



U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration

Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program (Transit in the Parks Program)

Planning Project - Proposal for Fiscal Year 2011 Funds

BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION		
Project Name (Please provide a 1-2 sentence description of the project): Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin Through Alternative Transportation Systems. A grant funding request to plan for equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica National Recreation Area.		
Proposed Funding Recipient: USDA Forest Service		
Public land unit(s) involved: Angeles National Forest Cleveland National Forest Los Padres National Forest San Bernardino National Forest Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area	<u>Location of Project</u> City: All communities and cities within the greater Los Angeles Basin County: Kern, Los Angeles, Monterey, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura State: California Congressional District: 17, 22 – 50, 52, 53	
Federal Land Management Agency managing the above unit(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Land Management <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Reclamation <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and Wildlife Service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forest Service <input type="checkbox"/> National Park Service <input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g. Federal Trust) Describe:	Type of Project: (Implementation projects, please use the alternate form) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposal is to plan for a possible new alternative transportation system where none currently exists. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposal is to plan for a possible enhancement of an existing alternative transportation system.		
Transit in Parks Program Funding Requested during FY 2011 \$296,500	Total Cost of Planning Project at Completion (All sources) \$310,000 (Includes FS Staff support from program funding)	
Were you awarded Transit in Parks Program funds for this project in the past? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If answer "Yes," please provide amount awarded: \$250,000		
Do you plan to request additional Transit in Parks Program funds in future years? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Note: If you wish to compete for future Transit in Parks Program fiscal year funds you must reapply) The completed project will identify priority implementation projects within potential destination zones linking residents of the Los Angeles basin to surrounding forest destinations via efficient transit. Those projects may seek future Transit in Parks Program funds but anticipated funding levels are unknown at this time. If answer "Yes," please specify Transit in Parks Program proposed funding levels for out years below:		
FY 2012 \$	FY 2013 \$	FY 2014 \$

FY 2011 Funding Amounts from sources other than Transit in Parks Program funds? Yes No
 If answer "Yes," please specify funding levels per source below:

State \$	Local \$	Federal (other than Transit in Parks Program) \$12,250 (FS Staff Support for Transit Planning with Community Groups in California)	Private sources \$1,250 (City Project Staff Support)
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OTHER PROJECT SPONSORS (in addition to funding recipient)

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REQUIREMENTS

- If a State, Tribal, or local government entity is proposing the project, the applicant has contacted the manager of the Federal land unit(s) and has the consent of the Federal land management agency or agencies affected.
- The project is consistent with the metropolitan and statewide planning process.
- The project is consistent with agency plans.
- The planning project will analyze all reasonable alternatives, including a non-construction option.

BASIC PROJECT DATA

Number of Visitors (Annual): Using 2006 National Use Visitor Monitoring (NVUM) estimated annual NF visits for each forest is as follows: Angeles: 3,181,000 Cleveland: 480,000 Los Padres: 924,000 San Bernardino: 2,443,000 The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area had 504,444 visitors in 2008. Total estimated annual visitors for all areas: 7,532,444	Daily Number of Visitors (Peak season): National Visitor Use Monitoring data is collected on annual visitation basis. Averaging the annual use over the year, the daily number of visitors would be 20,637.
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Average Number of Vehicles per Day at Peak Visitation: **Using the average daily visitor number and the national average number of people per vehicle (1.71)¹ there are an estimated 12,068 vehicles per day on the four forests.**

Current Road Level of Service at Peak Visitation: **Some forest access is via the California State Highway system although these routes are typically two lanes, narrow (minimal shoulder) and winding. Other heavily used National Forest routes vary between maintenance levels 3 to 5 meaning road design and maintenance considers federal highway safety standards and some level of user comfort. Generally, all routes are two-laned with minimal shoulders.**

What time of the year does your land unit experience Peak Visitation?

Spring Summer Fall Winter

Southern California's temperate climate allows recreation to occur year-round on the Forests. Peak visitation occurs on any weekend when temperatures climb in the LA Basin and folks seek higher elevation and water recreation resources to cool down. The forests with specific snow-play and winter recreation areas have high winter use in addition to other year-round recreation use. For example, the Idyllwild Nature Center (a 250-acre Riverside County Park adjacent to San Bernardino NF lands) had approximately 10,000 visitors over one snowy weekend (Saturday/Sunday) in January of 2011. (Based on total monies collected at \$2 per adult and \$1 per child for paying visitors.)

Current Carrying Capacity of Existing Roads: **Unknown**

What percent of that capacity is the site operating at during peak periods? **Unknown**

Current parking shortages during peak visitation: **Anecdotal information indicates parking shortages and overflow parking on road shoulders is common during peak visitation adversely impacting vegetation along forest roads.**

Current Number of Persons who use the alternative transportation system (if one already exists) at peak visitation: **There are no alternative transportation systems in place for access to or within any of the public lands in the project area. One public transit agency serves communities within the San Bernardino National Forest but does not include forest destinations on its route. Please see Appendix A for route and ridership data specific to this transit program.**

Estimated Annual Number of Persons who will use the alternative transportation system at project completion: **Will determine with this planning study. (City to forest recreation destination zones will be identified with this project based on populations in highest need of access along the most feasible routes. Ridership estimates will contribute to feasibility assessment.)**

Average number of auto collisions with wildlife in the area? **Unknown**

¹ Transportation Energy Data Book: Edition 29-2010. Chapter 8. Available at: http://cta.ornl.gov/data/tedb29/Edition29_Chapter08.pdf

Executive Summary

This is a grant-funding request to plan for equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. This planning project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities to provide equitable access to public lands, relieve congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

This grant will fund a transportation analysis of the potential for modifying existing, or planning new, public transportation options connecting the Los Angeles Basin to recreation destinations on the Forests. This includes evaluating diverse community outdoor recreation activity and infrastructure needs and/or desires, as well as identifying the most feasible transportation routes to the nearest national forest. It will also include assessing the existing transit infrastructure and the existing recreation site infrastructure to determine where modifications can be made to link the two. Multiple destination zones will be identified, linking urban-proximate areas via efficient transit routes to forest destinations.

The four forests of southern California, Angeles, San Bernardino, Cleveland and Los Padre, and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area constitute five of the most urban-influenced forests in the United States, serving an increasingly diverse population of over 20 million people who live within an hour's drive. Their combined total of almost 4 million acres of open space is an invaluable resource to the densely populated and highly urbanized environment of the Los Angeles Basin. For example, the Angeles National Forest and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area compose 84 percent of all park space within Los Angeles County. When temperatures rise, urban residents with personal transportation head to higher and cooler elevations such as the San Gabriel Canyon where water recreation resources offer relief from the heat of the LA Basin.

These forests have the capacity to provide the surrounding communities a place to engage in healthy outdoor recreation, experience the natural environment, experience solitude and escape the daily stresses of urban living. However, despite these forests' immediate proximity to densely populated, urban communities in the Los Angeles Basin, public transportation to recreation destinations in the forests is essentially non-existent.²

The effects of the absence of public transit to southern California's national forests are twofold. People of color and low-income communities in southern California disproportionately lack access to a vehicle to drive themselves and their families to forest recreation destinations. Without convenient public or alternative transportation options, access to the Forests' rich recreation resources are unattainable for many. In addition, with 2.4 million visitors to these four forests, traffic congestion and limited parking capacity during peak seasons adversely impact visitor experience and environmental conditions on the forests.

President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative³ and the National Forest's Framework for Sustainable Recreation (Framework)⁴ both speak to an increasingly urbanized American population losing its connection to the beneficial contributions of public lands including the basic natural resources that positively affect their lives. One of this project's main goals is to look for opportunities to engage the interest of the diverse population in the Los Angeles Basin with outdoor recreation on public lands and streamline their access via public transportation, while relieving existing parking and traffic congestion issues for current visitors. In some cases, pedestrian safety is also a concern.⁵

The benefits of outdoor recreation for American society are needed more today than ever before. Physical activity is an integral part of a healthy lifestyle, and outdoor recreation on our national forests is an important part of the Nation's existing wellness infrastructure. Increasing opportunities for all Americans to access nearby national forests or other outdoor spaces, particularly in highly urbanized environments, is an essential tool in the Nation's battle against the obesity epidemic and an integral part of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move Outside!" campaign.

