

SERIOUS TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS THREATENING THE REGION'S LIVABILITY— RESIDENTS WANT A BALANCE OF HIGHWAY AND TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

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SACRAMENTO – The Sacramento Area Council of Governments Board of Directors today heard the findings of independent survey research regarding transportation and quality of life issues. Results from a region-wide phone survey, online survey and focus group research confirm that transportation is a big concern for people in the six-county region.

When asked what they like about living in the Sacramento region, survey respondents indicated most commonly: access to services, small-town feeling, open space and nature, the people, security, community feeling and weather. Threatening what they enjoy about living here, transportation in the six-county region is viewed by a majority of residents (58%) as a serious problem.

Other findings:

- four out of five rate their community as an “excellent” or “good” place to live;
- four out of five believe transportation system improvements must be made;
- residents in all areas and groups want a balance of highway/freeway improvements and public transportation expansion; and
- residents rated 18 different highway and public transit improvements important, with many of them receiving high “extremely important” ratings.

Survey respondents were also asked about whether they would drive less if gas prices or other factors changed. Without having any potential changes described to them, 45% said they are likely to shift at least 10% of their car trips to transit, walking or bicycling over the next five years. Among the motivators for reducing car trips, higher gas prices were the most compelling to respondents.

“We’ve heard consistently that transportation is a major concern in this region. Addressing congestion and air pollution is going to require both highway and transit projects,” said SACOG Board Chair and El Dorado County Supervisor Rusty Dupray. “These results underline the priorities we’ve heard in community workshops, and they will help us create an integrated plan that will benefit the entire region.”

The results of this survey research will be used in conjunction with public input gathered in community workshops throughout the region in developing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2035, scheduled for adoption later this year. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan is a 28-year plan for transportation improvements based on projections for growth in population, housing and jobs in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. This MTP is the first to proactively link land use, air quality, and transportation needs in our region. This survey research is the latest in an 18-month public priority setting process to identify a list of transportation improvement projects to best meet the needs of our region as a whole.

The telephone survey was administered to 1,050 residents of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties from January 19-24, 2007, with a margin of error +/- 3%. Online survey and focus group research is also being used as part of the public outreach process. A full report will be available March 1. For more information or a copy of the summary findings contact Rebecca Thornton Sloan at (916) 321-9000.