PATHS FORWARD: THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY GREENWAY PROJECT

Authors: James Howe and Natalia Sifuentes
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The Los Angeles Sustainability Collaborative (LASC) is dedicated to creating a more sustainable Los Angeles by facilitating collaborative research, providing solutions to emerging environmental challenges and educating stakeholders. LASC seeks to achieve this mission by 1) collaborating with other non-profit organizations and academic institutions to identify research needs on key environmental issues, 2) funding research projects conducted by emerging environmental leaders at the university level and 3) sharing research findings to community, policy and business stakeholders.

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Graphics and Layout Design by Rachel Lindt
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This report presents an analysis of the potential benefits, impacts, and opportunities related to the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network. The San Gabriel Valley (SGV) is comprised of over 30 municipal jurisdictions, which local residents frequently travel across when performing daily tasks such as going to work, school, and running errands. The San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network ("Greenway Network") will transform underutilized flood control channels, abandoned railways, and utility rights-of-ways into a hybrid facility of bikeways, urban trails, and linear parks. The project will provide safer connections to downtown areas, schools, employment centers, transit centers, and health centers via active transportation corridors. The Greenway Network promotes more cohesive travel throughout the region while improving quality of life for those living, working, and playing in the San Gabriel Valley. The Greenway Network also has the added benefit of providing open recreation and green space to park-poor, disadvantaged communities located in the area. (See Figure 2 for a rendering of an enhanced San Gabriel Greenway).
ABOVE Figure 2. Rendering of an enhanced San Gabriel Valley Greenway
Image Credit: Rachel Lindt
Recently, the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) and project partner BikeSGV, a regional bicycle coalition, were awarded funding from the California Department of Transportation’s (Caltrans) Active Transportation Program to support the development of a San Gabriel Valley Greenway Master Plan. In advance of developing the Master Plan, the Los Angeles Sustainability Collaborative (LASC), the SGVCOG, and the First Supervisorial District of Los Angeles (District 1) commissioned this report to further refine the greenway concept and better understand the surrounding policy context. To achieve these goals, this report explores the best practices of other greenway projects and assesses their viability in relation to the specific needs of the San Gabriel Valley communities in regards to the following seven policy areas:

- Mobility and accessibility;
- Economic development; and
- Storm-water management.

This report identifies community stakeholders across various sectors and industries whose vested interest in the Greenway Network can be leveraged for future coalition building. These stakeholders include, but are not limited to, government officials (local, state, and federal), local schools and school districts, pedestrian and bicycle advocacy groups, local businesses, and environmental groups. Furthermore, this report assesses various federal, state, and county funding opportunities, including potential park and transportation measures on the November 2016 ballot.
2.0 Benefits of San Gabriel Greenways

There are many identified benefits associated with the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network, detailed in the following section of this report. They include public health, public safety, greenhouse gas reduction, public recreation and outdoor space, mobility and accessibility, economic development, and storm-water management. (See Figure 3, which illustrates the benefits associated with the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network). The San Gabriel Valley population is roughly 60% Caucasian, 20% Asian, 10% Black, and 10% Latino. About 65% of all residents own their own homes and the remainder rent. This is indicative of how important increasing accessibility can become as the high rate of home ownership in the areas signaling a commitment to community. Additionally, the mean commute time of San Gabriel Valley residents is about 26 minutes; improving bikeway access will drastically decrease this commuting time. Finally, the median household income is just above $50,000, indicating lower-income persons reside in the San Gabriel Valley. These are traditionally the people that face environmental inequity, for which improved access to bikeways can help minimize (ACS 5-Year Estimates).

2.1: Public Health

Providing recreational and active-transit opportunities for residents of the San Gabriel Valley has the potential to improve public health. Increasing accessibility is equally important to providing recreation space to allow underserved populations to utilize these resources. Obesity and diabetes are two of the most common health concerns in the San Gabriel Valley. These chronic health concerns compound the negative impacts of traffic and higher healthcare costs (Henry, 2014). Expanding the network of bicycle greenways can entice more residents to walk, jog, run, or bicycle - all of which can reduce the risk of diabetes and obesity.
ABOVE Figure 3 Rendering of an enhanced San Gabriel Valley Greenway

Image Credit: Rachel Lindt
The American Heart Association recommends 30 minutes of moderate to rigorous exercise per day, five days per week to improve overall cardiovascular health. By cycling five miles per day, a person can expect to live a healthier and longer life (NCHRP, p. 32). Additionally, some studies suggest that cycling for 20 miles per week can reduce the risk of heart disease by 50% (Travers, 2013). There is also an economic component to living a healthier lifestyle. Researchers for a study in Minnesota calculated that increased inactivity resulted in a cost of about $100 per resident each year (NCHRP, p. 32). This comes in the form of healthcare costs distributed equally among the residents.