Connecting highly urbanized populations such as metropolitan Los Angeles to National Forests is vital to remind people of the natural resources that sustain life – water, soil, food and fiber. Recreation is the portal for understanding and caring for natural resources and public lands. Without safe, efficient and environmentally sustainable transportation systems for all Americans to access their public land, the commitment to stewardship of our shared natural legacy will be lost.

The product of this grant will enable the four southern California national forests to contribute to the Framework's fourth focus area, Invest in Special Places. It will identify strategic investments in transportation resources to provide diverse public access to this treasured landscape and leverage partnerships for additional resources and sustainable funding.

² Public Transportation to Local National Forest, 2004. <http://www.cityprojectca.org/pdf/uscgeogstudy.pdf>

³ <http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov/>

⁴ http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/news/connecting_people_with_americas_great_outdoors_june_2010.pdf

⁵ Federal Lands Alternative Transportation Systems Study, A Summary of Forest Service ATS Needs, 2004.

Project Description

In 2010, the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region submitted a TRIP Planning Proposal for a programmatic assessment of transit expansion opportunities for all the national forests in California. As the grant was awarded at approximately half the requested amount, the focus of that project will be limited to the central Sierra region of California. In consideration of the significant transit needs in terms of population and equity issues related to public lands access, the Forest Service is submitting this FY2011 planning proposal funding request to assess transit opportunities specific to the four national forests in southern California, including the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

The geographic scope of this planning project will include the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and the four southern California national forests: Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino (the Forests). A map can be found in the appendix.

The Forests completed a joint land management plan effort in 2005⁶. This proposed transit-planning project supports the following elements of the forests' plan's vision:

- The national forests accommodate changing trends in visitor use through outreach efforts, facilities and education that meet the needs of emerging population demand.
- The national forests offer an escape from busy urban life by providing much-needed open space and a wide variety of recreation opportunities. They serve as an outdoor classroom, a "living laboratory," for learning about our natural and cultural heritage and the importance of conservation.

Key project participants include the Southern California Consortium and the City Project. The Southern California Consortium serves the communities adjacent to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests. Key components of its mission include striving to establish and strengthen relationships in Hispanic and other diverse communities and raise awareness of importance of natural resources and opportunities available on public lands in underserved communities

The mission of the City Project is to achieve equal justice, democracy and livability for all. They have sponsored and authored numerous reports on the lack of access to green spaces for many southern Californian urban residents. Their publications, which include *Public Transportation to Local National Forests* and *Healthy Parks, Schools, and Communities: Mapping Green Access and Equity for Southern California* among others, documenting the vital need for public transportation to the Angeles, San Bernardino, Cleveland, and Los Padres National Forests. The City Project combines research and analyses with community outreach to provide concerned citizens, elected and government officials, and other key stakeholders with the best available information upon which to prioritize actions and decisions that positively impact green access and quality of life for all.

Planning Project Elements

1. Socioeconomic and Social-Geospatial Data Synthesis: Utilize The City Project's existing geographic information system (GIS) data which identifies the areas with the highest levels of child obesity, fewest acres of parks per thousand residents, highest levels of poverty and the most people of color to prioritize populations with the greatest need for access to the Forests. Use this data and associated data from the Public Transportation and Feasibility Studies to identify destination zones for transit implementation projects.
2. Public Transportation Study: Build on existing transportation studies (e.g. Public Transportation to Local National Forests, 2004 and the ongoing Big Bear Valley Modal Alternatives Analysis⁷) of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation System's current access to the four southern California national forests. Identify potential transit routes to, and destinations within the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests. Evaluate modes of transportation considering user preference, economic feasibility and

⁶ USDA Forest Service. 2005. Land Management Plan Part 1 Southern California National Forests Vision. Available at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/scfpr/projects/lmp/docs/part1.pdf>

⁷ The Southern California Association of Governments, the San Bernardino Associated Governments and the Inland Valley Development Agency are co-sponsoring this to identify the most feasible all-weather, high-capacity, non-auto transportation mode to provide safe and timely access for passengers and goods from the San Bernardino Valley to the communities and resorts of the Big Bear Valley. More information is available at <http://www.scag.ca.gov/corridor/bigbear.htm>

environmental footprint to identify specific destination zones linking urban communities to public lands via efficient transit routes.

3. Recreation Needs/Barriers Study: Three complementary research strategies will be used to determine recreation needs and barriers -
 - a. A primary research study will be designed to combine focus group and familiarization trip protocols to take community groups on bus excursions to public lands to identify preferred departure points, destinations, activities, price points and potential barriers to regular forest visitation on a site by site basis;
 - b. A secondary analysis of data from two large, well-designed surveys (e.g., National Visitor Use Survey for the four Southern California forests and California Public Attitudes and Opinions toward Outdoor Recreation) will be completed to identify recreation preferences of survey respondents with similar demographic and geographic characteristics to the populations identified in the Socioeconomic and Social-Geodatabase Synthesis; and
 - c. Review of the existing recreation literature about barriers and constraints to participation with attention to the inter-relationships between transportation and other barriers to participation.
4. Sustainable Recreation Analysis: Analyze the ecological sustainability and infrastructure of the potential convergence locations of transit routes and recreation destinations. Identify potential modification or addition of recreation sites capable of sustainably serving additional visitors and methods to improve current visitor experience. Identify transit needs within each of the four national forests to relieve existing congestion and parking facility shortages, as well as, provide diverse recreation opportunities and access for visitors arriving via public transportation.
5. Feasibility Study: Identify economically sustainable scope of public transit to the four national forests including price-points, timing of access (e.g. weekend only, holidays, and/or special excursions), and partnerships with existing public transportation authorities or private transit providers. Identify feasibility of in-forest alternative transportation to relieve existing congestion and encourage a more dispersed recreation use of forest green space.

Timeline

At full funding, the project timeline is anticipated to take approximately one year from the time of allocation.

Project Area

Please see the Appendix B for a map of the geographic area this planning proposal would consider.

Financial Plan

Table 1. Proposed Financial Plan

Planning Element	Estimated Amount
Socioeconomic and Social-Geospatial Data Synthesis	\$53,000
Public Transportation Study	\$74,000
Recreation Needs/Barriers Study	\$78,500
Sustainable Recreation Analysis	\$33,000
Feasibility Study	\$58,000
Total Funding Request	\$296,500
Other Contributions	
Forest Service Staff Support for Transit Planning with Community Groups	\$12,250
City Project Staff Support	\$1,250
Other Contributions Total	\$13,500
Total Project Cost	\$310,000

Planning Justification

1. Demonstration of Need

a. Visitor mobility and experience:

National Visitor Use Monitoring Data show an existing use of up to 7,532,444⁸ million visits per year to National Forests and the National Recreation Area in southern California. Market projections for the growth in visitation for the National Forest alone show an additional 98,000 visits per/year can be expected each year for the next 20 years.⁹ This will potentially increase the number of recreation visits to almost 9.5 million per year by the year 2027.

Visitor mobility and experience are adversely affected by the following factors:

Inequitable Visitor Access

A key issue regarding visitor mobility and experience on the Forests is the existing inequity of visitor use of the Forests. According to National Visitor Use Monitoring data, between 83 to 92 percent of visitors to the Forests are non-Hispanic whites in a region that is disproportionately comprised of people of color and in a state in which non-Hispanic whites are in the minority¹⁰. For example in 2000, the Los Angeles county demographics include 31 percent non-Hispanic white, 45 percent Latino, 12 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, 10 percent African American, 0.2 percent Native American and 2.3 percent non-Hispanics of two or more races.¹¹

The City Project has authored several studies documenting the challenges of accessing the National Forests for many southern California residents, including a lack of public transportation options. Lack of transit has been found to be a contributing factor to lower forest use among people of color in southern California. Access to the national forests is limited to whatever is available via the public transportation systems or special excursions sponsored by community-based organizations and agencies. Despite the proximity of the Forests to the large urban area of the Los Angeles Basin and their presence in the broader southern California region, there are essentially no transportation services directly accessing these forests. The only exception to this includes the Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority bus transportation from San Bernardino's Metrolink Station to a Discovery Center at Big Bear¹². Public transit access to any other destination on the San Bernardino or any of the other three forests is non-existent. The major roads and highways that bisect the forest do not include bus or transit routes and the placement of visitor, nature, or discovery centers and other facilities are located far within the park, out of the range of a person without private transport.

Traffic Congestion

Regardless of economic stature, traffic congestion is one of southern California's greatest challenges.¹³ Because there is so much Federal and State open space in the southern California, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has identified access routes to this land and the transportation issues affecting those resources.¹⁴ SCAG found that in 1994, visitors experienced

⁸ 2006 National Visitor Use Monitoring data available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/>.

