



# I-15 IRP JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Escondido Chamber of Commerce  
 720 N Broadway, Escondido  
 (760) 745-2125

Wednesday, September 17, 2008  
 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
 (Pre-meeting lunch 12:30 to 1:00)

| Item #   | Presenter   |
|--|---|
| 1. <b>Welcome and Introductions</b>  | Co-Chairs: Ed Gallo 5 min.<br>for SANDAG/Tom Buckley for WRCOG  |
| 2. <b>Public Comments/Communications</b><br>Speakers are limited to three minutes each.  |   |
| 3. <b>Minutes</b><br>A & B Approve minutes from the January 29, 2007 and November 8, 2007 meetings. There was not a quorum at the January 29, 2007 meeting to approve the minutes at that time. It is requested that both sets of minutes be approved at this time.  | Kevin Viera<br>Program Manager<br>WRCOG                         |
| 4. <b>Overview of I-15 Interregional Partnership</b><br>Rick Bishop, Executive Director of WRCOG, will provide a short overview of the I-15 Interregional Partnership between western Riverside and San Diego Counties. He will recap the accomplishments made in Phase I and II, as well as briefly outline the objectives for Phase III  | Rick Bishop, 10 min.<br>WRCOG<br>Executive Director             |
| 5. <b>Caltrans View of the I-15 IRP</b><br>Caltrans representative Bill Figge will provide a brief report on the value of this project to Caltrans Headquarters and how the I-15 IRP has become a model project for the State.   | Bill Figge, 5 min.<br>Deputy Director,<br>Caltrans, District 11 |
| 6. <b>2008 Commuter Survey Presentation</b><br>Presentation of the Western Riverside County Commuter Survey. The survey is a follow-up to the survey completed in 2002 for Phase I of the IRP. The 2008 survey examines the inter- and intra-county commuting. Dr. McLarney will present an overview of the larger survey and then focus on the I-15 corridor commuter, trends between the two surveys, information on the commuting workforce into San Diego and elsewhere in the region. | Tim McLarney, 25 min.<br>Ph.D.<br>True North<br>Research        |

| Item # |  | Presenter  |         |
|--------|--|--|---------|
| 7.     | <b>Economic Development Strategies</b><br>Staff will outline tasks for the Economic Development subproject of the IRP and current status of tasks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Phase III Economic Development work plan;</li> <li>• Selection of consultant for economic development;</li> <li>• Discussion with economic development partners               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Southwestern California EDC (<i>Morris Myers</i>)</li> <li>○ San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (<i>Christina Luhn, Ph.D.</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Organizational Structure of Economic Development Groups</li> </ul>                           | Kevin Viera,<br>WRCOG<br>Carolyn Alkire,<br>SANDAG | 15 min. |
| 8.     | <b>Housing Strategies</b><br>SANDAG staff will brief the Committee on the objectives and activities planned for this component. Staff will also share San Diego's experience with the development of a Smart Growth Concept Map to encourage Transit-Oriented Development in the jurisdictions which may serve as a basis for Phase III activities in southwestern Riverside. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Phase III Housing work plan;</li> <li>• Methodology for Smart Growth Concept map;</li> <li>• How Smart Growth can address new legislation.</li> </ul>   | Susan Baldwin,<br>SANDAG                           | 10 min. |
| 9.     | <b>Transportation Strategies</b><br>a) <u>Strategic Implementation Plan:</u> The center piece for Phase III of the IRP will be the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP). RCTC is taking the lead on this component. Tanya Love, RCTC, will provide an overview of the activities currently underway and preliminary status of tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Phase II outcomes and strategies</li> <li>• Analysis of transit priority treatments and infrastructure improvements;</li> <li>• Initial data; findings and maps of Park and Ride facilities in southwest Riverside County;</li> <li>• Initial findings on goods movement for the I-15 corridor</li> </ul> | Tanya Love, RCTC;<br>Heather Werdick,<br>SANDAG    | 15 min. |
|        | b) <u>Transit and Vanpool Study:</u> Report on a concurrent grant to analyze the origin and destination of vanpools and locate opportunities to replace vanpools with higher occupancy bus transit routes.   | Barrow Emerson,<br>SANDAG<br>Robert Yates,<br>RCTC | 5 min.  |
| 10     | <b>Discussion on Issues for Phase III</b><br>Bob Leiter will facilitate a discussion among the Policy Committee members on issues that we should consider for Phase III.   | Bob Leiter,<br>SANDAG                              | 30 min. |

NEXT MEETING – Spring of 2009

120 min

ADJOURN



**From Riverside:**

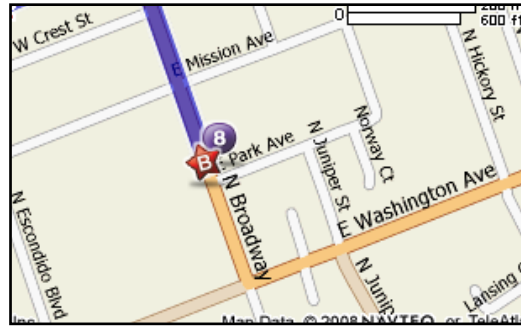
Take I-215 South toward San Diego

Merge onto I-15 South.

Merge onto CA-78 East toward RAMONA

Turn right at Broadway

End at 720 North Broadway



**From San Diego:**

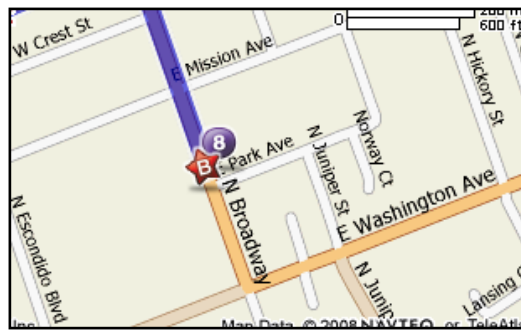
Take CA-163 North via EXIT 16 toward ESCONDIDO

Merge onto I-15 North

Merge onto CA-78 East via EXIT 32 toward RAMONA

Turn right at Broadway

End at 720 North Broadway



# I-15 IRP JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE

September 17, 2008

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **3A**

**Action Requested: APPROVE**

JANUARY 29, 2007, MEETING MINUTES

Meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m. at Escondido Parkway Community Center, Escondido, CA.

## **ITEM # 2 – PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments.

CONSENT

## **ITEM #3 – APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 9, 2006, MEETING MINUTES**

Minutes for November 9, 2006, meeting were approved.

REPORTS

## **ITEM #4 – FINAL DRAFT REPORT OF THE INTERSTATE 15 INTERREGIONAL PARTNERSHIP – PHASE II**

### *Economic Development*

Kevin Viera, WRCOG, made a presentation on the results of the Economic Development component of Phase II, including the activities of the Economic Development Working Group, and Gabe Renteria, SANDAG, provided an overview of the results of the Employment Cluster Study.

### Discussion

Patricia McCoy, SANDAG Borders, asked whether there was an expectation of wages increasing. Kevin Viera responded that WRCOG will be conducting a follow-up commuter survey and will focus on economic issues. This might reveal some information.

Charles White, WRCOG, asked about the relationship between labor from Riverside and Baja California. Jane Clough-Riquelme, SANDAG, responded that SANDAG has been doing cluster studies with Baja as well.

