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A TOWN HALL MEETING ON OUR BICYCLE SAFETY CRISIS

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Thank you to each of our presenters and panelists for making the time in their busy schedules to share their knowledge and expertise, including: Chris Augenstein, Deputy Director of Planning for Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority; John Brazil, Bike/Pedestrian Program Coordinator, City of San José; Dr. Gloria Duffy, CEO, Commonwealth Club of California; Carl Guardino, CEO, Silicon Valley Leadership Group; Will Kempton, Director, Caltrans; Linda Jackson, Canadian Olympic cyclist and Sporting Director of Team TIBCO elite women’s pro cycling; Ian McAvoy, Chief of Development, Caltrain; Therese McMillan, Deputy Executive Director for Policy, San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission; the Honorable Norman Y. Mineta, Secretary of Transportation (retired); Chuck Reed, Mayor, City of San José; Bijan Sartipi, Regional Director, Caltrans; and Corinne Winter, Executive Director, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition.

MTI also thanks our event cosponsors, including the Commonwealth Club of California, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Caltrain, the City of San José, Friends of the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens, the San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transit Commission, the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

Special recognition must be given to the liaisons from each of the sponsor organizations. These dedicated individuals served as expert advisors to help plan the event and set the agenda. They all worked diligently with MTI staff, including Executive Director Rod Diridon, Communications Director Donna Maurillo, and former MTI Communications Director Leslee Hamilton, in planning and producing this event.

MTI would also like to recognize staff members for their contributions to both the program and to this document, including Student Graphic Artists Israr Qumer and Sahil Rahimi, and Director Maurillo for editorial management. Thanks also to Meg Dastrup for transcription services and to Editorial Associates Frances Cherman and Catherine Frazier for editing this publication.

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FOREWORD

With the increase in gasoline prices and a growing desire to reduce engine emissions, people are increasingly turning to the bicycle as a means of transportation. However, inexperienced riders are not always aware of the dangers and special considerations involved in cycling through urban traffic. In a collision between a cyclist and a motorist, it's the motorist who has the advantage. As a result, cycling injuries and fatalities have been increasing not only in California, but also throughout the United States.

Public safety and transportation agencies, community organizations, elected officials, and citizens-at-large are rightly concerned about this disturbing trend. They want workable ways to address it while continuing to encourage people to leave their cars parked. Consequently, this Town Hall Forum was created to bring the community together, present the facts, and discuss possible solutions. The Mineta Transportation Institute plans to offer additional meetings as a follow-up to this first event.

MTI is grateful for the many people who are concerned enough to address this problem with public discussions and information exchanges. Along with those individuals and organizations recognized in the Acknowledgements, I also thank those individuals who worked as liaisons between MTI and their organizations. The product of their efforts is this most informative forum and ultimately this report.

The Mineta Transportation Institute has three primary functions—research, education, and information transfer. It is in the role of information transfer that we are fulfilling, along with the event cosponsors' efforts to organize and present this forum. We hope that this edited summary will contribute to an understanding of the issues facing bicycling advocates and transportation planners and policy makers, all of whom are working toward the best possible solutions to the future transportation needs of California and the United States.



Rod Diridon, Sr.

Executive Director, Mineta Transportation Institute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is no doubt that due to rising fuel costs, more people have turned to their bicycles as an economical and ecological-friendly mode of transportation. With the increase of bicycle traffic on our roads and streets has been an unfortunate rise in the number of incidents between cyclists and motor vehicles.

A major way to address this problem is to increase awareness in motorists and cyclists, and with that awareness comes action and possible solutions. One of the best ways to increase awareness is to create an open forum in the “town hall” format. This forum, “A Town Hall Meeting on Our Bicycle Safety Crisis,” is the first step in identifying problems and ultimately creating recommendations and solutions.

On June 28, 2008, the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI), along with several state and local transportation policymaking and bicycle advocacy organizations, presented this public forum at San José’s City Council Chambers. Cosponsoring organizations include the California Department of Transportation, Caltrain, City of San José, Friends of the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens, San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

Over the past 10 years nearly 200 Bay Area bicyclists have been killed and more than 25,000 injured, according to the California Highway Patrol (CHP). During that same time, Santa Clara County had the highest number of fatalities and injuries per capita compared to the nine other Bay Area counties.

The city of San José has a fine record of bicyclist safety, but even one death (cyclist versus automobile) per year is unacceptable. San José boasts 150 miles of bike lanes on its city streets and 50 miles of creek trails and other places for cycling aficionados to enjoy.

Welcoming words were given by Dr. Gloria Duffy, CEO, Commonwealth Club of California; Chuck Reed, mayor of San José; the Honorable Norman Y. Mineta, secretary of transportation (ret.); Carl Guardino, president and CEO of Silicon Valley Leadership Group

The keynote address was given by director of Caltrans Will Kempton. Moderator for the keynote speaker’s question and answer session was Carl Guardino.

Panel discussion members included Chris Augenstein, deputy director of planning for Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority; John Brazil, bike/pedestrian program coordinator, City of San José; Linda Jackson, Canadian Olympic cyclist and sporting director of Team TIBCO elite women’s pro cycling; Ian McAvoy, chief of development at Caltrain; Therese McMillan, deputy executive director for policy, San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission; Bijan Sartipi, regional director, Caltrans; and Corinne Winter, executive director,

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. Moderator for the panel discussion was Rod Diridon, executive director of MTI.

Each speaker shared information about proposals for regional and statewide bicycle improvements and policy changes that would favor and encourage bicycling as an alternative to automobiles. The audience, including interested community members and bicycling advocates, asked numerous thought-provoking questions that let policymakers in attendance better understand what the biking public desires for increasing safety and usability between transportation modes.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

DR. GLORIA DUFFY

Good afternoon, everyone. The clock has struck one, and we have a marathon event this afternoon, so I think we'd better get started. Welcome to the Commonwealth Club Silicon Valley's Bicycle Safety Town Hall Meeting. I'm Gloria Duffy, president and CEO of the Commonwealth Club.

Today, we are here to discuss a very important topic—how we can make the roads safer for both cyclists and motorists. Too many bicycle-versus-car accidents are occurring in the Bay Area, and of course, it is an uneven match when the two come into contact, with cyclists being the ones injured or killed at what have become alarming rates, especially in Silicon Valley. According to the California Highway Patrol, 200 cyclists have been killed and 25,000 injured in the nine Bay Area counties over the past decade.



Figure 1 Dr. Gloria Duffy

Two trends are coming together to produce this dangerous result: The increasing distraction of motorists due to cell phones, sleepiness, iPods, kids in the car, and so many other activities; and the increasing number of cyclists on the roads for sport or commuting. As gas prices skyrocket and our concern about climate change deepens, it is wonderful that more people are taking to their bicycles for transportation. But this means that the cyclist–motorist safety problem is likely to get worse. This is why we decided to organize today's forum—not only to bring attention to the issue, but also to spur a quest for solutions.

A major way to address the problem will be to increase education and awareness for both motorists and cyclists, but there are serious questions as to whether awareness will be enough. It's clear that we must also consider changes in public policy, possibly licensing cyclists; perhaps physically separating roadways and bikeways, as some European countries do, and I'm sure there will be other ideas from our keynote speaker and our panelists.

Today's forum is only a start, and we hope it will stimulate not only awareness, but also action on the part of policy makers, activists, and interest groups. What we have planned for today is a presentation by Caltrans director Will Kempton, with questions and answers from the audience moderated by Silicon Valley Leadership Group president and CEO Carl Guardino. Then we will move to a broader panel discussion with representatives of cycling groups, transit agencies, and other experts, which will be moderated by my husband, Mineta Transportation Institute Executive Director Rod Diridon.

A very big thanks to all of our cosponsors today, and there are many of them—the Mineta Transportation Institute, Caltrans, Caltrain, the City of San José, Friends of the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens, the San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transit Commission, the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

A special welcome to any Commonwealth Club members who are here. We're over 18,000 strong in the Bay Area—people committed to ongoing discussion of important local, regional, national, and international issues in ways that set the stage for better public policy. For those of you who are not members, please consider joining today so your voice can be heard on the questions that matter to you and our society. Your membership helps to support the 100 programs we hold in Silicon Valley every year, as well the Club's far-reaching radio, Internet, and television broadcasts. If you join today, you will receive a special discount, which our staff can tell you about at the membership table outside.

Now please join me in welcoming our host for today, San José Mayor Chuck Reed.

MAYOR CHUCK REED

Thank you, Gloria. I'd like to welcome the Commonwealth Club to San José, a city that takes riding a bike seriously. We have 150 miles of bike lanes on our city streets, 50 miles of creek trails and other places for bicycles to ride, and we will double those numbers over the next few years because we want more people riding bicycles. I am looking forward to getting the results of this forum; we are especially interested in the policy recommendations that might come out of it.



Figure 2 San José Mayor Chuck Reed

San José has a great record of public safety in this area. Our serious injuries in auto crashes are half the national average, yet last year, we had 37 deaths by automobile. About half of those were pedestrians and cyclists, and, while that's more than the number of homicides we had, it is still too many deaths and too many injuries. We look forward to working on those issues, and we have staff here that do that, day in and day out. Our department of transportation and our police department work to bring those rates down and to keep our streets safe and keep our cyclists, in particular, safe.

We are anxious for any new ideas and suggestions that people have. So thank you for coming to our city hall. Hope you have a great time here. You've got a bunch of great panelists and lots of experts, and I'm anxiously looking forward to the results. Thanks for coming!

DR. GLORIA DUFFY

Thank you very much, Mayor Reed, and thank you for giving us this beautiful space to meet in today. Now I'd like to introduce a special surprise guest. No stranger to San José, of course. Please welcome the former Secretary of Transportation, former mayor of San José, former Congressional leader representing San José, the Honorable Norman Y. Mineta.

THE HONORABLE NORMAN Y. MINETA

Thank you very much, Dr. Duffy, and thanks to all of the co-sponsoring organizations for today's bicycle safety meeting. I was the proud author of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, ISTEA, in which we introduced, for the first time, federal funding for bicycle paths, rails-to-trails and a number of other programs, at the great insistence of my good friend and colleague, Congressman Jim Oberstar of Minnesota.



Figure 3 The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta

Jim came to me and talked to me about putting an element in the ISTEA legislation as it relates to bicycling. He's an avid bicyclist—probably does 110, 120 miles a weekend—and so I put the provision into that bill. But, as this symposium is all about the safety of bicycling, it is important that we put our attention to whether it's the engineering aspects or the educational aspects of cycling, but today we are really dealing with the safety aspects of bicycling. How do you get the mix of modes into our travel system and yet make sure there is safety? So I want to thank the Commonwealth Club, Dr. Duffy, and Carl Guardino for being today's moderator, and Will Kempton for offering the keynote presentation, and all the participants of today's panel, in bringing this hot focus on bicycle safety. As Dr. Duffy stated, with energy prices increasing and with the increasing awareness of greenhouse gases, we really know there's going to be an increase in bicycling. We've got to make sure that the safety element is part of that major focus as we see this phenomenon occurring.

Thanks to all of you for being here today and participating, and for coming up with ideas to be able to make the whole issue of bicycling and intermodal transportation a safety issue. Thanks a million.

DR. GLORIA DUFFY

Thank you, Secretary Mineta, and we're especially honored to have you with us today. You've done so much as a leader with the foresight to promote multiple modes of transportation in

the U.S., anticipating the day when we would be faced with the type of environmental and price crisis we are facing today. So it's thanks to you that we have a diversity of transportation modes.

Now it is my pleasure to welcome the moderator for our first session, Carl Guardino, who, in addition to being president and CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, is an avid cyclist who promotes cycling for health and environmental purposes personally and through his organization. He is a real trouper to be here today—he's thrown his back out, and he jokes that he's still on two wheels. We're very happy to have you, Carl, and I'm pleased to turn the program over to you.

CARL GUARDINO

What an honor it is to be here with Norman Mineta in the audience. Thank you again, Mr. Cabinet Secretary, for being here.

Mayor Reed, thank you for your "Green Vision" and the tremendous work that you are doing here in San José.

Dr. Duffy, thank you. I join you in welcoming all of the participants in our town hall meeting this afternoon.



Figure 4 Carl Guardino

I had a bit of a mishap five days ago. I'd like to say that I was saving children from a burning building, but you'd probably find out that wasn't the case. But I was putting on my cycling shoes when my chronically bad back went out again, and here I am, five days later.

As CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group and one of 11 members of the California Transportation Commission, I feel it's imperative that we all find constructive ways for cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists to co-exist in safety and in security. When a car and a cyclist collide, the car is often dented, and all too often, the cyclist dies. No one wins in that scenario no matter who was at fault. So we need to move forward in a way that funds more bike and pedestrian facilities but also encourages everyone on two wheels to obey all the laws in the streets.

I think all of us in this room are cyclists, and I know you're as discouraged as I am when we see people without their helmets, running through lights, and not obeying the traffic signals, as well as the discouragement cyclists have when cars are not paying as much attention as they should be when we're on bikes. We can all do better, and that's why we're here today.

During today's program, we're going to have time for your questions, so please write them down on the question cards that you should have been provided. Members of the Commonwealth Club staff and volunteers will be collecting them throughout the program and bringing them to me so that we can ask those questions of Director Kempton.

Please now join me in welcoming our distinguished speaker, Will Kempton, the director of Caltrans, who will offer some insight into what can be done to make the roadways safe for all of us who use them.

Director Kempton's career in transportation began with Caltrans in 1973, where he held management positions in the area of finance and in the director's office and was appointed as assistant director in charge of Legislative and Congressional affairs. Over the course of Will's career, he also served as executive director of the Santa Clara County Traffic Authority Measure A of 1984, delivering three major road improvements on time and on budget. After that, he was the City Parks and Recreation commissioner and assistant city manager for the city of Folsom.

In 2004, Governor Schwarzenegger had the wisdom and good judgment to appoint him as the director of the California Department of Transportation, and he's responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of California's vast state transportation system, including more than 50,000 lane-miles of state highways stretching from Mexico to Oregon and from the Pacific Ocean to Nevada and Arizona.

As director, Will oversees an annual operating budget of more than \$13.8 billion, with 22,000 employees and \$10 billion in transportation improvements currently under construction. He is the man who accomplished the awesome feat of rebuilding and reopening the MacArthur Maze on I-580 in an amazing 26 days last year after a tanker-truck fire caused it to collapse.

Equally impressive, he is an avid athlete and marathon runner with a personal best of three hours and five minutes, which, for those of us who are runners, is lightning fast, and for me today seems even faster. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming a great friend to Silicon Valley, the leader of the California Department of Transportation, Mr. Will Kempton.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER WILL KEMPTON

WILL KEMPTON

Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here, and thank you very much for the invitation to appear before this group. Mayor Reed, what a great facility you have here. Having spent a lot of time in the Silicon Valley and going to a lot of council chambers around the area, I have to tell you this is the premier facility of any that I can recall. In fact, I think this would compare with any local governmental council chamber in the state of California, and, believe me, I have been to a lot of them.