⁹ USDA Forest Service Recreation Facility Analysis, 2007.

¹⁰ 2006 National Visitor Use Monitoring reports available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/>

¹¹ Southern California Socioeconomic Assessment: Sociodemographic Conditions, Projections and Quality of Life Indices, 2003. P52. Available at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr187/psw_gtr187.pdf

¹² See Appendix A

¹³ Southern California Association of Governments. 2006. State of the Commute Report. Available at <http://www.scag.ca.gov/publications/>

¹⁴ National Forest land accounts for 1.9 million acres of land in the six-county area of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Imperial and Ventura. National Park Service land is 700,000 acres, Bureau of Land Management land is 10 million acres, and State open space totals 400,554 acres.

varying degrees of congestion in reaching Federal open space destinations. Congestion was predicted to significantly worsen¹⁵ and a 2007 SCAG transportation report states the region (particularly Los Angeles and Orange Counties) ranked as the most congested metropolitan region in the nation.¹⁶ Given the projected growth in the region, SCAG has identified the need to address the availability of public and private transit services to open space and recreation areas, including the surrounding Forests.¹⁷

The Angeles National Forest provides an example representing a common issue on all the Forests. Existing visitation in the San Gabriel Canyon is high. At peak times, insufficient parking facilities lead to overflow parking along road shoulders and necessitate California Highway Patrol to close the road due to safety concerns. The Angeles would like to look for alternatives to this concentrated use and encourage more dispersed recreation across the forest. Public transit services to the forest and alternative transportation within the forest may provide successful methods to manage recreation use to improve visitor experience, contribute to ecological sustainability, and address social injustice. (See the appendix for photographic examples of congested conditions on the forests.)

The San Bernardino National Forest also experiences traffic congestion; however they have slightly different challenges than the Angeles National Forest. The Big Bear Valley, located in the eastern San Bernardino Mountains, is home to about 25,000 fulltime and part-time residents. The Valley is also one of the premiere summer and winter recreation areas close to the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Access to and from the Big Bear Valley is provided by four state highways. These roads are congested during peak recreational and commute periods, and are sometimes closed due to inclement weather and rock fall, particularly in winter and early spring. Ironically, access is most challenging following the snowfalls that produce the conditions most attractive to winter sports enthusiasts.

Public Health Issues and Connecting Urban Residents to Outdoor Recreation

Another important consideration in current access inequity and congestion issues is the direct effects on public health. The benefits of outdoor recreation for American society are needed more today than ever before. Physical activity is an integral part of a healthy lifestyle, and outdoor recreation on our national forests is an important part of the Nation's existing wellness infrastructure. Americans' increasing disconnection from the outdoors is one factor in the skyrocketing obesity rates across the nation¹⁸. Children today spend less than half as much time outside as their parents did, but instead are "plugged in" to electronic devices for more than seven hours a day¹⁹. Studies show that access to the outdoors can help turn the tide on the obesity health epidemic. Increasing opportunities for all Americans to access nearby National Forests or other outdoor spaces, particularly in highly urbanized environments, is an essential tool in the nation's battle against the obesity epidemic and an integral part of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move Outside!" campaign.

In 2007, 52 percent of Californians were overweight or obese, an increase of 1.6 percent since 2000. Overweight and obesity rates are highest among Californians of Latino, American Indian, African American and Pacific Islander descent, Californians from lower-income households and those with

¹⁵ SCAG projected that access to the Los Padres National Forest would worsen along Routes 23, 126, and 150 in Ventura County. Severe congestion, especially along Routes 74, 79, 91 and Route 18 east of Route 15 would affect travel to the Cleveland National Forest. In San Bernardino County, access along Routes 18, 38, 138 and 330 would deteriorate. In Los Angeles County, congestion on Routes 2, 5, 14 and 39 would slow travel to the Angeles National Forest.

¹⁶ Southern California Association of Governments. 2007. The State of the Region: Transportation. Available at <http://www.scag.ca.gov/publications/>.

¹⁷ Southern California Association of Governments. 1999. Roadway access to Federal and State Open Space in Southern California: Inventory and Initial assessment (draft).

¹⁸ Ogden, C.L., K.M. Flegal, M.D. Carroll, C.L. Johnson. *Prevalence and trends in overweight among U.S. children and adolescents, 1999–2000*.

¹⁹ Juster, Thomas F., Hiromi Ono and Frank P. Stanford. *Changing Times of American Youth: 1981–2003*.

disabilities. A California Health Interview Survey study found that low income teenagers are more than twice as likely to be obese than their more affluent peers, with more than 30 percent of low-income California children and teens overweight or obese. While poverty and issues of access (such as to healthy foods, recreation, and health care services) are critical determinants of obesity, researchers are increasingly showing associations between obesity and land use and transportation patterns that discourage physical activity.²⁰ Within the Los Angeles region, there are disparities in access to parks and recreation measured by acres of parks per thousand residents in every political subdivision (with national forests included in definition of parks). Children of color living in poverty with no access to a car suffer from the worst access to parks, forests, and other natural public places and suffer from the highest levels of childhood obesity.²¹

Currently, The City Project operates a Transit to Trails program with public and private partners to take inner city youth and their families to green space within southern California. This program, as well as other federal programs like the National Park Service's "Healthy Parks Healthy People" initiative, provides a best practice example of successful outreach using public lands and outdoor recreation in efforts to promote healthier lifestyles.

Finally, President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative²² and the National Forest's Framework for Sustainable Recreation (Framework)²³ both speak to an increasingly urbanized American population losing its connection to the beneficial contributions of public lands including the basic natural resources that positively affect their lives. One of this project's goals is to look for opportunities to engage the interest of the diverse population in the Los Angeles Basin with outdoor recreation on public lands and streamline their access via public transportation.

b. Environmental condition as a result of the existing transportation system:

The Forest Service acknowledges one of its central challenges is the need "to continue to offer a variety of opportunities, experiences, uses and forest access to an expanding and increasingly diverse population, while continuing to provide resource protection."²⁴

Providing public transit to the Forests would not only relieve the current social injustice of limited access to public lands, it would also relieve environmental impacts of current visitation by providing alternative transportation other than individually driven automobiles. If given an alternative to the expense and environmental footprint of driving, as well as the frustration associated with congestions and insufficient parking facilities, many forest visitors may choose public transportation to access their favorite recreation site on one of the Forests. Public transit and alternative transportation systems provide a means to minimize the impacts of heavy use on sensitive places that are in high demand by managing that demand more effectively.

Without alternatives to individual vehicle access to the Forests, the adverse environmental effects of traffic congestion such as poor air quality and run-off related water pollutions will continue and most likely increase with the projected increased visitation.

The Angeles National Forest Station Fire Restoration Strategy includes several important elements. One of which is to use interpretation as an opportunity to educate the forest visitors, including children, as the next generation of land stewards. The plan includes goals to capitalize on interpretation and education opportunities in light of the fire's landscape effects and create the Angeles NF as a "Living Learning Laboratory." The Southern California Consortium's community outreach and education programs have reached over 6,000 kindergarten thru high school aged students within the Los Angeles School District since October 2009. Additional public transit

²⁰ 2010 California Regional Progress Report. Available at:

<http://www.scag.ca.gov/publications/pdf/2010/CARegionalProgress2010.pdf>

²¹ Garcia, Robert and Audrey White. 2006. Healthy Parks, Schools, and Communities: Mapping Green Access and Equity for the Los Angeles Region Policy Report. p8.

²² <http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov/>

²³ http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/news/connecting_people_with_americas_great_outdoors_june_2010.pdf

²⁴ Southern California National Forests Land Management Plan, Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), p3-58.

opportunities to the new educational and interpretive facilities will be greatly facilitate connecting urban residents to their natural heritage.

Scope of Work and Methodology

2. Methodology for Assessing - Visitor Mobility & Experience

a. Traffic congestion:

The Public Transportation Study and Recreation Sustainability Analysis portions of this study will assess current public transit access to the Forests, current ridership data of the public transit provided in Big Bear Valley on the San Bernardino NF, existing traffic characteristics, circulation, and parking capacity at current developed sites and road shoulders.

