellate decisions that contradict it. Staff has been very busy these past months and have been unable to meet. And so, I've decided to send to the CAC and TA, as is. Hopefully staff can get together with me in the next month or two to provide any feedback.

As should be clear, these are my understandings for Measure A, its expenditure plan, and Measure W. TA must clearly rely on its Councils opinions. That said, the text of A, the expenditure plan, and W are quite straight forward and don't read as legal mumbo jumbo. Take a look. See what you think. I added excerpts below of the most related bits, see the links above for the full text.

In particular:

- We often hear that highway funds may not be spent on bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- But, Measure A, it's expenditure plan, and Measure W do not say this at all. Anywhere. In fact, in several places each calls out that these funds may be spent on cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. Further, these documents actively describe goals and principles that are violated by adding car capacity. The language is quite plain.

  We have created a restriction that does not exist, and ignore restrictions that do exist.
- I believe that we have placed ourselves at legal risk by doing so.
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- Measure A itself is silent on bike/ped funding buckets and segregation. Measure A is an odd duck. It says little itself about much of anything, delegating that to the "Expenditure Plan".
- The Expenditure Plan segregates only off highway bike projects. It sets a minimum of what may be spent on such projects. See excerpt below. And under section IV Project Descriptions/C. Local Streets/Transportation specifically specifically permits funding of bike and ped programs and safety projects.
- Measure W also specifically supports using highway funds on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. See excerpt below.

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- Measure A goal includes congestion reduction. Bike/Pedestrian infrastructure reduces congestion. Adding car capacity only increases it. Studies have uniformly shown this. Even CALTRANS DOT agrees. See October 2015 DOT Policy Brief.

  Two other goals - safety and meeting local mobility needs - also are supported by bike/ped infrastructure, and violated by adding car capacity.
- Measure W core principles are almost all supported by adding bike/ped infrastructure, and violated by increasing motor vehicle capacity, which increases VMT, increases GHG, increases public health hazards, and decreases safety. See excerpts below.

Measure A Expenditure Plan has no restrictions on spending highway funds for on highway project. In fact, it specifically supports doing so. What it says:

- Goals and Objectives:
  - Congestion Reduction. Even in 2004 it was known that adding capacity induces demand and thus results in increased congestion. But if there was any doubt in 2004, by 2015 there was none. Reducing congestion requires a mode shift away from cars. Encouraging more cars by adding capacity only increases congestion. Thus today, if we are to follow through on this goal, we must reject projects that add highway capacity for cars. None of the sub-goals contradict this.
  - Regional Connections: Caltrans as an alternate to driving on 101; Dumbarton Rail Line; Financial Assistance to SamTrans; Financial Assistance for Ferry Service.
  - Enhanced Safety. Adding capacity adds more vehicles to both the highway, connectors, and surface streets, all reducing safety. There is no sub goals for increasing capacity. The sub goals are to add grade separations; add bike and ped infrastructure; improve and maintain local streets.
  - Meet Local Mobility Needs. Sub goals are Para transit; local shuttles to provide options to private cars, provide funding for local road maintenance.
- Plan Summary
  - A. Transit: Caltrain, shuttles; para transit; SamTrans, etc.
  - B. Highways: Congested Corridor Projects; Roadway Projects. Of note: not a word excluding bike/ped projects. If these projects relieve congestion, or are part of a roadway project, they are permitted.
  - C. Local Streets/Transportation: allocated to 20 cities and counties for local transportation, including streets and roads. No exclusion of bike/ped.
  - D. Grade Separations.
  - E. Ped and Bike. Dedicated to off highway pedestrian and bike paths. Class 1 bike paths, and shared use paths. Note: bike paths are not bike lanes (class 2), bike routes (class 3), nor cycle tracks/bike ways. See definitions in Wikipedia and California Highway Design Manual. This category is not for all bike infrastructure, only for off highway bike infrastructure.
  - F. Alternate Congestion Relief
- Project Descriptions:
  - A. Transit. A list of projects.
  - B. Highways.