I do want to also thank Secretary Norm Mineta for his words, and I also want to recognize his contribution to transportation. He certainly has been a mentor to me, and a great, great asset to not only Silicon Valley and the State of California but also to this nation, in terms of his service. Norm, it's great to see you here today.

You may wonder why Norm is in town. We were having a meeting today of the Board of Trustees of the Norman Y. Mineta Transportation Institute, a division of San José State University's College of Business, just one of the university transportation centers around this country that receive substantial research dollars. As director of the State Department of Transportation, I can tell you we rely heavily on these university transportation centers for the kind of research that we need to support our program. There is no other center that has done the amount of work for us, and been as contributory, as MTI has.

Of the 15 Transportation Management masters and certificate program students graduating this evening, I think eight of the graduates are Caltrans employees. It gives us a great opportunity to be able to move our employees through a complete training program, including an opportunity to earn a master of science degree in transportation management.

Finally, I want to recognize our district director, Bijan Sartipi, and our chief deputy director in District 4, Dan McElhinney. I appreciate your coming out on a Saturday. It tells folks that we truly are interested in the subject matter. I am honored to be here and hope to take you through a rather informal discussion of some of the issues that I see facing bicycle commuting in this state and how we might move forward in the future.

At Caltrans are trying to change our transportation bureaucracy to a mobility company. We are really trying to be more responsive; I hope you have seen the change. Even those of you that don't have a lot to do with state government, I hope you've seen some better service out on the roadway. I know there are a lot of problems out there. We're scrambling to invest our dollars wisely with the help of Commissioner Guardino as a member of the State Transportation Commission. We're trying to get more money out on the street to effect the changes that are necessary, and I'm sure we're going to talk a little bit about that funding as it relates to bicycle commuting and recreational use. But I just wanted to give you a couple of examples of things that we have under way.

First of all, the month of May was Bicycle Commute Month, and Caltrans in Sacramento and across the state participated in that program. In the Sacramento region we have a contest that's called the "Million Mile Month," and the goal is, through the month of May, to have a million miles ridden by bicycle commuters and recreationalists in the Sacramento area.



Figure 5 Will Kempton (left) at the 2008 Million Mile Month in Sacramento

(photo by Marie Schelling, www.bikeweek.com)

Last year during Bicycle Commute Month, we had about 850,000 miles ridden by our area cyclists. This year, we broke the million mile barrier, which is a very, very significant accomplishment, and I'm very proud that Caltrans was a huge part of that. In fact, as one of the large employers in the region, we were named the number one bicycle commuting organization. We had more miles—a total of 65,000 miles—over our next-nearest competitor, which was the entire Cal EPA agency. They were at 58,000 miles—so we smoked 'em! I am competitive, and I like to win, so that was a wonderful accomplishment.

Then there's the individual Bike-to-Work Day, and although I live in Folsom, California, which is about 26 miles east of Sacramento, that doesn't lend itself, given my level of skill, to make that trip with any regularity on a bicycle because of the time that it takes.

But, of course, on Bike-to-Work Day, and during the Million Mile Month, I did quite a bit more riding. And on Bike-to-Work Day, I joined Senator Tom Torlakson. On that day we rode

from the Ryde Hotel on State Route 160 near the Sacramento River, and a group of us rode all the way into Sacramento on the levee, about 35 miles.

Well, on the day we picked for Bike-to-Work Day, there was a north wind blowing at 35 miles an hour, and guess which direction the Ryde Hotel is from Sacramento? It's south. And you're up on the levee, and there are no screens. You have occasional trees that you ride by, but that wind is going 35 miles an hour, blowing in the face. And, of course, Sen. Torlakson is a very accomplished bicyclist, and he surrounds himself with what I call "bicycle studs." These are people, and maybe many of you in the audience fill this bill, male or female cyclists that get out there on the road, and you cannot hold them down. One is always going a little bit faster than the person next to you, and that person then tries to speed up a little bit faster. And so this casual, 15 mile-per-hour pace that I was guaranteed in order for me to commit to do this little exercise worked its way up to 22 miles an hour in no time. So here I am trying to draft so that I can stay out of the wind, and not doing a very good job of it because I was struggling to keep that pace going for that 35 miles on top of a levee, exposed to a windstorm of monumental proportions, or at least it seemed to me, after I hit about mile 20. But we did make it; we got into town and we had completed the task.

I want to tell you about an effort that we're promoting. It's primarily out of headquarters because this is a Sacramento-based group. There's an organization called Breathe California. Some of you may know it within Sacramento; it's the former local chapter of the Lung Association. They sponsor a three-day bicycle trek every year in September. You go to the foothills, you ride for three days, and you have degrees of difficulty for the various parts of the ride. I always try to do the "moderate." I'm too embarrassed to do the easy course and not good enough to do the difficult course. You ride roughly 105 to 110 miles over the three-day period. We started out with a Caltrans team of seven two years ago, and we rode all over the foothills. That was a very enjoyable experience, and we raised a lot of money for Breathe California. Last year, we upped our team to 22 individuals, and we were able to spend time around the Napa Valley, which I found much more enjoyable because at the end of the day you have something to look forward to.

This year my goal is to get the Caltrans team up to 50. We have our own bicycle jerseys. We have a very great time, good camaraderie, and we're looking forward to a very successful event this year riding around the Napa Valley again.

So if you look at Caltrans' mission of improving mobility across California, bicycle mobility is an integral part of that mission. The key goal that we have—and our number one priority at Caltrans—is safety. The key goal that we have is making bicycle commuting and traveling by the various modes as safe as possible. We want to provide the safest transportation system in the nation for users and workers. And "users" do include bicyclists. So today we want to discuss improving bicycle safety, and I'm hopeful that we'll have a good exchange in the question-and-answer period, as well as when we hear from the panelists.

Let me just start by saying I'm not here to tell you what a great job Caltrans is doing with respect to promoting bicycle commuting and the recreational use of bicycles, because we're not. We haven't in the past. I don't think Caltrans has done a good job over the past decades in promoting alternative forms of transportation. We're getting better at that, and obviously we're getting a lot of help from the marketplace by virtue of the current price of gasoline and what that is doing to literally push people into using more transit, into looking at other ways of getting around, including bicycling and walking.

Governor Schwarzenegger is a huge supporter of biking and walking, from a fitness perspective. It's something that he presses us on. The Safe Routes to School program that is in effect due to the work of then-Congressman Mineta and the current chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the House of Representatives does provide resources for improving and encouraging kids to get on their bikes, as opposed to having Mom or Dad pop 'em in the car and drive 'em a couple of blocks.

When I was young, if you wanted to get to school or you wanted to get around, you just hopped on your bike and you went. It provided a great source of mobility, and we want to bring that back. But there are good reasons why parents take their kids by car. Now we want to create the safe environment that is necessary to allow for walking and biking to school.

You're not going to get a lot of defensiveness from me today. I hope we have a very honest and open exchange. There are a lot of things we need to do better. There is much more that we can do, but I think you will see we are moving in the right direction, and that's what I'd like to share with you.

Let me give you some real-life examples of what happens when you're out on the roadway. Let's take Leah. She's riding her bicycle down a major local arterial. She's obeying the rules. She's on the right side of the roadway. A car passes her, obviously at a greater rate of speed. The car turns on its right turn signal and proceeds to crowd over to the right side of the intersection. Leah is coming up on her bicycle and has to put on the brakes to avoid a collision, while the driver, not even looking to the right, is looking left to watch the oncoming traffic. Ultimately he makes the turn without ever turning or swiveling his head to look to the right. How many of you bicyclists have had that happen as you? Almost unanimous!

Let's take Scott, riding to an event here in San José on a conventional local highway, and he nearly gets clipped by a car riding by. These SUVs are particularly egregious in this because they have side-view mirrors that match the size of a small billboard as they go by you, and it doesn't seem that people judge very effectively how that mirror is sticking out there and how it can come close to hitting the bicycle rider.

And then there's Will, who rides recreationally, and who only goes about fifteen miles an hour. He is on a bike trail, and there is a huge crack in the bike trail where the asphalt has separated. He hits that going fifteen miles an hour. The front wheel stops instantly, and Will goes over the handlebars into, fortunately not the asphalt, but off to the side, where some of the brush

and the dirt breaks his fall, so he is not badly injured. But we've all—if we're using bicycles—experienced those kinds of incidents, and these are real persons.

Leah Brooks is a bicycle advocate in the Sacramento area. Scott is the chief of police of the town of Los Gatos who was riding to an event that I'm going to talk about a little bit later. And then Will is me. Those are the kinds of problems that we have experienced, and all of us have experienced, as bicycle commuters and recreational cyclists.

Many people don't ride. I don't ride a motorcycle because I think it's completely unsafe. Every time I've been on a motorcycle in my life, I've ended up in a wreck. So I just don't ride a motorcycle, and that's what happens with bicycle commuting. A lot of people believe it's not safe, so they miss out on a lot.

First of all, they miss out on a very viable commuting mode. They miss out on exercise, improved health and fitness. They miss out on the opportunity to save substantial dollars, particularly with the price of fuel today. They miss out on some great recreation. The community misses out, too, because we don't experience the reduced traffic congestion, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, so there's a lot of loss to the community as well. So we need to make bicycling part of our overall transportation plan. It's a safe, comfortable system that is needed to encourage new riders.

Now let me talk about the concept of "complete streets." How many of you have heard about that concept? Most of the cycling community will know what it means when we talk about complete streets. They're designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users, including cyclists. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely and comfortably move along and across a complete street. There are complete streets bills in the Congress and in the state Legislature. On May 1, 2008, Sacramento Congresswoman Doris Matsui introduced a bill in the House, "The Safe and Complete Streets Act of 2008"—HR 5951—to make the nation's roadways accessible to alternative modes of transportation. Complete streets are designed and operated to enable access to motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, and riders of public transit.

California's Assembly Bill 1538, the "Complete Streets Act of 2007," will ensure that transportation plans of California communities meet the needs of all users of the roadway, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of public transit, motorists, children, the elderly, and the disabled. To be able to accomplish what we need to do will require, commencing on January 1, 2009, that the legislative body of a city or county, upon any revision of the circulation element of a general plan, will need to modify the circulation element to specify how that element will provide for the routine accommodation of all users of the highway, defined to include motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and users of public transportation.

Now we're a long way off from seeing the benefits of this, but the very positive thing, from my perspective, is that we're beginning to win the battle to focus attention on these issues, and that has been a big part of our problem—raising this issue to a level where it is a public policy

issue that our elected officials are considering, that people are recognizing is a problem and are beginning to say, “We’ve got to take care of that.” And so while we will not necessarily see the immediate benefits of this particular requirement, it is going to be, I think, a very, very significant accomplishment for the state. It will mean that, in the future, we’ll see some changes with respect to the design of how people get around in our local communities.

Caltrans is also developing a department policy. We have a Deputy Directive 64—that’s our bureaucratic language for how we’re developing this—and it’s called “Accommodating Non-Motorized Travel.”

We’ve hijacked some of our senior managers at Caltrans, because we want that to become our complete streets approach to doing business. And it may not incorporate all of the things that most of you would like to see, but it’s going to make sure that we are fundamentally considering bicycle and pedestrian transportation in the design of our facilities.

We have so many traditions and so many policies at Caltrans that are simply in place because that’s the way we’ve always done business, and we can’t continue to act that way across the board. You know, I’ve been pushing cultural change at the Department of Transportation that I mentioned earlier. We want to be more innovative. We want to be more creative. And the fact of the matter is, the situation does change. So if we can take Deputy Directive 64 and make that into our complete streets policy so that when we do our design work, we are taking into account these needs, and that will be a very, very positive thing.

The policy statement says, “The Department fully considers the needs of non-motorized travelers (including pedestrians, bicyclists and persons with disabilities) in all programming, planning, maintenance, construction, operations and project development activities and products.” Now, again, you’re not going to see an immediate result from this, because this is sort of at the front end of project development. But it does mean that our future facilities—and I don’t mean ten years from now; it’s the facilities that are in the development phase right now—will have this consideration as we move forward. This directive is currently being revised to become the department’s complete streets policy.

We also are leading the strategic highway safety plan effort. That is an effort that was included in the current authorizing legislation. Secretary Mineta talked about ISTEA, which was probably the first true, complete authorizing legislation passed for the transportation program. SAFETEA-LU is the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, and then “LU” is Legacy for Users. But the rumor has it that the chairman of the committee’s wife is named Lu, and so we have SAFETEA-LU. I love acronyms in government; they’re just terrific. And there’s a requirement in that authorizing legislation for each state to develop a strategic highway safety plan.

Now there have been some statistics cited. I think Dr. Duffy mentioned 200 deaths of cyclists in the greater Bay Area as a statistic. We kill 43,000 people a year on our highways, cycling accidents, and pedestrian accidents, as well as automobile crashes. That is nearly as many people as were killed in the entire Vietnam War—killed every year. And we just sort of accept

it as a way of doing business. The fact of the matter is we've got to do so much better. In California, we're killing more than 3,000 people a year on our highways, including cyclists, pedestrians, and automobile travelers. So the Strategic Highway Safety Plan is a national effort to try to get folks to focus on various areas of how we can reduce traffic accidents in California. I am proud to say that the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan has a component dedicated to bicycle safety, and the partners in this effort include the California Highway Patrol, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Office of Traffic Safety, and local cities and counties.

The bicycle safety recommended actions from the Strategic Highway Safety Plan include establishing a safety improvement funding program, and I'm going to talk a little bit more about funding later in my discussion here, but that is absolutely critical. We need a stable source of funding, not just for bicycle safety, but we also need a stable source of funding if we're going to expand our existing system and protect it.

We want to increase helmet use. We want to utilize DMV materials to better educate drivers about bicycles, and frankly, I think we need to focus on training, and potentially, as Dr. Duffy indicated, licensing for our bicycle users. If we're going to truly treat bicycle transportation as a recognized method of commuting and people are on state highways, conventional highways, major arterials, we need to look at the prospect of, and answer the question "do these folks need licensing?" What kind of education program can we employ so that we are providing bicycle users with at least a minimum level of training and understanding about the pitfalls of operating a two-wheel vehicle?

We need to provide law enforcement training because, frequently, our law-enforcement officials don't fully understand what it's all about with respect to cycling. In my view, we have the greatest law enforcement officials in the country, here in California, and certainly the California Highway Patrol is the finest state police organization in the United States of America. But their focus is on the car, on the automobile, and on the use of that mode of transportation. So we need to make sure that our law enforcement officials get appropriate training on the laws and operations of bicycles.