The Recreation Needs/Barriers Study will include a demand analysis for the existing and future transportation needs as well as recreation destination desires and expectation. The analysis will include identifying methods for using transit to manage visitation to achieve ecological sustainability as well as meet social justice access needs. An estimate of the number of reduced vehicle miles travelled that could be achieved if visitors maximize use of public transit will be determined.

Assessment data derived from a Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) assessment scheduled the summer of 2011 will give direction to priority areas and assist with the identification of destination zones linking urban-proximate communities with the greatest access needs to forest destinations via efficient transit routes.

b. Visitor mobility, accessibility and safety:

As stated earlier, the lack of public transportation access contributes to this disparity in forest use among southern California residents.²⁵ The study will assess the existing intermodal connectivity between the Los Angeles Basin and recreation destinations on the Forests. It will seek to identify methods and opportunities for public transit access to the forest particularly seeking increased forest visitation of the low income and highly diverse urban populations.

The study will build on existing transportation studies (e.g. Public Transportation to Local National Forests, 2004) of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation System's current access to the Forests. It will identify potential transit routes to and destinations within the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests and evaluate modes of transportation considering user preference, economic feasibility and environmental footprint. Specific destination zones linking urban-proximate areas to forest destinations via efficient transit routes will be identified and prioritized for future implementation projects.

Traffic congestion issues on forest will be assessed to determine where opportunities to use transit to manage visitor use can improve both visitor mobility, safety and recreation experience. Data and analysis from the ongoing Big Bear Modal Alternatives Analysis and past California TAGs such as the Eastern Sierra or Colorado Front Range reports (where similarities to this region can be found) will be utilized.

c. Visitor education, recreation, and health benefits:

The study will assess the demand and feasibility to provide access to the Forests via public transit systems to increase the opportunities for underserved communities, low-income residents and people of color to access to healthy outdoor recreation and natural resource education. The Socioeconomic and Social-Geospatial Data Synthesis will utilize The City Project's existing geographic information system (GIS) data to prioritize the areas with the highest levels of child obesity, fewest acres of parks per thousand residents, highest levels of poverty and the most people of color to prioritize populations with the greatest need for access to the Forests.

People from different racial and ethnic groups use parks [or forest environments] differently, constructing meanings for natural space based on their own values, cultures, histories and

²⁵ Garcia, Robert and Audrey White. 2006. Healthy Parks, Schools, and Communities: Mapping Green Access and Equity for the Los Angeles Region Policy Report. p13.

traditions.²⁶ Building on work conducted by the Pacific Southwest Research Station regarding changing recreation patterns/users²⁷ and existing visitor use datasets, the Recreation Needs/Barriers Study will include destination zone focus groups from local urban communities to assess desired transportation methods, recreation destinations and existing barriers. The study would synthesize existing recreation research to identify recreation infrastructure specific to different ethnic community's social needs and expectations. This would include developing partnerships with local community groups to take urban residents on bus excursions to public lands to identify preferred departure points, destinations, activities, price points and potential barriers to regular forest visitation on a site by site basis

Responding proactively to differences in recreation styles may increase visitation from culturally diverse Californians and provide increased satisfaction, comfort and overall enjoyment of forest recreation resources. Utilizing existing recreation research such as the best practices described in *Serving Culturally Diverse Visitors to Forests in California: A Resource Guide*²⁸, the study will identify recreation infrastructure specific to a diverse community's social needs and expectations.

The resources of both the City Project and the California State University system can provide necessary community contacts and social science resources and expertise to obtain comprehensive and meaningful data.

3. Methodology for Assessing - Environmental Benefits of Project

a. Protection of sensitive natural, cultural, and historical resources:

Transportation related impacts are growing on the Forests of southern California. With nearly all the visitors arriving via private motor vehicle, any projected increase will directly translate to more motor vehicles. Even without engaging the underserved communities in the Los Angeles Basin, the market projections for growth of visitation on the Forests show that an estimated 57,000²⁹ additional vehicles per is expected each year over the next two decades. This will directly translate to more private motor vehicles.

State highways traversing the forests are generally steep and winding with minimal shoulders. The scenic quality and environmental sensitivity of the National Forest lands these routes pass through means that they will not be widened in the foreseeable future and even limited improvements such as passing lanes and turnouts are difficult. The current existing transportation system is not expected to be able to accommodate increasing visitation demands and will likely result in significant impacts on the area's sensitive natural, cultural, and historic resources.

The Sustainable Recreation Analysis will gather data necessary to develop a baseline assessment of vehicle use and traffic on the Forests. This will serve as the baseline for assessing the effects of existing use in light of projected increased use, and compare impacts with and without alternative transportation options. One of the main objectives of this planning effort is to identify methods and design a transportation system that would reduce the potential impacts to sensitive resources, thereby enhancing the quality of the recreation experience on the Forests.

²⁶ Garcia, Robert and Audrey White. 2006. Healthy Parks, Schools, and Communities: Mapping Green Access and Equity for the Los Angeles Region Policy Report. p14.

²⁷ Pacific Southwest Research Station Technical Report. Current efforts include Day Use Recreation on the Angeles NF, Asian Americans and Outdoor Recreation, A Multi-Ethnic Comparison of Angeles National Forest Recreation. Completed studies include Diverse Users of Four Urban National Forests: Participation, Preference and Perceptions and Ethnicity and Recreation: An Abridged Annotated Bibliography. <http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/topics/recreation/patterns/>

²⁸ N.S. Roberts, Chavez, D.J., Lara, B.M, and Sheffield, E.A. 2009. *Serving Culturally Diverse Visitors to Forests in California: A Resource Guide*. Available at: <http://atfiles.org/files/pdf/Cultural-Diverse-Forest.pdf>

²⁹ Based on projections of 98,000 visitors per year and the national average number of people per vehicle from the Transportation Energy Data Book: Edition 29-2010. Chapter 8. Available at: http://cta.ornl.gov/data/tebd29/Edition29_Chapter08.pdf

The Sustainable Recreation Analysis will also analyze the ecological sustainability and infrastructure of the potential convergence locations of transit routes and recreation destinations. It will identify potential modification or addition of recreation sites capable of sustainably serving additional visitors and methods to improve current visitor experience. It will identify transit needs within each of the four Forests to relieve existing congestion and parking facility shortages, as well as, provide diverse recreation opportunities and access for visitors arriving via public transportation.

b. Reduced pollution:

According to American Public Transportation Association (APTA), public transportation generates 95 percent less carbon monoxide, 92 percent less in volatile organic compounds and about 50 percent less in carbon dioxide and nitrogen per passenger mile in comparison to private automobiles. Intuitively, this implies that increasing visitor access to the Forests using public transit, while decreasing individually driven automobiles, will improve environmental and viewshed conditions and reduce pollution. Although, data regarding specific pollution improvement needs and targets are unavailable for the national forest land, air quality issues are well documented in the Los Angeles Basin.³⁰ Ambient ozone and particulate levels have historically been among the highest in the country and continue to violate established National Ambient Air Quality Standards.³¹ Emissions from all forms of transportation are now the largest source of air pollution in most regions of California, and remain the largest obstacle to clean air statewide.³²

This grant will fund gathering sufficient data to forecast environmental and pollution related benefits associated with increasing alternative transportation. This effort will rely upon the expertise of professionals as well as consulting firms to assemble existing information, determining where data does not exist to support this type of analysis, and establish methods for gathering the necessary information. The scale of future data collection will largely depend on the availability of certain information.

4. Methodology for Assessing - Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability

a. Operational efficiency:

Four destination zones will be identified, linking urban-proximate areas via efficient transit routes to forest destinations. Grant funding could support consultation with Volpe services or other transit expertise.

The Feasibility Study will identify possible routes, passenger capacity, schedules, staging areas and operational season for the proposed public transit routes to and potential alternative transportation systems within the Forests. This could include metro transit and other transit options such as ride share, smart car rentals, small bus and tour operations, etc. Concerns such as ease of use, signage, location of bus stops, frequency and ability to transport anticipated ridership will be considered utilizing context sensitive solutions. Additionally, maintenance, contracting, phased implementation, and additional infrastructure needs will be identified. Analysis and discussion of long-term sustainability and challenges to operational efficiency will also be included.

b. Financial feasibility:

The Feasibility Study component will provide costs for developing additional public transportation routes comparing metro transit and private operators including capital purchases, implementation costs and revenue sources. In addition, considering the challenges of sustainable transit projects specific to recreation, this project will compare the successful models of alternative transportation systems with those that were unsuccessful to identify better solutions

c. Cost effectiveness:

³⁰ <http://www.arb.ca.gov/aqd/studies.htm>

³¹ Southern California Association of Governments. 2007. The State of the Region: Air Quality and Health in the Greater Los Angeles Area: A Region in Crisis by Ed Avol. Available at <http://www.scag.ca.gov/publications/>.