Jillian Hanson-Cox, SANDAG Borders, stated that she works for a manufacturing company. Poway has been very aggressive in offering incentives 8 or 9 years ago. She wondered why we stopped there.

Kevin Viera stated that, based upon the survey, approximately 50 percent of commuters were going to northern San Diego while less than 10 percent were going to central San Diego.

Jeff Stone, Riverside County, asked why there was no category for healthcare, hospitals, and governments. Gabe Renteria responded that the focus of the study was on non-local clusters.

Charles Whit referred to a statement in the report on Page 11, which stated San Diego is becoming increasingly dependent on Riverside and Baja for workers. Gabe Renteria responded that this is related to the cost of homes vs. living. People who fill low-cost jobs cannot afford to live here.

Bob Leiter, SANDAG, clarified that there is no intentional effort to recruit workers; it's simply a function of the economy.

Jane Clough-Riquelme noted that changes in the structure of the mortgage industry in Mexico now allow people the possibility to buy a home with a down payment and pay over time as we do. With the SENTRI card, this now makes it feasible for many people, especially in the social service industries (firefighters, police, teachers), to purchase a home in Baja and commute.

Patricia McCoy stated that this is a region without borders. She mentioned the example of Colorado, where people who cannot afford to live in Vail live out in other areas – the same phenomenon.

Kevin Viera stated that, according to the first commuter survey, people are willing to give up part of their salary to live closer to where they work. This should be the motivation for working on economic development strategies for Riverside.

Rick Gibbs, RCTC, stated that this was an excellent report. It contains important information. Now the issue is what do we do next?

Bob Leiter explained the process that we would be walking through each of the main areas of the report with findings and then would hand out a set of suggested next steps that have been identified by staff, based upon the report. These next steps should be discussed with the committee and then will be included in the final report.

### *Transportation*

Heather Werdick, SANDAG, made a presentation on the transportation planning activities carried out in Phase II, with a particular emphasis on the Caltrans Cooperative County Line Study.

### Discussion

Charles White asked whether Caltrans or the County thought about putting in a toll on the county line. He stated that freeways are more common in California, but he is from the East Coast, where toll roads are a common feature of the transportation system. Heather Werdick responded that they have not yet looked at that option.

Bob Leiter stated that toll options are being considered as part of the update of the Regional Transportation Plan. There is a similar issue on the 91 in Orange County.

Charles White suggested that we should look at charging everyone.

Bob Leiter mentioned the notion of public-private partnerships as one alternative. The issue is how to equitably finance these types of projects. He mentioned that RCTC had completed a study on toll facilities.

Ron Roberts, RCTC, stated that they are looking at a toll-road option south from SR 91. It was approved by everyone except the Supervisor. There is a discussion going on with the Orange County Transportation Agency (OCTA) about extending the toll road south and using transponders.

Thomas Buckley, WRCOG, asked for clarification. Ron Roberts responded that it is just a proposal at the moment; just something to look at.

Bob Leiter mentioned that SANDAG and RCTC are looking at the potential of building additional capacity for I-15 north of the SR 78. The two agencies are looking at the costs and benefits of different approaches.

Rick Gibbs mentioned the example of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge as what can happen if both sides are not on the same page. Maryland planned to build the bridge, but not Virginia. We need to ensure that both ends match up.

Bill Figge, Caltrans, clarified that you cannot charge tolls on existing Interstates. You can discuss new facilities, but not existing facilities.

### *Housing*

Susan Baldwin, SANDAG, reviewed the accomplishments in the housing component of Phase II, with an emphasis on workforce housing initiatives in northern San Diego county.

### Discussion

Patricia McCoy stated that we need to think outside the box; indeed, just ignore the box altogether.

Kevin Viera stated that, from several sources, it seems that young people are interested in transit-oriented development. Riverside does not want to become Orange County. It is important to encourage developers to consider transit-oriented development.

Jane Clough-Riquelme stated this also is true of the elderly. As our population in this region ages, they will need to consider transit-oriented living to maintain their independence as long as they can.

Charles White was concerned about mobility in these new developments. How do you get around once you get there? Bob Leiter responded that there is work being done on the 'last mile' to make the more customized connections to the transit system from development projects. It's important to examine the cost effectiveness of employment and housing destinations.

Charles White asked why carpooling had not been incorporated to a greater degree. Heather Werdick responded that there is definitely a need to encourage people to carpool more.

Robert Yates, RCTC, suggested that RCTC and SANDAG could do additional joint marketing. He also mentioned the importance of promoting Park & Ride facilities.

Bob Leiter mentioned that the vanpool programs at RCTC and SANDAG are designed differently and it will be important to figure out the best way to collaborate for the best overall outcome. In San Diego, vanpoolers get a long-term subsidy, while in Riverside, they get an incentive for the first nine months and then it goes away. This would be an excellent area to develop a collaborative partnership.

Robert Yates mentioned that SANDAG and RCTC applied for a Caltrans grant to conduct an Origins and Destination Study to look at opportunities for buspool and express buses.

Patricia McCoy stated that this was an excellent report. Bob Leiter thanked all of the staff who contributed to the report.

#### **ITEM #5 – DISCUSSION ON NEXT STEPS OF I-15 IRP – PHASE III**

Bob Leiter distributed a matrix of activities for next steps for Phase III of the IRP. The committee was in agreement with the focus.

Thomas Buckley stated that the report was very positive and asked whether the IRP could be scheduled on the same day as the Borders Committee.

Ed Gallo, SANDAG Borders, mentioned that he thought the example of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge was an important lesson to keep in mind as we move forward.

Kevin Viera stated that WRCOG is in the process of implementing an update to the commuter survey. It will focus on the economic development aspect of the commute, asking some of the questions from the first survey as well as some new questions. It is important to determine the cost of commuting. As gas goes up, the cost benefit to the time and money for commuting goes down.

Patricia McCoy stated that this work is very, very important. She looks forward to Phase III. This report is a useful tool for elected officials.

Kevin Viera suggested that the results of the new survey could be shared at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. Staff will set up the next meeting for some time in late summer or fall.

**Attendance Sheet**  
**I-15 IRP Joint Policy Committee**  
**January 29, 2007**

**Joint Policy Committee**

- Charles White, WRCOG, Committee Chair
- Thomas Buckley, WRCOG
- Patricia McCoy, SANDAG Borders Committee
- Ed Gallo, SANDAG Borders Committee
- Jillian Hanson-Cox, SANDAG Borders Committee
- Rick Gibbs, RCTC
- Jeff Stone, RCTC, Riverside County
- Ron Roberts, RCTC
- Frank Kessler, RTA

**Agency Staff**

**SANDAG**

- Susan Baldwin
- Bob Leiter
- Jane Clough-Riquelme
- Gabriel Renteria
- Heather Werdick

**WRCOG**

- Kevin Viera

**RCTC**

- Robert Yates

**RTA**

- Lorelle Moe
- Mark Stanley

**Caltrans**

- Gary Green, District 8
- Bill Figge, District 11
- Maurice Eaton, District 11
- Dennis Thompson, District 11

**Other Agencies**

- Russ Decker, Cal. State San Marcos

# I-15 IRP JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE

September 17, 2008

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **3B**

**Action Requested: APPROVE**

NOVEMBER 8, 2007: MEETING SUMMARY

## **Agenda Item #1: Welcome and Self-Introductions**

Councilmember Thomas Buckley, City of Lake Elsinore, chaired the meeting. Attendants introduced themselves.

