

Report of Findings for Environmental Justice Focus Groups

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REPORT OF RESULTS

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Environmental Justice Focus Groups

Background

National Research Center, Inc., (NRC) was hired by the Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG) to conduct focus groups with environmental justice populations.¹ These focus groups were intended to supplement other research being done with the general populace as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035 (MTP 2035), and therefore, focused on “hard-to-reach” populations that might not otherwise have been adequately represented.²

A social science research firm, NRC specializes in citizen surveys, program evaluations, and needs assessments. Our focus is on helping local governments determine how to hear from their constituents within their particular resource and time constraints. We work nationally on a variety of topics, including transportation, community assessments for older adults and other special populations, positive youth development and hard-to-reach populations.

Our experience with resident surveys (phone and mail) is that non-White populations respond at a much lower rate than do White populations. Language, culture and legal resident status are additional barriers to response.

In general, focus groups are conducted for two primary reasons: to bring in the voices of these hard-to-reach populations and/or to explore in-depth topics of interest that can only be understood broadly from survey research. In this study, focus groups were used for both reasons, as well as to provide SACOG staff and Board of Directors with the perspectives voiced by environmental justice populations. Historically, these populations have been under-represented in transportation planning, or their perspectives have not been understood well.

In sum, focus groups are useful for exploring perspectives of individuals and groups, and indirectly, for establishing a rapport with communities. What they can not do, however, is offer findings that can be generalized to entire populations in the way that a randomly sampled survey can. Comments from one, or even two, Hispanic/Latino groups, for instance, should not be seen as representative of all Hispanic/Latino opinions.

The conclusions drawn from these focus groups are limited to what these individuals said. They can suggest what others might feel and say, but are not intended to be broadly representative. In addition,

¹ In 1994, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12898 directing all federal agencies to make environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on “minority populations and low-income populations.” As recipients of federal planning funds, SACOG is legally required to address environmental justice concerns at every stage of its planning efforts. (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/brevard.htm>, Accessed March 9, 2007)

² “Hard to reach” refers to those populations that tend to under-respond on surveys, may feel uninvolved in civic life because of citizen status, income level, linguistic isolation, or other factors.

sometimes the dynamics of a particular group can determine what is said. For instance, one or two very vocal or passionate participants can influence others' opinions.

Methodology

In collaboration, NRC and SACOG staff selected desired participant characteristics for a set of environmental justice focus groups. These choices were made based upon Federal definitions of “environmental justice” populations as well as U.S. Census 2000 data, which showed the number of particular racial/ethnic populations by county. U.S. Census 2000 data also were used to help determine geographic locations to draw from for group participants. While the eight groups could not be fully geographically representative, attention was paid to drawing participants from around the six-county region, where population density seemed sufficient to fill the focus groups.

Eight focus groups were held with the following characteristics:

- African American (Sacramento) - one group
- Asian-Pacific Islander (Sacramento) – one group
- Hispanic/Latino (Sacramento, Woodland) – two groups
- Low income (Sacramento, Placerville, Yuba City) – three groups
- Native American Indian (Sacramento) – one group

All groups had a mix of genders, ages, occupation, and occupational status, with the exception of the African-American group, who were primarily seniors and all long-time community activists. With one exception, all the Sacramento groups were held in Opinions, a professional focus group facility, with a one-way mirror and video and audio recording equipment. The Sacramento-based Asian-Pacific Islander group was held at the Asian Resource Center. Audio was digitally taped by NRC, and SACOG videotaped.

In Placerville and Woodland, the focus groups were held in a meeting room at the local library, audiotaped by NRC and videotaped by SACOG. In Yuba City, the focus group was held in a meeting room/classroom at a low-income resource center, audiotaped by NRC and videotaped by SACOG.

The Hispanic/Latino groups were conducted by Spanish-speaking Latina facilitator Irene Orozco, working with NRC. The African-American group was facilitated by African-American facilitator Gregory Diggs, PhD, working with NRC. The Asian-Pacific Islander group was facilitated by NRC research associate Wendy DuBow, PhD, with translation into Cantonese by Language World Services, via headsets for participants and microphones for the translators. DuBow conducted the rest of the groups in English. In both the Spanish and Cantonese language groups, there were participants who responded to questions in English.

Group sizes ranged from 6 to 14 adults, with a total of 75 participants, and an average group size of about nine persons. Discussions lasted from one-and-a-half to two hours each. In general, participants were given \$50 each as a thank-you gift at the end of each discussion, while the Native American Indian participants were given \$60 each, due to Opinions' recruitment protocol.

Recruiting for all groups was done by SACOG, in coordination with Valley Vision, a nonprofit organization³, and Opinions of Sacramento. Opinions drew from its database of about 40,000 names. These names have been collected since 1993 on an opt-in basis. Opinions' official policy is to invite only those people who have not participated in a focus group in the past year, though this rule is sometimes bent to accommodate specific population parameters. Opinions places invitation calls two weeks prior to the scheduled group. Four postal days prior, staff make a reminder call, repeating any screening questions used in the first calls. At three postal days, a reminder letter is sent out. Twenty-four hours prior, reminder phone calls are made.

Refreshments were furnished by SACOG and Opinions (when at their facility) and consisted primarily of sandwiches.

Each facilitator followed the same basic script, which was derived from a script developed by Davis, Hibbitts, & Midghall, and used with the general population focus groups in earlier phase of the research. The script began with inquiry into general sentiments about the Sacramento region, moved into more specific opinions about transportation, then asked about whether or not "something should be done" about transportation. The bulk of the time was spent on questions about participants' travel behaviors and what changes might reduce their overall car use. See Appendix I for English and Spanish scripts.

All focus group audiotapes were transcribed verbatim. These transcripts were then analyzed with QSR N6 qualitative software. N6 allows the analyst to organize quotations from all the groups so that recurrent themes can be coded and further analyzed.

Focus Group Findings

Following are the analyses of the eight environmental justice focus group conversations. Statements in italics or quotation marks are verbatim quotes. Any words added to enhance reader understanding appear in square brackets. Each quote under a given topic is from a unique individual in a unique group, unless otherwise specified. Sometimes entire conversations are excerpted to give the full flavor of the discussion.

ATTITUDES TOWARD SACRAMENTO

In general, participants mentioned liking the Sacramento region for similar reasons: weather, access to "city life," availability of small towns, and the relatively low cost of living (compared to the Bay Area). Perceptions that there have been recent increases in population, vehicle traffic, cost of living and crime were commonly disliked attributes of the area.

REPORTED TRANSPORTATION HABITS

Most participants drove themselves in their own cars on a daily basis. Many felt they had no other choice because of the perceived lack of public transportation. Many preferred to stay in their cars regardless of future alternatives, though some would consider light rail for longer commutes.

Among those without cars, the bus (or a series of buses) was the most common mode of travel, along with riding with a family member or friend.

³ Valley Vision is a "nonprofit association of people and organizations working to secure the social, environmental and economic health of the Sacramento Region." (<http://www.valleyvision.org/organization/index.html>, Accessed March 12, 2007)

GENERAL ATTITUDES

When participants heard the name of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, MTP 2035, they felt discouraged by the lengthy timeframe. For many participants, even five years was a long time to have to wait for some of the improvements they wanted to see on transportation-related issues. Nearly all felt that the 30-year timeframe was difficult to grasp. Thinking about it prompted nearly every group to refer to a futuristic scenario, involving flying cars or other technology that would transform contemporary transportation. The comments below illustrate their perspectives:

[Low income group]

Get one of those flying cars, like the Jetsons. One day that is going to happen.

[Low income group]

And if you're talking about a 35-year plan, the technology of cars and people in general is going to make things better. And one of the things I think you will be able to do is put in radar and things like that and have a virtual train. Cars just get on the freeway, they lock into each other's computers, and then you will be moving at 35-50 miles per hour bumper to bumper, but safely.

[Hispanic/Latino group]

I don't think we will have buses in 35 years. We'll be like the Jetsons up in the air. They will fly to your house and knock on your window and say, 'Hey, the bus is here for you.'

[Native American group]

Well, that's why the transportation thing is such a huge thing because 10, 20, 30 years from now, people are not going to be able to live here and breathe. We are going to have to do something. You know, we can't all drive our cars like we do now. It's just going to kill us all.

