Sierra Club Transportation Policy

Adopted by the Board of Directors, February 19-20, 1994; amended May 7-8, 1994

The Sierra Club supports transportation policy and systems that:

- minimize the impacts on and use of land, airspace and waterways, minimize the consumption of limited resources, including fuel, and reduce pollutant and noise emissions;
- provide everyone, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, with adequate access to jobs, shopping, services and recreation;
- provide adequate and efficient goods movement and substitute local goods for those requiring long distance movement, where feasible;
- encourage land uses that minimize travel requirements;
- strengthen local communities, towns and urban centers, and promote equal opportunity;
- eliminate transportation subsidies which handicap achievement of the above goals; and ensure vigorous and effective public participation in transportation planning.

Updated Transportation Policy Guidance Language

Adopted by the Board of Directors, September 2018

Transportation is the highest source of U.S. CO_2 emissions. Additionally, oil use in the transportation sector causes or exacerbates serious health conditions such as asthma, heart disease, and cancer. Sierra Club's goal is to cut U.S. oil use in half by 2030. Sierra Club's priority strategies to slash emissions from the transportation sector are:

- Cars, buses, trucks, and trains are increasingly powered by renewable electricity.
- Fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks are strong, with advanced design, materials and technologies (including electrification).
- Operating practices are efficient: Improve driver behavior, logistics for long-haul trucks and ships, and lower carbon mode-shifting (freight to rail, jet passengers to high-speed rail, etc.).
- Promote alternative modes of transportation by encouraging compact mixed-use land use patterns that prioritize walking and biking over vehicles, building and supporting public transit, reducing and eventually eliminating parking, encouraging shared vehicle use, telecommuting/flexible working hours, and using pricing and other incentives to equitably promote alternatives to driving.

Access to clean transportation solutions, such as walking, transit, biking, electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles, and electric vehicle charging should be distributed equitably throughout communities and neighborhoods. All strategies or policies that are adopted must be firmly rooted in the Jemez Principles as well as protect natural systems and open space, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and promote environmental and economic justice and access for all, including low-income communities and those most impacted by pollution.

Land Use

Land use patterns should be designed to prioritize walking and biking, reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)[1], increase public transit use, enhance the economic viability of public transit and decrease private motor vehicle use (auto mobility). Therefore zoning, financing, land-use controls, and other policies should:

- Promote desirable, affordable, dense, and equitable mixed-use infill development;
- Concentrate employment, commercial, services, and community amenities near transit stations or stops;
- Integrate pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commerce (markets, restaurants, services, etc.) into residential neighborhoods;
- Provide pedestrian amenities (such as a complete regular pedestrian street grid; sidewalks on both sides of the road; slow streets [traffic calming], bike lanes, speed limits and stop signs or lights, to keep traffic safe and comfortable for pedestrians; auto-free town and urban centers; street furniture and shelters; and street focused commercial and residential buildings;
- Expand affordable and accessible rail and bus transit networks and service to create good local and regional transportation options;
- Promote affordable housing, affordable clean transportation, and access to family-sustaining jobs as community benefits that go hand in hand;
- Eliminate parking subsidies and minimum requirements to encourage shifts to biking, walking, scooting, carpooling and transit;
- Greatly reduce or eliminate parking in areas served well by public transit;
- Provide adequate parks, natural areas and plantings for humans and wildlife, aesthetic enhancement, pedestrian protection and building/ sidewalk cooling; and
- Protect land outside presently developed areas from urban sprawl through urban limit lines or similar policies.

Existing communities should be revitalized or retrofitted, as necessary, to achieve these qualities and to enhance their quality of life. Revitalization of existing communities must include the participation of members of that community, and be conscious of potential impacts on vulnerable communities that reside in or around such community, including, but not limited to, protecting vulnerable residents from economic and physical disruption, and providing vulnerable residents the ability to enjoy the benefits being fostered during revitalization.