## **Agenda Item #2: Public Comments and Communications**

There were no public comments.

## **Agenda Item #3: Selection of Policy Committee Co-Chairs**

Kevin Viera, WRCOG, clarified the organizational structure of the I-15 Interregional Partnership and explained the roles and responsibilities of the Committee. Mayor Pro Tem, Ed Gallo and Thomas Buckley, City of Lake Elsinore, were nominated and elected new Co-Chairs of the Committee.

## **Agenda Item #4: Approval of January 29, 2007, Meeting Minutes**

As there was not a quorum, approval of the January 29 meeting minutes was tabled until next meeting.

## **Agenda Item #5: I-15 IRP – Background and Accomplishments**

Bob Leiter, SANDAG staff, provided an overview of the I-15 IRP between southwestern Riverside and San Diego Counties. Mr. Leiter reviewed key findings and accomplishments from Phases I and II.

### Discussion

Mayor Jim Desmond, City of Escondido, asked if there is a representative from Escondido on the SPRINTER Smart Growth Working Group.

Susan Baldwin, SANDAG staff, responded that Barbara Redlitz represents Escondido on the Working Group, which is made up of Planning Directors and other stakeholders, including major employers, from jurisdictions located along the SPRINTER corridor.

Councilmember Jack Feller, City of Oceanside, asked who from his jurisdiction participates on the Working Group.

Ms. Baldwin responded that Peter Katz represents Oceanside on the Working Group.

## **Agenda Item #6: Overview of I-15 IRP – Phase III**

Kevin Viera, WRCOG staff, presented information about the grants that SANDAG and WRCOG received to support the actions identified as next steps in the Phase II Final Report. Mr. Viera said that staff would give a brief overview of the activities planned for each of the strategic areas: economic development, transportation, and housing.

### **Agenda Item #6a: Economic Development**

Kevin Viera presented information on the economic development efforts planned for Phase III. Efforts will center on expansion of the Economic Development Working Group and facilitating a strategic action plan among selected industry clusters identified in Phase II.

#### Discussion

Councilmember Dave Allan, City of La Mesa, asked for clarification on the meaning of the terms 'primary' and 'secondary' in the responsible agencies column of the scope of work matrix for the economic development section.

Mr. Viera responded that the Primary responsible agencies will be WRCOG and SANDAG because the two agencies completed the Economic Cluster Study during Phase II. Stakeholders are the Secondary responsible agencies because they were identified in the Study and will be asked to convene during Phase III to work toward economic development solutions.

Councilmember Dave Allan, City of La Mesa, asked if there will be representation from the Tribal Governments during Phase III economic development programs/workshops.

Jane Clough-Riquelme, SANDAG staff, responded that the location quotient revealed during Phase II emphasized physical proximity of participating clusters as an important factor determining participation. She added that staff would invite tribal nations to participate in the development of the economic development strategic action plan.

### **Agenda Item #6b: Transportation**

Barrow Emerson, SANDAG staff, described the components of Phase III for Transportation. Work will focus on the development of an Interregional Strategic Transportation Implementation Plan to improve the functioning of the corridor, based on 5-, 10-, and 15-year time horizons. The Plan will be multi-modal, in keeping with the philosophy of the IRP.

#### Discussion:

Thomas Buckley, City of Lake Elsinore, said that a variety of Goods Movement data exists at SCAG which could be used for Phase III.

Councilmember Jack Feller, City of Oceanside, asked if there is a bus currently that travels to Oceanside from Temecula.

Mark Stanley, RTA, responded that there is a successful commuter line that travels between those jurisdictions.

Jack Feller, City of Oceanside, added that such a route could connect to the SPRINTER in the future.

Bob Leiter, SANDAG staff, said that the prior phase looked at the long term planning of how the northern system can connect to the managed lanes system in San Diego. He said that buses should be able to move through to Murietta and other jurisdictions in Riverside. This should be our focus for Phase III, to work together with SANDAG, RTC, RTA, Caltrans to continue having this discussion.

Jack Feller, City of Oceanside, said that it is important to note that the 76 is planned for widening and there are people who live and work in this region.

Mayor Jim Desmond, City of Escondido, asked where users board the bus to Oceanside.

The group responded that riders board at the Escondido Transit Center.

### **Agenda Item #6c: Housing**

Susan Baldwin, SANDAG staff, presented information on the components of the Phase III Housing Strategy. The housing component will focus on two efforts: 1) collaboration and development of projects focusing on the production of workforce housing in north San Diego County; 2) the development of a preliminary Smart Growth Concept Map for selected jurisdictions in southwest Riverside County. Ms. Baldwin passed out the Smart Growth Concept Map created by SANDAG in partnership with their member jurisdictions for San Diego County.

#### Discussion

Thomas Buckley, City of Lake Elsinore, said that the Two Percent Compass Program identified where two percent of the growth in the region could be located along transit corridors, which lead to a map similar to the Smart Growth Concept Map.

Kevin Viera, WRCOG staff, said that WRCOG is applying for funding from SCAG to complete a similar program that would incorporate the principals of the Smart Growth Concept Plan with SCAG's 2% strategies.

Bob Leiter, SANDAG staff, said that the difference between the Compass effort and the Smart Growth Concept map is that SANDAG based their smart growth locations on an adopted Regional Transportation Plan focused on BRT. Linking the two percent study results with this effort will give more focus to the project. SANDAG is open to the idea of providing technical support to their partner agencies.

Jack Feller, City of Oceanside, commented that one challenge in identifying smart growth areas along the SPRINTER line will be based in objections from the environmental community.

Susan Baldwin, SANDAG staff, responded that the project should find methods to meet on common ground with different groups, based on the need to develop in a way that is more sensitive to resource consumption and environmental conditions.

Jim Desmond, City of Escondido, said that in an urban area, building homes in the \$250,000 range will require building higher. Building higher can contribute to improvements in air quality and conservation of water, because development is occurring where the infrastructure already exists.

**Agenda Item #7: I-15 IRP Joint Policy Committee Charter**

Jane Clough-Riquelme, SANDAG staff, presented information on the need for a charter for the Committee. The attached charter is proposed to be amended to have the Committee to extend the sunset to the end of Phase III. Ms. Clough-Riquelme asked the Committee to recommend approval of the amended charter. Staff will take the proposed amended charter to the SANDAG Borders Committee and WRCOG's Executive Committee for approval.

A motion and second were made and the item was approved.

**Agenda Item #8: Location/Date for Next Meeting – first quarter of 2008**

Meeting was adjourned at 3pm.



THE CHOICES WE MAKE:  
COMMUTING, HOUSING & EMPLOYMENT

FINAL REPORT

CONDUCTED FOR  
WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (WRCOG)

AUGUST 11, 2008

*True North*  
**RESEARCH**

741 GARDEN VIEW COURT SUITE 208  
ENCINITAS, CALIFORNIA 92024  
PHONE 760.632.9900 FAX 760.632.9993  
WEB [WWW.TN-RESEARCH.COM](http://WWW.TN-RESEARCH.COM)





## INTRODUCTION

The Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) is the regional planning agency for Western Riverside County and, as such, serves as both a technical and information resource for the region's 14 incorporated cities and the county government. The purpose of WRCOG is to unify Western Riverside County so that it can speak with a collective voice on important issues that affect its members. One of WRCOG's primary functions is to plan and invest in the transportation system so that it best meets the mobility needs of the region—now and in the future. By better integrating the region's freeway, transit, and road networks, linking land-use and transportation planning, and strategically investing in infrastructure improvements where they are most needed, WRCOG helps to promote a sustainable, high quality of life in the region.