Substantial health risks also exist by continuing to drive a vehicle for commutes or for errands. An increased dependence on automobiles reduces one’s propensity to exercise regularly; obesity and diabetes are directly correlated to this transportation mode (Lear et al., 2014). Some people do not exercise because the infrastructure does not exist to support an active lifestyle, which suggests infrastructure improvements can provide opportunities for populations to exercise more.
2.2: Public Safety

The San Gabriel Valley has received lower safety rankings than other areas comparable in size and demographics, which signals a need to improve the community’s safety (Neighborhood Scout, 2015). Safety improvements tend to raise home values, lead to more long-term ownership of homes, and encourage more social activities. The San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network can help achieve these benefits through direct and indirect effects, including well-lit paths to reduce crime rates, and separated bicycle and pedestrian pathways to prevent automobile collisions with people.

An important aspect of the Greenway Network is its role in safely connecting communities to parks and recreation facilities. The presence of people is a factor in increasing safety of a park or pathway (Jacobson, et. al.). This includes maintenance crews working to keep the park clean, who can help drop crime rate due to the authoritative presence they present as employees in park uniforms and with familiarity of park or trail grounds (McCormick, 2007).

It is common for people who do not cycle to attribute the risks associated with getting on a bicycle as reasons for not riding a bike, claiming it is dangerous to ride on roads in close proximity to cars, or that the infrastructure does not support bicycle riding (FHWA Case Study 1, pg. 21). Others may not walk in an area because of infrastructure deficits. For example, sidewalks may not exist, forcing pedestrians to walk in a bike lane – if those exist on the roadway – or in traffic (FHWA Case Study 1, pg. 29).

Greenway and bicycle plans commissioned by areas including Buncombe County in North Carolina and Whittier, California have made safety a priority in park and pathway design. Buncombe County found that when natural surveillance, natural access control, and territoriality are implemented in park and greenway design, a community could be assured the area will not suffer from an increase in crime (Buncombe County, 2012). With natural surveillance, open spaces are maximized while enclosed or shrouded spaces are minimized. Areas such as parking lots or benches are unobstructed, so park visitors can both view the surrounding area and be seen by others. Natural access control, such as planting trees and shrubs, can help physically guide people through the area and can be used to provide a natural barrier to help deter potential criminals. When these mechanisms are effectively implemented, crime can be controlled and minimized.

In addition to crime prevention and reduction, greenway safety also includes preventing
traffic collisions that lead to injury and death. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) recently launched the “Go Human” campaign, which aims to minimize traffic incidents and encourage safe, active transportation. Greenways provide a safer alternative to cycling on roadways that may not have bike lanes or that are perceived as unsafe by the public. Greenways in Seattle resulted in a dramatic reduction in pedestrian/bicyclist collisions with motorists (City of Seattle). A similar result occurred in Pennsylvania, where a combination of lower travel speeds and physically separated multi-modal transportation roadways resulted in a decline in collisions (Brooke Fotheringham, n.d.). Ongoing research and evaluation suggests community safety is greatly improved with the installation of greenways.

2.3: Greenhouse Gas Reduction

In Los Angeles County, about 50% of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions come from the transportation sector (UCLA Institute for the Environment and Sustainability). Safe and reliable transportation routes for cyclists are an ideal opportunity to shift preferred modes of transportation from the car to the bicycle; doing so will offset millions of tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions each year. To achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions, greenways must present a viable transportation and recreation alternative to vehicles in order to encourage residents to opt for bicycling or walking. Vehicular greenhouse gas reductions are possible with an extensive greenway network that provides access to businesses and places of work, convenient routes for accomplishing errands, and attractive spaces for recreation and spending time outdoors. Transportation greenhouse gas reductions should be considered along with lifecycle considerations for the entirety of the project, which includes future offsets from single-occupancy vehicles.