Urban transportation systems and land use should be planned for whole regions, and planning should include strong community-wide involvement in the scoping and decision-making processes. Transportation-land use models should fully project the reduction in VMT and increase in transit experienced when transit is improved and areas are made more pedestrian accessible; and modelers should provide decision-makers with compact, transit-oriented alternatives.

[1] Traffic impacts shall be measured as VMT (vehicle miles traveled), not LOS (level of service); LOS favors suburban sprawl over infill development.

Transit

Walking, skating/scooters/skateboards, and bicycling are best, along with electronic communications, to reduce vehicle trips. Also important are buses, minibuses, light rail and heavy rail (as corridor trips increase) -all electrified wherever feasible. Rail systems are most effective in stimulating compact development patterns, increasing public transit patronage and reducing motor vehicle use. Station access should be provided by foot, bicycle and public transit, with few, but full-priced, public parking spots. Accommodation of pedestrians, bicycles and public transit should be given priority over private automobiles. Careful attention should be given to avoid conflicts between uses (pedestrian, bicycles and public transit).

Public transit service should be coordinated, electrified, and given bus-only lanes and traffic signal preemption.Transit facilities should facilitate intermodal transfers, including convenient and safe bicycle access to public transit vehicles, and secure bicycle storage in public places and stations. Electrification of buses and associated charging facilities should be the priority and not continued use of fossil fuel-based vehicles. High occupancy vehicles should be favored over single occupancy vehicles. Roads and traffic laws should be designed (complete street treatments) and enforced to enhance safety and accessibility. All parking costs should be separately priced ("unbundled"). Amtrak and high speed intercity rail, which afford comparable city center to city center access times, or which offer comparable overnight convenience, are preferred to air travel because they save energy, use less land, cut noise and pollutant emissions, and allow some airports to be closed. Therefore, new or improved rail facilities, and electronic communications, are preferred to new or expanded airports. Discourage private aviation to reduce noise impacts on urban and natural areas.

Commuting to and from work increases VMT, greenhouse gas emissions, and reduces employees' opportunities for a work-life balance. Employers should encourage working from home, flexible work days, or teleworking policies and programs for employees, when possible. Additionally, employers should provide commuting benefits for carpooling, using public transit, or other alternative modes of transportation to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips.

Low income, disabled, and elderly people as well as communities of color are especially isolated and impacted by a lack of reliable public transit and safe walking and cycling conditions. Their communities should receive additional consideration for improved, efficient, and affordable public transit (preferably electrified), unbiased enforcement practices, safer (slower vehicle speeds and enforcement of speed limits), and convenient walking, skating and cycling infrastructure.[2]

Electric Vehicles and Charging

In addition to reducing VMT, vehicle electrification is an important part of reducing petroleum use and GHG emissions. Over three-fourths of U.S. commuters drive alone

[2] Speed cameras, red light cameras, and other traffic law enforcement should provide non discriminatory enforcement.

to work, in part because the U.S. has built auto-dependent development for decades. Even with electricity sources that include coal and natural gas, electric cars, buses, and trucks are significantly lower in GHG emissions than conventional vehicles everywhere in the U.S. As we shift toward fully renewable electricity sources, electric vehicles become even cleaner over time and eventually truly zero emission.

States, cities, regions, and the federal government should provide leadership and coordination to adopt policies and regulations to deploy and support zero emission vehicles and the associated charging infrastructure also known as electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE). This includes programs, such as rebates and tax credits, that make EVs less expensive, including additional incentives for low and moderate income residents to increase financial access within those particular communities. State agencies, transit agencies, and local governments should lead by example by integrating EVs into their fleets, installing charging stations for their workers and visitors, and adopting long-term commitments for full fleet electrification.