WRCOG is also an active member of the I-15 Interregional Partnership, which is a voluntary compact between local elected officials representing WRCOG, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), Riverside Transit Agency (RTA), Caltrans, and other agencies. The primary goal of this compact is to address the job/housing imbalance in the region by collaborating to develop strategies in economic development, transportation, and housing that will reduce the impacts of interregional commuting, create more jobs in housing rich areas, and create more housing in job-rich areas.

**MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH** Successfully fulfilling its planning role requires that WRCOG have up-to-date and reliable information regarding the travel behaviors of residents and others who place demands on the region's transportation infrastructure. Moreover, to develop effective strategies for addressing the jobs/housing imbalance noted above, it is important to have timely data on the factors, rationales and decisions that residents make that contribute to interregional commuting patterns. Put simply, WRCOG needs to have a statistically reliable understanding of who the commuters are, why they have chosen to live so far from their jobs, what circumstances would be necessary to influence their commute behaviors, and how all of these factors may have changed in recent years with the rising cost of energy, increased traffic congestion, sub-prime housing crisis, and other developments.

Toward this end, WRCOG commissioned True North Research to conduct the *2007-2008 Commute, Housing and Employment Study* of residents in Western Riverside County. Although the design process for this study began with a "clean slate", the team took advantage of opportunities to build upon prior research, integrate studies where appropriate, and therefore leverage more information from the research than could be accomplished if the survey were designed without consideration of prior relevant studies. Many of the questions included in the survey, for example, were purposely replicated from the 2002 Interregional Partnership (IRP) studies<sup>1</sup> to allow the team to identify how patterns of interregional commuting may have changed in the past five years. Unlike the 2002 IRP studies, the present study also gathered detailed information from those who commute *within* the County (intra-county commuters), encompassed *all* of the WRCOG region,<sup>2</sup> and asked more detailed questions about commute behavior.

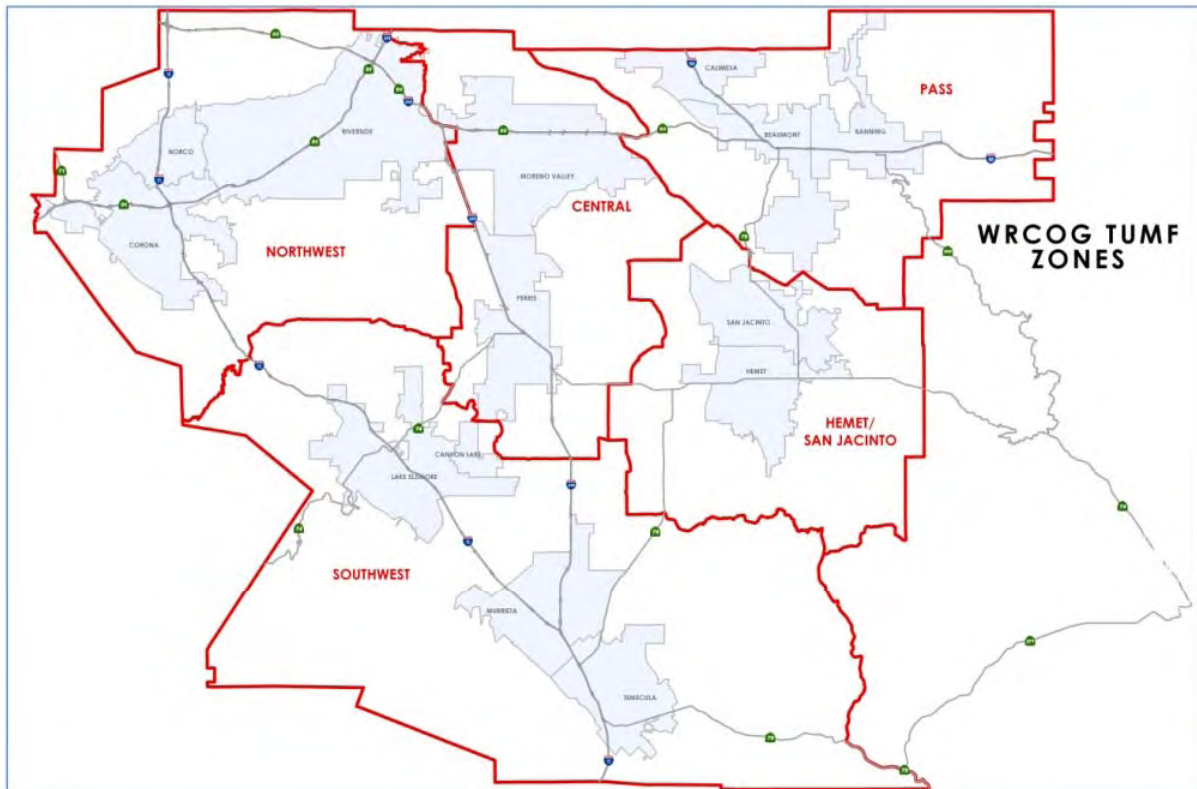
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1. See *Survey of Western Riverside County Residents and Commuters*, I-15 Interregional Partnership, 2002.

2. The 2002 IRP studies did not include the Pass TUMF zone, or portions of the Central and Hemet/San Jacinto TUMF zones.

**METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW** A full description of the methodology used for this study is included later in this report (see *Methodology* on page 102). To accommodate the large number of research objectives, two separate surveys were conducted. The first survey—which focused on commute-related questions—was administered to 2,000 adult residents in Western Riverside County who were selected using a stratified, random digit dial (RDD) sampling methodology. Respondents were initially sampled on a proportional basis from each of the five TUMF<sup>3</sup> zones that comprise the region (see map in Figure 1). Respondents participated in the survey by telephone or online between September 26, 2007 and December 13, 2007.<sup>4</sup>

**FIGURE 1 SUB-AREAS IDENTIFIED IN STUDY**



The second survey was administered exclusively to interregional commuters and focused on issues of housing and employment. A total of 1,120 adults in Western Riverside County who commuted outside of the County on a regular basis for their job or school were selected using a stratified, RDD sampling methodology. Respondents were sampled on a proportional basis from each of the five TUMF zones that comprise the region according to the distribution of interregional commuters discovered during the first survey. Respondents participated in the second survey by telephone between March 11 and May 19, 2008.

3. Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee Program.

4. To accommodate WRCOG's interest in profiling both intra-county and interregional commuting behavior, after the first 1,000 interviews were completed on a proportional basis the study strategically oversampled for commuters of various types to improve the statistical margins of error due to sampling within each commuter subgroup. To adjust for the oversampling by commuter type and other factors, the data were weighted prior to analyses and presentation. The results presented in this report are the weighted results, which are representative at the region-wide level, as well as by commuter type and demographic subgroups.

**QUESTION NUMBERING** This report presents the combined results of two separate surveys. Questions that were included in the first survey will be referenced by question number only. Those that were part of the second survey funded by the IRP will be denoted by the question number followed by (IRP). In some cases, the same question was asked in both studies and both question numbers will be referenced.

