

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter Public Position

<p>Chapter Lead/Owner: Gladwyn D'Souza</p> <p>Date Submitted March 23, 2012</p> <p>Date Passed March 26, 2012</p>	<p>Title of Proposed Position: Resolution in Support of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)</p>
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Resolution

WHEREAS, Sierra Club supports the use of public transit as a transportation alternative to reduce personal automobile use and promote an active lifestyle through transit, bicycling, and walking; and

WHEREAS, Designated bus lanes would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while lessening our dependence on foreign oil and cleaning up the air which helps California meet the requirements of California's climate change laws, AB32 and SB 375; and

WHEREAS, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) proposed a designated bus lane along Route 522, which makes up a quarter of all bus ridership in the county, to maximize use and would promote public transit use through fast and reliable service in areas with existing demand; and

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club supports the implementation of a designated lane for Bus Rapid Transit.

Background

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a mode of public transportation that provides designated lanes for bus use in order to have more reliable and efficient service. The designated lanes are planned along Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) route 522 on El Camino Real, which holds about one-fourth of all transit ridership in Santa Clara County. This project will cost about \$240 million and will be financed by the Santa Clara County Measure A half cent sales tax and federal funds. BRT would be a cheaper option than the similar light rail infrastructure that would cost 40% more to operate and approximately \$90 million to construct. Out of the six lanes that currently exist on El Camino Real, two will be designated for buses and the remaining four will stay as travel lanes. The buses will run every 5 to 10 minutes and will convey real-time bus arrival information. With the implementation of BRT, transit use is expected to triple on El Camino Real by 2035 because it will cut transit times and rival with car travel.

Additionally, VTA has agreed to provide funding for complete streets. VTA will help with landscaping and lighting to create a safer and more attractive transport option. VTA has also said that funding can be allocated to create or improve bicycle lanes and sidewalks. Emergency vehicles will also be able to benefit from this project and create faster and safer travel due to allowed emergency vehicle access. The vehicles and stations will be designed to make boarding easy, fast, and comfortable for everyone, including people in wheelchairs and with strollers. The Bus Rapid Transit project is an ideal transportation alternative for Santa Clara County that includes many benefits for its communities.

Description of Club Policy (or references)

The Sierra Club supports Public Transit as a means to reduce carbon emissions and to encourage green-oriented development on transit corridors. Said support extends to innovative methodologies that capitalize on existing, i.e. automotive, infrastructure.