

# Transportation And Land Use Coalition (TALC) REGIONAL MEETING Minutes

Wednesday, November 16, 2005

## 1) Announcements

- TALC is administering the **Safe Routes to Transit** program included in the bridge toll. The Advisory Committee forwarded to MTC a finished list of 9 recommended projects. For more info, see [http://www.transcoalition.org/c/bikeped/bikeped\\_saferoutes.html](http://www.transcoalition.org/c/bikeped/bikeped_saferoutes.html). The recommended list of projects will be posted there soon.
- Stuart is speaking at a **“Housing and the Bay” symposium** at UC Berkeley, Friday November 18, 2-4 pm.
- The **California Senate Infrastructure Committee** is meeting 12/7 at MTC’s Metro Center about the proposed Infrastructure Bond (\$5, 10, 50 billion?).
- TALC is coordinating the marketing for **"All Nighter"**, the bridge toll-funded bus service to connect BART stations during night when BART trains don't run. Service will start in early 2006. We'll be looking for some volunteers to help with marketing. To volunteer, contact Seth Schneider at [seth\[at\]transcoalition.org](mailto:seth[at]transcoalition.org).

## 2) Campaign update on New Transportation Funding

**Stuart Cohen**, TALC's Executive Director, gave an update on results from TALC's Transportation Funding Working Group, which over the past six months has been conducting research and meeting to develop recommendations for new transportation revenue sources. The group has been focusing on how to secure funding for underfunded transportation needs such as transit operations and pedestrian/bicycle safety.

The group has identified three best candidate funding strategies:

- Gas user fee : a “fee” only needs 50% majority, needs state enabling legislation (currently legislation only enables MTC to do a “tax” right now), and funds must be dedicated to needs of people who pay the fee, so application is limited.
- Regional Vehicle registration fee: this would go to a regional vote.
- Gas tax spillover: the detailed explanation of this was passed out at the meeting and is available from TALC (see end of this agenda item for contact info). The short story is that when gas prices rise, the state gets some extra funding that is supposed to be earmarked for transit, half to transit operations. However, the Governor and Legislature can take that funding and use it towards the state's general fund, instead. Last year TALC and others campaigned for the funds to be used for transit, but we lost. This year TALC and others will campaign along with transit operators.

Next steps:

- Stuart asked for feedback on a survey handed out at the meeting (contact Stuart for a copy).
- Participate in the Transportation Funding Working Group: for details, see [http://www.transcoalition.org/c/sus\\_funding/funding.html](http://www.transcoalition.org/c/sus_funding/funding.html)
- The Working Group's next conference call is Monday, December 5.

## 3) Health and Smart Growth: Making the Connections

We had an exciting evening with two dynamic speakers who are at the cutting edge of the movement to connect public health to transportation and land use. The following includes brief notes on each of their talks, links to their PowerPoint presentations, and notes on the ensuing discussion.

### Dr. Richard Jackson, UC Berkeley School of Public Health

The first speaker was **Dr. Richard Jackson**, MD, MPH, former California State Health Officer, currently Professor at UC Berkeley School of Public Health, and long-time director of the CDC's Center for Environmental Health. His talk was titled "Good Jobs, Good Food, Safe Homes, Safe Neighborhoods, Short Commutes and Real Vitality... the challenges are huge, smart transportation is critical."

Dr. Jackson started off by saying that the 21st centuries epidemics -- such as obesity (and linked problems of heart disease and diabetes close parentheses, inactivity, depression and other mental disorders, and stress -- are "see endemics" that are linked to our land use and transportation decisions. As we treat these illnesses with more costly medications, these problems are driving the huge rise in health care costs. This focus on dedicating the way our problems is wrong, Dr. Jackson argued. Instead we should focus on changing our lifestyles and the environment we live in. He addressed several topics:

- Obesity: startling maps show how Americans weigh more and are more likely to have diabetes. We've gained 10 lbs in 10 years! The impacts extend to increases in jet fuel use (\$1 billion more per year than a decade ago).
- Physical activity: distressing statistics on how much less we walk and bicycle, and the impacts of these changes; "no drug we use works as well as exercise."
- The "super sizing" of so many aspects of American life: burgers, sodas, homes, vehicles, land use, roads and highways, and miles of driving: "The things we are doing to destroy the planet are the same things that destroy our bodies."
- Automobile fatality rates, the number one cause of death for Americans aged 4 to 34 (compact cities have lower rates than sprawling areas).
- Asthma, including a real-world example from the Atlanta Olympics, when less driving meant that our air quality and fewer asthma attacks.
- Links between land use patterns and physical activity, obesity, and hypertension
- The comparison to tobacco smoking: tobacco has been tamed by a combination of "taxes, regulation, and demonizing the industry." We can learn from that approach.

For more resources, see:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces> - the CDC's Healthy Places webpage
- [http://www.transcoalition.org/cal/Richard\\_Jackson\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.transcoalition.org/cal/Richard_Jackson_presentation.pdf) – PDF of Dr. Jackson's presentation

### **Dr. Rajiv Bhatia, San Francisco Department of Public Health**

Director of occupational and environmental health for the San Francisco Department of public health, Dr. Bosch is responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating the city's environmental health policy. He spoke on "Health Impact Assessment for California's Growth and Development: the Practice, Research, and Advocacy of a Public Health Agency", addressing a few main topics:

- Health Impact Assessments: what they are, who uses them, and how the concept has been used in several developments around San Francisco and Oakland. Using HIA's in Environmental Impact Assessments has helped bring issues such as displacement, affordable housing, and access to schools into development debates, provided a rigorous analytical basis, and given them a place in the planning process.
- Transportation Health Effect Forecasting: for details, see the PowerPoint. One notable comment was that noise is an often overlooked but important impact on people's health.
- People Count: SF DPH is in the process of developing and validating a model of pedestrian flow, with the goal of developing a pedestrian level of service standard, as other cities have done.
- Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment (ENCHIA): SF DPH is developing this new tool outside of the EIA/EIR process. It includes mapping a large number of variables, and Rajiv showed results for several of these in his PowerPoint.

Dr. Bosch concluded with a suggested set of political strategies (half of which overlap with TALC's platform), expected outcomes of ENCHIA, and suggestions for how to connect with health professionals. For more information, see:

- <http://www.sfdph.org/eh> - main page for Environmental Health section
- <http://www.sfdph.org/phes> - Program on Health, Equity And Sustainability
- <http://www.sfdph.org/phes/enchia.htm> - Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment
- [http://www.transcoalition.org/cal/Rajiv\\_Bhatia\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.transcoalition.org/cal/Rajiv_Bhatia_presentation.pdf) – PDF of Dr. Bhatia's presentation

### **Discussion**

Many comments and questions centered around how to communicate these messages to the general public and decision makers:

- Contra Costa County Supervisor Mark DeSaulnier pointed out that doctors and public health officials have significant moral authority.
- Representatives from the health departments in Alameda and Contra Costa counties echoed San Francisco's interest in bringing health issues into transportation and land use decision-making processes.
- How to get your DPH to be involved: ask them directly and also ask elected officials to ask the DPH to be part of a planning process.
- Speak in the "grand rounds" that happen weekly at local hospitals. Contact your hospital or DPH to find out how.

#### **4) Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 15th, 5:30 pm.**

To suggest items for future agendas please contact Jeff Hobson at [jeff\[at\]transcoalition.org](mailto:jeff[at]transcoalition.org) or call 510-740-3150 ext 12.