**COMPARISONS TO 2002 IRP STUDIES** Because the present studies encompassed a larger geographic area than that surveyed for the 2002 IRP studies and used a different scheme for categorizing respondents that included a more detailed classification of commuter sub-groups, one can not simply compare the data presented in the respective reports to identify trends in commute behavior. For several key indicators, however, True North adjusted and filtered the data from both studies to allow for a meaningful comparison of results within the three TUMF zones that appeared in both studies (Northwest, Central and Southwest).



**ORGANIZATION OF REPORT** This report is designed to meet the needs of readers who prefer a summary of the findings as well as those who are interested in the details of the results. For those who seek an overview of the findings, the sections titled *Just the Facts* and *Conclusions* are for you. They provide a summary of the most important factual findings of the survey in bullet-point format and a discussion of their implications. For the interested reader, this section is followed by a more detailed description of the results complete with tables and figures by topic area (see *Table of Contents*). And, for the truly ambitious reader, the methodology and questionnaires used for the study are contained at the back of this report.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** True North thanks the staff at WRCOG who participated in the design of this study—Rick Bishop (Executive Director), Ruthanne Taylor Berger (Deputy Executive Director), and Kevin Viera (Program Manager). Their expertise, local knowledge, and insight improved the overall quality of the research presented here.

**DISCLAIMER** The statements and conclusions in this report are those of the authors (Dr. Timothy McLarney and Richard Sarles) at True North Research, Inc. and not necessarily those of WRCOG. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

**ABOUT TRUE NORTH** True North is a full-service survey research firm that is dedicated to providing public agencies with a clear understanding of the values, perceptions, priorities and behaviors of their residents and customers. Through designing and implementing scientific surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews, as well as expert interpretation of the findings, True North helps its clients to move with confidence when making strategic decisions in a variety of areas—such as planning, policy evaluation, performance management, organizational development, establishing fiscal priorities, and developing effective public information campaigns. During their careers, Dr. McLarney (President) and Mr. Sarles (Principal Researcher) have designed and conducted over 400 survey research studies for public agencies, including more than 200 studies for councils of government, municipalities and special districts.



## JUST THE FACTS

The following is an outline of the main factual findings from the 2007 survey. For the reader's convenience, we have organized the findings according to the section titles used in the body of this report. Thus, if you would like to learn more about a particular finding, simply turn to the appropriate report section.

### COMMUTER IDENTIFICATION

- Overall, 51% of respondents indicated that they were employed full-time, and an additional 8% offered that they were employed part-time. The remaining respondents were either students (4%), homemakers (12%), retired (20%), or between jobs at the time of the interview (5%).
- Among all respondents, 56% indicated that they commute to work or school at least three days per week (hereafter referred to as *regular* commuters).
- Sixty-one percent (61%) of regular commuters in Western Riverside County commute to a work or school destination that is also within Riverside County, whereas the remainder (39%) qualify as interregional commuters in that they commute to a destination outside of Riverside County. Among the interregional destinations, San Bernardino County was the most common (14%), followed by Orange County (10%), Los Angeles County (8%), and San Diego County (5%).
- Among regular *intra-county* commuters, more than half (52%) reported that they commute to a location within the Northwest TUMF zone. The Southwest and Central TUMF zones were cited as the commute destination of 16% and 15% of regular intra-county commuters, respectively, whereas the Hemet/San Jacinto and Pass zones were mentioned by 7% and 4% of intra-county commuters. Approximately 4% of regular intra-county commuters indicated that they commute to a destination in East County or another location that is not located within a TUMF zone.

### HOUSEHOLD COMMUTE PATTERNS

- Most respondents lived in households with at least two other individuals. Overall, 42% stated that at least four people live in their household, and an additional 17% indicated that three individuals reside in their home. Just 12% lived alone.
- More than half (55%) of those surveyed indicated that a total of two adults live in their household. Approximately one-quarter indicated that three (16%) or more (11%) adults reside in their home, whereas 16% indicated that they are the only adult in their household.
- Just under half (49%) of households surveyed in Western Riverside County indicated that they have one or more children present.
- Overall, 79% of households indicated that they had at least one person who commutes to work, and 42% indicated that two or more adults commute to work.
- Overall, 51% of households in Western Riverside County contain at least one intra-county commuter, 44% contain at least one interregional commuter, whereas 22% do not contain a commuter.
- The average household in Western Riverside County contains a total of 1.362 commuters (0.755 intra-county commuters and 0.607 interregional commuters).
- Among interregional destinations, the average number of commuters per household was highest for San Bernardino County (0.177 commuters), followed by Orange County (0.147),

Los Angeles County (0.111), San Diego County (0.067), Ventura County (0.003), and Imperial County (0.001).

- Overall, it is estimated that there are 680,110 commuters in Western Riverside County, nearly two-thirds of which reside in the Northwest (297,990) or Southwest (156,020) TUMF zones.

## COMMUTE ROUTES

- When regular commuters were asked to identify the freeway or highway that they *primarily* use when commuting to work or school, approximately 21% indicated that they do not use a freeway or highway when commuting. Among the specific freeways and highways, State Route 91 was mentioned most often (20%), followed by Interstate 15 (17%), Interstate 215 (13%), State Route 60 (11%), Interstate 10 (10%), State Route 74 (3%), and State Route 79 (2%).
- Considering both primary and secondary freeways/highways used during their commute, nearly one-third (31%) of regular commuters reported that they use SR-91 during their commute, 28% use I-15, and 22% use I-215. State Route 60 and I-10 were reported being used by 20% and 15% of regular commuters, respectively. Fewer respondents indicated that they use SR-74 (5%) or SR-79 (3%).
- Fifty-six percent (56%) of adults in the WRCOG region commute to work or school at least three days per week (referred to as *regular commuters*). Regular commuters can be further divided into intra-county commuters who travel to a destination within Riverside County (34%), and interregional commuters who commute to a destination outside of the County on SR-91 (7%), I-15 (3%), or via another route (12%).
- Among regular commuters, two-thirds indicated that they always choose the same route when commuting to work or school, whereas one-third (32%) typically alter their route.
- When asked *why* they alter their route, avoiding traffic congestion was by far the most common response, with a desire to go the fastest route each day, avoid obstructions, some other reason, or no particular reason accounting for the remaining responses.
- Sixty percent (60%) of regular commuters stated that on a weekly basis they choose to travel on major surface streets instead of a freeway or highway in order to avoid traffic congestion.
- When asked to identify which streets they use as an alternative to congested freeways/highways, Allesandro was mentioned most often (13%), followed by Van Buren Boulevard (12%), Magnolia (10%), Central (8%), and Arlington Avenue (7%). Although the list of alternative streets is long, no other individual street was identified by at least 5% of commuters who use surface street alternatives.
- More than half (52%) of interregional commuters who use SR-91 stated that they use the toll lanes (Express Lanes) on a weekly basis.
- Among interregional commuters who use I-15 for their commute, 18% indicated that they use the I-15 toll lanes (FasTrak lanes).

