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Questionnaire for People Power Endorsement

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Global Warming and Transportation

1. Given that transportation causes 43% of global warming gases, how do you think recent state legislation on global warming should affect major transportation improvements at the state level? What will you do to make that happen, if elected? When?

State transportation funding must be adequate to meet our current needs and at the same time focus on moving us to a saner, more environmentally conscious structure for our towns and transportation systems. I lived in England for about three years and travel back frequently. I loved living in a place where one does not need a car, where people respect and embrace transportation in common: footpaths that have been running for centuries through private land, bikepaths that can get you anywhere you want to go – frequently without riding next to cars, fully functional public transportation that encompasses trains and buses. People feel so much more connected when they can walk to shops or to the next town or take public transportation to work or play. We must move our land use decisions towards building around public transportation cores and routes, and building smaller with more public open space.

I strongly support the purchase of the rail line in Santa Cruz and development of a rail trail to provide a backbone through Santa Cruz County connecting to the Monterey rail trail, for walking and biking and perhaps a train/trolley service. We should foster public transportation through train service – primarily clean, electric trains – to every extent possible. And we have a responsibility to properly maintain our existing roads.

We also need a full bike network that is located away from cars so that parents can feel safe with their children riding to school. Our obesity epidemic demands that we find ways for kids to get to school under their own steam. My daughter in London can get to work by bicycle through a network that doesn't require her to be in traffic. We can do the same thing here. And we must properly fund maintenance and upkeep of bike paths, not just capital investment.

Given the spread of work and housing in the district, buses will provide the bulk of public transportation for some time. There is no incentive, however, for people to use buses when they are expensive and take so much longer for travel than cars. We need dedicated public transit lanes where they make sense. We need to truly invest in our bus system so that buses are frequent, cheaper, and attractive. We need to invest in the basics of a healthy transportation system that includes walking paths, bike paths, trains/trolleys, and buses. We should begin pilot PRT projects.

Funding is a matter of setting our priorities. We have raided our transportation budgets and have allowed gas taxes to be set as flat amounts, rather than percentages that can grow with the economy. These are just two transportation sources that need correcting.

2. How will the above affect the local jurisdictions? And Santa Cruz in particular? When?

State funding is allocated in part based on local matches or willingness to invest. When and if Santa Cruz comes together around transportation solutions, State funds can be more heavily accessed. Since the

Santa Cruz bus system is already moving to cleaner natural gas buses, this change could be accomplished relatively quickly. Some bike and pedestrian paths are also possible in a fairly short period of time if a consensus is reached.

3. How do you feel about Attorney General Brown's attempts to sue local jurisdictions with regard to their transportation plans? Are you supportive? Is it effective?

Many pressing problems have been handled in the courts – especially as in California, when political deadlock has prevented solutions from being implemented. Attorney General Brown has a long and impressive record on the environment. While his approach is unusual, he may have a chance of overcoming the vested interests of the auto lobby in the state.

4. Do you support SB375. When do you think it should take effect? If passed in its current form what impact would it have on major transportation plans for Santa Cruz County?

Absolutely. We must plan for the future and build around transit corridors. In our area, not only is sprawl affecting the environment, but covering over valuable agricultural land. Smart development is key to enabling the residents of our state to live within our resources. I hope it would encourage and support plans to develop rail transit within the county and between other counties.

Highways

1. Do you support plans to widen Highway One between Santa Cruz and Watsonville? What effect do you think widening the Highway would have on the social and physical geography of the county?

This area needs a balanced transportation system that recognizes where we are today but moves us towards healthier alternatives. The status quo is not acceptable – it's toll in stress, unhealthy transportation alternatives, and lack of ability to maximize public transportation is too great. We need to look ahead to clean alternatives that will improve the quality of life in our communities and help us build technology solutions that will also create new jobs.

2. If you don't think widening the Highway is a good idea, what are some of your strategies for stopping it, given that it is currently the Regional Transportation Commission's top priority?

I support efforts to build a consensus around transportation solutions since the status quo is not at all healthy or acceptable.

3. How would you answer those who believe that widening the highway would solve problems with congestion?

Highway widening as a sole solution to congestion is unlikely to be effective in part because of “induced traffic”. The level of induced traffic depends on several other factors, including land use growth restrictions, geography of the area, and efforts to change land use patterns to enable and encourage walking, biking, buses, and other forms of public transportation.

4. What do you think of the Attorney General's efforts to reign in freeway widening projects in San Bernardino and elsewhere?

Jerry Brown has a proven commitment to the environment. While it is unusual for a state attorney general to use his office this way, it may be effective. Phil Angelides did something similar when he was treasurer. He used his position on the board of the state pension fund to impact the behavior of the companies the fund invested in. Creative strategies like this, and like those Attorney General Brown is using, enable far-sighted public officials to accomplish more to benefit the citizens of this state. I supported creative strategies as a school board trustee – our attempts to become a charter district to increase revenue and remove some bureaucracy burden to SLVUSD – and our soon-to-be-successful efforts to protect clean, locally-controlled water through Friends of Locally Owned Water (FLOW).