We need to improve bicycle accommodations in work zones. This is key. This is such an important effort—bicycle lockers, shower facilities—so people can get to and from work on bicycles, making it easier for people to use this mode of transportation. I'm proud to say that's an effort that we do have under way at Caltrans across the state, where we're making sure that we have those facilities available for folks and that we are, in fact, encouraging our employees to bike to work.

We need to educate the public- and private-sector transportation professionals because many of us don't have a good enough sense about bicycle transportation. That's why I feel blessed that I am able to occasionally get out there and ride a bike, because it makes me much more aware of the needs and issues.

We need to return to bicycle safety inspections at schools. As a kid, I remember you'd bring your bike to school, and somebody from the local police department was there to go over your

bicycle, and you got a little decal that you could put on your bike that indicated it had been inspected, and it was a big deal, you know! You got to talk to the cops and all of that. So we need to return to that, and make sure that, as we build the safer routes to schools, that we are also teaching the young operators about safety.

I mentioned the Safe Routes to School program. We need to provide funding for bicycle safety education across the board. I've already talked about that. And we need to take steps to increase bicyclists' visibility.

Now I look at some of the colors that folks are wearing here today, and, you know, you typically have the bright colors, but the other day, I was driving home late at night down Folsom Boulevard, which is a four-lane, 50-mile-an-hour facility, and I saw this little, dim red light. You all know about the little light things that flash, and it was on the back of the seat of the bicyclist, and as I pulled up, the fellow was wearing black—dark clothes. You couldn't see him, and if he hadn't had that little light flashing there, I would not have noticed, and it could have been a tragic situation. And so you will agree that's very, very important in terms of bicyclist visibility.

We need to increase motorists' awareness and safety around bicyclists, and that's what we're talking about when we say "DMV materials," and we need to make sure that we include as part of the study material for our new, younger drivers, that right-hand-turn issue is a killer.

I'm a runner more than I am a cyclist, and, believe me, when you approach an intersection, and you see a car pulling up to make a right turn, chances are that that driver is not going to look your way. They're going to be watching the traffic coming from the left, and then they're going to pull right out in front of you. They usually get a nice, friendly tap on the trunk as I run by, to advise them that I was there.

We need to improve data about bicycle travel and bicycle crashes. I think if people understood the severity of the situation, they would be much more inclined to pay attention.

There are other Strategic Highway Safety Plan challenge areas that are critical to bicycle safety. Obviously, ensuring that vehicle drivers are competent, improving vehicle driver right-of-way and turning decisions. We need to improve the intersections and interchange safety, and we'll talk about one of those interchanges here in just a moment. We need to reduce speeding and aggressive driving. We need to improve commercial vehicle safety, improve work-zone safety, improve post-crash survivability, and we need to improve safety data collection access and analysis. All of these things are part of our Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Of course, these actions will require partnerships with transportation agencies, law-enforcement agencies, health professionals, emergency-medical services, safety advocates, and, most importantly, the general public.

Since June of 2007, Caltrans has worked with the California Bicycle Coalition to convene a series of bicycle advocacy summit meetings. I don't know if we've actually had one in the Bay Area, or if you've attended, but those summits provide a forum for discussing a broad array of bicycling topics, such as supporting bike commuters with parking, showers, and lockers;

engaging bicyclists in transportation planning and transportation project implementation activities; ensuring that all transportation projects accommodate bikes; and improving access to bike information on Caltrans web sites. To me, partnership is the key. I preach three things to our employees at Caltrans: “Be better partners. Be more efficient. Provide better customer service.” Partnership is absolutely essential to the success of this effort.

On the state highway system, approximately ten percent of total road mileage in California is accessible to bicycles. We may have a discussion about that issue today. However, on local roads, approximately 90 percent of the road mileage has bicycle access. So the majority of bicycling, obviously, happens on local roads.

But having more funding is going to help solve a lot of the issues that we’re facing, and I want to just refer to this newspaper article. As I got up at the hotel this morning, I took out the *San José Mercury News*, one of my favorite papers in California, and I go to the “B” section, and on the front page, just below the fold, is an article saying, “Making it safer to bike: bond money to improve Saratoga intersection.” And so I read the article and looked at the little map, and you see Saratoga-Los Gatos Road, which is State Route 9, a state highway, at Austin Way, an intersection where there have been a number of accidents in the recent past. If I’m not mistaken, I think ten accidents have occurred in the recent past.



Figure 6 Highway 9 (Saratoga-Los Gatos Road) and Austin Way

(view from Quito Road)

So Commissioner Guardino—these guys get appointed to the Transportation Commission, and you can’t keep ’em off your back, I’m telling you, they’re after you for all kinds of money—comes to me and says, “I want to fund a project at this location. It’s a high accident concentration, and we need some money for it.” So we have a conversation. Usually, he’s doing most of the talking, because he and I run together when he comes to the state capitol for the

Transportation Commission Meetings, and he always runs faster than I care to, and so I'm trying to keep up with him, and I can't say too much, so he does most of the talking. But he is asking me about sources of money for a bicycle project, and I give him some advice, and so he goes back and reads one of these Transportation Commission reports, and this is a very thick report, with a lot of pages, a lot of statistics, a lot of data, and he finds that Proposition 116, which was approved by the voters back in 1990, has a balance left of \$460,000 for bicycle transportation, and so he asks me about that, and I say, "Go for it!"

So Carl works with Bijan Sartipi, and they get that money, which requires a 20 percent match—and congratulations to the City of Saratoga, the Town of Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, as well as the County of Santa Clara. All get together, come up with the required 20 percent match, and yesterday, they did a ground-breaking for that bicycle project, which is now going to fix that problem at Austin Way and Saratoga-Los Gatos Road. So just an example of how difficult it is to get money for a small project like that to correct what is a major safety issue. Money is key to what we need to do in bicycle transportation.

The bicycle account provides state funds for city and county projects that improve bicycle safety and convenience, and that was only recently increased from \$3.5 million to \$7.2 million annually. That is a drop in the bucket. That could fund maybe 14 projects of the size that Carl was successful in getting funded here in Santa Clara County. It is a pittance given the need that we have out there.

So we need more money. We need a dedicated funding source, because, obviously, the needs for transportation across all modes are extremely significant, and, while we might be talking about tens or scores of millions of dollars that are needed for bicycle projects around the state, we are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars needed in the transit arena, and maybe even billions of dollars needed in other modes of transportation across the state, so we really have to look to provide a dedicated source of funding.

Now one thing that is key to that, and I have told the bicycle advocates—because I meet with them regularly, on a quarterly basis—that I will support some sort of an increase in funding for the Bicycle Transportation Account if, in fact, we can more efficiently spend what we have.

This is a problem, because we do allocate money, but it's usually such a small amount of money that the local agency has to hoard it until they can get the rest of the dollars from another source to complete that project. And so what happens is those dollars remain unspent. So when the bicycle advocates or I go to the state legislature, to the department of finance, to the state controller, and say, "We need more money for bicycle projects," they look at the records. "Well, you're carrying an unobligated balance here of, you know, \$7 million or \$8 million. This is over a multiple-year period, and you haven't spent that money. How can you say you need more dollars?"

Well, the fact of the matter is we have got to become more efficient at spending what we have, and I have volunteered Caltrans' support to work with the bicycle community to make sure that those dollars that have already been allocated to projects get spent more effectively.

Historically, funding from federal—this is one source, and I’m frankly a little skeptical of this source—but funding from federal, state, regional, and local sources pumps approximately \$100 million per year for statewide bicycle and pedestrian projects. Now I’m going to check that number. That was what was provided me in my speech, and when I read that it seemed a little high to me, and if you’re a regular walker or a bicyclist, I think most of us would agree that you don’t see that kind of investment being made. Now they may have included in that the accommodations that are taken when a local agency does design a street, and puts in a Class 3 bike path or something of that nature. That is one source relative to the funding that is available. But if that is, in fact, a correct number, it is not enough. We are not doing enough, and we need a dedicated source of funding.

Now Caltrans is developing training for recognizing and meeting bike needs on highway projects. We actually have bicycle coordinators in each one of our 12 transportation districts, and a statewide bicycle coordinator. We want them to be active. We want them to be proactive, to be innovative, so that they can actually become your advocates for our program, in our program, and effect the changes that are necessary.

We have a committee that’s working to ensure that traffic signals detect bikes, as required under state legislation, and we also are looking at being able to track bicycle commuting through what we call “intelligent transportation systems.” We’re doing a study that relates to automobiles being able to detect and determine the volume of traffic on our freeways and highways by cell phone.

And the same thing can happen if we use that technology to apply to bicycle users and pedestrians. If you’re carrying a cell phone, and every time I go out on the bike, I take a cell phone because you never know when you’re going to get stranded, having those cell phones there and being able to track bicycle usage is going to be very, very positive.

Finally, since 1992, Caltrans has supported the California Bicycle Advisory Committee, which is the committee advising us on bicycle issues. That is the group that I meet with on a regular basis, and it’s another example of partnership, and it’s absolutely essential that we engage in those partnerships. Represented on the Caltrans committees that work on bicycling and walking issues are several different bicycle coalitions, and Caltrans is proud to be a part of that effort.

Let me finish off by reiterating our mission: we improve mobility across California. And that is for all modes, including bicycles and pedestrians. So we like to say, “We’re here to get you there,” including those of you on bicycles. Let me stop there and hopefully, we can move into the question period.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CARL GUARDINO

Will you join me in thanking Director Will Kempton for his remarks? In addition to being honored by having Secretary Norman Mineta with us today, we're also delighted that another local elected official is here with us today. Ken Yeager, from our County Board of Supervisors, is an avid cyclist. Ken, thank you for joining us.

Director Kempton, thank you for your inspiring remarks, and all the work that you are doing to improve bicycle safety in California. We have more questions than we could ever get to, but we will get to as many as we can. There are numerous questions about the driver's test in the DMV. This card captures the point of several of those questions.

Are there any plans to include a question on the California driver's license exam that tests drivers' knowledge of bicycles' statutes as vehicles, proper sharing of the road, etc., which would then drive inclusion of car-bike safety into the driver's manual?

WILL KEMPTON

The answer is yes, and we are working with George Valverde, the director of the Department of Motor Vehicles, on this very subject. It goes beyond just a question or two on the driver's test. It really is about using the handbook that is provided and actually having appropriate information in the handbook about bicycle safety. Because as we strive to increase the share of the commute and mobility that is attributed to cycling, we need to make sure that we're providing adequate safety and information so that people are prepared. So that discussion is underway, and I'm not getting any resistance, frankly. I think we'll be able to do that in fairly short order.

CARL GUARDINO

Question: How does Caltrans get funding for bicycle projects? How does MTC, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, play into this? And can you summarize the process for project request funding?

WILL KEMPTON

There are a couple of ways that you can get bicycle funding, and, certainly, there is the Bicycle Transportation Account, which is essentially more of a project grant-type program, only \$7.2 million annually. But then bicycle projects and pedestrian projects are also available through what we call the Regional Transportation Improvement Program. Of the money that's available for transportation in California that can be applied to project work, 75 percent of

that is—and I’ll use the term loosely—“controlled” by the regional transportation planning agencies in your area. That includes—it starts with—the Santa Clara County VTA and moves through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and so the regional transportation improvement program that is developed every two years—it’s a five-year rolling program—can, in fact, include project work for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

But the most common way that bicycle and pedestrian improvements are included in transportation projects and funding is through the larger projects, and then assessing the effect of those projects. That’s why this design directive or deputy directive that I’m talking about, which is employing a complete-streets concept in how we do business, is so important, because that means the project work that we do—if we’re coming in and widening a conventional highway as an example—that we take into account the need to have appropriate bicycle lanes and the appropriate clearances in place. That is probably the biggest and the best opportunity to make sure that we’re providing funding for bicycle commuting.

CARL GUARDINO

A number of questions about children on bikes and safety. This one encapsulates them well:

What are the prospects to promote and provide a cycling safety class for children and families? The recent fatality of a 12-year-old girl could have had lack of training as a factor, as she was riding on the sidewalk at the time.

WILL KEMPTON

Well, getting a change in school curricula is a difficult assignment. I know that, because we’re trying to develop a workforce to help with infrastructure development in the future, and we’re working with the superintendent of public instruction, and other local education officials, to try to incorporate in the broad range of curricula around the state requirements that will enable people to either become engineers, or to take up a construction trade, or whatever. So I know some of the difficulties that we would experience in that route, trying to get schools to make formal adjustments in what they teach. But I think law enforcement can really provide a very significant aspect of that, particularly at the elementary school level. I previously mentioned that there used to be the bicycle inspection programs where you can actually have law enforcement officers going to schools, and, as a component of ongoing education, talk to the young people. Talk to them about bicycle safety. Check out their bicycles, make sure that they’re in good operating condition.

CARL GUARDINO

Question: How can we make sure adults on bikes wear helmets? Might that need to provide some funding for low-income workers?”

WILL KEMPTON

Any time you get into that kind of subsidy, it raises a whole range of issues, but I certainly think one of the things that we've talked about at Caltrans would be to have bicycles that would be available for our employees, so that if an employee has to go to a meeting that's ten, 12 blocks away, too far for some people to walk, and they'll usually hop in a state vehicle and drive that distance. So having not only the bicycle helmets available, but having a bicycle that's designated as a state vehicle—we'll put a big "CT" on the fender or something to designate it as a state vehicle—we will encourage folks to get their helmet, hop on that bike and ride to the meeting.

I think that the suggestion would have to be handled at the local level. Frankly, if we used the private sector, if we could get communications going with the large, private sector companies, maybe there's something that we might be able to pilot. From Caltrans' perspective I'd certainly be willing, and we have quite a few facilities around the state, and generally in most areas, there is a major employer, so maybe that's something that we could look at as a pilot effort.

But this business about trying to cut short these 20-minute commutes that people would go on, getting Caltrans employees to ride a bike...the light rail runs right in that direction, but people will end up driving. So if we had bicycles available, hop on the bike, and make that trip by bicycle, and we would provide the helmets.

CARL GUARDINO

Smart!

Why is it possible to rebuild the MacArthur Maze in record time, yet a simple bike path required as part of the 237 freeway conversion has no end in sight more than a decade and a half later?

WILL KEMPTON

To be candid, I don't know the project, and I would have to say that if it's taking that long, something's wrong, either in terms of funding availability or some other, probably environmental, issue. I always like to come out to these kinds of forums, because I always learn new things, and find out where there's another problem that we can try to tackle. So I will look into that.

But the same question could be asked of ongoing, regular transportation projects. How can you do the MacArthur Maze in 26 days, and it takes you two to three years to do another transportation project? The answer is very simple: When you have an emergency, and an emergency proclamation is declared by the governor, and the president declares a disaster that opens us up for emergency funding, you not only have an available source of money, you have

relief from the environmental and permitting process. That doesn't mean you can go out and do anything you want. You've got to be careful in terms of consideration for the environment. But you do not have to go through the very, very lengthy project development process.