## TIME, DISTANCE & MODE

- More than two-thirds of regular commuters indicated that they begin their commute between 5:00am and 6:59am (34%), or between 7:00am and 8:59am (38%).
- Overall, most (63%) regular commuters reported that their commute is 40 minutes or less, although one out of five (20%) reported that their one-way commute lasts at least an hour.
- In terms of commute *distance*, approximately one-quarter of respondents were represented in commute length categories of less than 10 miles (24%), 10 to 19 miles (24%), 20 to 39

miles (27%), and 40 miles or greater (23%). The average length among all regular commuters was 25.6 miles.

- Intra-county commuters averaged 16.28 miles one-way to work or school, whereas the corresponding figure among interregional commuters was 40.3 miles.
- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of regular commuters begin their commute back from work between 3:00pm and 4:59pm, and an additional 9% start the journey between 5:00pm and 6:59pm. More than one-third (34%) of regular commuters that start their return commute between 11:00am and 2:59pm.
- Sixty-three percent (63%) of regular commuters reported that their commute *to* work/school was 40 minutes or less. Fifty-five percent (55%) reported that their return trip from work/school to home was 40 minutes or less.
- Over half (approximately 52%) of regular commuters perceived that their commute to and from work/school has gotten slower in the past year, whereas 41% indicated that their commute had remained about the same duration during this period. Less than 8% of regular commuters indicated that their commute in either direction had gotten faster in the past year.
- Among regular commuters, driving alone in a vehicle is by far the dominant *primary* mode (84%), followed by carpooling (11%). All other modes were cited as the primary mode by less than 2% of respondents, including motorcycle (1.3%), bus (1.2%), walking/biking (0.9%), and the train (0.7%).
- Overall, just 7% of regular commuters indicated that they use multiple modes of transportation for their commute.
- Approximately 15% of regular commuters indicated that they had used public transit in Riverside County at least once during the previous 12 months.

## LIVING IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY

- Nearly half (45%) of those surveyed indicated that they had lived in Riverside County at least 15 years. At the other extreme, nearly one-quarter (23%) stated that they had moved to Riverside County within the past five years.
- When respondents who had moved to Riverside County within the past 9 years were asked to indicate from where they moved, the answers were rather evenly split between Orange County (21%), Los Angeles County (21%), San Diego County (15%), and another California county (21%). Approximately 15% of respondents indicated that they moved to Riverside County from another state, 5% from another country, and 2% were unwilling to answer the question.
- The vast majority (81%) of all respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of life in Riverside County, with 36% stating that they were *very* satisfied. Less than one in five (16%) residents stated that they were dissatisfied with the County in this respect, and an additional 3% were unsure or unwilling to answer the question.
- Among interregional commuters, approximately one quarter (23%) anticipate that the quality of life in Western Riverside County in 10 years will be about the same as it is today. Forty-three percent (43%) expect that the livability of the region will improve during this period, whereas 29% expect that in 10 years the region will be a worse place to live than it is today.
- When interregional commuters were asked what local governments could change to improve the livability of the region -- now and in the future -- the most commonly suggested changes centered on building additional freeway and highway capacity (23%), followed by reducing traffic congestion (11%). Improving public safety and limiting future growth and development were also mentioned by 9% and 5% of respondents, respectively.

- Nearly 80% of interregional commuters indicated that Riverside County is a better place to live than Los Angeles County, and more than two-thirds (71%) felt similarly about the comparison to San Bernardino County. Fewer interregional commuters perceived that Riverside County was a better place to live than Orange County (49%) or San Diego County (37%), although it was still the dominant response.
- Of those surveyed (commuters and non-commuters), four out of five (80%) reported that they lived in a detached single-family home, whereas 8% lived in an apartment, 3% in a condominium or townhome, 8% in a mobile home, and less than 1% refused to answer the question.
- Seventy-three (73%) of respondents indicated that they own their current residence in Western Riverside County.

## HOME OWNERSHIP HISTORY: INTERREGIONAL COMMUTERS

- Most interregional commuters (53%) reported that they rented their homes prior to moving to Riverside County.
- As to the type of housing they lived in prior to moving to Riverside County, single-family homes were the most common (61%), followed by apartments (25%), townhomes (6%), and condominiums (5%).
- Within the first year of arriving in Riverside County, the rates of home ownership among interregional commuters increased substantially to 62%.
- The type of housing in which they lived upon arrival in Riverside County also changed, with a substantially higher percentage (75%) reporting that they now lived in a single family residence.
- At the time of this study, more than two-thirds of interregional commuters reported that they owned their home.
- Interregional commuters at the time of this study also gravitated toward single-family residences, with 80% indicating that they currently reside in a single-family home.
- Just one-third (34%) of interregional commuters indicated that they considered housing near their place of employment when choosing their current home.
- When asked why they did not look for a home closer to their current employer, the affordability of housing in Riverside County (16%) and the higher cost of living near their work (12%) were the most frequent explanations, followed by a desire to live near their family (10%) or a lack of desire to live in the areas near their work (9%).

## TRADE-OFFS: INTERREGIONAL COMMUTERS

- Eighty-six percent (86%) of interregional commuters agreed that *the rising cost of gas has forced me to tighten my budget and reduce my spending in other areas.*
- Three-quarters (75%) of interregional commuters also confided that *commuting causes me a lot of stress.*
- Approximately one-third (36%) of interregional commuters indicated that they would be willing to make sacrifices and trade-offs by changing their job so they could work closer to their current home.
- A smaller percentage (30%) stated that they were willing to move closer to their current employer if it involved sacrifices or trade-offs.

- Overall, 56% of interregional commuters indicated that they would be at least somewhat interested in applying for a job within 15 minutes of their current home if it involved getting additional training or education.
- Forty-four percent (44%) of commuters stated that they would be interested in applying for the job even if it involved changing careers.
- Just one-quarter (25%) of interregional commuters were interested in applying for a local job if it involved a 15% pay cut.
- Overall, 44% of interregional commuters indicated that they would *not* be interested in applying for a local job even if it paid the same as their current job.
- Nearly three out of four interregional commuters (73%) reported that during the *past* 12 months they did *not* look for a job that was closer to where they currently live.
- Less than one in four (24%) interregional commuters indicated that they expect to seek employment closer to home during the *next* 12 months.

### Home Owners

- Just over one-third (39%) of interregional commuters that own their home stated that they would be interested in moving to be within a 15 minute drive of their current employer if they could get a similar home at the same price as their current home.
- Approximately 13% stated that they were interested if they could have a similar home for 25% more money than their current home.
- When given the option of having a house that was 25% smaller than their current home for the same money, 19% percent of interregional commuters expressed an interest in moving to be within 15 minutes of their current employer.
- Interest dropped to 9% when the trade-off would involve both a 25% increase in the mortgage and a 25% reduction in the size of the home.
- Just 13% of interregional commuters who own their homes expressed interest in moving to be within a 15 minute drive of their current employer if it involved moving into a townhome or condo.

### Renters

- Less than half (48%) of interregional commuters that rent their home stated that they would be interested in moving to be within a 15 minute drive of their current employer if they could get a similar home at the same rent as their current home.
- One quarter (25%) stated that they were interested if they could have a similar home for 25% more rent than their current home.
- When given the option of renting a house that was 25% smaller than their current home for the same money, 25% percent of interregional commuters expressed an interest in moving to be within 15 minutes of their current employer.
- Interest dropped to 19% when the trade-off would involve both a 25% increase in the rent and a 25% reduction in the size of the home.
- Just 28% of interregional commuters expressed interest in moving to be within a 15 minute drive of their current employer if it involved renting a townhome or condo.

## TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

- Approximately half of regular commuters whose one-way commute exceeds 30 minutes indicated that they would be at least somewhat likely to regularly carpool (52%) for their commute, or vanpool if the vanpool group received a \$400 monthly incentive (52%).
- A willingness to use a free service that would match the respondent with a convenient carpool was similarly high (49%) among this group, whereas interest in regularly vanpooling without an incentive (40%) and using public transit (34%) for their commute was somewhat lower.

## OCCUPATION, INDUSTRY & SALARY

- The most common occupational group for regular commuters was professional specialty (not including information technology) (14%), followed by craft and repair (13%), teacher (11%), supervisor/manager (10%), and administrative/office worker (10%).
- The most common industry for regular commuters was business services (17%), followed by medical and social services (14%), education (13%), and construction (13%).
- Among all regular commuters who answered the question, the average salary reported was \$67,837 per year.



## CONCLUSIONS

As noted in the *Introduction*, this study was designed to provide WRCOG with up-to-date and statistically reliable information regarding the travel behaviors of residents and others who place demands on the region's transportation infrastructure. Moreover, to develop effective strategies for addressing the jobs/housing imbalance noted above, it is important to have timely data on the factors, rationales and decisions that residents make that contribute to interregional commuting patterns.

Whereas subsequent sections of this report are devoted to conveying the detailed results of the survey, in this section we attempt to “see the forest through the trees” by noting how the collective results of the survey answer some of the key questions that motivated the research.

*What is the state of the commute in Western Riverside County?*

Commuting is a way of life for most Western Riverside County residents. Nearly four out of five households (79%) contain at least one person who commutes to work or school, with the average number of commuters per household being 1.362 among *all* households. Combining the findings of this survey with the most recently available demographic estimates,<sup>5</sup> it is estimated that 390,659 of the 497,655 households in the region contain at least one commuter, with the number of individual commuters being 680,110.

Differentiating between those who commute to destinations within Riverside County (intra-county commuter) and those who commute to destinations outside of the County (interregional commuter) reveals that both of these subgroups are well-represented among Western Riverside County households. More than half (51%) of all households in the region contain at least one intra-county commuter, with the corresponding figure for interregional commuters being 44%. The average number of intra-county commuters per household (0.755) is also slightly higher than the average number of interregional commuters (0.607), resulting in a projected total for the region of 382,827 intra-county commuters and 297,283 interregional commuters.

Although prevalent in all areas of Western Riverside County, commuters and commuting households are disproportionately concentrated in the Northwest, Central and Southwest TUMF zones. At the extremes, 84% of households in the Northwest zone contain at least one commuter, with the average household in this area containing 1.510 commuters. The corresponding figures for the Hemet/San Jacinto zone are 68% and 1.029, respectively. Overall, it is estimated that of the 680,110 commuters in Western Riverside County, nearly two-thirds reside in the Northwest (297,990) or Southwest (156,020) TUMF zones.

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5. 2007 housing estimates were provided by WRCOG.

*What are the travel characteristics of intra-county commuters?*

Perhaps the most striking pattern revealed in this study with respect to intra-county commuters is that despite residing in many different areas of the County, the majority commute to the same general area for work or school. Of the estimated 382,827 intra-county commuters in Western Riverside County, 199,070 (52%) commute to a destination in the Northwest TUMF zone. The Southwest and Central TUMF zones were cited as the commute destination of 16% and 15% of regular intra-county commuters, respectively, whereas the Hemet/San Jacinto and Pass zones were mentioned by 7% and 4% of intra-county commuters. Approximately 4% of regular intra-county commuters indicated that they commute to a destination that is not located within a TUMF zone.

As for *how* they get there, approximately one-quarter of intra-county commuters who commute on a regular basis reported using SR-91 (24%), I-215 (23%), and/or I-15 (23%), respectively. State Route 60 and I-10 were reported being used by 19% and 7% of regular intra-county commuters, respectively. Thirty percent (30%) of intra-county commuters choose a route that does not involve a freeway or highway.

Although they have preferred routes, intra-county commuters are also highly adaptive in their travel behavior. More than one-third (35%) of intra-county commuters alter their route on a weekly basis in response to traffic congestion, and more than two-thirds (69%) stated that at least once in a typical week they opt to travel on major surface streets instead of a freeway or highway in order to avoid traffic congestion. The streets most commonly used by intra-county commuters as alternatives to a congested freeway or highway are—in order of rank—Allesandro, Van Buren, Magnolia, Central, and Arlington.

Driving alone is the primary *way* intra-county commuters travel to work or school (86%), with carpooling being the primary mode for nearly 10% of intra-county commuters. The average intra-county commute reported by respondents was 16 miles in length, and 85% of intra-county commuters reported that their one-way commute can be accomplished in 40 minutes or less.

*What are the travel characteristics of inter-regional commuters?*

It is estimated that 297,283 individuals who reside in Western Riverside County commute to work or school destinations outside of Riverside County. Orange County receives the largest share of interregional commuters (76,249), followed by San Bernardino County (75,902), Los Angeles County (56,153), and San Diego County (37,405). An additional 49,301 interregional commuters were classified into the ‘other’ group.<sup>6</sup>

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6. The ‘other’ group consisted of individuals who commuted to multiple counties, those who commuted to counties other than Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino, or Imperial, and those for whom the respondent could not recall the destination county of a household member.

As for *how* they get there, just 7% of interregional commuters choose a route that does not involve a freeway or highway. Nearly 42% use SR-91, one-third (33%) use I-15, 27% use I-10, 20% use I-215, 22% use SR-60, and 27% use other freeways/highways as part of their commute.

When compared to their intra-county counterparts, interregional commuters were more consistent in their choice of routes to work or school. Nearly three-quarters (72%) stated that they always choose the same basic route for their commute, and less than half (47%) reported that on a weekly basis they will opt to travel on major surface streets instead of a freeway or highway in order to avoid traffic congestion. The streets most commonly used by interregional commuters as alternatives to a congested freeway or highway are—in rank order—Van Buren, Allesandro, Ontario, Green River, and Magnolia.

Like their intra-county counterparts, driving alone is the primary *way* interregional commuters travel to work or school (80%), with carpooling being the primary mode for nearly 13% of interregional commuters. The average interregional commute reported by respondents was 40.3 miles in length, and nearly two-thirds (65%) of interregional commuters reported that their one-way commute takes at least one-hour to accomplish.

*How are intra-county and interregional commuters different?*

Aside from their commute destinations, intra-county commuters and interregional commuters are different in a host of ways. It is worth noting that some of these differences shed light on the motivation underlying interregional commuters' decisions to endure long commutes out of Riverside County for their jobs.

When compared to their intra-county counterparts, interregional commuters are more likely to be male, married, and concentrated in the 25 to 54 age brackets. From a socio-economic perspective, interregional commuters earn substantially more compensation (average \$71,600 annually) for their job when compared to intra-county commuters (\$60,700), are more likely to own their own home, and are more likely to live in a detached single-family home.

The survey also revealed striking relationships between commute characteristics, compensation, and length of residence. Across all commuter subgroups, length of commute was positively correlated with compensation. Simply put, the longer it takes for a person to commute to work, the higher their expected salary. Among employed residents, the longer one had resided in the County, the more likely they were to commute within Riverside County. At the extremes, 73% of those who had lived in Riverside County 15 years or more also worked in Riverside County, whereas the comparable figure among newcomers (less than one year) was 44%.