Except for the African-Americans, who were all community activists, participants generally felt disempowered to make change, and disinclined to expect change. Especially among the low income groups, there was much distrust of public officials, their spending habits, and their projected timeframes. Comments from four groups demonstrate these attitudes:

[African-American group]

I think what you hear here is frustration in the fact that we are not moving fast enough. And we're especially not moving fast enough in the neighborhoods that need it the most.

[Low income group]

Don't have two years' worth of study and then by that time things have changed. Then you need three parking garages instead of just one. So we have to have another committee to see if it's feasible!

[Low income group]

*Participant 1: Wow. So we'll all be dead. So, really, class dismissed because none of us will be here.
Participant 2: For future generations.
Participant 1: Then let them worry about it!*

[Low income group]

Participant 1: Fifteen years ago there was a plan!

Participant 2: Exactly!

Participant 3: Like there is always a plan, but ...

PERCEIVED TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

In all eight focus groups, participants discussed the problems they experienced with transportation in the region, from vehicle traffic to buses to sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Even without being asked directly about problems, they were loquacious about the issues they encountered.

Traffic

Traffic volume and gas prices were common complaints about driving. Most people perceived traffic on freeways and in downtowns to be nearly unbearable.

[African-American Group]

Participant 1: So the first thing I think about is the congestion in this area.

Participant 2: We have continuous use of our freeways, and our highways are continuously used, and it's beginning to be 24/7 where it used to be just very slight. Very light.

[Asian Pacific Islander Group]

Participant 1: When you have to drive it is like the traffic is really bad, and it takes a long time to get to the places.

Participant 2: About three or four years ago when I drive (sic) to work, it takes like 20 minutes to get there. About 20 minutes. About eight miles. But now when I have to go to work, it takes more than 45 minutes to an hour to get to work. In the morning there is like more traffic.

[Low income groups]

It still seems to be almost bumper to bumper all the time during the day anymore.

The freeway is backed up because they are sitting there trying to get through the lights.

Now it's become what used to be a little podunk road, with people who used to travel along at a reasonable rate of speed, are now the speedways to get around stuff [congestion on main roads].

All of the freeways in Sacramento are not enough for how many people we have.

Public Transportation

Most participants (including public transportation users and non-users) had concerns about using public transportation. Their interest in the possible “amenities” proposed in the script, such as Internet access, and so on, was overridden by their concern for the problems with current public transportation. These problems dominated the conversation and were secondary to “traffic” when they thought of transportation in the Sacramento region.

Public Transportation: Transit Service Expansion

Across all groups, participants felt strongly that the bus and rail system needed to be expanded in order to enable them or their fellow residents to use public transportation.

[African-American group]

I don't have a problem as far as the location of the stops for me because light rail is five minutes from my home, but my problem is destinations. I mean, if I could get to my destinations, that's fine! I mean, but I can't use light rail or the bus because it doesn't get me to my destinations.

[Low income group]

We have a great little airport here. It's one of the best kept secrets, but we need a way to get out to it without a car.

Participants generally had a much better association with light rail than with the bus or with traffic because it was perceived as faster, and they thought a “better class of people” ride light rail than ride the bus. For longer distances, participants said they would be likely to use light rail, especially traveling from outlying areas of Sacramento into the capitol. Many became enthusiastic about the idea of using light rail regularly when the facilitator suggested it as a possible future option.

[Low income group]

I love getting on the light rail and going down to the train to go to San Francisco. That is very important to me.

[Asian-Pacific Islander group]

More light rail. More faster. More safe. Always have a security or official with uniform.

[Low income group]

- Participant 1: Like in my case, you can always save gas by just parking your car at the light rail station and taking it downtown.*
- Participant 2: That and time.*
- Participant 3: Plus it saves you parking downtown too, which would be a lot.*
- Participant 4: Yeab. Going from Folsom into Sacramento is so much easier and cheaper than driving as long as where you are going is close to where you get off.*

Public Transportation: Safety

People expressed concern about waiting at bus stops and light rail stations. Several men and women shared stories about uncomfortable situations they had encountered. For example:

[Hispanic/Latino group]

If you leave your car parked in these areas, it'll be left without tires.

[Native American Indian group]

I have a good example. My daughter and I were on the light rail. We had to get off at Ardon and El Paso Light Rail. I had to throw something away because we had to catch another bus to get to the doctor, and my daughter just turned around, and quick stepping, here comes this guy, 'Oh, you're by yourself.' And I was right behind her, 'No, her mother is with her, and I'm standing right behind you.' He took off so quick so fast. There are a lot of light rail stations I will refuse to get off at.

[Low income group]

I remember I worked until like 8:00 [p.m.], and when I got off that rotation at 8:00, there was no security guard to be found for them to walk me to my car. And that was Arden/El Paso!

Public Transportation: Personal Comfort

One conversation in a low-income group captured many people's concerns about the loss of privacy that occurs on public transportation:

[Low income group]

Facilitator: So if [your commute time] increases, would that make you look for another way of getting somewhere?

Participant 1: Yeab.

Facilitator: Instead of driving?

Participant 1: No, I'd go a different way or something.

Facilitator: And why is that? What is it that stops you from wanting to do that [try alternative ways of commuting]?

Participant 1: The people who take transit.

Participant 2: Inconsiderate!

Participant 3: Oh yeah!

Participant 1: You got homeless people.

Participant 2: People that smell like piss.

Participant 4: You got everyone coughing on you.

Participant 3: It's inconvenient. Standing out there in the rain.

Participant 4: It's more likely to get the flu. Because you are enclosed. You are enclosed, and people don't catch what they are doing like...cough, cough, and you are sitting right next to them.

Participant 5: You have kids.

Participant 4: But I mean, sometimes it does get frustrating taking the light rail in the mornings because some of the stations that I park at to park my car and take the light rail, they are already packed. Some of them you have to pay and then jump on the light rail. Or you—it just, I don't know. I like taking it to an extent, but not really if I don't have to because of the people. And what if you don't catch it on time? What if you just barely miss it? Because sometimes you could be running to it, push the button and the light rail takes off.

Participant 6: It's stop and go, stop and go. I get in my car and just go. On the bus you have to stop because everybody gets on and off at different stops.

Participant 7: Then you have to call your boss and say hey, I'm catching the next light rail and I'll be late for work, and it's just like a write up. Bosses don't care. Believe me in my case, my boss does not even care. He does not want to hear no excuses. You have to be on time.

The Asian-Pacific Islander group, two low income groups, and both Hispanic/Latino groups mentioned the need for shelters and benches at bus stops.

[Asian-Pacific Islander group]

Participant 1: If there was a cover while you are waiting like on a rainy day.

Participant 2: They need to have a bench or something like a shelter.

Participant 1: On a rainy day no one is going to take the bus. Where are you going to sit, in the rain?

[Low income group]

Participant 1: Like one of the bus stops will just have a post saying The Bus. If they had a cover and a bench, and people could sit down, especially when it's 105 degrees outside.

Participant 2: Or if it's raining.

Participant 3: Some do and some don't.

Participant 2: Well, some areas have more money than others.

Public Transportation: Travel Time

When the facilitator asked whether or not participants would be interested in public transportation if it came more frequently, people expressed interest. They noted that the amount of time it takes to use public transportation now made them want to avoid taking it.

[Low income group]

And that's another thing people don't really think about when they are taking the bus. It takes so much time for a bus to pick you up and take you to—that's why I feel like it is inconvenient to have to take a bus. Because you have to have extra time in order to get to and from wherever you are going.

[Low income group]

Well, it's time too. There is just not enough time in the day to do everything. It's faster to drive somewhere rather than take a bus because it could take four hours to take a bus and two hours to take the trip in the car and you have two more hours to do something else in. Riding the bus is out of the question.

[Asian-Pacific Islander group]

Participant 1: Schedule and times are impossible. Takes a long time if you drive to get places. One to two hours to get to a place, but bus is stop, stop, stop. Takes too long!

Participant 2: It is better to have BART, like in San Francisco. It is more convenient. The time schedule is more flexible.

