

# Non-Motorized Transportation

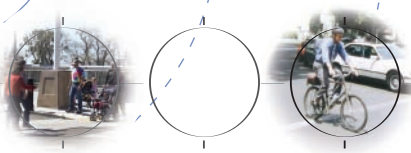
SACRAMENTO REGION  
**MTP2035**  
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN  
THE NEXT STEP IN BLUEPRINT

ISSUE BRIEF

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This paper explores the issues and choices that underlie the expansion of bicycle and pedestrian (non-motorized) facilities through the life of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Good planning involves anticipating future needs correctly because transportation planning decisions can be self-fulfilling. If we expect demand to become more diverse we will implement different policies, helping to create a more balanced transportation system.

*This brief highlights the non-motorized transportation issues being studied for the MTP2035. For the complete Non-Motorized Transportation Issue Paper visit [www.sacog.org/mtp/2035](http://www.sacog.org/mtp/2035)*



Walking and bicycling conditions are affected by the quantity and quality of sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes and paths, system connectivity, the security and attractiveness of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and support features such as secure bike parking and shower facilities.

## The Current Non-motorized Transportation System and its Use

Of nine million daily trips in the Sacramento region, 100,000 (1 percent) are bicycle trips and 450,000 (5 percent) are pedestrian trips. Many people—youth, elderly, disabled, low income, or those who do not have access to an automobile—are dependent on walking and bicycling to access goods, services, activities, and destinations such as transit, medical services, education and employment. As the region's population grows beyond two million, total travel demand will continue to grow. If highway congestion continues to worsen, driving costs increase (delay and parking), and we improve the bicycle and pedestrian network, bicycling may become more attractive.

## How Non-motorized Modes Complement Other Transportation Modes

The ultimate goal of a good transportation system is accessibility. In many situations, the best way to improve transportation is to improve



walking and bicycling access to transit as well as employment centers, schools and other major destinations. When activity centers become congested, all modes complement each other, serving specific types of trips, instead of competing. Every trip involves non-motorized segments, either as the primary mode or as a portion of the total trip—walking to/from a transit stop or parking lot—so walking and cycling conditions in part determine the accessibility of any destination.

### **Non-motorized Expansion and Land Use**

Blueprint land use policies support improved connectivity as a way to increase land use accessibility. More compact land uses and non-motorized connections can shorten trips and change travel choices: SACOG estimated that its Preferred Blueprint Alternative for 2050 would result in 13 percent of trips being by bicycle and walking, 3 percent by transit, and 84 percent by auto. Efforts to increase connectivity and accessibility must overcome the common preference for residential cul-de-sac streets. Cul-de-sacs limit access to and from neighborhoods, especially by bicyclists and pedestrians, by increasing the travel time and distances between destinations. Public investment in non-motorized facilities and a well connected transportation system can make mixed-use, compact, and transit oriented developments fit into the community and function better. Market studies have shown that there is growing demand for non-motorized oriented development.

### **Environmental Effects of Non-motorized Transportation**

An increase in non-motorized transportation reduces energy consumption and pollution emissions; it also reduces the amount of land needed for roads and parking facilities preserving open space, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources (e.g. historic buildings).

### **Social Effects of Non-motorized Transportation**

Walking and bicycling provide basic mobility and are particularly important for people who are transportation disadvantaged. Poor walking conditions can contribute to social exclusion—the physical, economic and social isolation of vulnerable populations. Increases in walking and bicycling will result in improved public health from increased exercise and



improved air quality. With more people out of their cars and physically on the streets and sidewalks there is also increased neighborhood interaction and community cohesion.

### **Economic Effects of Non-motorized Transportation**

Motor vehicle use imposes various public costs for road and parking facilities: traffic congestion, crash risk and environmental damages. Congestion adds delay cost on top of the higher cost of driving. The Texas Transportation Institute reports that the average Sacramento commuter loses \$374 annually due to time spent in congestion. High parking and fuel costs also add to the cost of driving. Good walking/biking conditions allow consumers to save on vehicle expenses. Non-motorized facilities can also increase nearby property values and help attract residents and businesses that value environmental quality, physical fitness and outdoor recreation.

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### **Funding for Non-motorized Facilities Expansion**

Better counting of walking and bicycling trips may recognize more usage. Given the state's reluctance to fund non-motorized transportation facilities, it is more likely that local transportation funding must be found to meet the financial needs of an expanded non-motorized transportation system for the region. Non-motorized facility improvements, because they serve multiple purposes, can be included in other budgets, such as: recreation, developer impact fees, transit, the state's Safe Routes to Schools program, and public health.



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