If we had had to do MacArthur Maze under traditional means, and doing it as a regular project, that road would still be closed, and we might be getting around, at this point, to actually issuing a contract. It takes a long time under normal process requirements to deliver a project. These projects were done on an emergency basis, and that's why we were able to move so quickly.

CARL GUARDINO

Since that question seemed to resonate with a lot of our audience, we'll save that for our regional panel later, and perhaps folks at the regional level...

WILL KEMPTON

Maybe we talk with some of the folks afterwards; I'll be happy to stay around. I really do what to know about some of the difficulties that are with that project.

CARL GUARDINO

With 10 minutes left, let me move on to our next question. We seem to believe that a line drawn on the pavement and a bike lane sign are going to protect cyclists. What statistics, if any, support that idea? How much safer is a physical separation of cars and cyclists?

WILL KEMPTON

Well, physical separation is absolutely a safer situation, and, depending on the circumstances, or the use or type of the facility, it can be a lot safer. We actually have sections of our interstate highway where bicyclists can operate [with no physical barrier]. I would never use those facilities because there's just too much of an opportunity for somebody who's traveling 65 miles an hour, even if they're observing the speed limit or potentially faster, for being distracted for a moment, with cell phones, and BlackBerrys, and all of the things that we now do while we're driving, it just doesn't add up from my perspective. So, no question, a separated bicycle facility, if we had the resources, would be the way to go because it is a much safer situation.

Just as we make our highways safer by providing wider lanes and wider shoulders, so we can provide for recovery time and response, making sure we have an adequate space for bicycle use is also helpful.

I know this is a problem for cyclists—much of our infrastructure on a highway or a local roadway, is not bicycle-friendly. An example of this is a lot of you have gone over the drainage system, and you get stuck in the grates. That's a real problem. That's happened to me, and I've tipped over in the street as a result of that. So how can we make those kinds of facilities more bicycle-friendly?

Although our complete streets program will provide for this, how can we make sure that we have adequate space between cyclists and cars? I don't know whether this is something that the bicycle community likes very much, but rumble strips, indentions in the pavement between the automobile roadway and the actual bike lane can be helpful. As a car drifts and hits the rumble strip, the driver knows it. We've all driven over them, it makes a noise and the driver can correct. It certainly attracts attention back to the roadway. So that's another safety mechanism possibly there.

CARL GUARDINO

There are numerous questions linking bikes and transit and gas prices. I think a couple of these summed them up well: With gas at \$4.60 a gallon and rising, and transit ridership on BART and Caltrain at all-time highs, how do we ensure our transit systems are more bike-friendly? Today, Caltrain is carrying close to 40,000 daily trips. BART is carrying 365,000 daily trips. When the BART extension to Santa Clara is built, how do we ensure both BART and Caltrain welcome cyclists with more bike lockers and bikes on board?

WILL KEMPTON

I have a couple of thoughts on that. First of all, the very best way is to go before the BART or Caltrain boards and to tell them, as a user and as a commuter, that they need to put these bicycle facilities onboard. It's kind of like the way we've treated our response to the Americans with Disabilities Act. We do try to put forward a token effort to be responsive, and yet there is always so much more that you could do. But I would say, number one, get to the decision-makers. Get to the policy boards on these issues to make sure that they know that there's a need out there, that there's a demand for these kinds of facilities.

I frankly think one of the most effective ways to effect these kinds of changes is to make it a condition of funding. So as these large rail or transit operations get their money, there's the possibility of saying, "Your receipt of this money is conditional on making sure that you're accommodating bicycle commuters as part of your ongoing transit or rail operations." That's probably the most effective way to get somebody's attention. I think most governing boards tend to be responsive to the expression of need and requirements that their users communicate to them.

CARL GUARDINO

More on transit and bikes: We should increase dedicated public-transportation lanes and rail-based public transport, such as VTA light rail. When will there be BART to San José?

WILL KEMPTON

If I could tell you that, I would quit my job, which doesn't pay very much to begin with, and go into the seer business. To answer the last question first, I think BART to San José is going to happen. The support of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, and the support of so many of your elected officials and the public to bring BART to San José. Every time we see poll results for what people in Santa Clara County think about bringing BART to San José, there's overwhelming support to do that.

The project remains on everybody's plate. It remains on the screen, as we say. And we're chipping away at it. We're looking to find a way to fund the traffic congestion relief programs so that we can bring a significant amount of dollars to the fore that have already been committed to this project. So I think eventually that will happen, and I understand that there's talk about maybe raising a few extra dollars locally to help with that. So that is the BART issue.

Again, I think when you look at the other needs that we're talking about, and how we identify funding, how you encourage those agencies to do what they need to do, that communication with the governing boards is vital. I think that tying funding to response to accommodating bicycle commuting more effectively, those are the options that are available to us.

CARL GUARDINO

Question: How can we get our legislators in Sacramento to pass the three-foot berth clearance requirement for passing bicycles that other states and Canada have as law?

WILL KEMPTON

I think it was Assemblymember Pedro Nava [D-Santa Barbara] who carried that legislation, and it didn't get out of committee. You've got to communicate to those legislators. When a bill is introduced, you can get with your bicycle advocates who follow Sacramento. You can find out what the path of the bill is. You can see which committee members are on those committees, and get to them directly. You have such a constituency out there with respect to bicycle commuting. I see it all over the state. You need to organize. You need to become a force, and you need to let these legislators know how important it is to do these things.

We're looking to get a move-over law for our maintenance workers out on the freeways and state highways. That is when you see a state transportation vehicle with its lights flashing,

meaning that we've got workers out there, motor vehicles would have to move over into the other lane. Now that is on the books for law enforcement, but we can't seem to get that through the legislature for a variety of reasons.

Same thing is true with moving over for bicycle commuters. I think that's a very, very appropriate thing to do, and not only that, but it's going to teach people to be watchful of cyclists. They're going to have to pay more attention, because if you don't move over, and that cyclist gets your license number, you may be paying a fine. I think you need to really gear up and advocate for that, because I think that could occur if the members of the legislature get the message.

CARL GUARDINO

We are unfortunately down to the last question for Caltrans Director Kempton, but I think you'll agree with me why those of us on the California Transportation Commission consider him the E.F. Hutton of transportation. When Will Kempton speaks, everyone listens. We appreciate your service to our state, Director Kempton.

WILL KEMPTON

Oh, that's bad, Carl!

CARL GUARDINO

There are so many good questions, but there's a common theme here. There is a public perception that cycling is inherently more dangerous than driving a car. Do you agree with this? And how can this perception or reality be changed?

WILL KEMPTON

The example you used at the beginning of your comments, when there is an accident, it is typically the car that ends up with a dent, and it is the bicyclist that ends up being hurt or killed. Certainly when those collisions occur you would have to say that the chances are that the cyclist is going to end up on the wrong end of the deal. But if you look at statistics, I would say that bicycle commuting is no more dangerous than driving in an automobile. And I think that statistics would support that statement, because we have a lot of problems out there. Overall there are 43,000 deaths annually in this country due to traffic accidents, which includes bicycling, bicycle folks, and pedestrians. No question that operating a motor vehicle, or any vehicle moving at a fairly high rate of speed down a roadway, is not necessarily the safest thing. But I don't think that bicycle commuting inherently is any more dangerous than driving an automobile.

CARL GUARDINO

Our thanks to Director Will Kempton, the head of the California Department of Transportation, and to all of you joining us here in San José and to those of you listening on the radio. This Silicon Valley Town Hall meeting of the Commonwealth Club of California, celebrating over a century of addressing important public policy issues, is adjourned.

PANEL DISCUSSION

ROD DIRIDON

Welcome to our bicycle safety panel discussion. Before we begin, I have a little housekeeping to do.

First, I'd like to mention that Breathe California, which was mentioned earlier by Director Kempton, is very active here in Santa Clara County. They have a multi-distance bicycle marathon, so we beginners can participate as well as the more experienced bicycle athletes. I'm very proud to say that I'm the president of the Breathe California board this year.



Figure 7 Rod Diridon

I notice that Leslee Hamilton is here. Leslee is a San José Parks commissioner, and has done some staff-support work. She was Director of Communications and Special Projects at the Mineta Transportation Institute before the Guadalupe Parks and Gardens Corporation stole her away to become their executive director. Now she's working on creating a central park for the City of San José. Leslee put together the packet that you have that describes the today's program.

The panelists' bios are in your packet and I want to stress that you should read those bios. We have a remarkable group of people that have come together from all over the state to share their experiences. We want to develop a compilation of background studies and ideas which

we hope can be used to solve some problems either through legislative action or administrative-procedure modification.

We'll begin with the regional director for the California Department of Transportation, Bijan Sartipi, who is an "engineer's engineer." He really knows how to do things and he has a very distinct concern for bicycle safety.

BIJAN SARTIPI

Good afternoon, and thank you Rod. It's really a pleasure to have the opportunity to be here on this panel with these distinguished members. I do not have a PowerPoint presentation, but I would like to say a few words before taking questions on the department and the district's activities as they relate to pedestrian safety improvements and access.

To set the stage, the district, as the owner, operates and maintains 6,200 lane-miles of highways and freeways in the nine counties of the Bay Area. Bicycles are allowed on all conventional highways and a few specially designated stretches of freeway shoulders. In District 4, over 775 miles of our facility—greater than 12 percent—is available for biking. About ten percent of our facilities statewide are available to bikes and, in the Bay Area, 12 percent. However, this is not enough.



Handout/The Chronicle

Figure 8 Bijan Sartipi

In Santa Clara County, we have 93 miles of our highways with bike access, which is only 7 percent. In general, the percentage is lower in more urbanized areas than in rural areas. So the

higher state average tends to be due to the fact that the majority of our conventional highways are in non-urban areas.

As Director Kempton stated, Caltrans' mission is to improve bicycle mobility, with its focus being on safety and safe access while providing that mobility. Let me emphasize that we want bicyclists to be safe and secure on every mile of our highways.

There have been numerous accidents and fatalities involving bicycles on state highways. Between 2005 and the end of October 2007, there have been 788 bicycle accidents on state highways, with a total of eight fatalities. Despite the fact that this is a disturbingly large number this volume masks a downward trend in fatal incidents involving bicycles. There were four in 2005, two in 2006, and two for the first ten months of 2007. Despite this downward trend even one fatality is one too many. In Santa Clara County, of the 233 accidents that occurred on state highways for this period, there was one fatality in 2005, and none in 2006 or the first ten months of 2007.

Although I do not bike to work, I do ride my bike on weekends with family and friends and stay on trails and on the streets, never on freeways even where it is allowed. I leave that for the professionals.

In light of this, CTC commissioner Carl Guardino announced a recent funding increase for bicycle improvements on Highway 9 in Santa Clara County.



Figure 9 A bicyclist in downtown San José

When it comes to an accident between a bike and a car, the bike loses. That said, our goal and commitment is to make sure that we work with local cities and counties and utilize our District Bicycle Advisory Committee to fully consider the needs of bicyclists and non-motorized travelers in providing accommodations, from project concept in the planning phase through design, construction, and maintenance. As Directive 64 is being updated, with

additional proposition 1B bond-funded projects, we're delivering a large number of capital improvement projects to the Bay Area.

We all view transportation improvements as an opportunity to improve safety and access and mobility for all users, including bicycles and pedestrians. We work hard to make sure that these accesses are maintained to the fullest extent possible during construction, and one of every five miles of our highways are under construction right now. At times, we provide bicycle improvement as mitigations for our capital projects.

With respect to regional policies, the district participated with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission on the development of their "Routine Accommodations of Pedestrian and Bicyclist Policy." The policy uses the department's Directive 64 as a requirement for local projects that are funded with regional funds. Included in this policy is a commitment by the district to maintain and share with the Bicycle Advisory Committee a listing of ongoing project-initiation documents—those are the scoping documents that are used for projects—on a state highway facility where bicyclists and pedestrians are permitted. To address bicycle needs, as part of Caltrans District 4 program we have a staff member who serves as the focal-point liaison for the internal programs and also to the community, to address bicycle and pedestrian needs in the planning phase of the project development.

As mentioned earlier, we have a district bicycle advisory committee made up of members from various bicycle-advocacy groups, including the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, the Peninsula Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition, and other public agencies and regional agencies such as MTC [Metropolitan Transportation Commission]. This year, we also established a new pedestrian advisory committee as well.

Outside of improving bicycle and pedestrian access to our facility, Caltrans also contributes to the construction of the Bay Trail. To improve access to the bay and construct bicycle facilities as part of the permit requirements, we work with locals on the Safe Route to School program that also has a bicycle element.

We also work with Marin County to utilize their recent funding from SAFETEA-LU to install bicycle racks at a number of our park-and-ride facilities.

Let me conclude by restating the district's commitment to work with local partners and to assure practical, safe, and reliable facilities for all modes of commuting and recreation, much of which goes specifically to bicycles and pedestrian access and safety. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to be on this panel, and I look forward to answering your questions.

ROD DIRIDON

Bijan, thank you very much. I neglected to mention that Jim Helmer, director of the San José Department of Transportation is here, and we do appreciate him spending all of this time with us and helping us arrange the panel. He is a true multi-modal transportation supporter, and a strong supporter of bicycling.

Now, let me introduce Ian McAvoy, chief of development at Caltrain. When we were building the panel, someone said, “Well, why do you want Caltrain?” And we said it’s because Caltrain has gone the extra mile to try to create a bicycle-friendly atmosphere. In fact, I’m very proud to have been the person on the board that made the motion that required that the lead car be dedicated to bicycles when some people thought it was impossible to do. Ian’s made it happen, and we all appreciate him being here.

IAN MCAVOY

Well, thank you very much, and it’s a pleasure to be here.

Before I talk about what Caltrain is and where it is going, I’d like to reflect on Director Kempton’s war story about his 35-mile-an-hour winds. Growing up in the U.K., we used to get a lot of winds, too. But we still made really key decisions about which way we ride. We’d never ride into the wind; we’d ride with the wind, and it was a lot more fun to do that. So in the future, if the wind blows one way, ride the other way. It helps!

It’s a pleasure to be here. If you read the newspapers or you watch the television, you’ll have noticed that Caltrain has been an overwhelming success over the last several years. An example is the introduction of the Baby Bullet service, created by focusing on customers’ needs and also the economy. Lately we’ve seen a significant increase in ridership, which is now close to 40,000 a week. But we’ve had to deal with this increase with little or no new equipment, so we’ve reached a threshold.

At the moment, we currently have about 2,300 bikes that come onto the Caltrain system each weekday. This is a pretty significant portion of our overall ridership. Going back to the early 1990s, we’ve known from day one that the real benefit of public transportation is not just the trip that you take on the train itself, but it’s the true origin-destination trip. We knew then, as we know now, that most people who were riding Caltrain actually didn’t live very close to Caltrain, and, in most cases, didn’t work very close to Caltrain, either. So we embraced the concept of bicycles on the train from the very beginning when other public transportation agencies were very fearful of allowing bicycles on trains because of the many issues raised by their presence.