Public Transportation: Bus Driver Courtesy

Although there were no script questions on this topic, across groups, bus riders inevitably brought up the lack of courtesy they had seen bus drivers display. The anecdotes centered on what bus riders saw as driver disrespect for the elderly, for non-English speakers and for mothers with multiple children.

[Low income group]

They are rude. You'll get off the light rail and some of these bus drivers they'll take off. They won't even wait for the light rail, they'll just take off.

[African-American group]

I really understand what he's saying because I have trouble getting up on the step, and some of the bus drivers will sit there and look at you. They don't care how hard it is for you to get up.

The foreign-born residents were especially perplexed:

[Hispanic/Latino group]

Participant 1: What are the rules for bus drivers? What I do not like is that they make some stops, gather their people and they enter the street without looking in the back to see if everyone is seated, to look at the people. It is as if they have the right to drive onto the street without caution. This is what I do not like about them.

Participant 2: Many of the drivers do this.

Participant 3: We're not sure if those are the rules of public transportation for the bus drivers, or they just simply do what they want.

Participant 4: They need to practice more safety when driving.

Participant 5: The drivers need to stay parked for a little while people get on and off and watch for cars.

[Hispanic/Latino group]

Participant 1: I use the bus a lot. I believe of all the drivers I've encountered only one has allowed me enough time to take the time to load the children [three children under seven.] without complaining. I don't know if they offer the bus drivers classes on how to behave or how to treat people and passengers, but they should.

Participant 2: I like the comment that was made regarding a call-in number we could call if the bus driver is rude. You never know when they come to work in a bad mood!

The older adult group of African Americans also noted that the Paratransit dispatch employees were “cavalier” and “rude”:

Now I don't do Paratransit, but I connect a lot of people with Paratransit so I have opportunities to talk with people down at dispatch. Now, I'm going to be nice and say that they have a very cavalier attitude towards their job. If they had to rely on Paratransit, they wouldn't be thinking the same way.

Public Transportation: Cost

Sacramento-based groups and the Woodland Hispanic group had the most experience with public transportation and spoke at length about the cost of public transportation and the difficulties of paying for it.

[Low income group]

Participant 1: It's \$2.50 each way. Yeab, \$5.00.

Participant 2: Yeab, it went up considerably.

Participant 1: The all day pass is \$5.00, and it's supposed to be going up again.

Participant 3: And you never get to go exactly where you need to go. You take a couple of buses, and you walk a little bit or something.

Participant 4: For a [light rail] monthly pass you are looking at like \$82 bucks.

Participant 5: Yeab, but to people that don't have cars it's good. It's just that it used to be affordable, and it's not anymore.

Participant 6: I'm a student, and so I don't have to pay hardly anything, but if it wasn't like that I would not even [be able to], I would walk. I could not. As much as school can cost at

times, I couldn't even try it. Especially since school is daily, daily, daily. I would never be able to make it up.

Support for Pedestrian and Bicycle Traffic

In all eight groups, residents discussed the lack of lighting, sidewalks, and bike lanes. Even for very short distances (such as one mile or less), most residents did not feel safe walking or biking. For some, their discomfort had to do with crime, but for others, it was purely an infrastructure issue because they did not feel safe from vehicle traffic.

[Low income group]

Participant 1: Well, I'm not sure it's safe anywhere. It doesn't matter where you are.

Participant 2: Some people don't care. You could be walking on the sidewalk minding your own business and going where you're going. If it's raining, there is water in the gutters, they will intentionally drive in it and splash you with water.

[Low income group]

Participant 1: Here I can't even walk because there is nowhere safe to walk. And I can walk like half a block and then I have no sidewalks, and then I'm walking in traffic. And it's just not safe. Too many people get hit on these little roads.

Participant 2: There aren't even shoulders on the roads.

Participant 3: No.

Participant 4: You are like literally in the lane if you are trying to walk along the road.

Participant 3: Like maybe 4 inches between the road and the ditch!

[Low income group]

None of it makes sense and that's probably my biggest concern. Not having sidewalks and no way to get around. I would walk to Raley's. It's only a mile, and I've done it before, but I'm not walking on a busy street with no sidewalks when people are going 45 in a 35-mile [zone].

[Low income group]

Participant 1: You don't know if someone is just going to like drive by and shoot you walking down the street.

Participant 2: Do you feel that unsafe?

Participant 1: I'm safe. Other people aren't safe!

Participant 1: Well, somebody got shot about a month ago out in front of the library and it's just scary.

Participant 3: And then they [sidewalks] are always only on the other side of the street, and it stops here and then you have to cross the busy road.

Participant 4: It's impossible to do that. You just have to do your best.

[Native American group]

And there is not even sidewalks to walk. Forget riding a bike. Even if you wanted to walk somewhere there are no sidewalks so you are either walking in mud or you are walking in the road.

[Asian-Pacific Islander group]

Participant 1: There are a lot of streets that have no lights. Streets with no lights. There are some that don't turn on right away. There are many streets without sidewalks.

Participant 2: So the lights when we walk across the streets - the lights that turn on so fast and blink so fast - there is not enough time.

Participant 3: Especially the elderly. They can't walk so fast.

[African-American group]

We have something that is very unique in Sacramento, and that is we have telephone poles in the middle of our sidewalks in many cases. So, consequently, many people who are on bicycles, who are in motorized wheelchairs for instance, sometimes have to go into the street to get around these telephone poles because we don't have them underground. I, myself, have many times almost hit someone in a wheelchair or on a bicycle because there is poor lighting on the street and because they have to go out around these telephone poles.

The topic of bicycle riding brought up similar concerns for safety and improved infrastructure.

[Asian-Pacific Islander group]

Participant 1: Sometimes if you bike around here it is kind of dangerous because the cars move really quickly around here.

Facilitator: Are there bike lanes?

Participant 1: Some, but too narrow.

Participant 2: They have them.

Participant 3: Yeah, there is, but they are pretty much really narrow and short.

Participant 1: Sometimes it is like if you get to some point, there is no bike lane anymore. Lot of accidents with bikes and cars.

[Native American group]

Participant 1: And there have been some improvements in bike trails like coming across the freeway at Howell, they now have bike wings on the outsides of the bridges that are totally separate from the cars, which is great. But there is a lot of instances too where bike lanes just end!

Participant 2: So there is still some disconnects in that circulation system. I know a lot that I would never ride my bike downtown. Ever. I will drive to take my bike to the American River Parkway and ride the American River Parkway, but I would not ride my bike to go downtown. Ever! It's frightening. You're this far from cars [places his hands a few inches from one another]

Participant 3: Especially at night on K Street Mall as soon as it gets dark.

Participant 4: Visibility. There is a lot of car traffic. There is the light rail traffic coming in - the light rail tracks run in the streets. And like I say sometimes the bike lanes just disappear and then you are stuck.

Participant 5: You're in traffic.

Participant 4: They make it hard on you.

Participant 2: Yes.

Participant 5: It's like they don't want you to be on a bike.

Participant 4: The bike lanes are not kept up.

Participant 6: They are like the streets. They are not kept up.

Participant 3: No.

[Hispanic/Latino group]

Participant 1: I think if we had more bike lanes. I'd use my bike more to go to work. My commute use to be three blocks away. So, I would use my bike even if it rained. I wouldn't care. I would get there fast. I wouldn't have to warm up my car. Now my commute is across town. If I had bike lanes, and felt safe crossing the street, I think would still ride my bike. I would save on gas. Especially if my car didn't start.

Participant 2: I have four kids. Riding the bus is not that easy for me. I have to pick them up from school at 4:00 p.m. If I am not at the bus stop 25-30 minutes before, I'd be late picking up my kids. It takes me 15 minutes to ride my bike to their school. So, for me, it is easier to ride my bike. I would like to see more bike lanes.

For shorter distances, some regular drivers said they would be willing—even eager—to walk or ride a bicycle if there were street lights, bike lanes, sidewalks or shoulders consistently linked together.

[Low income group]

I'd walk downtown. I'm close enough to where I would, if it were that I could, but there are no sidewalks on Spring Street, and it's dark.

Car Commitment

The three low income groups (who were particularly car-oriented) the Native American Indian group, and the Asian-Pacific Islander group all mentioned their dissatisfaction with road conditions. Road characteristics and problems were mentioned repeatedly, including potholes, lack of a shoulder, and what they perceived as unplanned access to and from new developments. In the smaller towns, streetlight timing and congested downtown areas also were common topics.