³² 2010 California Regional Progress Report. Available at: <http://www.scag.ca.gov/publications/pdf/2010/CARegionalProgress2010.pdf>

Cost effectiveness will be addressed in the Feasibility Study considering transportation asset management strategies. A key component of the Feasibility Study is to propose financially sustainable transportation system alternatives. It will include estimates of anticipated revenues and expenditures, capital costs, operations and maintenance costs, and administrative oversight costs. An assessment of price point acceptance among the underserved communities this grant is attempting to reach will be included in the Recreation Needs/Demands Study.

d. Partnerships and funding from other sources:

This planning project is being proposed as a partnership between the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region and The City Project. Additional project sponsors and project supporters include the following. Please see Appendix D for letters of support.

- Southern California Consortium
- Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
- Southern California Association of Governments
- Caltrans
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council
- Sierra Club
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Ventura County
- Outdoor Outreach
- Outward Bound Adventures
- Anahuak Youth Soccer Association

Appendix A

Current Number of Persons who use the alternative transportation system (if one already exists) at peak visitation:

The Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority (MARTA) is the only public transportation available within any of the four southern California forests. Although MARTA travels on a forest route through the San Bernardino to provide public transportation to the residents within the Big Bear Valley and the communities of Lake Arrowhead, Crestline and Running Springs, there are no forest recreation facility stops on the route. Please see the following communication from MARTA regarding their ridership information.

From: [BettyAnn Merrill](#)
To: [Timory K Peel](#)
Subject: RE: Information Request for Transit Grant Planning
Date: 05/04/2011 09:22 AM
Attachments: MARTA Ridership.pdf

I've attached a pdf of our ridership graphs for the last two years for both our Fixed Route (local) and Off-the-Mountain routes for both Big Bear and Crestline. Another consideration is the fact that there is no accessibility from our routes to the camp grounds. Basically someone coming up the mountain would have to get some form of transportation (Metrolink, Greyhound) to San Bernardino. We would pick them up and bring them up the hill to one of the communities. From there they would have to transfer to the local routes to get as close as possible to their destination. From that point it would be taxi or walk. Most of our campgrounds are located quite a distance out of town. Even for someone who wanted to come up and fish at the lakes, it is inconvenient. You barely have time to get up here before you have to turn around to go home because of our schedule of operation. We also do not provide Off-the-Mountain service on Sundays, so people coming up for the weekend are not able to get back down until Monday morning.

Fares are \$10 per person one way to come up on the Off-the-Mountain to Big Bear. The Fixed Route is \$1.50 throughout the valley. Fares to Crestline, Lake Arrowhead are zone based at \$2.50 per zone for the Off-the-Mountain and \$1.00 per zone for their Fixed Routes.

My extension is 133 if you would like to discuss further.

Regards,

BettyAnn Merrill
Administrative Assistant
Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority
PO Box 1501 ❖ 41939 Fox Farm Rd
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315
(909) 878-5200 ph ❖ (909) 878-5207 fax
www.marta.cc

From: Timory K Peel [<mailto:tpeel@fs.fed.us>]
Sent: Tuesday, May 03, 2011 9:05 AM
To: bmerrill@marta.cc
Subject: Information Request for Transit Grant Planning

Hello,
My name is Timory Peel and I work for the US Forest Service. I'm currently developing a Transit in Parks grant proposal related to alternative transportation on and/or to the four southern California National Forests.

As MARTA is the only public transit currently available across the forests, I'm hoping you can provide an estimate of your passenger numbers at peak visitation.

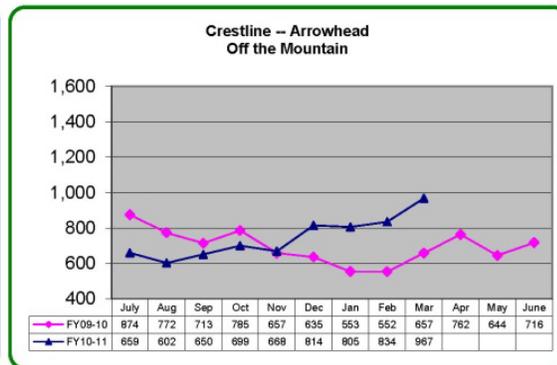
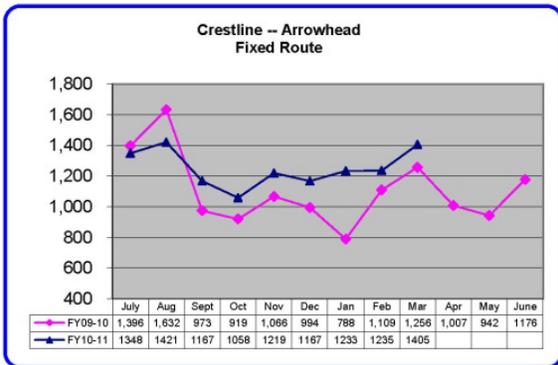
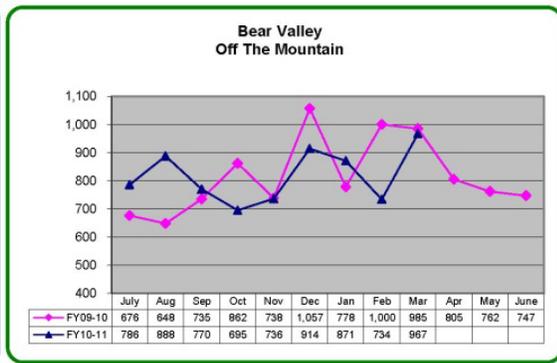
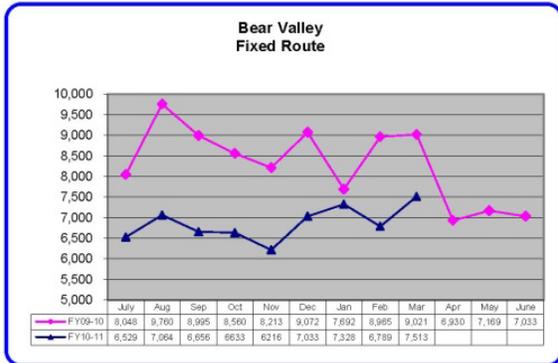
The deadline on the grant proposal is Monday, May 9th so if someone would have the opportunity to provide the information this week I would greatly appreciate it.

Thank you !