California State law (Assembly Bill 1358, Dababneh. School facilities: design-build contracts, 2015) specifies development...
standards and designates areas for bikeway construction, for which the San Gabriel Valley fits the appropriate characteristics (City of Los Angeles, 2010 Bicycle Plan). These guidelines help ensure individual projects contribute to mandated greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set forth by the State of California. The amount of energy required and carbon dioxide released during the manufacturing of a bicycle is taken into consideration for evaluation of bicycle transportation impacts on climate change, in addition to greenhouse gas emissions. Researchers at the Pacific Institute calculated that riding a bicycle about 400 miles, instead of driving, would offset the carbon costs of creating that bicycle (Cohen, et al., 2008).

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has conducted studies assessing how the construction of dedicated bicycle lanes along the Orange Line, a bus rapid transit route in the San Fernando Valley in northern Los Angeles County, would impact carbon dioxide emissions. Metro’s analysis estimates that about 314 million tons of carbon dioxide will be offset each year by constructing an 18-mile dedicated bikeway in a low-impact scenario (Metro, 2010). Under a high-impact scenario, the bikeway would reduce up to 507 million tons of carbon dioxide. Even in the lowest-impact case, about 300 million tons of carbon dioxide would be reduced. This analysis importantly takes construction of the bikeway into consideration, indicating that carbon dioxide emissions will effectively be reduced in the long run with a shift in transportation modes.

2.4: Public Recreation and Outdoor Learning Space

The San Gabriel Valley has a park-deficit, with far less park and recreation space per person than the national average of about 6 acres per 1,000 persons (Trust for Public Land). On average, there is about 0.6 acres of park space per 1,000 residents in the San Gabriel Valley. Greenways and bike paths have long set the precedent for providing recreation space in park-poor areas. The greenways themselves provide public recreation space while also serving as a connection between parks and other facilities.

The Sacramento City/County Bikeways are a strong example of providing many recreational opportunities in an area that once had little. The Bikeways span the length of the American River, from the City of Sacramento to the City of Folsom, and uniquely blends park space with bicycle facilities. Many communities in the Sacramento area are now within walking or biking distance to a park. The City of Temecula is also implementing a similar plan. The bikeways under construction are designed to connect parks in areas that previously had disjointed active transportation networks.
Integration of park and bicycle transportation infrastructure allow residents to get the most out of the park and recreation system by linking them together and improving accessibility.

The San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network can also serve as an outdoor learning space for residents and visitors through the expansion of community programs, and can connect to schools previously not accessible by walking or bicycling. Schools in multiple counties in California have undertaken initiatives to encourage cycling to school. For example, Santa Cruz County instituted a “Green Ways to School” program that encourages students to bike to their middle or high school. The San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments has initiated their own “Safe Routes to School” program as well, with the intent of making active transportation for children a safe and viable way to get to school. Improved access to bikeways and expansion of the network would strengthen the Safe Routes to School program by allowing more students to safely bike and walk to school, connecting regions that were previously inaccessible by foot or bike. Programs such as these educate students on the proper way to bicycle to be safe and fun.

Not only can children learn how to stay healthy and active by using the greenways and connected parks, but they can also learn about the environmental benefits of the greenways. Informational signage placed along the pathways can help increase awareness of ecosystem benefits greenway projects can provide. Greenways can serve a vital role in storm-water management as well, a feature that could go unnoticed without educational elements like signage.

2.5: Mobility and Accessibility

Most of the transportation space in the San Gabriel Valley is dedicated to automobile transportation. Public transit is often lacking in areas that would benefit from improved mobility and accessibility. The Greenway Network can enhance mobility in two important areas. First, the project seeks to address transportation deficits by linking distant locations, previously only accessible by automobile, in a sustainable and healthy way. The point-to-point distance between locations is reduced because greenways do not need to follow the road network and can instead be mapped out in a more direct pathway. This can encourage residents to travel by bicycle or by foot rather than travel in a car. Second, the greenways can link transit hubs, which are sometimes located in inconvenient areas not easily accessible by bike or foot. When an automobile is required to reach a transit station, parking must be provided, which has its own environmental and economic consequences. A more sustainable
solution is to link transit stations to the greenway network, allowing residents to access mass transit without a car. The greenways will serve an important function of enhancing first and last mile connections, linking points of origin to transit, and then on to the destination, which was previously nonexistent.