Many, however, felt that there would never be acceptable non-car alternatives for them. Some either lived too far away from a transit hub, such as a downtown, or their town was too small to warrant public transportation.

[Hispanic/Latino group]

Realistically, they have to maintain the fares of buses and light rail. If the fares go up, then it would not benefit us [to use it]. The cost would be the same as if I were to pay for gasoline. If I had to choose between the two, I would choose convenience – my car! If I had to spend \$10 on bus fare and this would include your children—they allow one child free—but I'd have to pay for the other three. So I would take my car. It would be cheaper and it's faster.

[African-American group]

Other people call me and schedule my time for me. Crises, interventions and that sort of thing. So right now I have to be extremely mobile and I can't depend on the public transportation system at this point in my life. Maybe later on.

[Asian-Pacific Islander group]

I personally would still not take the bus. If you are waiting 10 minutes, let's say you are waiting 10 minutes, and the bus takes 10 minutes longer than driving your car, that is 20 minutes, and you don't have the convenience [of your car].

[Low income group]

Participant 1: Yeab, but I don't like driving with other people. I just don't like the music that they listen to, or they drive too slow.

Participant 2: I don't like people riding with me either. I even tell my mother to follow me!

When one low income group was asked if higher gas prices would encourage them to use something other than a personal car, two participants summed up the general sentiment among all the low income focus groups:

I wouldn't do it. I'd get in my car. I'd get a night job to be able to pay for gas. You know, I don't want to be scared. I don't want to be scared. I don't want to be, 'Where's my purse?' Yeab, I don't want to be nervous. And in my own car, I'm in control of my surroundings, and if I'm nervous I can hit my horn, or I can drive into the fire department, or I can—you know, I feel much more safe in my own car.

I would always seek to find an alternative way of less expensive driving rather than quit driving.

Once the facilitator discussed a range of possible public transportation improvements, however, many participants were intrigued by the idea of reducing their personal car usage.

[Latino/Hispanic group]

If there were more bus routes, light rail service and parking, if prices of gas continued to increase, we would definitely take public transportation.

[Low income group]

Participant 1: If I could walk less than 1/4 of a mile and it wasn't an awful pouring rain day, but if I could walk less than 1/4 of a mile, get on the bus and be there, I'd do it in a heartbeat.

Participant 2: I would too.

Participant 1: Like we had in Sacramento. I'd be using the bus all the time, and my car would be the weekends. I'm not saying I would never drive, because I'd still drive around on the weekends and get groceries and stuff, but to and from work, in a heart beat.

[Low income group]

I would most definitely use a rail system if it were that frequent. [Others nodded in agreement.]

Some participants even saw the bus or light rail as more convenient than a car, when the routes worked for their schedules. One Spanish speaker said, “I take the bus at 8:00 a.m. to be at work at 9:00 a.m. Others take it as well. For us it is perfect to take the bus. There are times that I am exhausted, and it takes 45 minutes one way. I don't have to worry about driving. I feel relieved that I don't have to be in a hurry, and don't have to get on the freeway! Or worry about going too fast that the police might stop you!”

Another Spanish speaker noticed:

. . . [T]here are so many people moving into the city, there is more traffic, congestion, pollution, garbage. It is obvious that public transportation is not just going to be a desire, but rather a necessity

In addition, some people in the low income groups and the Native American group mentioned that they already try to limit their driving by carpooling and bundling errands because of gas prices and a concern for the environment.

[Low income groups]

Well I'm cheap! So I try to limit my driving, not because I'm a nice guy but because it's expensive.

I have a car that doesn't get the best gas mileage so that's my reason for not driving all over the place. I try not to.

I work in Sacramento, and I always try to shop on the way home so I'm not going back down there, but just mainly because the gas got so ridiculous, and now it's just a habit to try not to waste gas money or whatever.

Well, I have always considered myself pretty green - I mean I have a compost pile and the whole bit, but I don't know, I think it's when the gas got really crazy, like \$3.59 and that's when it really started hitting me that this is ridiculous. And then when it went down, I already had those habits.

Look for a hybrid car. Use hydrogen. Look for something like that.

We have a huge air quality problem here in Sacramento. Especially in the summer. And that concerns me greatly. That's one of the reasons why I would not drive.

Finally, in every focus group, one or more participants suggested that if elected officials and planners experienced what “regular people” experienced, then change would occur faster and that Sacramento area transportation would be much improved. (For more direct messages to policy makers and planners, see Appendix II.)

[Low income group]

Make them come and do what we do— 30 days.

[Low income group]

They are making decisions on our lives and they don't really know how it is.

[Hispanic/Latino group]

I think the policy makers should interview the people that would take the bus / transportation. They are driving their Mercedes. I know the policy makers are not taking the bus. If they are going to implement regulations, talk to the real people who take public transportation.

[Hispanic/Latino group]

They should put themselves in our shoes. They feel our frustration when the bus has past us by and wouldn't stop.

Conclusions

Environmental justice focus group data suggest that there is potential for behavior change in the realm of transportation habits because most focus group participants perceived traffic on freeways and within cities to be nearly unbearable. However, there are “barriers to change” that must be overcome. These include concerns over:

- Transit service connectivity
- Safety
- Personal comfort
- Travel time
- Bus driver courtesy
- Cost
- Support for pedestrian and bicycle traffic

There was general consensus among the groups that improving the public transportation infrastructure would change the ways Sacramento residents viewed their transportation options. As one participant said, “[W]e are just so tied to our vehicles here in California because of the transportation infrastructure that you have no other choice.”

Having “no other choice” but to drive was a predominant theme in the groups, both within and outside of Sacramento city limits. These data suggest that there are major infrastructure issues to be addressed before people will change their single-occupancy driving habits. Participants expressed a need for extended light rail and bus connectivity, along with more frequent and reliable service. They also wanted safety and cost concerns addressed. They expressed a desire for better lighting, sidewalks and bicycle lanes to allow them to decrease their car use for local trips.

Were these infrastructure issues resolved, focus group participants expressed interest in using alternative forms of transportation. Although there were vocal individuals committed to staying in their cars, overall, these focus group participants saw reduced car use as preserving the quality of life that they enjoy in the Sacramento region as well as saving them the costs of car maintenance and gasoline.

WELCOME SOLUTIONS

Focus group participants were full of ideas about how to resolve the problems they perceived with transportation in the Sacramento region. Along with other solutions mentioned throughout the body of this report, they hoped to see offerings such as the following:

- Increased prevalence of transit stops and frequency of service
- Education on how to use transit
- Bus schedules, light rail schedules and telephone information lines in Spanish, Cantonese, Russian and Hmong
- Security on public transportation and at Park-and-Ride lots

- Change machines in multiple locations if exact change is required for public transit
- Public transit ticket and pass sales in multiple community locations
- Shelters and benches at bus stops
- Bus schedules and maps posted at bus stops
- Reduced pass prices offered by employers and/or passes on a sliding scale
- Lighting and sidewalks for areas that could see increased foot traffic from non-drivers
- Lighting and bike lanes for areas that could see increased bicycle traffic from non-drivers

PUBLIC RELATIONS RECOMMENDATION: SOCIAL MARKETING

Infrastructure solutions are the first step to altering transportation behaviors and perceptions in the Sacramento region. Once some on-the-ground solutions have been implemented, then marketing plays an important role in shifting both behaviors and perceptions.

The barriers to change, as revealed in these focus groups, can be referenced to develop effective social marketing programs to overcome stereotypes, biases and negative experiences residents have had with transportation and with public officials. Some suggestions are included below:

- A marketing campaign that addresses:
 - The loss of control residents might feel in leaving their cars behind
 - Cleanliness of alternative solutions to single occupancy driving
 - Safety of alternative solutions to single occupancy driving
 - Cost savings of alternative solutions to single occupancy driving
 - Courteousness of public transportation drivers
 - Pollution that residents breathe and see
 - The discrepancy people perceive between their lives and the lives of decision makers
 - The length of time it takes for infrastructure changes

Some techniques used in other geographic areas that might help overcome residents' hesitation to use alternative modes in Sacramento include:

- Free day on every new route established
- Cultural competency and empathy training for bus drivers
- Walk or Bike to work day with incentives for participation
- Walk or Bike to school day with incentives for participation
- Incentives for using carpool lanes
- Publicized day when public officials use alternative modes of transportation

With infrastructure improvements, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) innovations, and solid social marketing, SACOG has the opportunity to transform transportation behaviors in the Sacramento region.

