

# How Does Transit Impact Air Quality?

Currently, San Diego is in nonattainment for California's particulate matter (PM) standard, and for the state and federal standards for ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), the major component of smog. Due to this lack of compliance, San Diego received an "F" grade from the American Lung Association in the 2009 report titled *State of the Air*, and **was ranked as having the 8<sup>th</sup> worst air quality in the United States** (in terms of O<sub>3</sub>).<sup>1</sup> According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the source for at least half of the pollutants contributing to O<sub>3</sub> pollution in urban areas includes: cars, buses, trucks, and off-highway mobile sources such as construction vehicles and boats.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the San Diego Air Pollution Control District states that, "Locally, motor vehicles and mobile equipment powered by internal combustion engines produce about three-quarters of the smog-forming emissions, about one-half of the greenhouse gases, and they contribute significantly to diesel particulate matter, a known carcinogen, in the air we breathe."<sup>3</sup>

Because **pollution from motor vehicles generates significant amounts of both O<sub>3</sub> and PM**, air pollution in San Diego would be greatly improved by significantly reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) throughout the region. In the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) produced in 2007, the San Diego Association of Governments estimated that in 2009 yearly average VMT for the entire region would be approximately 89 million, and that this number would grow to approximately 115 million by 2030.<sup>4</sup> The 2030 RTP involved extensive highway infrastructure investments, and was challenged by the Attorney General of California and Save Our Forest and Ranchlands for having a lack of transit infrastructure. San Diego's future does not have to involve a dramatic increase in VMT as proposed by the 2030 RTP, because reducing VMT and corresponding air pollution could be immediately possible in San Diego by increasing transit infrastructure and reducing the amount of cars on the road.

Please support the Urban Area Transit Strategy and create a new future for San Diego: one that provides clean air for all San Diego residents!!!

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.stateoftheair.org/2009/states/california/san-diego-06073.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/consumer/04-ozone.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sdapcd.org/info/reports/ANNUAL.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.sandag.org/programs/transportation/comprehensive\\_transportation\\_projects/2030rtp/2007rtp\\_E\\_final.pdf](http://www.sandag.org/programs/transportation/comprehensive_transportation_projects/2030rtp/2007rtp_E_final.pdf)