The Greenway Network will connect much-needed services between different areas in the San Gabriel Valley while creating an alternative transportation opportunity for those with disabilities. Because greenway development is subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it will augment the network of ADA-compliant routes and thus, increase accessibility and mobility for those with physical disabilities. The ADA does not allow any gaps or steps larger than ¼ inch in the pavement for those in wheelchairs and requires curb ramps, for example, which will add to accessibility improvements in the community overall. Some areas in the San Gabriel Valley may have accessibility features, but do not help those with disabilities actually reach their destinations. By connecting healthcare locations, schools, and transit hubs, greenways can provide an alternative to traveling by car to reach these locations.

2.6: Economic Development

The San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network project is expected to result in an increase of economic activity in the region. Numerous studies, illustrated below, verify more cyclists means more economic activity. While most of the studies assess the impacts of Class-II bike lanes (on-street), the greenways could connect dispersed economic hubs that would not otherwise be easily accessible by bicycle. Cyclists can more easily stop at local businesses on a whim because finding a safe and visible place to park a bikes is often easier (and less expensive) than parking an automobile. On average, cyclists spend about $20 more per capita on things such as restaurants, bars, and convenience stores than motorists do (Jaffe, 2015).

In New York City, protected bicycle lanes were recently installed on a few blocks in lower Manhattan. The economic impacts of this installation were immediately recognized: local businesses saw an increase in sales (Cohen, at al.). Those who shop by traveling from active transportation modes were found to be far more likely to spend money at local retailers. This is due to a number of factors, including the ability to reach local businesses more easily by biking or by walking.
Not only does cycling improve the economy, but any form of active transportation also acts as an economic stimulus (DeShazo, at al). The U.S. economy benefitted from $730 billion of spending due to outdoor recreation and activities (Outdoor Industry Foundation, n.d.). Additionally, U.S. consumers and government entities will save approximately $100 trillion in infrastructure and health care costs by transitioning some of the population who drive single-occupancy vehicles to cycling or walking for daily commutes (Replogle, 2014).

The greenways are expected to cost about $1 million per linear mile of bikeway. Investment in Greenway Network expansion will help create jobs in engineering, construction, and maintenance and will help develop a more robust, sustainable transportation system in the San Gabriel Valley.

2.7: Storm-water Management

The Los Angeles watershed is covered with over 480 square miles of impervious surfaces. Impervious surfaces prohibit groundwater recharge, which decreases the amount of water stored in local aquifers (California Water Board). The Sustainable LA Grand Challenge at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
The San Gabriel Valley is subject to flooding from the Los Angeles River and other water bodies within the Los Angeles Watershed. A partnership with the Los Angeles County Public Works Department can help identify and locate the best locations to place low-impact developments along the greenway system. These green storm-water infrastructure projects will help the SGV greenway system retain its structural integrity and also serve as a flood-control channel for the region. Some greenways in the San Gabriel Valley network will replace unused and retired flood-control channels, an adaptive reuse of urban infrastructure that may help improve the political feasibility of the project and increase its support.

It is likely that climate change will result in imported water losses for Los Angeles, yet it is possible to account for these losses through the installation of green storm-water infrastructure projects. In the Los Angeles region, it would take approximately 3 square-miles of low-impact developments to account for the climate change losses for imported water and recharge the groundwater aquifer (Howe, 2015). New and exciting technologies exist that can make implementation of low-impact developments less expensive and more viable, such as semi-permeable pavement and bioswales. Using the Greenway Network for storm-water management provides the opportunity to re-establish native vegetation, decrease rates of soil erosion, filter water, and allow for natural water infiltration.