Appendix I. Focus Group Scripts

Moderator Discussion Guide (English)

Welcome and Ground Rules (5-10 minutes)

Hello. Thank you all for coming and participating in this focus group discussion. My name is _____ and I work for a company in Boulder called National Research Center. _____ is with me today to take notes.

You were invited to join this discussion because you live in the Sacramento area and drive, walk or take public transportation as part of your daily life. A group called the Council of Governments is sponsoring this focus group discussion so they can learn from you what you care about when it comes to transportation and planning.

In case you've not been in a focus group before, a focus group is an informal discussion where we'll ask you a series of questions to encourage sharing of ideas and opinions. We really want you to express yourself openly and honestly. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.

We are going to tape record this session to ensure our report accurately reflects your comments. However, your responses will not be linked with your name in any way. Everything you say will be kept strictly confidential. Because we are taping, I may need to remind you occasionally to speak up or talk one at a time so that we can hear you clearly when we review the session audio or video tapes

I am your guide, but I want the conversation to be among all of you. Each time I ask a question, we don't need to go around the table to let everyone respond. But every so often I may check in and make sure that we get a chance to hear from different people because it is important that we understand different perspectives. There are only _____ of you, so each one of your perspectives is important to hear. If you would like to add to an idea, or if you have an idea that is different from other people's ideas, that's the time to jump into the conversation.

[Mention food protocol, cash gift at end of group: _____ a.m./p.m.].

ICE BREAKER (5 MINUTES)

Let's begin by pronouncing your name for me and telling us how you usually get where you are going each day (i.e., walk, drive your car, carpool, bike, take a bus, etc.).

Secondary question: What do you like about living in the Sacramento Region (quality of life indicators)?

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS (10 MINUTES)

1. When you think of “transportation” in the Sacramento region, what comes to mind?

What are some of the good things about transportation in this region?

What are some of the things you’d like to see improved?

ACTION QUESTIONS (20 MINUTES)

Let’s consider the idea of changing our transportation system in this region.

2. What do you think are the reasons something should be done about transportation?

[PROBE: cost increases with waiting; traffic congestion hurts business; air pollution; help people get places efficiently; danger of accidents; emergency preparedness]

3. What do you think are the reasons something should NOT be done about transportation in this region?

[PROBES: cost, futility, short-term fixes not sufficient; money should go elsewhere; congestion forces public transit use]

BEHAVIOR (40 MINUTES)

Now, let’s talk about your habits when it comes to transportation.

4. How many of you own a car? [ASK FOR A SHOW OF HANDS. RECORD HANDS]
- 4.b For those that own a car, how many cars are in your household? [ASK PER FAMILY UNIT]
- 4.c How many use it every day, or nearly every day? [ASK FOR A SHOW OF HANDS. RECORD HANDS]
- 4.d What are some ways you could reduce your car trips?
- 4.e What could be done in your community or neighborhood to help you reduce your car travel?
[PROBE: discount bus passes through your employer, bike path, safer sidewalks, etc.]
5. I am going to read a list of things other Sacramento residents have named as important to them if they were to consider making changes to their transportation habits. Listen to each one and consider how important it is for you personally. We can discuss them afterward.

Amenities

1. *Availability of wireless Internet on rail system (light rail, street car, commuter train)*
2. *Availability of wireless Internet on buses*

- 5.b. Is Wireless Internet important to you? Let’s talk for a minute about why or why not. [PROBE: Anything else you’d like to see besides Internet?]

Convenience

3. *If rail service came reliably every 15 minutes*
4. *If buses came reliably every 15 minutes*

5. *If a bus stop was within easy walking distance (5-15 minutes) of your home*
6. *If a rail station was within easy walking distance (5-15 minutes) of your home*

5.c. Are these (or other) issues of convenience important to you? Can you talk about that a little?

Time spent

7. *If your typical daily car trips took 25% longer
(If your commute is 30 minutes long, that means it would be about 8 minutes longer. If it is now 10 minutes, that means it would be about 3 minutes longer, if an hour, then about 15 minutes longer)*
8. *If your typical daily car trips took 50% longer
(If your commute is 30 minutes long, that means it would be about 16 minutes longer. If it is now 10 minutes, that means it would be about 6 minutes longer, if an hour, then about 30 minutes longer)*
9. *If the time for a trip by transit was the same as by car*
10. *If your typical daily trip by transit was 25% faster than by car*
11. *If your typical daily trip by transit was not more than 25% slower than using a car*

5.d. Is time spent traveling important to you when you choose how you'll make your daily trips? Can you talk about that a little?

Infrastructure

12. *If there were more and safer bicycle lanes*
13. *If there were better lighting and sidewalks*
14. *If the areas I have to go through were safer*

5.e. Would changing your area's infrastructure influence your habits? Can you talk about that a little?

Cost

15. *If the cost of parking doubled*
16. *If gas increased to \$3.50 a gallon*
17. *If you had to start paying for parking at work*
18. *If gas increased to \$4.50 a gallon*

5.f. How would costs like these impact your transportation habits?

5.g. Which of all the items I've listed resonated with you the most? What makes that the most important to you?

FINAL OPINIONS (20 MINUTES)

Let's stop for a moment and consider everything we have discussed in this group, and all the ideas it made you think about.

6. Given all you have said and heard, what changes in the region's transportation system are most important to you?
[PROBES: new roads, bike lanes, buses, light rail, commuter rail, carpool lanes, road maintenance, etc.]

7. What is the one most important message you have for the planners and policy makers in this region about transportation?

CLOSURE (5 MINUTES)

I have a question for you that I am curious about personally.

8. Did your feelings about the need to do something—or not do something—about transportation in this region change as a result of this discussion? [SHOW OF HANDS]
[PROBE: How did your opinion change? What caused the change?]

CONCLUSION

That concludes our discussion. I've enjoyed talking with all of you. On your way out, _____ will give you your thank you gift.

Moderator Discussion Guide (Spanish)

Hola. Gracias todo para venir y tomando parte en este debate en grupo del foco. Me llamo Irene Orozco y yo trabajo para una compañía en Boulder que se llama el Centro Nacional de Investigación. Wendy DuBow esta conmigo para tomar apuntes hoy.

Usted fue invitado a unir esta discusión porque usted vive en el área de Sacramento y maneja, el transporte público de la caminata o el cuento como parte de su vida cotidiana. un grupo que se llame el Concilio de Govenments patrocina este debate en grupo del foco tan ellos pueden aprender de usted lo que usted tiene interés en cuando viene al transporte y la planificación.

Grabaremos el registro que esta sesión para asegurar la certeza de sus comentarios en el aumento de valor nuestro informe. Sin embargo, su respuesta no será ligada con su nombre en ninguna manera. Todo que usted dice será mantenido estrictamente confidencial. Porque grabamos, puedo necesitar recordarle occaionallyto habla más alto o habla de uno en uno para que nosotros le podamos oír claramente cuando revisamos las cintas de la audiofrecuencia de la sesión.

Soy su guía, pero quero que la conversación esté entre todo ustedes. Cada vez yo hago una pregunta, no necesitamos andar alrededor la mesa para permitirles responder. Pero alguna que otra vez yo puedo verificar que tenemos una ocasión de oír de diferente personas, porque es importante que entendamos las perspectivas diferentes. Hay único # de ustedes, así que cada uno de sus perspectivas es importante oír. Si usted querría añadir a cualquier idea, o si usted tiene una idea que es diferente de otras ideas de personas, eso es el tiempo de saltar en la conversación.

[proptocal de alimento de mención, obsequio de dinero efectivo en el fin del grupo: 5:45 de la tarde].

HIELE CACHON (5 MINUTOS)

Empecemos dando su nombre y diciendo ha nosotros cómo usted obtiene generalmente donde usted va cada día (el ejemplo: la caminata, maneja su coche, el coche de uso compartido, la bicicleta, toma un autobús, etc.).