I think we can say, as far as I understood, that we do have the highest bicycle capacity of any system in this area, maybe the highest capacity of any system west of the Mississippi. Frankly, we’ve been a victim of our own success. We’ve done so well in terms of trying to balance the needs of customers that we’ve found ourselves now in a position where we really have to kind of break through some significant policy barriers, and I’m glad that we’re talking about policies today.

What we did is engage on a strategic plan for bicycles on Caltrain. The majority of the folks we talked to were bicycle advocates. We heard from many people from the community. We heard what they wanted, and it’s no secret that everybody wants more bicycles and trains. All

we heard was, “How do I get my bicycle on the train?” and “How do I stop getting bumped off the train?”

Through the public outreach process, we floated a series of concepts. One of them is a bike-share program, which is not a new concept, but it’s something that we’re very interested in. We’ve spent some time over in Europe and in Asia, taking a look at how other systems deal with bike sharing. We were very intrigued by the system in place in Copenhagen with what they’ve done in terms of access to transportation systems and their bicycle-sharing programs. We’ve also looked at bike subsidies. Obviously, we all know that bikes are very expensive, and we’re looking to see if there are opportunities to get funding or grants to give people the opportunity to have the bicycles that fold up.

We have looked at charging for bicycle access some type of a guaranteed-ride program, which is very complex. We haven’t reached any conclusions yet, but we are looking toward that. One thing that should be here right now, and I think we have the technology, is real-time information for bicyclists. We give real-time information to others, so why not also provide real-time information to bicyclists?

I’m sure there are going to be many questions on Caltrain because we are the lightning rod right now when it comes to a lot of the public policy issues. I want to leave you with a couple of thoughts. We are absolutely focused on executing the vision of access to all on Caltrain; however, we do know that there are some significant hurdles that we have to address.

The first one is clearly how to finding funding. At the end of the day, improvements cost money, and even though we’ve seen that more people are making a choice to move away from their cars onto public transit, we know that the governance of funding is still a significant issue for public transportation, which is something we need to deal with.

The second issue: the connectivity of bicyclists and the system. Dealing with the different needs of the different types of riders that we have, we’re facing a significant problem. We’re seeing reliability issues because of dwell times, and that’s something we need to overcome, because we operate the system now very much on a European- or Asian-type technology, which is we don’t like trains to be late. It’s something that we focus on, keeping the trains on time. When trains fall out of time, you have a cascade effect on the system throughout the peaks.

Finally, we’re trying to create a balanced program for everybody. I know that in the world of advocacy, balance is usually what’s right for the individual who’s trying to make the case for the issue. But we’re trying to hear everybody’s view on this, and hopefully, in the not-too-distant future, we’ll be incorporating the findings of the bicycle-access plan into our more strategic policy vision goals. This comes especially as we move to incorporate into what we call “Caltrain 2025,” which involves the incorporation of high-speed rail and buying new equipment.

I’m sure there will be plenty of questions, but I’ll finish right there. Thank you.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you, Ian. Our next presenter is John Brazil. John is a bicycle and pedestrian program coordinator for the City of San José Department of Transportation.

JOHN BRAZIL

I'm John Brazil, and I am the City of San José's bicycle and pedestrian program coordinator. I wanted to talk about a few things; but first I'll give you an overview for those of you who aren't familiar with the bicycling culture in the South Bay and San Jose. As a city we're fortunate to have sponsored, and continue to sponsor, lots of bicycling activities, such as the Amgen Tour of California. For those of you who haven't heard of it, it's a Tour de France-style multi-day professional bike race that attracts the best racers in the world. We're the only city to have hosted a stage finish in each of the last three years.

We are also one of only four cities in the U.S. to host the Lance Armstrong Foundation's Live Strong event, which includes a bike race and a running race. We have lots of other events for bicycling enthusiasts, such as the handmade bike show. We also have won several awards, including bronze-level National Bicycle-Friendly Community award.

We're looking to improve to a higher level, and we have lots of bike organizations such as the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, from which Corinne Winter, the executive director of that organization, will be talking later, as well as several touring clubs such as the Almaden Cycle Touring Club. We're also one of fewer than a dozen cities in the U.S. to have a velodrome, the Hellyer Velodrome.

Let me briefly talk about some of the bicycle programs we have in San José. We have a Street Smarts public education campaign which has won national awards. It seeks to educate not just bicyclists but pedestrians and motorists on how to share the road and be a little bit safer. There are several cities and government agencies across the country that have adopted this successful program.

We also have a school safety program that reaches nearly 18,000 folks a year, and another that goes to all of our 200 kindergarten-through-ninth-grade schools and provides things like bike rodeos to teach students how to bicycle safely, walk safely, etc.

We also partner with law enforcement. The San José Police Department and other law-enforcement agencies partner with us on Operation Safe Passage, which occurs in the fall when school's back in session, trying to get motorists and bicyclists and pedestrians to pay a little more attention, and watch out for each other.

We offer free adult bike skills classes. They've been successful. People who know how to ride may want to learn a little more about how to ride safely in traffic. And then we have a detailed collision-analysis program that I'll talk more about in a minute.

Now, a summary of some of our facilities: our general plan calls for a network of over 400 miles of bikeways. Those include on-street bike lanes and off-street trails. As part of that, our trail network includes 32 trail corridors. Right now it's partially built, but it will eventually have over a hundred miles. We've completed about 48 percent of that network. For several years we have also had building code requirements that new buildings include bike parking and showers, and we have a program that helps bicyclists navigate around the city with a signage system. Just this summer, we had a ribbon cutting recently for our first crosstown bikeway signage project that has a system of signs to guide people across town on a bike.

We're fortunate to have transportation and transit providers in the area that allow bikes on board. Caltrain is a great success. Valley Transit Authority, who operates our light-rail and buses, allows bikes on board. For those of you that have been to other parts of the country, you may appreciate that not everywhere has it as nice as we do.

And then, there's a bill that passed the state Legislature that will require signals be bike-friendly in the future. If there are new signals built or existing signals modified, they're required to accommodate bikes, so that a bicyclist knows how and can get the signal to turn green for them. Caltrans is developing standards to guide cities like San José on how to do that, so we'll be implementing that soon. We thank Caltrans for that leadership.

As we've built our bikeway network on-street, we've found that we've run out of easy facilities to build, where there's plenty of room to just put a stripe down, and some signs. More often, we're coming across streets where there isn't enough room to add a bike lane without removing on-street parking or travel lanes, and both of those are incredibly hard to do. With the leadership of folks like our director, Jim Helmer, we've started to take a closer look at streets where we can do lane reductions.

Take the example of a street with two travel lanes in each direction that doesn't appear to have enough room for bike lanes. We did an analysis of the existing motor vehicle volumes including the future forecasted volumes where the area is built out to see if we need four lanes in each direction. It turns out we don't always. San Fernando Street in San José is an example where we analyzed this and found, "Hey, we can reduce the number of lanes and still maintain the route for buses, still get the car volume through there, still accommodate pedestrians and add bike lanes!"

So let's take a look at the "after" picture. We added high-visibility crosswalks. We maintained the turn lanes so that cars could still make their way through, and we really had no negative impact on the level of service for cars, and, while there are no standard metrics for bike level of service, clearly this is an improvement for bikes.

We did "before" counts for bikes. There were about 72 bikes in the A.M. peak, which is a two-hour period, 7 A.M. TO 9 A.M. And we've done some "after" counts, but I have to be honest: the "after" counts were on bike-to-work day, so they're not really fair, but the counts were over 200. So it went from about 70 to over 200, but if it wasn't bike-to-work day, I

suspect it would be still over a hundred. So that was really a great success, and it's an example of what can be done.

I want to talk a little bit about measuring safety. There are lots of people with lots of opinions, and no one is necessarily right or wrong, but there are lots of ways to measure safety, and I want to show you some numbers from San José. First of all, it's important to look at trends, not just one static year. That doesn't tell you anything. But as you can see from this slide, actually, we're seeing a slight downward trend in bicycle collisions from 2004 to 2007, and that's heartening. But what we really want to know is what is the collision rate. I mean, if collisions are going down but that's because no one's riding any more, that doesn't really help us, right? So we try and find the rates.

Moving forward, San José is conducting more extensive bike counts so that in the future, we will be able to determine the rates of bicyclists. We're not there yet to really consistently tell you how many more people are biking. We think more are biking, but at any rate, as for collisions, we can see a downward trend.

And what about fatalities? I wouldn't necessarily call it a "trend," because those of you statistics people would ask, "Do we have a sample size large enough to really say that fatalities are on a downward trend?" But at least fatalities are going down. You can see the numbers in the red bars—these are the actual numbers of fatalities. So it's not as bad as some might suggest.

That said, of course any fatality, or any collision, or any injury is one too many, so we certainly aren't resting on our laurels. The programs we talked about earlier to encourage safety and improve skills among bicyclists, motorists, and pedestrians are important programs.

We are seeing an increase in the number of facility miles we have, and that of course encourages more people to ride. So which comes first: the chicken or the egg? Do available facilities create more bicyclists? Or do more bicyclists demand more facilities?

I'd suggest it's not an either/or. It's clearly both that are happening, but you can see, fortunately, our number of bike lane miles is going up, which is very helpful to those of us that ride and want safe places to ride. Keeping in mind that we don't have separate bike facilities to ride, but we can ride on any city street.

I just want to summarize a few points. Sometimes there is a trend to talk about—"Well, if we can just make that intersection safe, we'll be okay." I constantly get the question, "What's the most dangerous intersection in San José?" And I always say I can't answer that because that's not the right way to look at it.

I can tell you that there's no intersection in San José that has more than two or three bike collisions a year, max. Now it just doesn't make logical sense to think about which intersection is the most dangerous. That said, we can make physical improvements. The project on Highway 9 is a great example of improvements that will make things safer, but I'd rather look

at human behaviors and types of facilities that will make the whole environment safer for all of us, so it's people, not just streets and vehicles.

The two key factors, in my view, that we need to be focusing on are speed and inattention, and folks alluded to that earlier. All of us have cell phones. I've actually used mine when I'm riding my bike. Maybe that's not so wise, and we can talk about whether the new law for motorists applies to bicyclists as well, but if we all just slow down a little, particularly when we're driving cars, and if we all pay more attention, no matter what mode we're in, that's going to go a long way. So we have to take some personal responsibility, and cities like San José, and programs like the Bike/Ped Program, have to take responsibility to build more and better facilities for all of us.

Finally, there's training. Someone alluded to it earlier: "You know, well, maybe we should be talking about licensing for bicyclists." Interesting concept. I don't know that it should be mandated, but I really encourage everyone to take a bike skills class because you'll really feel better and be safer. With that, I think I'm running out of time, so I'll wind up and thank you very much.

ROD DIRIDON

John, thank you, and we'll proceed with Therese McMillan, deputy executive director for policy, San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Therese?

THERESE MCMILLAN

Thank you, Rod. I know we're more than halfway through our allotted time, so I'm going to make my comments brief, in large part because a number of the points that were raised earlier are relevant to the larger Bay Area context. So let me just focus particularly on the programs that MTC has engaged in relative to facilitating bike, and—very importantly—bike and pedestrian movement, non-vehicular movement, and in doing that maybe touch on and reinforce some of the important points raised earlier.

As a planning and funding agency, one of the most important things we need is good information, and I believe we have been preparing for at least the last six years, maybe more, a state-of-the-system report every year, which includes safety-related statistics, and tracks all fatal and injury collisions for bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle-to-vehicle collisions that occur. I want to emphasize that the points that John made, the trend lines that were indicative of San José, are what we're also seeing region-wide. This is not to say that any fatality, any injury, is acceptable. However, we have begun to see a flattening region-wide in terms of overall collisions.

Now what's interesting though, and what gives us some pause, we also believe that bicycle collisions are under-represented, and they may in fact be under-represented in lower-income communities for reasons we don't fully understand. That may be an issue that needs some

particular attention, in large part because, for lower-income communities, where car ownership is less, bicycles become a very valuable means for movement, and ones that we have been examining as a viable source for providing mobility for these populations. But in fact what's going on with that is we're not getting good information about what's happening in terms of collisions among those populations and neighborhoods. We need to get a better handle on that.

A pedestrian and bicycle safety tool kit is something that we have worked with our regional bicycle working group to develop. We have put that on our Web site to provide, for anyone who just clicks, examples of state-of-the-practice, in terms of safety policies and programs, something for which I want to give credit to Sean Co. Our staff has worked very hard in pulling that together, and it's been a collaborative effort with a cross-section of bicycle interests throughout the region.

Our regional bicycle working group is a very important advisory group for us. They've done a lot. Particularly, they have helped to advise on the definition of a regional bike network that will be the subject of what I'll talk about next, which is what facility should be the focus for infrastructure development.



Figure 10 Therese McMillan

To reiterate a point that John mentioned, what we do know, time and time again, is that the majority of collisions are not the result of infrastructure shortcomings. They are the result of human behavior. They are the result of speeding, of aggressive driving, of drunk

driving—which, unfortunately, is on the uptick—and in particular for bicycle-related collisions, this right-of-way, turning, decision-making issue. So while it is extremely important that we do try to invest where we can in safer infrastructure, safer infrastructure is not going to alleviate the problems that we see on the road, so there needs to be a combination program of education and of enforcement of laws and regulations that needs to be coupled with infrastructure development.

We will be having our commission take up recommendations for specific investments that are incorporated into our long-range plan. The current staff proposal that's being reviewed by our advisory committees, and will be presented in a couple of weeks to our planning committee, has a number of recommended investments that would benefit bicycles. We're talking about a 25-year long-range plan, so when I say we have some discretionary investment decisions on the order of about \$32 billion—again, put this in the perspective of escalated cost over 25 years—but our regional bicycle interests had asked for roughly a \$2 billion investment program. What we are recommending is \$1 billion, which would fully fund the regional bike plan network except for the links related to our toll bridge facilities. As you know, in some cases our toll bridges are being designed to include a full, grade-separated bike network, the Carquinez Bridge being an example of that, but there are further bridge improvements to be made. On a mile-for-mile basis, those are extremely expensive, as Bijan knows. Given the fact that we do not have enough money for every single need in this region by a long shot, at least we've made a recommendation that the bulk of the regional bike plan network would be funded.

Importantly, and I think this is a part of our education as well, there tends to be a tendency to say, "If I don't have 'bicycle' in my label for this funding-investment category, then it doesn't help me." Instead, what we have been trying to do is think about how investments can be integrated to benefit multiple modes, and our investments in local streets and roads are a clear example of that. Bikes can't really move unless there's a road system, and investing in our local streets and roads, and particularly the smooth-pavement elements of that, is a major need. We're not nearly able to fund everything, but we're recommending \$7 billion of discretionary funds, on top of a significant, hundreds-of-millions investment in what we call "committed funds," which is a major priority.