The San Gabriel Valley aims to have 100% locally sourced water by the year 2050, and groundwater infiltration is one of the most important and viable mechanisms that can help accomplish this goal. The San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network can serve as important infiltration points that both filter storm-water and recharge the groundwater aquifer.
3.0 Sources of Support for the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network

In this section, the report discusses financial and political support for the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network. It begins with an overview of existing support for the project and continues into a discussion of potential funding sources for the next phases of the project, such as developing a Master Plan. Integrated into this discussion of potential funding sources is the political climate regarding legislation, programs, and bonds that support regional active transportation projects such as the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network. The following topics are considered viable funding sources for this project and are discussed with more depth in this section: Cap and trade funds, CALFIRE Urban and Community Forestry grants, AB 1251: Greenway Development and Sustainment Act of 2015, Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recover (TIGER) grants, transportation tax measures, and the 2016-2017 proposed state budget.

3.1: Overview of Existing Support

Those currently supporting the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network include the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, Supervisor Hilda Solis of the First Supervisorial District of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Sustainability Collaborative, and BikeSGV. Currently, the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network is in its initial feasibility stage, but recently was awarded approximately $643,000 from the Caltrans Active Transportation Program (ATP) to begin the development of a Regional Greenway Master Plan (Projects, n.d.). The ATP, originally created in 2013 by California Governor Jerry Brown, consolidates state and federal active transportation funding mechanisms with the goal of more effectively providing support to active transportation projects. This includes increasing the number of walking, bicycling and transit trips; safety; public health; greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction; and ensuring that active transportation benefits extend to disadvantaged communities (“Active Transportation Program (ATP),” n.d.). Among the federal and state transportation programs consolidated into the ATP are the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA), and State Safe Routes to School (SR2S) (“Active Transportation Program (ATP),” n.d.).
Community Forestry Program provides grants funded by the CARB. As a part of California Climate Investments, the CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Program seeks to increase tree and tree-related vegetation to provide environmental benefits to the communities being served. Grant awardees contribute significantly to reducing GHG emissions, and also provide other benefits including, but not limited to, flood and storm-water management, recreation, improved public health, and urban revitalization. The program places an emphasis on serving environmental justice communities, which are defined as communities who are “disproportionately burdened with environmental and/or economic challenges” (California Climate Investments and Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 2016). The amounts awarded by CAL FIRE vary each year and are determined by annual state budget allocations.

Both local governments (cities, counties, and districts) and nonprofits are eligible to apply for CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry grants, but proposed projects must meet several criteria. These projects must further the above-mentioned goals of the Urban and Community Forestry Program, demonstrate a net reduction in GHG emissions to be maintained for 10 years thereafter, include methodology for calculating and quantifying the GHG emissions benefits provided, be located in or adjacent to an urban area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, and provide a finished, usable product, report, etc.

3.2 Potential Funding Sources

Cap and Trade Funds
One of the primary mechanisms for reducing air pollution in California is the Cap and Trade program developed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and implemented in 2012 to address the goals set by Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. In order for California to reach 1990 levels of pollution by the year 2020, the Cap and Trade program sets a ceiling, or ‘cap’, on the amount of emissions that each industry is allowed per year. The state’s largest emitters are all required to obtain permits in order to proceed with their business. While approximately 90% of permits are distributed to businesses for free, the remaining 10% are auctioned off quarterly by the state and utilities to companies that need extra emission allowances. A portion of revenue that the state retains is directed into the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), where it is then allocated to projects that help reduce pollution (Lazo, 2014). In 2014, Governor Brown negotiated with the state legislature to award one-quarter of all future cap and trade revenue to the California High Speed Rail project. The remaining revenue from Cap and Trade will go toward a variety of projects including affordable housing, infrastructure and transit (Lazo, 2014).

CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Grants
Authorized by the California Urban Forestry Act of 1978, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s (CAL FIRE) Urban and Community Forestry Program provides grants funded by the CARB. As a part of California Climate Investments, the CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Program seeks to increase tree and tree-related vegetation to provide environmental benefits to the communities being served. Grant awardees contribute significantly to reducing GHG emissions, and also provide other benefits including, but not limited to, flood and storm-water management, recreation, improved public health, and urban revitalization. The program places an emphasis on serving environmental justice communities, which are defined as communities who are “disproportionately burdened with environmental and/or economic challenges” (California Climate Investments and Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 2016). The amounts awarded by CAL FIRE vary each year and are determined by annual state budget allocations.