¿La pregunta secundaria: qué quiere usted acerca de vivir en la Región de Sacramento (la calidad de indicadores de vida)?

LAS PREGUNTAS INTRODUCTORIAS (10 MINUTOS)

1. ¿Cuándo usted piensa en el "transporte" en la región de Sacramento, que viene a Su mente?

¿De qué son algún lo bueno que tiene el transporte en esta región?

¿Qué es algunos de las cosas que usted querría ver mejorado?

LA ACCION PREGUNTA (20 MINUTOS)

Consideremos la idea de cambiar nuestros sistemas del transporte en esta región.

2. ¿Qué piensa usted es las razones que algo debemos ser hechas acerca del transporte?

[La TIENTA: el aumento del costo con esperar; la congestión del tráfico duele el negocio; la contaminación atmosférica; personas de ayuda obtienen los lugares effeciently; el peligro de accedents; la preparación de la emergencia]

3. ¿Qué piensa son las razones que algo no deben ser hechas acerca del transporte en esta región?

[La TIENTA: el costo, la inutilidad, fijar a corto plazo no suficiente; dinero debe ir en otra parte; las fuerzas de la congestión ust público de tránsito]

LA CONDUCTA (40 MINUTOS)

Ahora permítanos discutir acerca de sus hábitos cuando viene al transporte.

4. ¿Cuántos de usted tienen un coche? [pida una exposición de manos. ¿El registro entrega] Para ésos que tienen un coche, cuántos coches están en su casa? [pregunte por la unidad de la familia]

4. B. Cuántos de usted lo utiliza [la Exposición de manos. Registre]

4. C. ¿Qué es algunos de las maneras usted podría reducir su uso de este coche? [la exposición de manos. Registre]

4. D. ¿Qué se podría hacer en su ciudad o en el vecindario para ayudarlo a reducir sus viajes?

[LA TIENTA: autobús de descuento pasa la depresión su empleador, los carriles para ciclistas, las aceras más seguras, etc.]

5. Leeré una lista de cosas otros residentes de Sacramento ha han discutido los hábitos como son importantes. Escuche cada uno y considere cuán son importante para usted personalmente. Nosotros los podemos discutir después.

Los servicios

1. La disponibilidad del Internet radiofónico en baranda sistema (baranda de luz, coche de calle, el tren)
2. La disponibilidad del Internet radiofónico en autobuses.

5. B. ¿Están el Internet Radiofónico o algún otro servicio que sera importante a usted? No permítanos discutir para un minuto acerca de por qué ni acerca de por qué.

[*la TIENTA: ¿Algo más usted querría ver aparte del Internet?*]

La conveniencia

3. Si el servicio de baranda vino seguramente cada 15 minutos
4. Si autobuses vinieron seguramente cada 15 minutos
5. Si una paradero estaba dentro de la distancia caminante (5-15 minutos) de su casa.
6. Si una estación de baranda estaba fácil andar dentro de la distancia (5-15 minutos) de su casa.
7. Si una paradero estaba corto para maneja en un coche (15 minutos) de su casa con estacionamiento fácil.
8. Si una estación de baranda estaba corto para maneja en un coche (15 minutos) de su casa con estacionamiento fácil.

El tiempo gastó

9. Si sus viajes diarios típicos de coche tomaron 25% más largo (si su conmuta es 30 minutos de longitud, eso significa que estaría acerca de 8 minutos más largos. Si es ahora 10 minutos, eso significa que estaría acerca de 3 minutos más largos, si una hora, entonces acerca de 15 minutos más largos).
 10. Si sus viajes diarios típicos de coche tomaron 50% más largo (Si su conmuta es 30 minutos de longitud, eso significa que estaría acerca de 16 minutos más largos. Si es ahora 10 minutos, eso significa que estaría acerca de 6 minutos más largos, si una hora, entonces acerca de 30 minutos más largos).
 11. Si el tiempo para un viaje por tránsito fue igual que en coche
 12. Si su viaje diario típico por tránsito fue 25% más rápido que en coche.
 13. Si su viaje diario típico por tránsito no fue más de 25% más lento que utilizando un coche.
5. C. ¿Es gastado el tiempo viajando importante para ustedes cuando escoge cómo harán sus viajes diarios? ¿Puede hablar usted acerca de este un poco?

INFRAESTRUCTURA

14. ¿Si había más y carriles para ciclistas más seguros?
 15. ¿Si allía mayor luz y las aceras?
 16. ¿Si las áreas usted tuvo que caminar fueron más seguro?
5. D. ¿Cambiar influiría su infraestructura de área sus hábitos? ¿Puede hablar ustedes acerca de esto un poco?

EL COSTO

17. ¿Si el costo de estacionamiento duplicó?
 18. ¿Si gas aumentó a \$3,50 un galón?
 19. ¿Si usted tuvo que empezar pagando por estacionamiento en el trabajo?
 20. ¿Si gas aumentó a \$4,50 un galón?
- 5.E. ¿Cómo hace los costos como éstos impresionan sus hábitos del transporte?

5. F. ¿Cuál de todos los artículos yo he listado resonada con usted mas? ¿Qué marcas son muy importante para usted?

LAS PREGUNTAS FINALES (20 MINUTOS)

Permítanos la parada para un minuto y considera todo que hemos discutido en este grupo, y en todas las ideas que lo hizo usted pensar acerca de esto.

6. ¿Dado todo usted ha dicho y ha oído, cuántos de usted querría ver los cambios en el sistema del transporte de la región?

7. ¿Qué es el uno la mayoría de los mensajes importantes que usted tiene para los fabricantes de planificadores y política en esta región acerca del transporte?

EL CIERRE (5 MINUTOS)

Tengo una pregunta para usted que soy curioso acerca personalmente.

8. ¿Hizo sus sentimientos acerca de la necesidad de hacer algo - o no hacer algo - acerca de transportacion in este cambio de la región como resultado de esta discusión? [La exposición de manos]

[la TIENTA: ¿Cómo cambió su opinión? ¿Qué causó el cambio?]

LA CONCLUSION

Esto concluye nuestra discusión. He gustado hablar con todo ustedes. En su salida, Wendy le dará su regalo de gracias. Gracias.

Appendix II. Verbatim Messages to Policymakers and Planners

In keeping with the previously used script, participants were asked, “What is the one most important message you have for the planners and policy makers in this region about transportation?” Their responses are included verbatim below:

[African-American Group]

Participant 1: And the one thing I appreciate - remember when she [the Director of the Regional Transit] came here from Denver - and anytime something is brought to her attention, boy, you better believe she gets on it - and the one thing... my son has encountered her taking light rail, because she just doesn't rely on what people report to her, she gets on to see for herself what's going on and I think that is really significant to stay on top of things.

Participant 2: I drove for 20 years, and I'm tired of it. I would like to take a bus to the grocery store. Go right over here to the bus or the light rail or whatever, go pick things up and go back home. One very important thing I would like to mention is we could use more natural gas than the gasoline and diesel fuels and things, so we would be able to breathe and our trees would be more effective and we wouldn't have masses of fumes to deal with. And those things too, in terms of attitude: if the public transportation system could come up with a little slogan who tells passengers to be kind to other passengers. Like something that just said, “Be kind today. Help fellow passengers.” But something shorter than that. But something that they could just post in the light rail vehicles or the bus.

Participant 3: Serve all the people and not just some. Serve the people who are the most greatly impacted by these issues. But any issue that is going to have a direct impact on the majority of the people - that is who they need to be talking to, or their representatives. I would not hesitate for _____ to go to some meeting and say I represent _____ such and such, so they need to be talking to people who are directly impacted instead of somebody who is way over here - like I said - the good old girls group.

Participant 4: You know, as I've been sitting here listening, I feel that if the people in authority, that have the rules and how to make legislation for us, I think if generally they would look at their own body, their own physical body and let that be an analogy for the whole community because when you take something into your body all the parts of the members gets it. It may take a little while for it to get there, but nevertheless the nutrients all the parts are going to get. But to me, it looks as if they are just concerned about where they are and they are not looking at the whole part of the whole person- the whole community - because when it comes down to the whole structure we all make up the majority you know. But they are at the top and they are like, “Where are you all at?” We are all right but... If you stub your toe, all the members of your body are going to pay attention to it. You may not remember this fella right now, but all your attention is going to be drawn right to that member. Now people are not looking at us as a whole - as a body.