Three years ago, one of the things that we have adopted is what is known as a routine accommodation policy. One of our other speakers had talked about this; that when MTC discretionary funds are used on local streets and roads, we have developed a checklist to encourage the local jurisdiction to develop a complete streets investment package for it.

As you might imagine, this went through a rather contentious review among participating advisory groups. While we have not made it mandatory, we have required that the jurisdiction review this checklist with a local bicycle and pedestrian and community advisory group at the local level to have the dialogue necessary to say, "If we are doing a major pavement overlay, if it's an opportunity to restripe our road to put in a bike lane, if we are doing something similar in terms of major rehabilitation or alignment, are there safer crosswalks or timed signals that

can be incorporated into this design?” So the \$7 billion in local streets and roads is subject to this routine accommodation policy, so we have the opportunity to see a level of improvements to help with bicycles that would be aligned with that.



Figure 11 Carquinez Bridge bike lane

In addition to that, there are two programs related to smart growth that I think are very important in terms of facilitating bicycles. We are recommending a new program in climate change. Greenhouse gas reduction is one of the major policy initiatives that my commission wants to incorporate into this plan. This is brand-new, but we’ve worked with a cross section of interests—the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC), who’s worked with other organizations. They have recommended and helped to develop a Safe Routes to School, Safe Routes to Transit program that we’re recommending get some significant funding. That program clearly is speaking to safer pedestrian and bike access. This notion of education and enforcement in addition to infrastructure is central to that.

We are recommending doubling our commission’s investment in Transportation for Livable Communities, which focuses on not only transit-oriented development communities that Ian and others would be familiar with, but also the access to those transit facilities through biking and walking. That’s another area where design of a smart mixed-use infill-oriented community can have a lot of benefits for the bicycling community.

I’m sure to get a lot more questions so I’ll wrap it up.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you very much, Therese. Our next speaker is Corinne Winter. She is the executive director of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition and has been referred to as the focal point of activity for the bicycle coalition in this area.

Corinne?

CORINNE WINTER

Thank you. I'm actually just curious if everyone who's a bike coalition member could raise their hand. It's great to see you guys here.

I just wanted to start by showing you a couple facts here that you may or may not have already been aware of. We have about 800 people dying every year as a result of fatalities on their bicycles in the United States, while we have, I think, it's up now to more like 43,000 a year dying from auto crashes in the United States. Interestingly enough, riding a bus or a train is about ten times safer than getting in a passenger car, but we don't hear people saying things like, "Well, I think I'm going to take public transit, 'cause getting in my car just isn't safe enough." So this is just kind of a different way to look at it. There are a lot of different perspectives around safety, as John had mentioned, and there's really a difference between potentially perceived risks and actual risks. And those are decisions we all need to make as individuals.

So, while it's good to keep things in perspective, there is certainly a disparity in safety between cycling in the United States and in several other countries. Here you can see a bunch of European countries listed, and I'd like you to note the Netherlands with about five times fewer fatalities per mile cycled than we have here in the United States. Obviously we could be doing more here, and there are lots of lessons from around the world in terms of both facilities and generating awareness that we can follow.

Note here that the Netherlands also has the highest mode-share of cycling per trip in the countries studied, and I believe, in the world, with 27 percent of trips being taken by bike. Now in the United States, we have only have around one percent of trips—I think it's hovering a little above that now, maybe 1.5 percent of trips—by bicycle. So what we can note for certain here is that there's an inverse relationship in between the number of people that are cycling and the rate of fatalities, both in terms of per trip and per mile. The fatalities fall dramatically as more people start cycling, and multiple studies have shown that.

So, hopefully, as we move forward, there will be more people cycling. There will be more, for certain, more people cycling. We're seeing more people cycling every year due to gas prices, due to environmental concerns. So hopefully we get over a hump in our infrastructure and are able to get into a space where cycling does become quite a bit more safe than it is now.



Figure 12 Corinne Winter

(photo by Metroactive)

So here at the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, we are all about increasing cycling, as many of you in the audience know. We've been seeing huge increases in the number of cyclists. This year, for Bike-to-Work Day in this county, we had twice as many riders as we did last year, and last year, we had about twice as many as the year before. So we'd love to take all the credit, but of course we think probably gas prices and environmental concerns and improvements in infrastructure are also part of it.

One way we do work to promote safe cycling is through our "Share the Road" initiative, which has three main components: we do bicyclist education, motorist awareness outreach, and have a program to do advocacy to enhance cycling and road safety.

So here's some simple advice for bicyclists. I was asked to provide the number one thing, and I would say the number one thing is for people to ride on the right side of the road. I'm sure most of the people in the audience already do this and are frustrated when you are riding down the right side of the road, and there's this bicyclist coming at you in your bike lane or in your shoulder.

In addition, being visible and predictable is obviously important, and as John mentioned, taking a bicycle skills course can teach even the most competent cyclist something new about how to be safe and competent on the road. Of course, as always, for both motorists and cyclists, it's important to understand the laws that pertain to cyclists.

Some advice for motorists is to place safety before convenience. Has anyone noticed that we have a problem in this culture where we're always in a hurry? People get behind the wheel,

myself included, and we just want to go, and we want to get to our destination as soon as possible, and really what we need is a paradigm shift in the way people are thinking about using transportation. It's really not most important for me to get to my destination as fast as possible. It's much more important for me to get to my destination without hurting anybody on my trip. With that said, people need to not drive distracted or inebriated, and we need to wait for adequate room before passing cyclists, and not squeeze by.

With our Share the Road program, we have a whole bunch of goals, but here are just a couple that I wanted to highlight. We really want to see increased signage on all roads, and especially roads that cyclists are on in large numbers. We'd like to see improved urban and transportation system design, and we're working with local cities and counties to try and realize that. We'd also like to see increased penalties for crashes. You and I should realize as motorists, I'm going to be a lot more careful out there if I know I'm going to be harshly penalized if I hurt someone with my vehicle because I am driving a potentially deadly weapon.

We'd also like to do more outreach to law enforcement officers, because they don't always have the correct data in terms of bicyclist rules and regulations and responsibilities, and they don't always enforce them, either. So we'd like to see more enforcement. And more bicycling information in the DMV handbook is, as Director Kempton said, already under way. I'm very pleased to hear about that. More bicyclist education and more outreach to motorists in whatever way we can.

To close, I'd like to impress on you that we can increase cycling, and we can make cycling safer for everyone. The many successful policies and programs in cities around the world have really greatly increased cycling, and there's no reason we can't do that here. Northern Europe has been at the forefront, but there have been isolated areas in the United States, like in Portland and in Davis, where we've seen a lot of success, and we can do that here in Silicon Valley as well.

We do have a unique opportunity at this time with gas prices going through the roof. We have a lot of political and social interest in this. The public really wants to see good transportation alternatives, and bicycling is definitely a great transportation alternative, as many of you know. Thanks.

ROD DIRIDON

That's a very nice summary. Thanks, Corinne, and thanks for your day-to-day advocacy and support of bicycling and safety to all of the people here. We appreciate your involvement.

Chris Augenstein is the deputy director of planning for Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. Chris has the responsibility of trying to coordinate, among many other things, the connectivity of bike lanes between cities. That's a thankless job, I know, Chris, but you're getting there. It's a lot better than it used to be, and good luck on that. Let's hear what the VTA is doing.

CHRIS AUGENSTEIN

Thank you, Rod. Yes, we are making progress—maybe slowly—but surely making progress. In the interest of time, I'll try to keep my remarks brief.

I'd like to share with you our vision—VTA's vision—of bicycles, and the vision for bicycles in Santa Clara County. We envision this as a truly integrated and integral part of our overall multi-modal transportation system, and a system that really is operable 24 hours a day. It can't really function as a true integrated system without being accessible to all levels of rider 24 hours a day and seven days a week. We need to rethink the way we plan and design our streets and our cities.

Streets are the most abundant public space of any space in a city, yet we really seem to only think of them in one context. We need to support everything we do with simply good planning, design and funding. Funding has been a key topic many of us have been discussing here today, and I would even add that the crisis in safety, as it's been termed, is related to what I would say is a crisis in funding. We simply need more money to do the things we want to do in our cities.

Ultimately, our vision is to elevate the bicycle to a truly viable form of transportation for everyone—not just recreational cyclists, not just children, or people who can't afford to buy a car, but, really, anybody. So we have a bicycle rider by choice attracted to the system, and obviously this will take a lot of different people doing a lot of different things, so it really is about a partnership.

I just wanted to touch a little bit on what “interconnection” means. Really, it means a full range of facilities. We need to have an integrated system of not only the bike lanes on the roadways, but also trails, pathways, and all designed to extremely high standards. We should devote the same attention to our bicycle system as we devote to our roads and our transit system.

We think that designing and building is really about safe routes, not just to school and to transit, but safe routes for everybody—whatever trip you need to make, whether it's to the grocery store, to your friend's house, to work, wherever—the trip should be safe. If we develop this network over the course of years, it's going to be good for the environment, obviously because one extremely good way of reducing our vehicle miles traveled, which is a direct proxy for greenhouse gas emissions, is to get people into other modes, and we think bicycling has tremendous potential to do that.

I wanted to share with you some ideas about rethinking street design, and, as I mentioned, streets are the most abundant public space; yet when we think about streets, we really tend to think of them in terms of design for expressway or freeway speeds. What this graph is showing is what we really need to think about in the context of bicycles. We really need to put more attention into designing streets on the local, collector, and arterial level, that have more of an emphasis on land use and more of an emphasis on accommodating other forms of mobility—walking and biking and transit—and they shouldn't necessarily be designed

simply for automobile throughput at the highest speed possible. So rethinking how we design streets, rethinking how we view streets, is an integral part of what we're trying to do at VTA.

This is just a simple diagram to show you what a typical curvilinear network is like, and I wanted to share this with you, because many of us—many of our neighborhoods—are designed like this. You can see that if you live in one of the cul-de-sac areas, and you want to get to the park or get to shopping, not only do you have a circuitous route, but you're often forced, as a bicyclist, to go into potentially high traffic volume, high speed roadways. And so it is just a simple rethinking of how we design these streets, just again, the idea of interconnection. The more routes we can provide, the more interconnected we can make the whole transportation system, the safer things are going to be, but also the more efficient things are going to be.

This is an acronym that our bicycle program manager Michelle DeRobertis came up with to encompass all of the things we need to do, to build bike-friendly communities. We have to have the policies. We have to have the education. We have to have the design. We have to have the systems, laws, and, ultimately, we have to fund these programs.

VTA is the responsible agency for developing the countywide bike plan. We're currently in the final throes of getting the plan update together. It will be going to our board of directors in August. In this plan, not only have we incorporated our vision, but we've incorporated the policy, the design guidelines, and, hopefully, we've identified funding for a number of programs.

One of the things that's included in here that's new from the previous bike plan is we have identified a new set of cross-county bike corridors which will ultimately be incorporated into the regional bike plan, which would therefore make those corridors potentially eligible for regional funding. But we've also identified over 200 cross-barrier connections. These are areas that we have worked collaboratively to identify with the cities and the county government, and Caltrans—things like creek crossings or very onerous intersections to cross, or freeway barriers. We've identified over 200 of these cross-barrier connections that we hope to address with project development over the next several years. And also we've identified hundreds of millions of dollars in bike projects that we want to implement over the 25-year life of the plan.

So, to close, a little bit about what we're doing:

Obviously, we're working to implement our bike plan, and our bicycle-expenditure plan—these are things that are ongoing developments of VTA—and to implement the bicycle expenditure plan, or the BEP. It's really all about funding and working closely with the cities to make sure the projects can be delivered on time and within budget.

We're also working with the cities and Caltrans to incorporate use of our guidelines in their planning activities as well. We also are working with the cities in our development review process. This is something that there's really tremendous opportunity with at a local level: when new development comes in, simply accommodating bicycle and pedestrian projects—or bicycle and pedestrian design elements—as part of that development review process. We then

get the development community to pony up for things that they should be ponying up for, frankly.

We also have a Complete Streets program in our upcoming work program. This is kind of pivoting off other work we've done with our communities on a transportation program, our bicycle technical guidelines, and our pedestrian technical guidelines, all of which are board-adopted guidelines that we're working with the cities to implement. Then, lastly, advocating for more funding, not only from existing sources, but seeking partnerships and identifying new funding sources.

And I'd like to give kudos to the City of San José because they are actually out in front of doing this. They have identified, as part of their North San José development policy, around \$30 million for bike and pedestrian improvements just in the North San José corridor—on North First Street, roughly from 101 to Tasman Drive. So these local fund sources are going to become more and more important as we move into the future, and with that, I will end my remarks. Thank you.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you very much, Chris.

Now, batting cleanup is our superstar in attendance, Linda Jackson, former Olympian from Canada. I guess you're never "former." You're always an Olympian, aren't you? She is the founder of the Team TIBCO Women's Pro Cycling program.

LINDA JACKSON

Thank you for having me here today. This has been really educational for me to find out what's going on in Santa Clara County and in San José, with respect to the advances for cyclists.

I was asked to talk today a little bit about cyclists that flout the laws out there and run red lights and run stop signs. And I was a little bit annoyed when I was asked to talk about that to start with, but then I thought, "No, I'll address it, and then kind of move on."

The bigger issue out there, when I look at everything we've talked about today—its numbers and dollars and improvements and facilities, etc.—there's a huge issue out there with behavior on both the motorists' part and the cyclists' part when it comes to bike safety. If you're out there on the roads as much as I am—you know, 20,000 kilometers a year, year after year—you see a lot of scary, dangerous, fatal, sad things, and I personally know of several people, friends, that have been killed on these roads. So it is an issue.

And it's only going to get worse. As gas prices go up, as more people start commuting for green reasons, or for gas price reasons, it is going to get worse. And so, while it may look like bike safety is really not that much of a concern or is flattening out, I don't think that's going to last, I'm afraid.

Part of the issue is going to be new cyclists on the road that aren't that experienced, and they're not going to understand how to manage their bike. So I was really happy to see the San José Bike Skills flyer. I thought things like that will go a long way toward helping inexperienced cyclists develop the skills they need on the road.

Getting back to flouting the laws, I do think that cyclists have a big sense of entitlement out there on the road, and I think they need to obey the laws. I recently heard of some initiatives that would allow cyclists to kind of go through stop signs or slow and go through lights, and I think that's a horrendous idea. I don't know who came up with it, but I think there are already huge issues between motorists and bicyclists out there, and you introduce something like that, and, boy, are you going to upset the drivers around here! So I don't know if I'm offending anyone here on this panel with that, but I think that's a really bad mistake.

