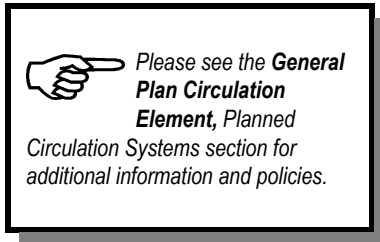




AQ 13.3 Encourage the construction of high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes whenever necessary to relieve congestion, safety hazards and air pollution as described in the AQMP.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITY DEVELOPMENT



Regionally, transportation facility development means increasing capacity through the expansion of highway and transit systems to meet population and land use demand. Though major construction projects often require massive capital investment, mobility and capacity are increased. These projects include: major highways in high growth regions, construction of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes where severe traffic problems occur, and the construction of rapid transit corridors and facilities. Unfortunately, this strategy responds slowly to changing demands on the transportation system and may burden the region with debt.

Estimates for the development of additional facilities and systems over the next twenty years call for billions of dollars in investment. While federal government spending will account for a large portion of the funding required, additional revenues will have to be raised through a variety of means, including the gas tax, sales tax, user fees, tolls and bonds.

The costs of regional transportation projects also include growth in population, housing and services, and their impact on the transportation system. This raises traffic volume to or above the system's designed capacity while decaying air quality. When major transit corridors become congested, for example, daily commuters take alternate routes to avoid traffic delays. Once a new route becomes operational, commuters abandon these alternative routes for the new or improved systems until they too become congested. However, trying to build out of this situation does not solve the problem because it fuels an unbridled cycle of more growth, traffic, transportation facility development and smog. Continued transportation facility development results in increased growth, higher taxes, and minimal net gains in mobility for each dollar spent. All of this only lessens the chances for good air quality.

Just as there is a need regionally, capital improvements are also required locally to keep traffic moving and reduce emissions. It is the intent of the County to continue such improvements. However, the County recognizes that large construction projects are not always the best option for meeting transportation demands and that other, less expensive alternatives, are sometimes available. These alternatives include demand management, transportation systems management, and strategies to improve the job/housing ratio. While the County cannot meet all of its mobility and air pollution challenges using these alternatives, they may supplement needed capital improvements to help meet the County's transportation demands.

The transportation facility development required must improve mobility by encouraging multiple-occupancy vehicle use and alternative travel modes for both short and long trips. Therefore, the County must emphasize construction projects such as single purpose, high occupancy vehicle lanes, park-n-ride lots, light rail and bus routes. It should also give priority to bicycle paths and trails,



pedestrian overpasses, and bus turnouts. These projects improve mobility and air quality by encouraging efficient transportation use.

Policies:

- AQ 14.1 Emphasize the use of high occupancy vehicle lanes, light rail and bus routes, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities when using transportation facility development to improve mobility and air quality.
- AQ 14.2 Utilize facility development programs only when the County cannot substitute Transportation Demand Management, Transportation Systems Management, or job/housing balance strategies.
- AQ 14.3 Monitor traffic and congestion to determine when and where the County needs new transportation facilities to achieve increased mobility efficiency.
- AQ 14.4 Preserve transportation corridors with the potential of high demand or of regional significance for future expansion to meet project demand. (AI 53)

PARTICULATE MATTER

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines particulate matter (PM) as either airborne photochemical precipitates or windborne dust. Consisting of tiny solid or liquid particles of soot, dust, smoke, fumes, and aerosols, common sources of PM are manufacturing and power plants, agriculture, diesel trucks and other vehicles, construction sites, fire and windblown dust. Generally PM settles from atmospheric suspension as either particulate or acid rain and fog that has the potential to damage health, crops, and property. Particulate of 2.5 microns or smaller (2.5 microns is approximately equal to .000098 inches) may stay suspended in the air for longer periods of time and when inhaled can penetrate deep into the lungs. Among the health effects related to PM_{2.5} are premature death, decreased lung function and exacerbation of asthma and other respiratory tract illnesses.

Particulate sized between 2.5 and 10 microns (10 microns is approximately equal to .0004 inches), known as PM₁₀ also pose a great risk to human health. PM₁₀ can easily enter the air sacs in the lungs where they may be deposited, resulting in an increased risk of developing cancer, potentially changing lung function and structure, and possibly exacerbating preexisting respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. It can also irritate the eyes, damage sensitive tissues, sometimes carry disease, and may even cause premature death. PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ are especially hazardous to the old, young and infirmed.

Although it produces less than 10% of the South Coast Air Basin's particulate matter, western Riverside County, which is part of the SOCAB, exceeds federal standards more than any other urban area in the nation, and has the highest particulate concentration in the SOCAB. These high levels of particulate matter are largely imported from the urbanized portions of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. This imported particulate is generally composed of photochemical precipitates rather than dust, smoke or soot. Riverside County is also responsible