



In This Issue

[News Briefs](#)

[New Highway 99 Management Plan Shows Meters, HOV Lanes by 2030](#)

[One Voice Considers Priorities for Sacramento, DC Visits](#)

[Pavement Management Report Shows "Fix the Worst First" Is Poor Road Strategy](#)

[Household Hazardous Waste Collection](#)

[Governing Board Decisions Made in Aug/Sep: Decisions To Be Made in October](#)

News Briefs

How Much Does It Cost to Commute to Work?

If you've been thinking of carpooling or hopping on the Carless Commute, operated by Merced County's THE BUS, here's something that might help you make that decision.

<http://rideshare.511.org/calculator> is a fun and interesting calculator – and the total amount can be an eye-popper.

Oct. 15, 2008

New Highway 99 Management Plan Identifies Metering, HOV Lanes by 2030

Highway 99 through Merced County with eight lanes, ramp metering, and High Occupancy Vehicle lanes? A recent study of future needs points to just that.

When Prop. 1B was approved by the voters in 2006, the money was divided among various transportation programs. A \$1 billion earmark was carved out for the San Joaquin Valley. Then all areas of the state competed for remaining funds in various categories.

For all projects paid for with Highway 99 Bond Act money, a Corridor System Management Plan was required this month. Two projects in Merced County received these funds: Hwy 99 Arboleda Project at a cost of \$151,900,000, with construction to begin in 2010, and Hwy 99 Plainsburg Project, costing \$101,177,000, construction to begin in 2011.

The Arboleda project will widen Hwy 99 from four lanes to six from Buchanan Hollow Road to just north of McHenry Road. The Plainsburg project will also widen Hwy 99 to six lanes from the Madera County line to Buchanan Hollow Road.



The Corridor Plan studies Highway 99 from north of the junction of Highway 152 in Chowchilla, Madera County, to the junction of Highway 165 in Turlock, Stanislaus County. Putting together this plan required a cooperative effort among MCAG, Caltrans, Madera County Transportation Commission, Stanislaus Council of Governments, City of Madera, City of Chowchilla, City of Merced, California Highway Patrol, and local transportation partners and stakeholders along the corridor.

The management strategy includes a 10-year plan that identifies use of buses, park-and-ride, rest areas, and bicycle facility improvements. It also evaluates congestion and delays for the years 2015 and 2030, and accident rates over a three year period. Projections show that, by final build out, ramp metering and HOV lanes will be needed to manage congestion.

One Voice Considers Priorities

New Carless Commute Run from Atwater/Merced to Dos Palos

Merced County Transit "THE BUS" announces a new Carless Commute run from Atwater and Merced to Dos Palos. Currently, 13 riders commute to Dos Palos Elementary School. Carless Commute is a semi-express bus run for commuters. Currently the program services 400 riders on 15 different runs within Merced County and from Turlock. Cost is \$30/month. Call (209) 385-7600 for more information.

Finding Your Carbon Footprint

With all the talk about global warming and living a "greener" lifestyle, it's useful to discover our own carbon footprint. This is the amount in tons of greenhouse gases each of us generates as a result of daily activities. If the calculation seems huge, remember that most of these measuring devices take into account the activity required to produce the items we need or want.

To calculate your carbon footprint, go to www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html.

for 2009 Sacramento, DC visits

We have many regional road needs. Water is a critical issue. What about education programs that prepare students for careers? We could use more healthcare professionals, especially specialists. And jobs, jobs, jobs seems to be the mantra for our cities and county. There are so many needs to choose from, which 6 or 8 should MCAG One Voice carry forward?



The group began their considerations with a kickoff luncheon in September, where they heard from Jason Peltier of the Westlands Water District. He explained the enormous impact to agriculture, businesses, and homes that the recent Delta court ruling had, combined with environmental restoration programs that will require more water diversion. Add to that conflicting regulations at the state and federal levels, more population so more demand, and a second year of drought in California, and the future of water availability was shown to be a challenge.