What can we do? I guess what the police officers and everybody are already doing. I do a lot of group rides in the area they are part of the attraction of living in the Bay Area. They've got to continue. They draw a lot of Olympic cyclists and pro athletes to this area. It's a huge asset to the Bay Area. But they need to obey the rules, and I think it's all about education. We've talked a lot about education, but you've got to pinpoint, okay, "How do you educate everybody?"

When you look at the incidents of accidents from 1996 to 2007—accidents where there have been one or more motor vehicles or one or more cyclists—when you look at the at-fault percentages when it's found that a cyclist is at fault, a full 33 percent of those cyclists at fault are under 18 years old. So I was really pleased to hear all the talk and discussion about education at schools, and I think it should go in the DMV handbook. There should be an extensive section in the DMV handbook about what the rules on the road are. I don't really know what the rule is for stop signs. Do you have to put your foot down? Can you just slow and go? You know, how are they going to enforce that? So I think education is going to be a big part of it, and also consequences.

If a cyclist runs a red light, what's the consequence? Do they just get a slap on the wrist? Do they get a fine? Does that go on your driver's license? I think if it went on your driver's license for these violations, maybe cyclists would be a little bit more careful out there, because who wants points and insurance going up? So I think there should be consequences for not obeying the laws, the cycling laws.



Figure 13 Linda Jackson

Back to behavior, I think the big issue here is there are two groups of people. There are motorists that don't ride a bike and really don't know anything about what it's like to ride a bike out there. And there are cyclists that both drive and ride. And I think the latter understand and we give a berth to people when we go by them because we know how dangerous it is. You can swerve or something, and if a car buzzes by you, it's very dangerous. There's the motorist that doesn't ride a bike, and doesn't really want to ride a bike, and those are the people that we have to educate on the rules of the road as far as cyclists are concerned. I would love to see and support the initiative about having to give cyclists a berth when you go around them, because, when you look at the stats, I think in the last about 10 years, of the 19 cycling deaths in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, seven of those people have been hit from behind. So maybe if they knew they had to have a berth, and, you know, that extra three feet when they reach down for their CD or their cigarette or whatever it is they're reaching for, maybe that cyclist wouldn't be killed. So I'd love to see that passed. That's about it.

ROD DIRIDON

Linda, that's very insightful, and passionate too, and that always helps.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS PANEL SESSION

ROD DIRIDON

Now we're going to be taking questions from the audience, and all you have to do is walk down and stand in front of the microphone. We'll take you in the sequence that you arrive at the microphone as you're coming forward, and again, please ask a question; don't make a statement and be an advocate. This is the time to ask a question, and I'll ask one question just to clarify an issue while this gentleman is coming forward, and please, others, come on right down and line up. Remember to say your name and your affiliation.

Therese, the question regarding allowing bicyclists to run stop signs has come up several times, and MTC was apparently the focal point for a possible approval authority in regard to that. Would you clarify that?

THERESE MCMILLAN

Yes, and I need to clarify up front, there was nothing that was ever a proposal to take to our commission on this subject. I think this was badly mischaracterized by the media coverage of this, so let me set the record straight first on what prompted it. Given a lot of the comments that have been said today as to the fact that infrastructure can only do so much—that it's really about "behaviors," and what rules are out there—the question was simply raised, "What are other states or areas doing? Are folks doing something different than California?"

The first interesting thing was very little was different is that Idaho did have this stop-and-roll thing. So all we were doing was researching what it was, and whether there was data to say that they had experienced some different safety issues. So, of course, it was taken up that MTC was out there promoting that this be implemented tomorrow. So, just to say, we did some initial research. What was interesting, a lot of different issues, pro and con, were put out there. There was support from cyclists for it; there was obviously a lot of pushback from other groups that think it's unsafe. So there is no closure at all on this subject, although I would say we've gotten very immediate public feedback from the media coverage on it that. Folks are very concerned about it, and, obviously, there is no way that we would take anything to our commission for even remotely considering it without significant vetting. And MTC, quite frankly, is very unlikely to—we wouldn't be the focal point for it anyway. It clearly would have to be state or local jurisdiction only.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you, Therese. Let's take one more question because Director Kempton has to leave, and he may want to comment on this. These are questions that came up that didn't have time to be answered during the Commonwealth Club portion of the program, and this question is, "With

fuel prices causing a sharp rise in the number of cyclists, is Caltrans shifting funds from roads to cycle amenities to match the shift in ridership?”

WILL KEMPTON

Unfortunately, transportation funding doesn’t exactly work that way. I think the good news is that the fact that the gas prices are going up so much is going to result in a greater market share of the traveling public using bicycles as a mode of transportation, and so that will result in more pressure on those agencies which do make the funding decisions to put work—to put more emphasis—on bicycle facilities. Clearly, it does raise the benefit, raise the image, if you will, of those projects in the grand scheme of things. So, ultimately, it will be a positive, and, again, I think we’ll see bicycle projects getting more of a market share if this price situation continues, and it doesn’t look like it’s going to abate soon.

ROD DIRIDON

Sir, your name and your affiliation?

KEVIN JACKSON

Hi. I’m Kevin Jackson. I’m a Silicon Valley Bike Coalition member, and I’m also on the Sunnyvale Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Commission. I have actually two questions, if that’s okay. First of all, thank you all for hosting this forum that addresses a really important need. I hope a lot of good things come out of it. It’s clear that there’s plenty of room for improvement in all areas. There has been a lot of talk about facilities, changes in the law, and, of course, cyclist education. But more important than all of these combined, yet getting the least attention, is dangerous motorist behavior. Typical drivers, I consider them to be doubly dangerous. Because not only do they not know how to share the road with cyclists, they don’t even realize that they don’t know it, so they’re not motivated to do anything to learn the rules, and, combined with their disproportionate ability to cause harm to others, I think it’s something that calls for far more attention, and yet it gets the least. So my first question is, I would like to ask for your thoughts on how to get more attention for this critical, yet neglected problem?

ROD DIRIDON

Let’s ask both questions, and then we’ll answer them, and then the next person can be staging. Go ahead and ask your second question.

KEVIN JACKSON

Okay. Second question. Well, that was actually my question about the MacArthur Maze repair, and the 237 bike path, and Commissioner Kempton stated that the McArthur maze was a really important emergency, and so there was all the funding. There were all the clearances. Everything got pushed out of the way for that one, which I understand.

Well, anyway, throughout all this, what we've heard is that the improvements for cycling will be done, provided we have the funding, provided that it won't compromise our car capacity—it won't interfere with anything else. So my question is, why is getting where you need to go a “need” if you use a multi-ton vehicle but not if you want to use a more environmentally responsible mode? Thank you.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you. The last is a bit rhetorical, but let's try to address the first question. Who would like to give that a shot? We're not going to get away without answering it. Will?

WILL KEMPTON

Well, I have just one quick statement relative to this focusing on driver behavior. I really think that if we're successful in getting some attention paid to this in the DMV handbook, and maybe even successful in having some questions on the driver's test related to being aware of bicyclists and aware of the rules of the road for cyclists, that, I think, will be a big help. And I am really going to try to push on this, because I could just see a couple of extra pages being added to the DMV handbook which would talk about this issue, and everybody knows that a kid who is going to take the test to get their driver's license is studying that handbook. I wish they'd study their math and their history books as well as they study that handbook to get that driver's license. So, not to say that the problem is all with the kids, but the same is true with adults. If we focus some attention on that through the DMV handbook, and through the testing process, that will be at least some help in bringing attention to driver behavior.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you, Will. I think it's a proper statement. Let me dispose of the latter. Did you want comment, Corinne?

CORINNE WINTER

Yes, please. I definitely agree with you, Director Kempton, that's going to be very helpful, but I also do think that there is a certain segment of the population that will still drive aggressively, and certainly that's a concern to the motoring public as well as the cycling

public. I really think a lot of people take responsibility for their actions, whether on a bike or in a car on their own, because they have that ethical system. And the reason we have laws, of course, is for people who don't do that on their own. I think if we really strengthen the penalties against people who injure any user in the road, including cyclists, that people will take more personal responsibility and will take the issue more seriously, and potentially we'll see a decrease in that type of aggressiveness on the road.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you, Corinne. Next question?

DON MAGDANZ

I'm Don Magdanz from the Marin County Bicycle Coalition. I'm also on the San Rafael BPAC [Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee], and the TAM [Transportation Authority of Marin] BPAC in Marin County. Many government solutions create more problems than they solve. What problems primarily having to do with bicycle safety do you solve by licensing bicyclists? And are you suggesting licensing bicycles, cyclists, or both?

ROD DIRIDON

I'm not sure anybody suggested licensing bicyclists for sure, but that was a concept that might be considered.

DON MAGDANZ

Will did. And also the introductory person did, as well.

WILL KEMPTON

I don't think I suggested that it was *the* way to go. It certainly is a concept that's been discussed, and I just offered that that might be a part of the solution. I think one thing that you would gain, by licensing, and I'm not talking about, you know, a horribly expensive kind of a process, or whatever, but it would be the opportunity to touch a cyclist with respect to communicating safety information, etc., so that would be one plus that I could see coming out of that. I think there are issues, and maybe you're the gentleman who wrote on the question slip—by the way, I looked at all of the questions that were unanswered, just to see what people's concerns are—"How would you deal with children in terms of licensing?" I think that's a good question. Maybe we would look to license only people that are using state highway facilities, as an example, so that we wouldn't be having to deal with folks, primarily kids, who are riding around on local streets. I don't know. It's not something that I am

suggesting or advocating. It's just a thought, a concept to think about, with respect to would it help us communicate safety information more readily? Would it help us look at the safety of equipment, etc.? So, again, just food for thought at this particular point.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you. Next?

CHAD BROWER

Hi. My name is Chad Brower. I'm a local bicycle commuter. My question is mainly directed at our Caltrans director here, and my question is do you consider it safe or fair to have a large, 30-mile-per-hour speed difference between the bike lane and the right-hand road lane, and yet no speed difference whatsoever between the right-hand road lane and the left-hand road lane? Why not reduce the speed limits of the right-hand road lanes? Particularly for local or highways like El Camino Real or Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road.

ROD DIRIDON

I'm not sure Caltrans controls that, but let's see what Bijan has to say.

BIJAN SARTIPI

Well, the speed limit for the entire roadway is actually governed by the 85th Percentile Rule, and, by law, if we don't follow that any accident or incident becomes a liability for the state as a whole, and this is supported by the California Highway Patrol. It is done by traffic studies to identify if there are special circumstances—schools, hospitals, and other uses around the facility—that could be reduced by maybe five miles [per hour], and we have done that in a number of locations. Various speed limits in various lanes—that's not something that I'm aware of that's actually being looked at. So I can't offer anything with respect to that. Differential speed does cause problems on any facility, a state highway or local roads. The differential in speed is actually what causes a lot of the accidents. But we haven't looked at differential speed for different lanes.

ROD DIRIDON

Would any of the other panelists like to comment? I should note that the Mineta Transportation Institute has done several bicycle studies, and this may be a good topic for another one, and thank you for the good idea.

CARRIE HAMILTON

Hello. My name is Carrie Hamilton, and I work with a variety of community-based organizations. My question is about mixed-use facilities and your ideas about that, versus single-use facilities such as trails and safety and utilization issues around bikes versus pedestrians, hikers, baby carriages, equestrians, minibikes, and all those kinds of issues.

ROD DIRIDON

Who would like to answer this question? Thanks, John.

JOHN BRAZIL

That's a great question, and the first facility that comes to mind is the Los Gatos Creek Trail. It's so wildly popular and successful, and one of the consequences is when you have a mixed-use facility with people inline skating, walking their dog with a leash, riding a bike, there are some conflicts. So it's a challenge that we face because of the success of the facility.

Some of the things I know our city-trail program is looking at to address that in the future is to increase the standard width that the city would use when they design new trails, to create more space for multiple users, looking at standards that other cities use—for example, the Twin Cities in Minneapolis. I was on a facility there where they created a very wide trail, and they'd striped one section for bicyclists, and then another section for pedestrians, so kind of separating them within a larger trail. But it's definitely a challenge. I think we want to try to provide for as many different modes as we can: biking, walking, skating, etc., wheelchair users; but I don't think there's a simple, single solution.

ROD DIRIDON

Thanks for your question.

MARK JENSEN

Good afternoon. My name is Mark Jensen. I'm a League of American Bicyclists bicycling instructor. I'm a new instructor. I was primarily prompted to become an instructor so I could teach middle-school kids and clone a bicycle program that Richard Swent, in our audience, has been doing a remarkable job with in Palo Alto. I'm trying to do that in my same neighborhood in Los Gatos. I was talking with Assemblymember Ira Ruskin last Saturday, and I just realized that one of the problems we have is there is no funding for that kind of safety training. And his eyes lit up when I mentioned it when we were talking because it's kind of a "mom-and-apple-pie" kind of issue. So my question to the panel members is: if we were going to look for some kind of state funding for, say, middle-school bicycle safety instruction, what

kind of pots would we look to try and get that money out of? How would we go about kind of structuring to get some money to pay for more instructors—to clone Richard again and also provide for some helmets?

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you. Comments, folks?

THERESE McMILLAN

I can. Well, the state transportation budget is in somewhat of a crisis and a wreck right now, but there's a very large opportunity coming up at the federal level. The State of California actually gets a significant amount of money from the federal government, and Congress will be taking up—in fact, they have to because the current authorization—essentially current laws and regulations and funding levels that expire as of this fiscal year 2008–2009. We need a new federal authorization, and my boss was actually part of a national commission looking at a significantly restructured program that, among things, focuses on flexibility, particularly for metropolitan areas, and community-oriented options for investment, and the like. I say that only because if they do not work on the margins, but instead really think about working on a clean slate and completely restructuring this federal program, this is an opportunity for bicycle and pedestrian and community transportation-oriented programs to get a significant leg up. They've made some progress over the last, say, 30 years, in terms of flexibility of funding, but there is more that could be done, and this is the time to do that. And, again, if that happens at the national level, California, by these formulas, would get a significant amount of that money.

ROD DIRIDON

Bijan?

BIJAN SARTIPI

No, I can't identify any funding source specific to that, and, as Therese mentioned with respect to transportation, we are having a significant shortfall in our transportation funding just to keep our infrastructure together. It goes without saying that right now the amount of monies that come to the department for preservation of the system we already have only covers about 60 percent of our needs. Good suggestion, but I don't have any funding source I could identify that could accommodate that. And maybe Therese's point—that the national level would be someplace to keep that discussion.

THERESE MCMILLAN

Just to add real quick: The national level is the greater longer-term solution. But in the short run, you might want to look at Safe Routes to School funding. Caltrans has a request for proposals that's due in a few weeks, so it's probably a little bit late to make it into that one, but all of the Safe Routes to School funding streams require you to partner with a city, and so you can talk to me later about that if you're more interested. We have actually talked with the City of Los Gatos in the past about putting a proposal together.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you. It seems like a good idea.