Timory Peel
USDA FS Recreation Solutions
406.295.7467



tpeel@fs.fed.us MARTA Ridership.pdf



Appendix B

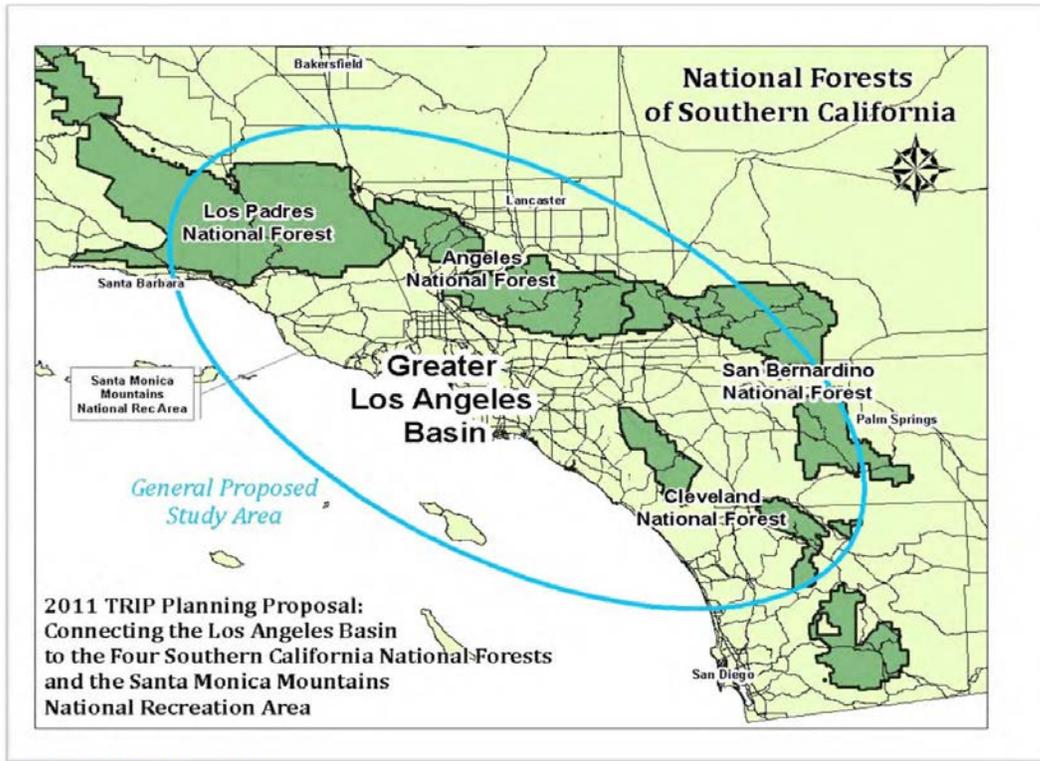


Figure 1. General Project Vicinity Map

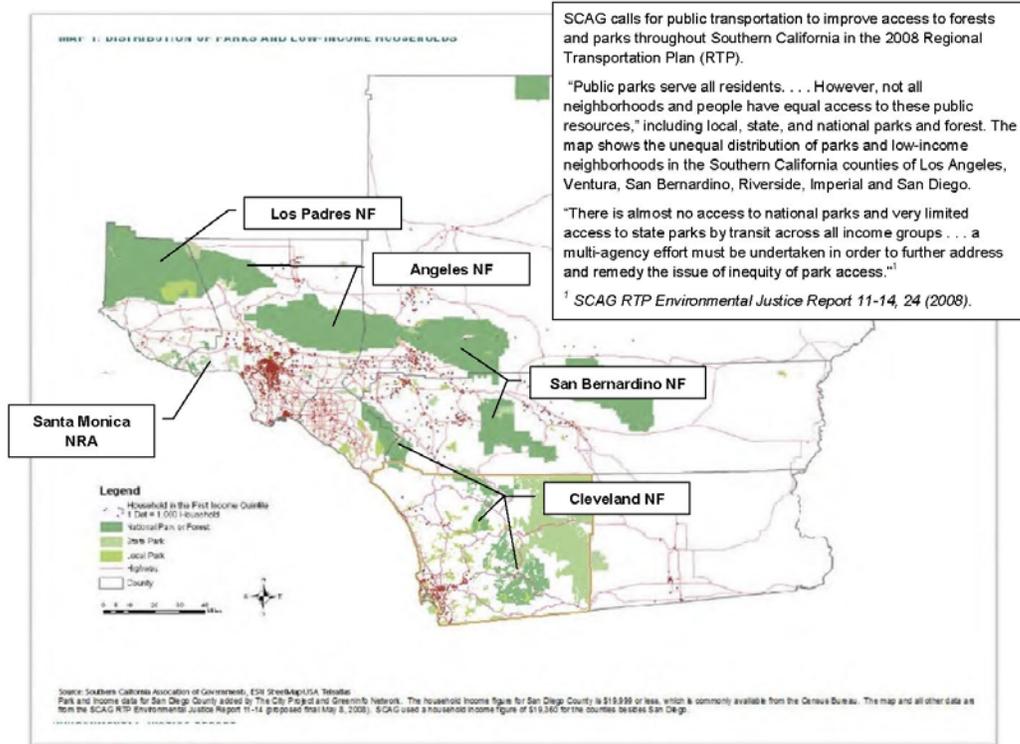


Figure 1. Distribution of Parks and Low-Income Households from 2008 Regional Transportation Plan Environmental Justice Report (SCAG)

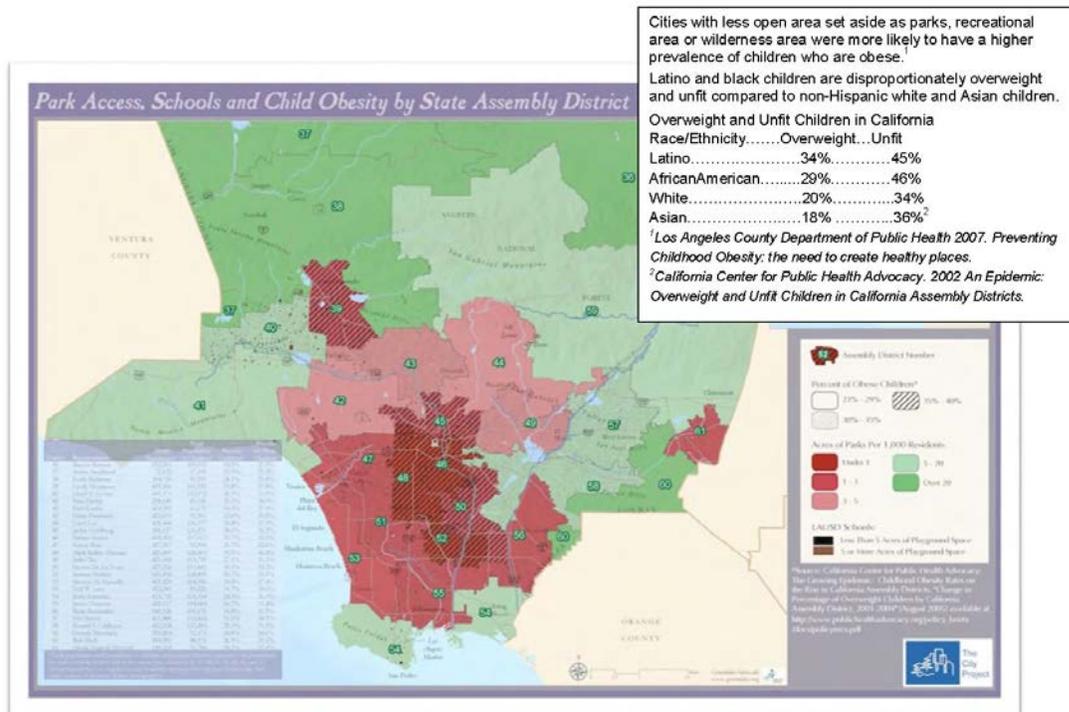


Figure 2. Children of color living in poverty with no access to a car have the highest levels of child obesity, and the worst access to parks and school.

Appendix C - Photographs

Appendix C – Photographs

**Transit in Parks Program Planning Proposal for Fiscal Year 2011 Funds –
Connecting Southern Californian National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin
through Alternative Transportation Systems.**



Figure 1. The Los Angeles basin, home to over 20 million residents, is within an hour's drive of the Santa Monica National Recreation Area or the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres or San Bernardino National Forests. Although residents can see the forest, most have never visited because they lack transportation.

Appendix C – Photographs

Transit to Trails takes inner city youth and their families and friends on fun mountain, beach and Los Angeles River trips. The project enriches their education about water, land, wildlife and cultural history, and the importance of physical activity and healthy eating for life-long health. This provides a best practice example of successful outreach using public lands and outdoor recreation in efforts to promote healthier lifestyles.



Figure 2. Anahuak youth ride buses to Franklin Canyon March 30 2007 (Photo from *The City Project*).



Figure 3. Anahuak Youth Association at Franklin Canyon March 30 2007 with Transit to Trails (Photo from *The City Project*).

Appendix C – Photographs

Existing congestion on the Forests contributes to degraded visitor experience and adverse environmental effects.

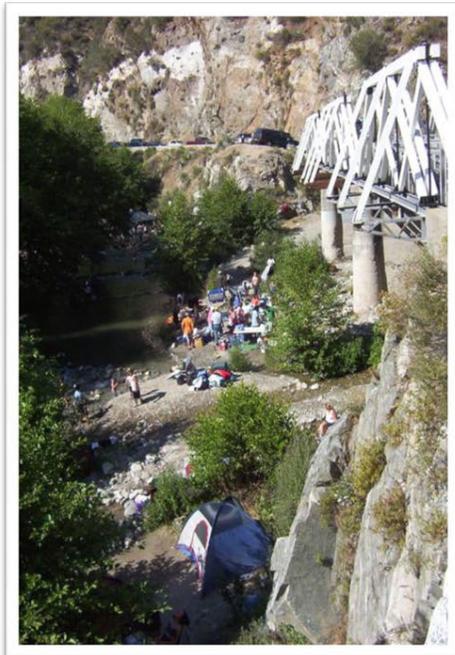


Figure 4. Snowplay visitors along Forest Road 9N24 to Mt Pinos on the Los Padres National Forest.