With a large portion of city residents living in multi-family units, accessible charging infrastructure is particularly important for them, including in building garages and in public parking areas. Fast charging equipment in cities and along highways will be key to increase EV reliability and viability. Houses, multi-family residences, commercial areas, and public and private garages should accommodate the charging of electric vehicles through minimum electric vehicle parking requirements and EV ready building codes. Additional prioritization must be given to low-income and disadvantaged communities where access and availability are often lacking and who bear the burden of poor air quality and pollution. Electrified transit, school, garbage trucks and delivery fleet vehicles must be supported as they reduce pollution impacts in neighborhoods and communities.

Utility programs and investments, such as widespread EVSE installation programs, should incentivize EV adoption as part of a modernized grid. Any regulatory changes to benefit EVs must promote fair costs for ratepayers and be pursued in conjunction with other trends in our energy systems, such as widespread adoption of solar and other clean energy generation and storage. Exorbitant demand (peak usage) charges in particular represent a major barrier to cost-effective EV charging and should be carefully evaluated.

State regulators, policymakers, dealers and utilities should work to provide public education and outreach to ensure the vast majority of consumers view EVs as a viable and desirable option. Educational and awareness activities should include programs that highlight existing incentives or rebates, best practices, EVSE signage, and materials and resources that actively promote electrification. Additionally, dealers and manufacturers should require “best practice” standards for their sales and maintenance staff and use their status to promote electric vehicles as a viable form of transportation.

Shared Economy, Shared Transportation and Autonomous Vehicles

Vehicle-sharing and autonomous technologies are changing our transportation systems and have the potential to further transform the ways we move people and goods: more

access to affordable transportation options, lower personal vehicle ownership rates, fewer full-time family-supporting jobs, increased or decreased vehicle miles traveled and sprawl, more vehicles per mile of road, etc. The disruptive nature of these technologies necessitates forward-thinking policies to ensure that their growth is consistent with Sierra Club policies promoting climate protection and equity.

Autonomy: While the Sierra Club's policies regarding land use, electric vehicles, and reducing VMT are articulated elsewhere in policy and this guidance, it is important to note that improving and enforcing those policies must increase in priority as more vehicles become autonomous and could significantly increase or decrease VMT, depending on how programs are designed. Supporting policies to enable and require vehicle to vehicle communication is an opportunity to decrease congestion and pressure to build new roads, as such technology could enable vehicles to travel safely with shorter distance between vehicles, allowing more vehicles per the same road space, reducing miles spent lost or searching for parking, and creating fewer accidents and decisions that impede traffic flow. A key priority for Sierra Club entities must be working with our partners who represent worker interests to discuss and identify shared solutions for the potential displacement in family-supporting jobs in trucking, taxi/TNC, and other transportation sectors as autonomous technology proliferates.

Shared Vehicle Technology: One of the biggest opportunities to rapidly electrify passenger vehicles could be a shift away from personal ownership of vehicles enabled by sharing technology. Shared-use fleets (Transportation Network Companies (TNC)) must accelerate the transition to zero-emission vehicles. TNCs should provide subsidies and incentives for their drivers to purchase electric vehicles. The use of gasoline-powered cars and single-passenger e-hailed taxis should be discouraged, while walking, cycling, e-scootering, zero-emission public transportation and other sustainable modes of mobility - and convenient access and connections between those modes - should be prioritized. Impacted stakeholders, particularly residents, workers and businesses located in overburdened and underserved communities, should be first in line for improvements in air quality and mobility access by a transition to shared, zero-emission and eventually autonomous vehicles. Therefore, these groups should be actively engaged with in planning and decision-making processes and supported during the transition to zero-emission, shared and autonomous mobility. Physical and digital access to shared mobility fleets must have thoughtful design and ensure equitable access by all people regardless of location, age, ability, gender and income levels.

Autonomous vehicles must be designed and operated to protect all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and vehicle occupants. Legislation or rulings that would remove culpability and accountability for injuries to all road users should be opposed. All cities should adopt and enforce policies (such as Vision Zero goals and plans) that protect the health, safety, and welfare of pedestrians and cyclists.