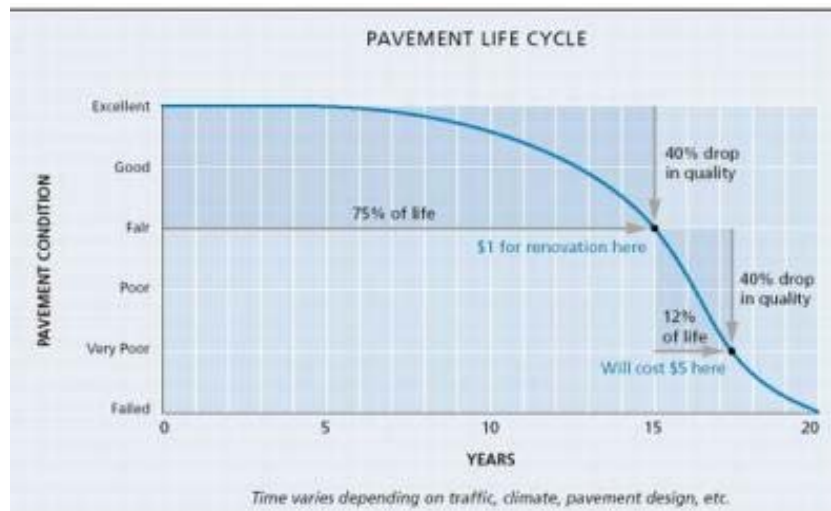
On Oct. 1, One Voice held its first workshop-style meeting at Foster Farms in Livingston, where the MCAG federal lobbyist led the group through a discussion of national issues. Meeting attendees then listed their priority ideas on charts placed around the room.

The group will meet next on Oct. 23, 9:00 a.m. at the Los Banos City Hall. MCAG's state lobbyist will help the group focus on issues at the state level. The last two meetings will be Nov. 21, 9:00 a.m., Merced City Hall, and Dec. 12, 9:00 a.m., Atwater Community Center.

One Voice meetings are open to anyone who lives in Merced County. Citizens-at-large and community leaders discuss these issues and more at a series of four meetings from Oct. to Dec. Business owners, elected officials, nonprofit agency directors and staff, and leaders in healthcare, education, economic development, and water bring different perspectives that lead to lively discussions.

Pavement Management Report Shows "Fix the Worst First" Is Poor Road Strategy

Test your knowledge: Which country, among industrialized nations, has the most greenhouse gas emissions? (Australia. The U.S. is second.)



MCAG recently released its annual Pavement Management Program (PMP) report which evaluates road pavement conditions. There has been little change from the previous year's report, which indicated, for much of Merced County, a continuous downward spiral of escalating costs and diminishing revenues.

PMP is a cooperative program, managed by MCAG, to help the cities and county of Merced make cost-effective decisions about road maintenance. PMP provides tools to rate pavement conditions, suggest a maintenance schedule, and evaluate strategies.

This program and experience have shown that "fix the worst first" is the least effective strategy. "The worst streets can easily eat up all of a city's road repair money, leaving others that are marginal to further disintegrate," explains Ty Phimmasone, MCAG Associate Planner. "Dollars can be stretched when good and fair roads are maintained."

Over 20 years, the average life of a road, pavement deteriorates 40% over 15 years, then rapidly accelerates during the last five years. Maintaining a good road costs \$10,000 per mile, a fair road costs \$25,000, but a poor to severe road costs \$200,000 to \$850,000 per mile.

As cities and county reevaluate and inventory roads, they collect data on weathering and raveling, linear cracking, block cracking, fatigue cracking, rutting, and drainage.

"This program helps public works departments work together to reduce costs," says Ty. "For example, if a city is putting a seal on a road that extends past the city limits, and the county has that road on its work schedule, the treatment for the entire road could be supplied once rather than bringing two trucks with two half loads out."

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

MCAG provides recycling education for the cities and county of Merced. A series of hazardous waste collections, with the last one for 2008 to be held in Dos Palos on Oct. 25, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.,

Golden Gate & Blossom St. in the parking lot behind the Post Office.