Figure 5. Sunrise Scenic Byway on the Cleveland NF

Appendix C – Photographs



Figures 6 and 7. Visitor use in the San Gabriel Canyon on the Angeles National Forest exceeds parking capacity during the peak season. Overflow parking along the road shoulders becomes a traffic hazard requiring California Highway Patrol to close the road.



Appendix D – Letters of Support



1055 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1660 Los Angeles, CA 90017-2499

T: (213)977-1035

F: (213)977-5457

www.cityprojectca.org

May 2, 2011

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
East Building
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support for U.S. Forest Service Transit in Parks Program Proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

The City Project supports the Forest Service's Transit in Parks Program planning proposal, Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin Through Alternative Transportation Systems. It is a grant-funding request to plan for equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica National Recreation Area. This planning project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities to provide equitable access to public lands, relieve congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

The mission of The City Project is equal justice, democracy, and livability for all. We have worked for more than a decade on a range of environmental and social justice issues, including access to parks, forests, and other green space. Equitable and ecologically sustainable access to our region's forest resources is important for promoting healthy lifestyles and connecting all people with their natural and cultural heritage

Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Garcia".

Robert Garcia
Executive Director and Counsel
The City Project

Equal Justice, Democracy, and Livability for All
Board of Advisors: Chris Burrows • Lydia Camarillo • Juan Devis • Tom Hayden • Virginia Keeny • Robbie LaBelle
Anne McEnany • Lyndon Parker • Michael Rodriguez
The City Project is a project of Community Partners



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southern California Consortium

701 N. Santa Anita Ave.
Arcadia, CA 91006-2725
626-574-1613 Voice
800-735-5789 CRS

Date: May 5, 2011

Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in the Parks Program
Federal Transit Administration
US Department of Transportation

To Whom It May Concern,

The Southern California Consortium fully supports the Forest Service's Transit in Parks Program planning proposal, *Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin Through Alternative Transportation Systems*. The grant-funding request to plan for equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is not only timely but also very necessary in present day southern California populous. This planning project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities to provide equitable access to public lands, relieve congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

In 2006 the US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region established the Southern California Consortium program whose mission it is to strengthen outreach to underrepresented and underserved communities in order to increase diversity within the Forest Service workforce applicant pools. Lack of transportation often prevents low-income communities from learning about the federal public land system which can lead to disconnects on many levels between the public and natural resource conservation. Equitable and ecologically sustainable access to our region's forest resources is mission critical for the Southern California Consortium. If funded this grant will help to promote healthy lifestyles, ethical stewardship, conservation principals, and connect the increasingly diverse population with their natural and cultural heritage.

The Southern California Consortium also commits to supporting the success of the findings from this grant by connecting underserved communities with the resources resulting from this grant and by continuing to advocate for the accessibility for low-income diverse communities to national public lands.

Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project.

Sincerely,

FABIAN GARCIA
Southern California Consortium, Director



Caring for the Land and Serving People

Printed on Recycled Paper





United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
401 West Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, California 91360-4207

L3217(SAMO)
May 6, 2011

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks' Program

Re: Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin through Alternative Transportation Systems: Equitable and Ecologically Sustainable Transit Access

To Whom It May Concern:

The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), a unit of the National Park Service, fully supports the Forest Service's Transit in Parks' Program planning proposal, Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin through Alternative Transportation Systems. This ambitious proposal calls for a plan that will identify equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access solutions to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities that will expand access to public lands, relieve congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

Equitable and ecologically sustainable access to our region's natural resources is vital to promote healthy lifestyles and connect all people with their natural and cultural heritage. The National Park Service (NPS) mission calls for preserving our nation's natural and cultural resources, while providing opportunities for enjoyment, education, and inspiration for generations to come.

The NPS frequently hears from park partners that transportation barriers are one of the most significant challenges to visiting our nation's public lands. This study would greatly benefit underserved urban communities surrounding Southern California's natural open spaces by increasing peoples' access to their forest and parks.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration to fund this meaningful project.

Sincerely,


Lorenza Fong
Acting Superintendent

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BRANCH

100 S. MAIN STREET MS-16

LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-3702

PHONE (213) 897-0213

FAX (213) 897-0678

*Flex your power!
Be energy efficient!*

May 6, 2011

Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

To Whom This May Concern:

The California Department of Transportation supports the Forest Service's Transit in Parks Program grant funding request for its planning proposal, *Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin Through Alternative Transportation Systems*.

The purpose of the proposal is to plan for equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests along with the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. This planning project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities to provide equitable access to public lands, relieve traffic congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

This Forest Service proposal is supportive of our Department's mission to improve mobility across California, and our strategic goals for:

Safety – provide the safest transportation system in the nation for users and workers;

Mobility – maximize transportation system performance and accessibility; and

Stewardship – preserve and enhance California's resources and assets.

Improving transit opportunities to provide equitable access for underserved populations and relieve congestion to and within the region's national parks and recreation area is consistent with these safety, mobility, environmental justice and stewardship goals.

State Routes 1 (Pacific Coast Highway), 2 (Angeles Crest Highway), 5 (Golden State Freeway), 15 (Mojave Freeway), 23 (Decker Canyon Road/Mulholland Highway), 33 (Maricopa Highway) and 138 (Pearblossom Highway) are the major access routes for the region's residents and visitors to the Angeles, San Bernardino, Los Padres and Cleveland National Forests and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

"Caltrans improves mobility across California"

Federal Transit Administration
May 6, 2011
Page 2

Alternative transit access could reduce roadway congestion and parking overflow problems in the forest, improve safety by directing visitors to locations that allow for safe pedestrian access and usage, and protect the Station Fire and other burn areas that are not recovered enough for public use. Equitable and ecologically sustainable access to our region's forest resources is important for promoting healthy lifestyles and connecting all people with their natural and cultural heritage.

Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project.

Sincerely,



JJM JAMES J. McCARTHY
Deputy District Director
Division of Planning, Public Transportation
and Local Assistance

- c: David Sosa, Chief, Office of Regional Planning & Public Transportation
Linda Wright, Chief, Public Transportation Branch, ORP&PT

"Caltrans improves mobility across California"



League of United Latin American Citizens
State of California

11591 Candy Lane, Garden Grove CA 92840 Tel. (714) 636-7576 Fax (714) 636-7770

May 5, 2011

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
East Building
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support for U.S. Forest Service Transit in Parks Program Proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

California League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) supports the Forest Service's Transit in Parks Program planning proposal in partnership with The City Project, Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin Through Alternative Transportation Systems. It is a grant-funding request to plan for equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica National Recreation Area. This planning project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities to provide equitable access to public lands, relieve congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

LULAC is the largest Latino civil rights and advocacy group in the United States and has existed for 82 years. California LULAC works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans throughout California, including the southern California region served by this project, looking for freedom and an honest way of life. Our mission is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of the Hispanic population of California. Equitable and ecologically sustainable access to our region's forest resources is important for promoting healthy lifestyles and connecting all people with their natural and cultural heritage

Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project.

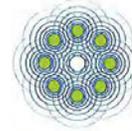
Sincerely,

Benny Diaz, Jr., State Director
California LULAC

"Serving our community since 1929"

The League of United Latin American Citizens, the largest and oldest Hispanic membership organization in the country, advances the economic conditions, educational attainment, political influence, health, housing and civil rights of Hispanic Americans through community-based programs operating at more than 880 LULAC councils nationwide.

May 5, 2011



Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program
US Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

RE: Letter of Support for Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program

To whom this may concern:

On behalf of the Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, I am pleased to express our support for the Forest Service's Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program planning proposal, *Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin through Alternative Transportation Systems*. This proposal focuses on equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. This planning project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities to provide equitable access to public lands, relieve congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

The Watershed Council is the region's trusted hub for essential watershed research and analysis. With a legacy of facilitation and collaboration, the Watershed Council effectively connects diverse perspectives to address timely watershed issues. We recognize the benefits of providing access to our region's forests while maintaining a healthy watershed and ecosystems. In 2005, the Watershed Council began implementing regional monitoring and valuation projects with multiple partners to uncover trends in the health of the streams, lakes, and fish within our watershed for beneficial uses to the community. This program covers most of the Los Angeles Basin to generate a holistic vision for assessing the health of California's watersheds by gauging ecologic, social and economic indicators of health and allowing community engagement with the complex problem of watershed management. The Forest Service has been an important partner in this work and we look forward to continued and expanded partnerships.

