

Public Subsidies for Parking Structures

November 3, 2008

To: MTC Sub-committee on Economics and Pricing and Advisory Council

From Sherman Lewis, Committee Chair

I recommend that the Committee and Advisory Council ask MTC, to request that the CARB study and approve new state policy to discourage Public Subsidies for Parking Structures.

Resolution: The Advisory Council asks that MTC request the State of California promulgate a policy to discourage or prevent public subsidies to parking structures. Such a policy could state
Public subsidies to parking structures encourage more driving and more carbon emissions. Any place attracting enough trips for a parking structure also can be served by transit. Therefore the State of California opposes / discourages state and local governments from building subsidized parking structures and recommends using transit for access.

My immediate reason for pursuing this is that California State University East Bay, Hayward Hills Campus (CSUEB Hayward) is planning to build a parking structure and is not studying seriously any transit alternative. The issues, however, apply to all subsidized parking structures.

I have done a great deal of research and I believe that CSUEB Hayward has potential funding for frequent, all-day, rapid bus using parking fines, parking fees, and class pass. I have given this research to those planning a new campus master plan and have not received a reply.

The system would initially go between the campus and Hayward BART, expand to South Hayward BART, and then make additional extensions as ridership justifies.

Rapid bus would be faster than car travel based on number of innovations to speed the service (details available on request).

Students now pay \$60 per quarter to park. With rapid bus, they could continue to pay \$60, or they could ride the bus free of charge (class pass). Students would be able to park their cars at park-and-ride lots close to the campus. Bus service would be every five minutes or more frequent.

The campus administration has talked with AC Transit, which rejected a request to realign Route 92 to Carlos Bee Blvd. because of strong ridership on the existing alignment along Second St. AC Transit buses cannot come up Carlos Bee Blvd. faster than about 20 miles per hour, and the trip duration is much longer than rapid bus. The cost is about \$148 per hour, compared to MV Transportation in Union City at about \$68 per hour.

The administration is doing an EIR on a parking structure which will probably have to be cross-subsidized by parking fees from surface parking. Those same fees could be used for transit, and at

a much lower cost per trip. A parking structure for 1,100 spaces would cost about \$15 per space per work day. A 6 bus transit system would cost about \$1.40 per round trip rider. (Spreadsheet financial analyses sent on request.)

Campuses are ideal locations for transit access; they cover a relatively small area with a dense population of mostly younger, healthy people. CSUEB Hayward can grow based on more parking strictures and more traffic to campus, or based on transit. Transit also saves land for residences, class rooms, and recreational green space.

Whenever a parking structure is built, it attracts traffic relative to a transit solution. This traffic adds to congestion and preempts road space needed for development not feasibly served by transit. The City of Hayward is planning for several hundred acres of land surplus from a proposed, now defunct, freeway. Some development of this 238 corridor will be car-dependent, and some can use transit. If CSUEB Hayward works with the City of Hayward, more 238 surplus land development could be transit based. But with parking structures, the university preempts road space needed for redevelopment and increases congestion, reducing access to the campus itself.

The State of California has just begun the process of planning for decarbonization. In October the Air Resource Board released the Final Scoping Plan to meet the goals of AB 32.

Now it is appropriate for the state to get more specific and, among other things, oppose public subsidies for parking structures.

It is increasingly urgent that human society deal with global warming. The costs to date are already high in weather damage, permanent loss of land to higher sea levels, extensive decline of species, depleting oil resources, health and safety costs, economic inefficiency due to environmental externalities, and military costs. Carbon is building up faster than previously predicted. Little real progress has been made. Yet under duress of higher prices California drivers dramatically lowered gasoline purchases in a short span of time . We have the ability to change, but so far we lack the will.

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