Participant 5: Ok. Now what they really need to take a look at, I think, is what areas do we serve well right now and what areas do we not serve well right now and I'm talking about public transportation ok. And then say ok, now how can we better serve these areas that aren't being well served and connect them to the areas that are being well served? That's not the way that the thinking seems to have been going recently. I know we are looking at the one across town three ways from Grant Line to 50. But that's only one avenue. And that is just for people who are going to be in vehicles. We still have to look at the poor folks on the ground.

Participant 6: Did you say how many people on the SACOG use the transportation system? Yes. Use the transportation system! I wonder if it would be possible for us to get that information? How many of them do actually use the transportation system. It would be good to know how many of them has gone out to see for themselves. Every person... This is a Fran Barker meeting, and every person at this table was called here by Fran Barker. I would like [someone from SACOG] to get back with me. Excuse me...927-9384 and I will see to it that all the others hear about it. However, everyone's telephone number is available and their addresses - I have all of them, so that SACOG will be able to keep every person at this table informed as to what is going on as a result of this forum. And also the information that you brought here and I did watch your program on Channel 3 when you had the town hall for SACOG. And I called all the people on the list that I invited to be here, to watch that as well.

[Asian-Pacific Islander Group]

Participant: More light rail stations and more bus stations.

Participant: More light rail stations. It is faster. You can get from area to area if they have a light rail. I took the light rail on the way to _____ this week and it took only half an hour. And they stop where you know ...

Participant: Light rail is much faster than the bus. And it is safer. Once you get in there... I think light rail has security. I don't think they have a gun or anything but they can give you a ticket. Light rail is more safety. They can give you a ticket. They kind of check, you know.

Participant: More bus stops.

Participant: If we had safer bike lanes. We could bike there if there were more paths.

Participant: A better schedule. They stop fast too! (Light rail). Not bumpy road, feel really smooth. More light rail. More faster. More safe. Always have a security or official with uniform.

Participant: More bus stops. Safer bike lanes, wider, bike racks.

Participant: Schedule translated, better instructions in languages.

Participant: Want to know that what we talk, if you gonna make it happen.

Participant: Make us think about other ways and possibilities. But only if you change it.

Participant: Need information about the when the last bus comes. Needs more shelters for rainy days.

[Low Income Group (Sacramento)]

Participant 1: Put your money where it's supposed to go.

Participant 2: Yeah. Catch the bus and see how you feel about it.

Participant 3: Yeah. Make it more convenient to people and safer.

Participant 4: Walk in our shoes and then we'll see.

Participant 5: Spend a day - not in your working uniform - and then you'll get more respect from us. Be in your street clothes and see how many people you are appalled by if you were in our shoes.

Participant 4: Walk in our shoes for a day.

- Participant 5: *Oh, I'd say for a month!*
- Participant 4: *Make them really suffer, huh?*
- Participant 6: *Make them pay out of their own pockets. Don't take it out of their checks.*
- Participant 5: *Make them come and do what we do. 30 days.*
- Participant 6: *Take it for a month. A monthly pass and don't get that state raise because I know it's cheaper - buy it for the full price and see how it is. They won't like it. Believe me they won't like it.*
- Participant 7: *Get on that light rail.*
- Participant 4: *Get on that light rail and you'll hear a lot of stories. You'll see a lot of weird people. You'll see... I don't judge but it's crazy. They [bus drivers] are rude. You'll get off the light rail and some of these bus drivers they'll take off. They won't even wait for the light rail - they'll just take off and I don't know... We have a place downtown ...the ones from the big house in the capitol, get their license plates and everything. Then they also have a vehicle free service and our taxes pay for that. Why can't they go draw a number and sit like we all do to wait for our number to be drawn to go get our tags. They are making decisions on our lives and they don't really know how it is. They are living up here and we are down here. Way down here. They are eating and driving on our taxes. Tell them to walk in our shoes!*

[Low Income Group (Placerville)]

- Participant 1: *Don't wait until 2030. I'd like to be alive to enjoy it! Consider the traffic impact at the time something is being changed or being built. And as much as possible, make that construction or that change at least partially compensate for the increased traffic flow. As has been mentioned several times around here, there is housing going in with no increase in access to that housing at all and we do have one positive example and that's Wal-Mart and that is that it does make a difference to make that development pay for the traffic. Wal-Mart was willing to do it. I'm cheap. I would scream and I would yell if I was the developer, but you know what? If there's no choice. You want to social engineer, then I'd start there.*
- Participant 2: *What I was thinking about while we were talking is that I always think it would be nice if the light rail came up the hill, but actually, I think it would be nice if our own county did something and not worry about having it come up. I think it was always that we have Bart too and you can get to Pittsburgh or wherever. People just need to take care of their own transportation issues. I mean that would be good. Like making more buses. I never hear anyone ever advertise anything about the buses for example, so how would you even know about it unless you see one about? Or like your idea of having a shuttle. I mean they always do it when there is a fair or something like at Christmas time, but I always look at it this way, which is probably really negative, but it's all the people moving in to town. The people who live here already - we never get anything like that. It's the new people coming in from everywhere so they get the little bus and during the Christmas time all the people come in to go shop. You know what I mean? I just don't think it is for the people who live here. But the perks are for the other people. We are all very local in all of our discussion. Maybe that's what you wanted, but I can't help thinking of Placerville is less than 10,000 people, but yet there is 150,000 plus on the Western Slope. This is the County Seat and everybody is coming into here to do all of their major business and then from here going down to Sacramento the roads are terrible. 50 is horrible. I think something needs to be done connecting us to the major centers down there in the Valley. I don't know what. I*

don't know how, but I think that's what is definitely needed. Well, everybody's ideas up to me have been all my ideas so the only thing left I can think of is to kind of expand on Diane's is maybe a car pooling from Placerville all the way down to Sacramento because it stops in Eldorado Hills and then we get all the congestion. So just adding in the car-pooling all the way up.

Participant 3: I would suggest that both city and county get together when they are doing their transportation planning and improvements and both have a general consensus as to what needs to be done so it is not so crazy like with the traffic lights and stuff. I think that if both county and state work together with their improvements things would flow more easily. Right? Not just so much, well this is county and this is city and this is government you know. I think they should all come into one so they are not fighting against each other basically. When you said about the Sacramento people coming up... and 30 years ago they talked about the people from Sacramento coming up and they were going to build a freeway coming up over. That's been 30 years ago and then just last year they decided to take down the overpass and the overpass was down in like 2 weeks time... like they just took it down. The other problem with them taking so long to make the improvements is that by the time they get to that point there is other improvements that need to be made because of that long time frame you know. So the improvements are being made and those are improvements for when they started the plan and now there is a whole new set of improvements needing to be made because they took so long to make those plans!

[Low Income Group (Yuba City)]

Participant 1: To me make the highways a real highway. Make 99 a real highway and 70 a real highway and 65 a real highway. Freeways. Freeways. Make the highways bigger. I'd like an East/West, North/South railway system. A light rail system. I think I'd like a rail system. That would be awesome. I want to say improving the highways. Yeah. As much as I hate to see them get bigger, it has to. It has to.

Participant 2: That sounds good. Better highways. They said they would do that too when they talked about the light rail. And maybe if they did a light rail all over, then maybe the gas will go up.

Participant 3: Well, I got to question you. You got these people here. I think a politician should have been here from the City Council or the Supervisors [to listen to us talk]. Like they said in the election, I don't think everyone here has forgotten about it, but the number one topic was the levee's because that was politics and so forth.

Participant 4: As far as transportation there is no one simple answer. It needs to be better transportation which means more lanes, better lanes or like you mentioned freeways. Freeways means you can get on there and go and you don't have so many exits and I think she talked about Highway. 70 north of Marysville or from here to Live Oak, you have 99, which is only a two-lane road you know. Which is just ridiculous. You need real interstates. 99 should be a real interstate just like I-5 is and 65 and 70 also.