The Transit in Parks Program is vitally important in our complex, large urban region to bring people to the natural lands surrounding Los Angeles, providing equitable and ecologically sustainable access to our region's forest resources, an important factor in promoting healthy lifestyles and connecting all people with their natural and cultural heritage. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy L.C. Steele, D. Env.

Executive Director

The Watershed Council's determination that a proposal is consistent with our mission and vision and is therefore worthy of our support does not imply that all individual agencies and organizations represented on the Board of Directors concur with, or have reviewed, the proposal.

The Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council

700 N. Alameda Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012 T 213/ 229-9945 F 213/ 229-9952



May 5, 2011

To whom this may concern:

The Sierra Club supports the Forest Service's Transit in Parks Program planning proposal, *Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin Through Alternative Transportation Systems*. It is a grant-funding request to plan for equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. This planning project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities to provide equitable access to public lands, relieve congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

The Sierra Club's goals of exploring, enjoying and protecting the land would be advanced through funding of the above program. Equitable and ecologically sustainable access to our region's forest resources is important for promoting healthy lifestyles and connecting all people with their natural and cultural heritage

Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project.

Sincerely,

Byron Gudiel
Senior Organizing Manager
Los Angeles National Field Office
3435 Wilshire Blv, Ste 660
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 387 6528 x 213



3435 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 660, Los Angeles, CA 90010-1904
(213) 387-6528 phone • (213) 387-8348 fax www.sierraclub.org



Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Ventura County

May 5, 2011

To whom this may concern:

Big Brothers & Big Sisters supports the Forest Service's Transit in Parks Program planning proposal, *Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin Through Alternative Transportation Systems*. The planning proposal is a grant-funding request to plan for equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. This planning project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities to provide equitable access to public lands, relieve congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

Big Brothers & Big sisters vision is to assist youth with goal setting, skill building health, wellness and provide community resources. We encourage Equitable and ecologically sustainable access to our region's forest resources is important for promoting healthy lifestyles and connecting all people with their natural and cultural heritage. Through this project twelve youth from Fillmore and Piru's Mentor Program were able to visit The Los Padres National Forest for the first time. Without the support of a trained forest service leader, our youth would have not learned the proper rules and safety guidelines of hiking in the wilderness and the importance of volunteering and giving back to their community by helping clean up. The experience was very memorable and a few of our youth are now interested in perusing careers in the U.S. forest service.

Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project.

Best Regards,

Amelia Aparicio
Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Ventura County
Case Manager/Match Support
(805) 910-6643

5275 Market Street
Suite A
San Diego, CA 92114
T: 619.238.5790
F: 619.237.7612
www.outdooroutreach.org



"I've been called all sorts of things in my life: homeless, at-risk, underprivileged, troublemaker, loser. Now I'm called rock climber, surfer and snowboarder."

– Juan H., Outdoor Outreach Leadership Student

May 9, 2011

To whom this may concern:

Outdoor Outreach supports the Forest Service's Transit in Parks Program planning proposal, *Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin Through Alternative Transportation Systems*. It is a grant-funding request to plan for equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. This planning project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities to provide equitable access to public lands, relieve congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

Outdoor Outreach is a San Diego-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to empower at-risk and underprivileged youth to make positive, lasting changes in their lives through comprehensive outdoor programming. Outdoor Outreach programs support underserved youth in San Diego County who are at risk for school dropout, substance abuse, violence and unintended pregnancy. We are the only agency in San Diego and one of just a few in the country to utilize outdoor physical experiences to provide youth with the support, relationships, resources and opportunities they need to become successful adults. Since our founding in 1999, we have taken more than 5,100 youth on over 1,770 outings, including rock climbing, snowboarding, surfing, snorkeling, mountain biking and backpacking. In 2011, we expect to serve 700 youth through 250 outings.

Access to outdoor recreational opportunities is a major barrier for the population we serve. We wholeheartedly support the efforts of The National Forest to provide more access to communities and citizens most in need. Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project.

Sincerely,

Christopher Rutgers
Executive Director

Outdoor Outreach – Coming into a World of Possibility from the Outside

Outward Bound Adventures



May 5, 2011

To: Whom It May Concern:

As an outdoor agency whose goal is to help urban youth and families learn about and gain access to our natural resources, OBA, Inc. (better known as Outward Bound Adventures) fully supports the Forest Service Transit in Parks Program proposal *Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin Through Alternative Transportation Systems*.

One of the missing elements to providing equal access to our national parks and forests has always been transportation. By providing standardized public transportation our four regional wilderness areas will be open to all, including urban low-income families. As with the summer bus programs that transport inner city residents to beach areas on a daily basis, I believe that a transportation system like the one being proposed would not only improve usage of our natural resources by people of color, but also help reduce peak season traffic and parking issues and reduce environmental issues.

OBA's mission is to provide meaningful nature-based education that promotes positive self-development, environmental responsibility, and outdoor career exposure for urban youth. Our program will be enhanced by our youth and families knowing that after OBA, they still can enjoy the beauty of our four wilderness areas.

I encourage you to share in the Forestry Service's ambition by responding positively to their much needed proposal.

Respectfully,

Ken Preston
Executive Director

Outward Bound Adventures P.O. Box 202 Pasadena, CA 91101
Ph: 626.564.0844 Fax: 626.564.0904
www.obainc.org



May 4, 2011

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
East Building
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support for U.S. Forest Service Transit in Parks Program Proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

Anahuak Youth Soccer Association supports the Forest Service's Transit in Parks Program planning proposal in partnership with The City Project, Connecting Southern California National Forests and the Los Angeles Basin Through Alternative Transportation Systems. It is a grant-funding request to plan for equitable and ecologically sustainable transit access to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests and the Santa Monica National Recreation Area. This planning project will identify and prioritize transit opportunities to provide equitable access to public lands, relieve congestion, enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.

Anahuak Youth Soccer Association (AYSA) is a non-profit children's sports organization. We provide group team soccer opportunities to children whose families cannot afford the fees charged by other local programs. AYSA also provides a social network for youth and their families and community leaders. We are avidly involved in providing environmental educational opportunities for the youth we serve. We have been recognized for our achievements with a Los Angeles River Award in 2002 and received international recognition and a personal commitment from Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchu. Most recently, we were instrumental in the creation of the "Rio de Los Angeles State Park", 2007. Equitable and ecologically sustainable access to our region's forest resources is important for promoting healthy lifestyles and connecting all people with their natural and cultural heritage

Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project.

Sincerely,

Raul Macias
President and Founder
Anahuak Youth Soccer Association

From: [Ryan Kuo](#)
To: [Timory K Peel](#)
Subject: RE: Forest Service Transit in Parks Grant Proposal Support
Date: 05/05/2011 02:56 PM

Thanks, Timory.

I couldn't help but notice that this study has very similar goals to the Big Bear Modal Alternatives Analysis that we are co-sponsoring (<http://scag.ca.gov/bigbear>). The Big Bear Analysis aims to identify the most feasible all-weather, high-capacity, non-auto transportation mode to provide safe and timely access for passengers and goods from the San Bernardino Valley to the communities and resorts of the Big Bear Valley. The Forest Service's Richard Thornburgh, Deputy District Ranger from the Front Country Ranger District, San Bernardino National Forest, has been involved in this study, which is expected to be complete in 1-2 months.

I am thrilled to see that you are pursuing a study like this, and would just want to know if you would be coordinating with Richard Thornburgh or someone from his shop on this study. Perhaps you can utilize findings from our study as appropriate for yours?

Ryan

Ryan Kuo
*Senior Regional Planner
Transportation Planning*

Southern California Association of Governments
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Ryan Kuo, Senior Regional Planner for the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), communicated an interest in our project and an intent to provide a letter of support in our telephone conversations. However, he was unable to submit the letter prior to the application deadline. I have included this email correspondence as evidence of SCAG's interest and support.

From: Timory K Peel [mailto:tpeel@fs.fed.us]
Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2011 11:34 AM
To: Ryan Kuo
Subject: Forest Service Transit in Parks Grant Proposal Support

Hello Mr. Kuo,

Here is a copy of the current draft of our grant proposal and a template for a letter of support. The template is just a starting point, please edit as you need.

If you'd like more information regarding the Transit in Parks program here is a link

<http://www.triptac.org/>

Please call or email with any questions! Thank you so much for your time!

~ Timory Kelly Peel
USDA FS Recreation Solutions
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