*Has the practice of inter-regional commuting changed in recent years?*

The answer to this question depends on how you look at it. From a *household* perspective, little appears to have changed with respect to interregional commuting patterns in the past seven years. Focusing on just the three TUMF zones for which comparable data exists,<sup>7</sup> the number of interregional commuters per household increased just slightly (+0.026) between 2002 and 2007. The net overall increase in interregional commuters per household reflected small increases in Orange County, San Bernardino County, and “other” county commuters, and small decreases in the concentration of Los Angeles, San Diego, Ventura and Imperial County commuters.

Although little has changed with respect to interregional commuting from the household perspective, the same is not true from a *regional* perspective. Because of the explosive growth in the region’s population and housing since 2000, the sheer number of interregional commuters—and the demands they place on the region’s infrastructure—have grown exponentially. Indeed, whereas the number of households has increased by 31% since 2000 in the TUMF zones for which comparable data exists (Northwest, Central and Southwest), the estimated number of interregional commuters increased by 40% (or 71,931 additional interregional commuters) during the same period. Paralleling the growth rate in housing, the rate of growth in interregional commuters was also markedly higher in the Southwest TUMF zone. Between 2000 and 2007, it is estimated that the Southwest subregion added 28,497 interregional commuters, which represents an increase of more than 68% over seven years.

*How are we to understand the origins of interregional commuting?*

One of the conclusions of the 2002 IRP studies was that the keys to understanding the prevalence of interregional commuting was commuters’ strong preference for a single-family residence, coupled with their desire to own a home and the greater availability/affordability of this type of housing in Western Riverside County. To help better understand how these factors contribute to patterns of interregional commuting, detailed questions were asked of interregional commuters in the present study to profile their history of home ownership.

The results of these questions strongly support the underlying explanations regarding the origins of interregional commuting noted above. Prior to moving to Riverside County, just 42% of interregional commuters owned their home, and 61% lived in single-family residences. Within the first year of arriving in Riverside County, the percentage of interregional commuters who owned their home increased to 62%. The percentage that reported living in a single-family residence also increased to 75%.

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7. See *Commuters per Household* on page 26 and *Regional Projections* on page 28 for a discussion of the adjustments needed to compare results from the present survey with those of the 2002 IRP studies. The three zones for which comparable data was available were the Northwest, Central, and Southwest TUMF zones.

It is also worth noting that just one-third (34%) of interregional commuters indicated that they considered homes near their place of employment when searching for their current residence. The reason? The affordability of housing in Riverside County and/or the higher cost of living near their work were the dominant explanations.

*How do perceptions of Riverside County as a place to live contribute to interregional commuting?*

Because many interregional commuters reported moving to Riverside County due to the greater availability of housing they can afford and other cost of living factors, one might expect that they would prefer to live in another area and therefore would be somewhat less satisfied with living in Riverside County than their intra-county or non-commuting counterparts. The results of this study indicate that this is, in fact, *not* the case. Interregional commuters reported being slightly *more* satisfied with Riverside County as a place to live than either intra-county commuters or non-commuters. Moreover, interregional commuters generally viewed Riverside County as a *better* place to live than Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange and San Diego counties, respectively.

*Are interregional commuters receptive to making employment or housing-related trade-offs to reduce their commute?*

The results of the present study paint a very interesting and very telling portrait of interregional commuters' perspectives on their commute -- and their willingness to endure it. Despite the stress caused by their commute and the financial hardships they face due to rising gas prices, the vast majority of interregional commuters were uninterested in making employment or housing-related trade-offs to reduce their commute.

With respect to employment-related trade-offs, for example, just one-quarter (25%) of interregional commuters were interested in applying for a comparable job within a 15 minute drive of their current home in Riverside County if it involved a pay cut of 15%. The comparable figure for a pay cut of 5% was only marginally higher at 35%. Respondents' reactions to these "hypothetical" scenarios were quite consistent with their job-seeking behavior -- both actual and expected. Overall, just 21% of interregional commuters reported that they had looked for a job that was closer to their home in the past 12 months, and a similar percentage (24%) expected to seek employment closer to home in the coming year.

Although many factors appeared to shape an interregional commuter's interest in seeking alternative employment closer to home -- including current salary, perceived employer benefits, and length of working for an employer -- it was the relationship that *wasn't* present that was most interesting. There was no consistent relationship between job-seeking behavior and length of commute. Stated differently, length of commute does not appear to be an important factor in motivating interregional commuters to seek employment closer to home.

When compared to employment-related trade-offs, interregional commuters expressed even *less* interest in making trade-offs that involved housing. Among home owners, for example, less than one in five interregional commuters was willing to move to be within a 15 minute drive of their current employer if it involved one or more trade-offs related to housing price, size, or type. In fact, just 39% of interregional commuters who own a home in Riverside County stated that they would be interested in moving to be near their current employer even if they could get a similar home at the same price.

With the housing market in decline, it is understandable why some home owners would be reluctant to sell their home to relocate closer to their current employer. However, if concerns about the costs and losses associated with selling a home in a down market were at the root interregional commuters' lack of interest in relocating, one would expect that interregional commuters who currently rent their homes would express far greater interest in relocating. What the study found, however, was that renters were only modestly more interested in relocating their homes to reduce their commute when compared to home owners.

*Are interregional commuters more receptive to making changes now than in 2002?*

In the six years that have elapsed since the 2002 IRP studies were conducted, traffic congestion has gotten worse, gas prices have risen dramatically, and interregional commuters report being *more* stressed with their commute than ever before. Despite these trends, however, interregional commuters' interest in making employment or housing-related trade-offs to reduce their commute appears to have diminished substantially.

Those who commute to destinations outside of Riverside County on SR-91 are perhaps the clearest example of this pattern that appears to be shared by all interregional commuter subgroups. Approximately 51% of SR-91 commuters *strongly* agreed that commuting causes them a lot of stress, up significantly from 43% in 2002. Seventy-eight percent (78%) also reported that the rising cost of gas has forced them to curtail their spending in other areas. Nevertheless, just one-third (34%) of SR-91 commuters were willing to consider applying for a local job even if it paid the same as their current job, down from 52% in 2002. Among home owners in this same subgroup, the percentage who indicated that they would be very interested in relocating to be within a 15 minute drive of their current employer also declined from 42% in 2002 to 29% in 2008.

The implications of these findings are somewhat troubling if the goal is to develop strategies to convert *existing* interregional commuters into intra-county commuters. Indeed, not only do interregional commuters generally express little interest in making the employment or housing-related trade-offs that would be required to reduce their commute, as a

group they seem to be *less* willing to make these types of changes than they were in the past.

Of course, the real challenge is not existing interregional commuters so much as it is future interregional commuters. These are individuals who - in the coming months and years -- will be deciding whether or not to live in Western Riverside County and commute to employment destinations outside of the County. The data strongly suggest that interregional commuters are imported -- not home grown. That is, they live and work outside of Riverside County and at some point choose to become an interregional commuter by relocating their residence to Riverside County. Strategies that alter the cost-benefit analysis for these individuals *before* they make the move to Riverside County may be more effective than trying to convert existing interregional commuters.