Trains

1. Do you support buying the Union Pacific Rail Corridor from Davenport to Watsonville? If so, how can you help complete the purchase?

Absolutely. This rail corridor presents a transit opportunity we might not have otherwise. We must not lose it. There are funds available, and I would work with other representatives to secure them. We must plan for the future.

2. Do you support a trail along the rail corridor from Davenport to Watsonville. If so, what is your plan for its completion? How long will it take?

I support the rail trail. This is an ideal area for a trail since the necessary grading is already done and the land is available. In addition, since much of the area it covers is rideable by just about anybody in reasonable physical condition, it should get a great deal of use. It also provides a splendid backbone for a bike path to enable many of our schoolchildren to ride safely to school.

3. Could we run a passenger train along the corridor? If so, tell us what the service might be like in 10 years. What would you do to get it on track?

I support passenger trains as part of a total transportation plan.

4. What do you think about proposals for high-speed rail in California? Which alignment do you prefer? Will you support the project if it goes over Pacheco Pass?

Again, going back to my experience in Europe, I have seen how well high-speed rail can work. Trains all over Europe are well-used and well-liked. I have found the same to be true in Japan. I strongly support proposals for high-speed rail in California and see strengths and weaknesses in both routes.

Bicycling and Walking

1. What will you do to make bicycling and walking more pleasant, safer, and more socially accepted in the State of California? How about walking?

I will work for funding, policies and, where appropriate, laws, that promote smart development, walkable communities, bike and foot paths away from traffic, and prioritize public transit over cars. I believe that in the many parts of California that enjoy a good climate, people would prefer walking and biking over sitting for hours in traffic – we just need to make sure walking and biking are viable alternatives to cars.

2. Several bills that effect cyclists will be seen by the Legislature next year. What is your opinion on:

●AB 1358 The Complete Streets Act

I admire Senator Simitian for authoring this common-sense bill and hope he will introduce it again. As the local government groups that supported it know, the success of low-income housing and of healthy communities depends on effective planning and convenient, affordable transit.

●AB 163 Bicycle Facilities Improvement Act of 2007

Anything that makes it easier and more attractive for people to get out of their cars is a good thing. I hope the bill will actually be considered and passed this year.

●AB 211 (formerly AB 437) Local Health Officers

This makes sense to me. We are used to thinking of health within very narrow confines. But, as our national obesity epidemic shows, over-reliance on cars is impacting our health. Planning viable, walkable communities will not only improve our quality of life, but our health. Again, you only need look at Paris to see how a walking culture can overcome one of the richest diets in the world.

●AB 1472 California Healthy Places Act of 2008

While this may be a good start, it does not seem to go far enough. As a culture, we have been taught that a home and piece of land of our own is part of the American dream. But that can be achieved in many ways. Attractive, well-built developments with common gardens and open space can fulfill this desire, form better communities, and make better use of our land.

We can no longer continue to sprawl unimpeded with no thought to the consequences. Those days are over. We must provide for the gradual transition to more liveable, sustainable communities with mass transit, renewable energy, growing land, and inviolate open space.

Caltrans

The Santa Cruz City Council recently voted to ask Caltrans to put vertical and horizontal signs on Mission Street informing drivers to allow cyclists full use of the right lane. So far, Caltrans has refused to do so. How would you work with Caltrans to get them to support the City Council in making changes to Mission Street?

Again, I think this approach is too limited. As long as cars and bikes share the same streets, bikes will be at a disadvantage. We need to develop a system of bike trails that will enable cyclists to have pleasanter places to ride. And we need to improve public transit options that will provide more efficient use of city streets. This is the only way we realistically will be able to designate portions of those streets for cyclists.

One for the Road

How do you get around? What form(s) of transportation do you use on a regular basis? How will you get to work if elected? To Sacramento?

Because I live in the Santa Cruz Mountains, I use my Prius to get around. I walk into town, which is just a mile. Of all the areas in the county, this is probably one of the worst served by public transit. However, I look forward to taking the train from San Jose to Sacramento (as I have done), and using public transit in Sacramento. I know any public office entails a lot of reading. And I can't think of a better way to get it done than to take it on the train!

Anything else you want to tell us:

As we face one of the worst state budget crises in recent memory, and the very real possibility of a recession, we need to send leaders to Sacramento who have real-world experience balancing tough budgets without cutting our basic priorities – and when it comes to complicated problems, my record shows I know how to get things done.

I started a business that created good local jobs through innovative green technology and provided employees and their families with quality health coverage. I served two terms on the school board – and we had balanced budgets in tough times and protected kids.

I know we can balance our state's budget without cutting off opportunities that will move us to a saner, more environmentally conscious transportation infrastructure. That's why I'm running – to put my experience to work in Sacramento to get California back on track.