Participant 5: *I'm leaning more towards the railways because honestly if you turn 99 and 70 into a bigger freeway... 99 is running right through the middle of town. Honestly...I would do railways before I would increase the highway.*

Participant 6: *I'm sitting here with _____. [agrees with railways]*

[Native American Indian Group]

Participant 1: *There are problems with freeways, there are problems with busses, there are problems with light rail. I traveled to Sacramento my whole life, even when I didn't live here and we could go to the snow or up to Tahoe in the summer and you come down - especially during the summer and we never saw, at least I don't remember seeing from Placerville where you can finally see down, like huge amounts of pollution and the last time I was like, "Are we living in LA now?"*

Participant 2: *This is the new LA. I mean we have a lot of areas that are getting heavily populated just like that. And especially - my opinion is like, this is California, anyone that lives here, you just think like everything - you hear about the traffic in LA and all these other things, but all those major cities, San Francisco, LA, San Diego and whatever, from what I know and from what I've experienced in any of those cities were very good. At least modernized infrastructures for transportation. And then here is Sacramento just like ...edging up a little bit as soon as they can get a budget fixed or as soon as we can get someone to plan something in 2035 you know.*

Participant 3: *But it's a worker mentality because they feel and truly believe on some level that the only people that use public transportation are people below a certain income level. So therefore there is not as much drive to go and develop all of this and make it better because the only people using it are the people who can't pay taxes anyway. But I see that, not in education as a system, but the general public hasn't been educated on all these other places that use it and it is not the lower rungs of society that use public transportation. In New York everybody uses public transportation. Even CEOs of companies and I just think that is an education issue that maybe it is the government that hasn't educated the people enough on what it could be like. They need to look at what the population is going to be 40 years from now and plan to accommodate that number of people. Not just the number of people who are here today.*

Participant 4: *I say overhaul and educate. Educate the public on what is being done. Educate the public on air quality and how it can be accomplished. How you can actually lower the bad quality of air by riding mass transit, but at the same time overhauling the system so that it is more accessible to a great population.*

Participant 5: *I agree. Mainly it is just making it accessible for anyone who wants to ride on it. To be able to get to where they need to be in reasonable amount of time. Taking the cars out of the mix, all you have to do is offer it at a comparable time because if I could get to work in 45 minutes, and I was able to do so without having all these obstacles in the way I would do it and it's just getting everywhere I need to go. Being able to do that on public transit - that would make me want to do it and I'm sure it would make everyone else want to do it.*

Participant 6: One thing that I really think is I was just thinking of Sacramento when I moved here was like it is so close to the Bay and so close to the mountains and it was so nice to live here because it was right in the middle. But now all I do is want to go to the Bay or go to the mountains and get out of the valley because even just the quality of air and I think like with the transportation like we are the State Capitol of the most economically ...we could set an example here and I think that's what's the most important thing. I think that we need to look at other cities of course to make an example but we have the chance now to say we can clean up everything and set an example for the whole United States because I always thought that whatever starts in California spreads out. So if they were to start something here and to say...it always seems to be about cost. Like oh, well we got to count the cost. Well, everything costs money. What if we just start in Sacramento - the Capitol - and just to be able to have that route that goes north and south and east and west without having such trouble would be awesome.

[Hispanic/Latino Group (Woodland)]

Participant 1: Hurry up! I think the policy makers should interview the people that would take the bus / transportation. They are driving their Mercedes. I know the policy makers are not taking the bus. If they are going to implement regulations, they should talk to the real people who take public transportation.

Participant 2: Surveys. If all of us here were to call on the office of [bus transportation] I think we'd send a strong message. I need to tell them we need more buses / routes. If one uses a bus pass. It would be quicker to get on...instead of having to pull out change. If you place it [pass] in your badge - you would have easy access to it. There should be a phone number that one could call in to voice their comments / opinions. There are no seat belts on those buses. We don't feel safe having our children on [city buses]. An accident could happen. They need seat belts. I agree with what everyone has said. I like the comment that was made regarding a call-in number we could call if the bus driver is rude. You never know when they come to work in a bad mood!

Participant 3: I like that you are here to listen to us. Because the reality is - that if we don't talk about this...things will continue to be the same. And if they don't listen...well then... I'd like to send the message that they continue what they've started this. Think about all the pollution and traffic we'll have in the future if nothing changes. I hope they do something more state of the art. As time goes on...everything changes...like technology...the cost.

Participant 4: They should know what the average person who takes the bus - has to experience. Not take too long to do something about the lack of public transportation in their area. Not raise the fares. Make it more affordable and reliable. Extend light rail service to the woodland and/or outlying areas. That they take/ride public transportation and not ride around in their Mercedes. So sometimes, for the rules and regulations, they need to talk with people first and see how it impacts personal lives.

Participant 5: Honestly interview the people, some on the bus who use it daily; it affects people's lives. I think it's crucial to get people's opinions who use the bus on daily basis. Interview riders and do surveys. Now, they say, We are not hearing [a problem] because we are driving our nice cars to our jobs.

[Hispanic/Latino Group (Sacramento)]

*Participant 1: Growth and development has brought issues. Last five years has made a change, south extension has tried to help. But by the time something is implemented, it will be a long time from now *(i.e, 5 years)Just like there are so many people moving into the city, there is more traffic, congestion, pollution, garbage. It is obvious that public transportation is not just going to be a want, but rather a necessity. Educate the bus drivers.*

Participant 2: The growth / development. I think that they (SACOG) are trying to address regional traffic. Growth is faster. I think our money (taxes) like _____ said earlier should go toward improving transportation or things that benefit us here. It really makes no sense to build another Arena, like Arco Arena. Arco Arena is fine. It appears that the money is not going towards things that would benefit us. Here is Sac...many people say it's boring, not much to see here. They should invest in our city, not spend money on things that don't matter. They should thinking of the people, and what they need here. They should wait until the situation has reached the extreme. Then it would be late. Think ahead. I agree...I think they should do something now. When I arrived in 1985 they had just begun building the light rail. That was 20 years ago. I hope they don't wait that long this time. Think we should put them on the bus and live what we live. They should put themselves in our shoes. They feel our frustration when the bus has past us by and wouldn't stop.

Participant 3: Also, take their children and not give enough time to get on the bus. They usually ask us to hurry. If they this happens to them....then things will definitely change. Don't wait but do it now. Give more routes while we are waiting for the rest to happen. Take away their cars and let them try to get places. Especially if they have kids and have limited time, then see how it goes. If they do this, they will get on it right away and make change happen. It won't take 30 years.

Participant 4: I would like to see a change now because the pollution is increasing. I don't want to see people not do anything.

Appendix III. Information Resources Mentioned

SACOG wanted to know where people obtained information about transportation and other issues. A general question on this topic was added to the last seven focus groups.

Community center representatives from non-English speaking populations expressed a desire to be more informed about public transportation options and procedures, so they could be resources for their communities. Participants in the environmental justice focus groups shared where they tended to get information. In general, their preferred sources were:

- Newspapers
- Bill inserts
- Highway billboards
- Signs on buses in multiple languages
- An information helpline in their language of choice (e.g., Spanish, Cantonese, Hmong, Russian, Mandarin)
- Presentations open to the public in local community centers or neighborhood gathering places

Information Sources by Group

Asian-Pacific Islander

- Community Center
- Post Office
- A public workshop on bus travel in Cantonese
- Library
- DMV
- Asian or American market
- Newspaper
- Public Health
- Career Center
- Unemployment Center

Low Income (Placerville)

- Newspapers

Native American Indian

- Internet
- Community Meetings
- Newspaper
- Mailings/postcards
- Highway billboards
- Universities
- Radio
- Television
- PowWows
- Indian Education Center

Hispanic/Latino (Woodland)

- Maps describing bus routes
- Information posted at bus stops
- Mailer/fliers
- Information Helpline
- Community Centers and Clinics
- Mexican and American markets
- Newspaper
- Internet
- Brochures
- Television
- Phonebook
- Radio
- Highway billboards

Hispanic/Latino (Sacramento)

- Mail
- Radio
- Newspapers
- Television

- Highway billboards
- Schools
- Public Broadcast Network
- Bus advertising
- Public meeting
- Community centers
- Phonebook