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AB 1251: Greenway Development and Sustainment Act

The Greenway Development and Sustainment Act of 2015 (California State Assembly Bill 1251) was proposed by Assemblymember Jimmy Gomez of District 51 and approved by Governor Jerry Brown in October 2015. AB 1251 aims to support the creation of greenways throughout the state, on the basis that they will provide a multitude of benefits including recreational and open space, GHG emission reductions, opportunities for floodwater management, and support for wildlife conservation. The bill encourages nonprofit organizations and government entities to undertake greenway projects by creating a ‘greenway easement,’ or a new real property interest that is “voluntarily created and freely transferable in whole or in part, for the purpose of developing greenways adjacent to urban waterways…” (Colborn, “Assembly Floor Analysis,” AB 1251). The specification that greenways, as defined in AB 1251, can only be adjacent to waterways is likely due to Assemblymember Gomez’s primary consideration of developing the Los Angeles River Greenway project when he proposed the legislation; as a result, the LA River project is specifically referenced in the bill text. However, this specification leads to certain segments of the proposed San Gabriel Valley Greenway being ineligible for the greenway easement property interest. Consequently, it is the recommendation of this report that lobbying efforts be made to change the definition of

and/or action (California Climate Investments and Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 2016). Additionally, projects seeking funding cannot replace existing projects or activities, but rather enhance existing local efforts. Proposed projects cannot have regular fiscal support from local government, nor can they fulfill required mitigation activities. Finally, projects must be completed by December 31, 2020 and applicants can only submit a maximum of three grant proposals. The application process is twofold: concept applications are first solicited via the CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry website during mid to late summer, and are due early to mid-fall. Following the concept application phase, applicants are invited to submit full project application in late fall/early winter, with full project applications due in mid to late winter and award notification in early spring (California Climate Investments and Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 2016). Of the four specific grants offered by CAL FIRE, the grant most appropriate to fund the San Gabriel Valley Greenway is the “Green Innovations” grant, as Green Innovations projects are not required to be primarily focused on planting trees. There are several more specific criteria that must be met to be eligible for the Green Innovations grant, including types of trees that can be planted, a required educational and outreach component, and active participation from local residents, business, or nonprofits (California Climate Investments and Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 2016).
greenways to become more inclusive of other regional greenway network configurations that will provide most, if not all, of the same benefits.

**Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grants**

TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) is a federally funded discretionary grant program that provides capital funding to any public entity for surface transportation infrastructure. Since its inception, the Office of the Secretary of Transportation awarded nearly $4.6 billion in TIGER grants to capital and planning projects that address safety, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, quality of life, and environmental sustainability ("About TIGER Grants," n.d.). TIGER grants specifically aim to fund multimodal, multijurisdictional projects, and provide funding to any public entity ("About TIGER Grants," n.d.). Projects funded by TIGER grants can be either transportation capital or planning projects for freight and/or passenger transportation networks. However, projects that have successfully secured TIGER funding were those that were creative in utilizing resources and partnerships to promote growth, fill a critical void in the transportation system or provide a measurable, substantial benefit to the area where it is located ("Frequently Asked Questions," n.d.). In 2015, Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx selected projects that emphasized three key transportation goals:

1. Connect communities to employment, education, and services, particularly in economically distressed areas;
2. Improve public health and safety; and
3. Innovation and integration of technology into transportation.

Of these three goals, the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network best achieves Goals 1 and 2. Similar ventures, such as a complete streets and linear park endeavor in Kalispell, Montana was awarded $10 million of TIGER funding as its plan to relocate rail from the downtown area to an industrial area would create an economic catalyst, thus fulfilling Goal 1 ("U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx Announces $500
The San Gabriel Valley was a major beneficiary of Low Carbon Transit Operations Program funding, having received $5,897,391 to extend Metro Gold Line light rail into the region. This example indicates that the San Gabriel Valley may once again benefit from Caltrans funding as the Greenway Network meets the dual goals of reducing GHG emissions and supporting disadvantaged communities.