Highway Expansion, Gas Tax and Transportation Revenues

The Sierra Club recognizes that funding for transportation infrastructure, including transit and road maintenance and operations, may face challenges as gas tax revenues

decline due mostly to more efficient gasoline powered vehicles and the gas tax not adjusting with inflation. The Sierra Club supports the consideration of a wide array of solutions, including fees based on weight or vehicle miles traveled or the energy intensity of fuels. Ideally, no fees should be instituted on drivers of electric vehicles as a singled out group until the sales trajectory reaches the levels needed to reach our shared climate protection targets. We should be incentivizing rather than discouraging drivers for shifting to cleaner vehicles.

No limited access highways ("freeways") should be built or widened, especially in urban-suburban areas or near threatened natural areas. High occupancy vehicle (HOV) and high occupancy vehicle/toll (HOT) lanes should come from converting existing highway lanes rather than constructing new lanes. This will avoid constructing new lanes which are mixed-flow much of the day, or are converted to full-time mixed-flow after construction. Toll rates on HOT lanes should vary by time of day, and revenues above operating expenses should be used to improve travel opportunities for low income travelers and to operate public transit. Policies to implement charges for parking and highway access, congestion pricing and Transportation Control Measures rather than increasing road capacity for vehicles should be considered before highway expansion. Parking charges should be unbundled from rents. Intelligent Vehicle/Highway Systems (IVHS) should not be designed to increase highway capacity and stimulate additional traffic, off-highway congestion, sprawl, energy consumption and pollution.

Freight

Freight railroads, especially electrified, are preferred over highway or air freight to save energy and land, and cut noise and pollutant emissions.

As e-commerce becomes more accessible and prefered over trips to brick and mortar stores, emissions from delivery vehicles will continue to increase. In order to reduce emissions from medium and heavy duty, delivery trucks should be electrified to reduce emissions. In addition, incentives to reduce “split” orders should be evaluated as ways to reduce emissions and reduce waste and costs.

Financing and Subsidies

Polluters should be charged fines, fees, or other costs on their pollution, and those dollars should be reinvested in clean solutions. For example, state and regional programs should pursue a cap on carbon in the transportation sector and reinvest the revenue generated (“cap and invest”) on clean transportation solutions, such as transit, EV programs, and biking and pedestrian programs, etc. Federal, state, and local subsidies should be provided to those systems (walking, bicycling, public transit, passenger and freight railroads and ferries) and equipment that go further toward achieving accessibility, convenience, efficiency, cleanliness and equity goals, and denied to the other modes. Additionally, subsidies for drivers of electric vehicles (EVs) are essential to help this market grow and to allow access for all communities to purchase/lease these cleaner technologies. A certain number should be reserved for low-income drivers, and low-income drivers should be prioritized to ensure equitable

access for all communities. Such subsidies are especially needed to correct the history of heavy subsidies to fossil fuel based internal combustion motor vehicles, including medium and heavy duty trucks. We need appropriate fossil fuel and carbon based taxes, parking and road user charges, annual fossil fuel based vehicle fees, and elimination of tax credits and deductions for fossil fuel based motor vehicle use. The capital and operating costs of airports, air traffic control, pilot training, and waterways, including dredging and navigation costs, should be charged to the users of such systems.

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

The National Environmental Policy Act, and the Clean Air and Water Acts should be complied with fully. Meaningful public participation must take place from the start of development of state and regional transportation plans. Opportunities for participation should be enhanced. The participation of environmental, public transit and low income community groups, including legal help and research, should be publicly funded.

Interpretation of this Guidance

If a proposed measure predominantly conforms with this Guidance but conflicts in some details, it becomes a matter of discretion whether the Sierra Club can support it. For example, we may decide to endorse a transportation ballot measure that predominantly funds transit that we seek but also includes some highway funding that we oppose that is necessary for political support.