...
        - f: County-wide Supplemental Roadway Projects. There is no prohibition on bike/ped projects. In particular, bike and ped are supported by the language "congestion reduction" and "changing needs". It reads: "This project provides funding for supplemental roadway projects critical for congestion reduction in addition to those identified in the key congested areas. Supplemental roadway projects may include any type of roadway (local-collector-arterial-state route) anywhere in the County. A partial list of Candidate Projects is included below. Additional Candidate Projects may be submitted to the TA for consideration to account for changing needs".
    - C. Local Streets and Roads.
        - 1. Local Streets/Transportation. This specifically calls out support of roadway bike and ped projects under this bucket. "Annually, 22.5% of the tax revenue will be allocated to Cities and the County to fund the improvement or maintenance of local transportation, including streets and roads. The County and Cities may use funding to: maintain or improve local streets and roads by paving streets and sidewalks and repairing potholes; promote or operate alternative modes of transportation, which may include funding shuttles or sponsoring carpools, **bicycling and pedestrian programs**, and develop and implement traffic operations and safety projects including signal coordination, **bike/pedestrian safety projects**, ..."
    - D. Grade Separation
    - E. Pedestrian and Bicycle. Off highway projects. "Eligible projects include paths, trails and bridges over roads and highways". This clearly is meant to dedicate funds to off highway. There is nothing here limiting any other funds from being spent for on roadway projects.
    - F. Alternate Congestion Relief.
- Governing Board
- Implementation Guidelines

Measure W. Actively support spending highway funds on bike/ped infrastructure, and rejects spending on adding additional car capacity

- Core Principles
    - *Relieve traffic congestion countywide.*

      Cycling and pedestrian infrastructure reduce traffic congestion. Adding car capacity increases congestion. See above.
    - *Invest in a financially-sustainable public transportation ...*

      Cycling and walking couple perfectly as first/last mile components with public transport. Adding car capacity reduces the financial stability of public transport.
    - *Implement environmentally-friendly transportation solutions and projects that incorporate green stormwater infrastructure and plan for climate change;*

      Cycling and pedestrian infrastructure are environmentally friendly

transportation solutions. Adding capacity for cars is not.

- *Promote economic vitality, economic development, and the creation of quality jobs;*

  Adding capacity for cars diminishes economic vitality. Lots of research and studies on this.
- *Maximize opportunities to leverage investment and services from public and private partners;*
- *Enhance safety and public health;*

  Adding cycling and pedestrian infrastructure makes streets safer for all users. Including cars. Adding car capacity diminishes it. Cycling and walking have myriad public health benefits. Adding car capacity diminishes it.
- *Invest in repair and maintenance of existing and future infrastructure;*

  GAO estimates are that cycling causes less than 1/100,000th the damage to roads than an average car. Adding bike and pedestrian infrastructure is an investment in long lived existing and future infrastructure. Adding car capacity is an investment in the degradation of our existing and future infrastructure.
- *Facilitate the reduction of vehicle miles travelled, travel times and greenhouse gas emissions;*

  Bike and ped infrastructure reduces VMT, travel times, and GHG. Adding car capacity increases them all.
- *Incorporate the inclusion and implementation of complete street policies and other strategies that encourage safe accommodation of all people using the roads, regardless of mode of travel;*

  Bike and ped infrastructure is a core part of complete streets. Replacing additional bike/ped infrastructure with additional car capacity makes it difficult/nearly impossible to do so.
- *Incentivize transit, bicycle, pedestrian, carpooling and other shared-ride options over driving alone;*

  Tautalogically adding bike and ped infrastructure does so. Adding car capacity takes away funds and space from adding bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Adding car capacity induces demand for driving alone, and reduces the incentive for carpools and shared-ride options.
- *Maximize potential traffic reduction associated with the creation of housing in high-quality transit corridors.*

  Adding bike/ped supports high quality transit corridors. They are the first/last mile. Adding car capacity takes away space and funds needed for providing high quality transit.

- Section 6. San Mateo County Congestion Relief Plan
  - Countywide Highway Congestion Improvements (22.5 percent)
    ... Eligible candidate projects can include bicycle and pedestrian components or facilities ...

Local Safety, Pothole and Congestion Relief Improvements (12.5%)
... supporting all modes of travel ... bicycling and pedestrian programs; ... bicycle/pedestrian safety projects ...

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements (5%)

The text makes clear this is a minimum, not a maximum investment in bike/ped infrastructure.

Thanks,

giuliano
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Drive a bike a bit more often and cars a bit less. You'll be healthier and happier, and so will our world.

Expenditure Plan Summary:

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:
Goal 1. Reduce Commute Corridor Congestion