Transportation Tax Measure

In 2008, Measure R passed in Los Angeles County as a 30-year half-cent sales tax to be used to fund transportation projects, and has been essential to the rail expansion that the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has undertaken since then. To continue generating funds for more transportation improvements throughout the county, Metro is preparing two more potential countywide ballot measures to be voted on in 2016 (San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, 2015). The ballot measures being proposed will be based on the project and expense priorities set by regional government entities within Los Angeles County, including Metro, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the Westside Cities Council of Governments, the South Bay Cities Council of Governments, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments and the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, among others. The attention to local transportation projects may be key to finding success at the polls, but might be offset by the

2016-2017 Proposed State Budget

Governor Brown’s 2016-2017 proposed budget includes $16.2 billion in total funding for all Transportation Agency programs. The Agency is comprised of Caltrans, California Transportation Commission, the High Speed Rail Authority, the Department of Motor Vehicles, California Highway Patrol, and the Board of Pilot Commissioners. Of first-year resources, which total over $1.7 billion, $100 million cap and trade dollars will be allocated to fund Caltrans’ Low Carbon Road Program. The Low Carbon Road Program will support local active transportation projects (Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., 2016) and other carbon-reducing projects on local streets and roads, with at least 50% of funding dedicated to projects benefiting disadvantaged communities. This program is similar to the Caltrans’ Low Carbon Transit Operations Program, which in 2015 awarded $22 million of cap and trade funds to 86 projects.

Million in TIGER Grants Awarded to 39 Projects,” n.d.). Another project to be funded from a TIGER grant is a bike and pedestrian network in Laguna, New Mexico, which was granted $1 million to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, reduce transportation related fatalities and injuries, and also serve as an economic catalyst by connecting residential areas to commercial centers (“U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx Announces $500 million in TIGER Grants Awarded to 39 Projects,” n.d.).
competing measures. The two proposed ballot measures are as follows:

1. A new 40-year half-cent sales tax in addition to the existing Measure R half-cent tax
2. Continue Measure R’s half-cent sales for an additional 18 years after the 30-year provision has been reached

The new half-cent tax would redistribute 50% of the tax revenue to sub-regional Councils of Governments, based on population and employment, for transportation capital improvements (San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, 2015). It would also present an opportunity for funds to be used specifically for active transportation, which is not currently an explicit consideration in the existing Measure R expenditure plan.

Alternately, the continuation of Measure R’s existing half-cent sales tax for an additional 18 years, through 2056, would result in the continuation of the current expenditure plan in which 40% of revenue is allocated to transit capital.

There are various benefits to consider when weighing these ballot measures as potential funding sources for the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network.

While the first option – introducing a new, additional tax – would seem preferable when considering the larger pool of funds that would be available for transportation capital funding, the difficulty of introducing another tax cannot be underestimated. At 9%, the sales tax is already higher than surrounding areas, and an additional half-cent raise would put LA County at risk for losing more expensive purchases. However, it would provide liquid capital that transportation projects could use directly, rather than having to borrow against future tax revenue as would happen with the second option of extending Measure R an additional 18 years.

Figure 3.2.1: TIGER Grant Funding Allocation

Source: SGVCOG
Nevertheless, there is a precedent for this type of measure. Measure J, a transportation bond that proposed extending Measure R’s existing half-cent sales tax, only narrowly missed the two-thirds vote it needed to pass in 2012. This occurrence suggests that there is adequate support for another similar transportation measure to pass – particularly if high voter turnout is anticipated this election cycle.
4.0 Conclusion

The San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network project provides many much-needed benefits to the community and does so in a sustainable manner. The project will increase the number of parks in the community, and more importantly, provide a way to access those parks by means other than driving. The greenways can link transit stations to residential and commercial areas, further increasing the accessibility of sustainable transportation to residents.

Greenways have been proven to reduce crime and increase physical activity in communities. Residents have greater opportunities to go outside and connect with one another, which enhances a sense of ownership in the community. Many San Gabriel Valley residents are at-risk for becoming obese or being diagnosed with diabetes; increasing physical activity is an important way to stop these negative health consequences from becoming a reality.

Another advantage of the proposed Greenway Network is the conversion of abandoned railways that provide no benefit to the community. These railways contribute to urban blight and occupy space that could be far more conducive to a healthy community. Similarly, flood control channels can be repurposed into more beneficial uses, such as a greenways, and still serve flood control purposes. Installing low-impact developments along the greenway can reduce the risk of flooding while improving the natural landscaping and replenishing the water table.

Repurposing abandoned railways and flood control channels is an ideal opportunity to improve the well-being of residents in the San Gabriel Valley. A more sustainable, healthy, and vibrant community is possible through the creation of a greenway network in the San Gabriel Valley.
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