If you missed a waste collection near you, take hazardous waste to the collection site located right next to the landfill on Hwy 59 in Merced. The landfill is operated by Merced County Solid Waste, but the hazardous waste collection site is operated by the County Division of Environmental Health.

Collection sites will accept up to the following amounts of hazardous materials:

- 15 gallons of liquid household hazardous waste
- 125 pounds of solid household hazardous waste
- 20 gallons of used motor oil
- 3 batteries per vehicle
- NO containers larger than 5 gallons will be accepted!
- NO Hazardous Waste will be accepted from businesses at the one day collection events; however, businesses may drop off any amount of e-waste, such as computers, TVs, and other electronic devices.



The Household Hazardous Waste and E-Waste Clean-Up events are partially funded by a grant from the California Integrated Waste Management Board and conducted by Merced County Division of Environmental Health. There is no charge to the public at the collection event because the cost of the event is reimbursed from State grants and refuse charges. For questions, contact the Dept. of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health at (209) 381-1100 or the Household Hazardous Waste Site located at 6040 N. Hwy. 59 at 723-4753.

Governing Board Decisions of Aug/Sep; Decisions To Be Made on Oct. 16, 2008

In August and September, the MCAG Governing Board made the following decisions --

As the Merced County Regional Waste Management Authority Board:

There were no agenda items in August.

As the Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County:

- Approved the Disadvantaged business Enterprise annual anticipated participation level

As the MCAG Governing Board:

- Accepted the countywide Pavement Management Annual Report
- Approved appointments to the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council
- Approved the One Voice timeline for 2008-09
- Following a public hearing, adopted the Merced County Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan by Resolution 2008/08-21-03
- Approved the Local Transportation Fund claims by Resolution 2008/08-21-04
- Concurred with proposed program change for the Los Banos bypass
- During the public comment period on the Atwater-Merced Expressway, a number of representatives from the Atwater Elementary School District expressed their concerns, as did the Stop Wal-Mart organization. Students from UC Merced and Merced College spoke in favor of the project. The decision to choose an alignment was delayed for 30-60

days.

In September, the Directors made the following decisions --

As the Merced County Regional Waste Management Authority Board:
There were no agenda items in August.

As the Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County:

- Approved a new policy: Service Suspension for Violent and Disruptive Behavior and /or illegal Conduct on Merced County Transit Vehicles.
- Appointed a subcommittee to meet quarterly with transit managers to develop a service plan and annual budget
- Heard a report on bus issues due to a 43% reduction in budget from the state

As the MCAG Governing Board:

- Changed the Board's position on SB 375 from oppose to neutral
- Selected to send two representatives and one staff member to the San Joaquin Valley "Valley Voice" visit to Washington, D.C. in March 2009
- Approved a report on transit revenues and determined that the fare box ratio requirement was not met for 2006/07.
- Continued discussion on new alignment for the Atwater-Merced Expressway after further meetings with the Atwater Elementary School District. The Draft Environmental Impact Report will need to be recirculated for 45 days.
- Appointed Lila McIver as City Citizen-at-Large and Patti Dossetti as County Citizen-at-Large for the Integrated Waste Management Local Task Force.

In October, the Directors will consider the following –

As the Merced County Regional Waste Management Authority Board:

- Direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals for the Highway 59 Landfill Gas Utilization project

As the Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County:

- Request MCAG to reallocate balance of 2008-09 Local Transportation Funds of \$993,987 to the Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County
- Direct transit staff to evaluate existing fares and return in 30 days with fare options

As the MCAG Governing Board:

- Approve a master agreement with Caltrans
- Appoint a citizen-at-large representative to the Citizens Advisory Committee
- Hear an update on the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint project
- Support the submittal of a 4th year Blueprint grant to Caltrans
- Shift \$993,987 in LTF funds back to transit to cover the budget shortfall of \$993,987
- Authorize the Executive Director to prepare draft documentation for the Anna M. Fuentes Memorial Scholarship and return documentation to the Governing Board within 60 days.