RICK AUSTIN

Good afternoon. My name is Rick Austin, and I'm a private bicycling and transportation activist. I've conservatively calculated I've done about 10,000 to 15,000 commute miles since I've lived in the Bay Area, about 18 years.

And I have two questions, and then I could go on forever, because this is a very challenging issue for a lot of people. I'm somewhat going to reiterate the first gentleman's question, in that I really like a lot of what I've heard here today, but why do we continue to speak of bicycles as a second-class modality at the cost of motor vehicles? Also, why is removing things like on-street parking lanes of traffic not a viable option?

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you for your two very well-presented questions. We lose the room at four, so we need to keep moving. Let's see if we can get some answers to those two questions.

THERESE MCMILLAN

I would say there is a changing tide with respect to the last point you made about removing parking. We use a term, transit-oriented development, and these focused-growth communities are being redesigned to better accommodate access through walking and biking and transit, as opposed to driving your car. It is a difficult subject because we have a baseline where a lot of our neighborhoods have been designed without sidewalks and oriented toward cars from the very beginning. We could spend a whole lot of our time looking back and saying, "That's a horrible thing."

Moving forward, though, what we've been working on as a regional agency is really thinking about working with cities and counties to say, "If you were to commit to your new development going into infill, and redesign new communities around transit with this notion

of denser developments and mixed-use so that you don't have a mall five or ten miles away that's the only place where you can get your groceries and other services, but, instead, have something literally in your neighborhood, then you design your streetscape to accommodate that kind of access that doesn't have to be car-oriented. So I, personally, think there's a shift going that way, but it's something that, again, we're trying to link our funding to those areas that would support that.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you. Bijan and Chris.

BIJAN SARTIPI

Building on that, but not repeating what Therese was talking about, as an example there's actually an ongoing study of the El Camino Real going through a dozen cities. We are looking at the "grand boulevard." A lot of decisions are at the local level. When you talk about taking the street parking, or in this case, on a state highway, the locals make those decisions, and the businesses become involved in that decision, because that is who it is serving. We are looking, with SamTrans and all of the cities along El Camino Real, at a grand-boulevard discussion that actually talks about how we can reduce the lane width, how we can provide additional room for bicycles, maybe even widening the sidewalk, because El Camino is an old street that doesn't have a lot of those amenities. It is not a point of destination right now. It is getting people from way up north to way down south, which is how it has been designed; but the cities are thinking, and we are discussing, a change in that entire corridor, as an example.

RICK AUSTIN

I'm sorry. I asked the question poorly, and I will conclude my remarks, but, again, we're all speaking of bicycles as an afterthought, which I think is the wrong way to go. It's a paradigm shift, culturally and philosophically. We always talk about, "How can we add bikes to cars?" We need to think about, "How can bikes have an equal presence?" Thank you.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you, and certainly got that from your first question, and it would be nice, but it's a process that takes time. Chris?

CHRIS AUGENSTEIN

Just to follow on to your remark, in my comments I did want to try to paint the picture of VTA's vision for bikes in Santa Clara County, and we are trying to do the very thing that you're

asking about. We are trying to elevate bicycles to be a concept that is truly a standalone, independent mode of travel that's integrated with everything else we're doing. So VTA shares that vision of bicycles being a truly viable mode of transportation that is elevated up to the level of our roadway and our transit system.

You know this is going to be something—you all know here that we're not there yet. It's a long-term vision to do this. But if we incrementally work at this year by year by year, you know, my kids, when they're in their early 20s or in their teen years, they'll be enjoying the fruits of that labor. So as VTA we are embracing that concept. We were, I think, the only CMA to write a letter of support for MTC's routine accommodations policy, and we're already implementing the review of bicycle facilities on all of our capital projects—not only our transit projects but also our highway projects. So VTA is already doing that.

ROD DIRIDON

Linda, you're an international cyclist and have seen the priority of bicycles in other countries. Is there any sense of—we know that they're a higher priority in the Netherlands and other places—any sense of how some of those concepts might be adopted here?

LINDA JACKSON

That's a tough one, but there's no question that they are a higher priority overseas, and it's not just the pathways that Holland has. It's the motorists' attitude toward the cyclists, so I'll leave it to experts like Corinne and everybody else on how you do it here, but there's no question that it's worked over there, and it's worked well, and it's a whole shift in attitude as well.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you. John?

JOHN BRAZIL

So we went from the state level to the regional level, and we're getting down to the local level, and the person's question was about how do you make it happen, culturally shifting? Well, clearly, it takes a while, and you can't do it overnight, and if you bear with me for some techno-speak, I'll give you an example of how San José is starting to take these steps.

Traditionally, when a private development is proposed, for example, a high-tech company wants to build a million square feet, they have to do CEQA analysis—California Environmental Quality Analysis—to determine the impact. And they tell the city, “We want to build a high-rise with a million square feet. Here are the impacts to the water, to the environment, to the air. And to the transportation.”

Historically, the way the transportation impacts are analyzed has always been, “How many cars can you fit through the intersection?” Period. End of story. How many cars can you fit through the intersection? The building is going to add a thousand trips? Okay, you need to give the city \$100,000 so they can make that intersection bigger, to fit more cars through the intersection. No mention of bikes or peds.

What San José has done is identify certain locations where it feels it’s more important to have a balanced transportation system, and said, “Okay, in these parts of the city, when that developer has to analyze the impacts of the project, they don’t have to look just at the impact of cars; they have to look at the impact to transportation, to pedestrians, and to bicyclists.” And it goes even further to say that, “In certain specific areas, there are times when we will not make cars the number-one priority but make transit and walking and biking the higher priority.”

And that developer will have to fund improvements to accommodate bikes and walkers and transportation, not just cars. So it’s starting to happen, but it is a really glacial shift in the way of doing things. It takes a while.

ROD DIRIDON

Any modification of behaviors is iterative, and we’re part of that iterative process. We’ve been notified that we have a little less than ten minutes, so let’s try to keep our answers short and questions short.

NAME INAUDIBLE

Hi. My name is (inaudible). I am a local cyclist, and I think it’s great that all the local cities are putting in these bike lanes, and so on, but I’ve found that a lot of them are not very well-designed, and not very safe. For example, there’s a bike lane on the street, and it just doesn’t take you through the intersection; it ends before the intersection, or just dumps you into an off-ramp from a highway, and you have to merge through all the cars yourself. So my question is, do there exist design standards for bike lanes like there are for roads, to ensure safety? And is anyone working on this?

ROD DIRIDON

Can John and Chris address this briefly?

JOHN BRAZIL

I can address it really briefly. Yes, there are standards. First of all, let me say I agree with you—I agree that there are lots of bike facilities that aren’t built as well as they could be.

There are standards, and part of the problem is, historically some folks weren't aware of the standards or didn't follow them as well as they should. That's getting a lot better. We're working with Caltrans, actually, to identify opportunities, like at freeway interchanges—which is the biggest challenge for bicyclists—to improve the striping. California recently updated their standards a couple of years ago, so they've gotten better. We're getting more awareness of them and trying to follow them, but there's a lot of old stuff out there that needs to be improved.

CHRIS AUGENSTEIN

Actually, VTA has published bicycle technical design guidelines, and it just recently went through the board. Our update was just updated a couple months ago, and there are lots of plan diagrams and recommendations about how to design freeway interchanges, intersections, to address the concerns that you're raising here. We're also actively working with Caltrans, both on their advisory committee and just at the staff level, to get those incorporated into sort of state highway street design standards, as well. So VTA does have published design guidelines. We can get you a copy of that, if you like, to see what that is. And we're also working with all the cities to try to implement these at the local level, with more to come.

BIJAN SARTIPI

We do have design standards, as was said, for the state highways. We also are looking at the various bike coalitions and other groups to help us in our committees at specific locations where these standards are not working, because one design doesn't fit all. We have to do something different, and those are the best help we can get, to make sure that if there are problems at the specific locations that we can actively address it.

ROD DIRIDON

Thank you.

RICHARD SWENT

Hi, my name is Richard Swent. I'm chair of the Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee and chair of the VTA Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and I am an instructor who does a lot of youth skills education. But my question right now is for Mr. Sartipi, and it has to do with the speed limit issue in the 85th percentile.

The engineering and traffic surveys that determine that 85th percentile speed limit don't measure bicyclists. They don't count bicyclists. They don't measure the speed of bicyclists. They only count the speed of cars. So we have Sand Hill Road in Menlo Park, just west of Interstate 280. The speed limit was 55 miles an hour. There's a bike lane there used by

hundreds of bicyclists a day going 10 or 15 miles an hour uphill, the most they could do. They did the engineering traffic survey. Those bicyclists weren't counted. They lowered the speed limit from 55 to 50 in the interest of bicycle safety, but if—here's the question—if bicyclists are going to be considered legitimate, equal users of the road, is there a possibility that they could be fully integrated into the engineering and traffic surveys so they would be counted, and their speeds measured and included when setting speed limits?

ROD DIRIDON

Good question.

BIJAN SARTIPI

I didn't think about that, so all I can say is that's a good question I can take back and check with our Highway Patrol, and also our traffic engineers, to see what, really, does it take, from our perspective, to address that? But very good point that you're bringing up.

ROD DIRIDON

Mr. Swent, if you could leave your contact information, I'm sure that Bijan would like to get the results of his inquiries to you. Yes, ma'am.

NAME INAUDIBLE

Hello, my name is (inaudible). I am a local bicyclist, and I am from the Netherlands, so I'm happy to hear there are also less sinful things to do in the Netherlands. I have a very hands-on question about specifically separating the bike lane from the roads. I know the space is limited, but coming from the Netherlands, I kind of know what works, and it can be as simple as raising orange cones instead of striping orange cones. So I was just wondering, with the future plans, how realistic is it to implement that? Because it's very safe and gives the bicyclists a very safe feeling.

JOHN BRAZIL

Well, I think you raised the question of the hour for bike planners. I see one or two bike planners in the audience that do what I do, and we're always talking about European countries that have higher mode shares—you know, 30 and 40 percent, and so I think we can learn something from what is done in those countries.

Part of the challenge is what's been talked about in previous questions, which is—let's be realistic, or let's be honest: in the States, we've built out our roads for cars, cars, cars, cars, until we don't have any more room, and so it's going to take kind of a commitment at a high level to

decide, “Too much of that; we’re going to take away a car lane and create a two-way cycle path on the street.” And I think, conceptually, it’s the future. But somebody’s going to have to take a big step to say, “We’re going to have to take a car lane away because there just isn’t room.”

ROD DIRIDON

May I say something about that, please? You can’t imagine the amount of courage that it’s taken on the part of John, and especially his boss, Jim Helmer, to step up and say they’re going to do that. The amount of backlash that is inherent in taking away a lane of traffic is remarkable, and you ought to give him a lot of support and a pat on the back for standing up and saying, “This is something that we will do,” and actually implementing it in a couple of places on a trial basis, but it could expand out.

JOHN BRAZIL

I’m not a politician but let me just point out that I didn’t say we’re going to do it, but we want to, in the future, look into it. My boss is here, and he knows how hard it is, and we can’t do it immediately, but that’s what we have to start moving toward.

ROD DIRIDON

Good for you. Thank you for offering. This will be our last question.

LAUREL NEIL

My name is Laurel Neil, and I grew up in the Bay Area, and used to do 5,000 to 10,000 miles a year of cycling in my youth. One of the things I wanted to ask is, they have these cute little stickers on the back of the Caltrans cars that say, “Share the road.” And I think if they were available to the public, and maybe one out of ten, one out of twenty cars had them, it would really say a lot. Because I like to ride a bicycle, but, hey, reality check? I’m stuck driving mom’s taxi a lot of the time, and if you saw more presence of these on cars, it would say, “Hey, I care about bikes.” It would make a difference, and it would socially change things. So I don’t know if they could be made available.

ROD DIRIDON

That’s the first question. It will go to Caltrans to start with, and others might respond, too, and then we’ll take one more question from you, and then we really do have to adjourn.

BIJAN SARTIPI

We can take a look at that. That's all I can say.

I know the one that we put on our vehicles very prominently is "Give 'em a brake," and "Slow for the cone zone." The "Share the Road"—I need to look at and see how we're putting them out and where we're marketing them, and if they are part of that marketing effort, also.

ROD DIRIDON

Our Olympian has something to add.

LINDA JACKSON

Just a couple of comments on the "Share the Road" thought. It's actually a thought I had yesterday. We need more of those "Share the Road" signs on all the heavily traveled bike paths and the roads; "Share the Road" on top and "It's the Law" underneath. Like the "Buckle Up. It's the Law" signs. I thought you might like that.

ROD DIRIDON

It's a good referral to Caltrans for consideration, and we'll see how that works out.

Last question.

LAUREL NEIL

I am also here today because I lost a neighbor. We're all neighbors in our small county. It's a small-town area, and one intersection last year has claimed two lives. One of them was a very nice guy, a teacher, he was a doctorate, and before that he was a trained police officer. The day he was killed was the day that the juniors and the seniors were registering for classes, so you can't tell me he wasn't setting a good example and being safe. But within a year, the same thing: big truck, didn't even look, didn't see the cyclist. Killed another guy, and it isn't being solved, and I'd like to see if there's some way they can change the laws, that the commercial license is ripped away for 30 days, whether they're at fault or not. This would say, "You're going to be punished if you don't look." And it really is necessary. And is there a way we can go...that that could be done?

ROD DIRIDON

That's a proposal rather than a question.

And it's referred to the whole panel. If someone would like to respond, you're welcome to, but it will be included in the transcript of the report as a proposal. Is there a comment? Okay, let's...we are—I'm sorry.

LAUREL NEIL

I have two more things, if that would be allowed to say.

ROD DIRIDON

You know, we really are over time, and we're not going to be able to do it. I apologize, but... Could you give it to us in writing, and we'll include it in the report?

LAUREL NEIL

One of them, I think, is direct. It's about the four-way stop sign and bikes running through it.

ROD DIRIDON

It's not a matter of whether it's a good idea; it's a matter of us having to leave the room. I'm sorry. We were supposed to be out at four o'clock, and we're a little over four now.

I apologize, but if you would like to give us your thoughts, we'll put it in the report.

Thank you very much for the panel, for being here, and for all of you for joining us today. The Mineta Transportation Institute will publish the proceedings in a summary form. They'll be on our Web page, which is <http://transweb.sjsu.edu>, and it will go on to the state and federal legislature and the various appropriate committees. Thanks again for being with us, and we'll see you at the next one.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BART	Bay Area Rapid Transit
BEP	Bicycle expenditure plan
BPAC	Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Analysis
CMA	Congestion Management Agency
DMV	Department of Motor Vehicles
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
MTC	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
MTI	Mineta Transportation Institute
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act-Legacy for Users
TALC	Transportation and Land Use Coalition
TAM	Transportation Authority of Marin
TIBCO	The Information Bus Company
VTA	Valley Transit Authority

