

# Driving Change: Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled in California

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# Reducing Driving Is Part of California's Climate Policy

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- AB 32: Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006
  - Reduce economy-wide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020
- SB 375 (2008): lower emissions by lowering car use
  - Regional per capita emission targets
  - Coordinated transportation and land use
- Our study: Is California well-positioned to meet SB 375 goals?



# Outline

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- Approaches for reducing driving
- Local programs and perceptions
- California's experience with transit-oriented development
- Policy recommendations

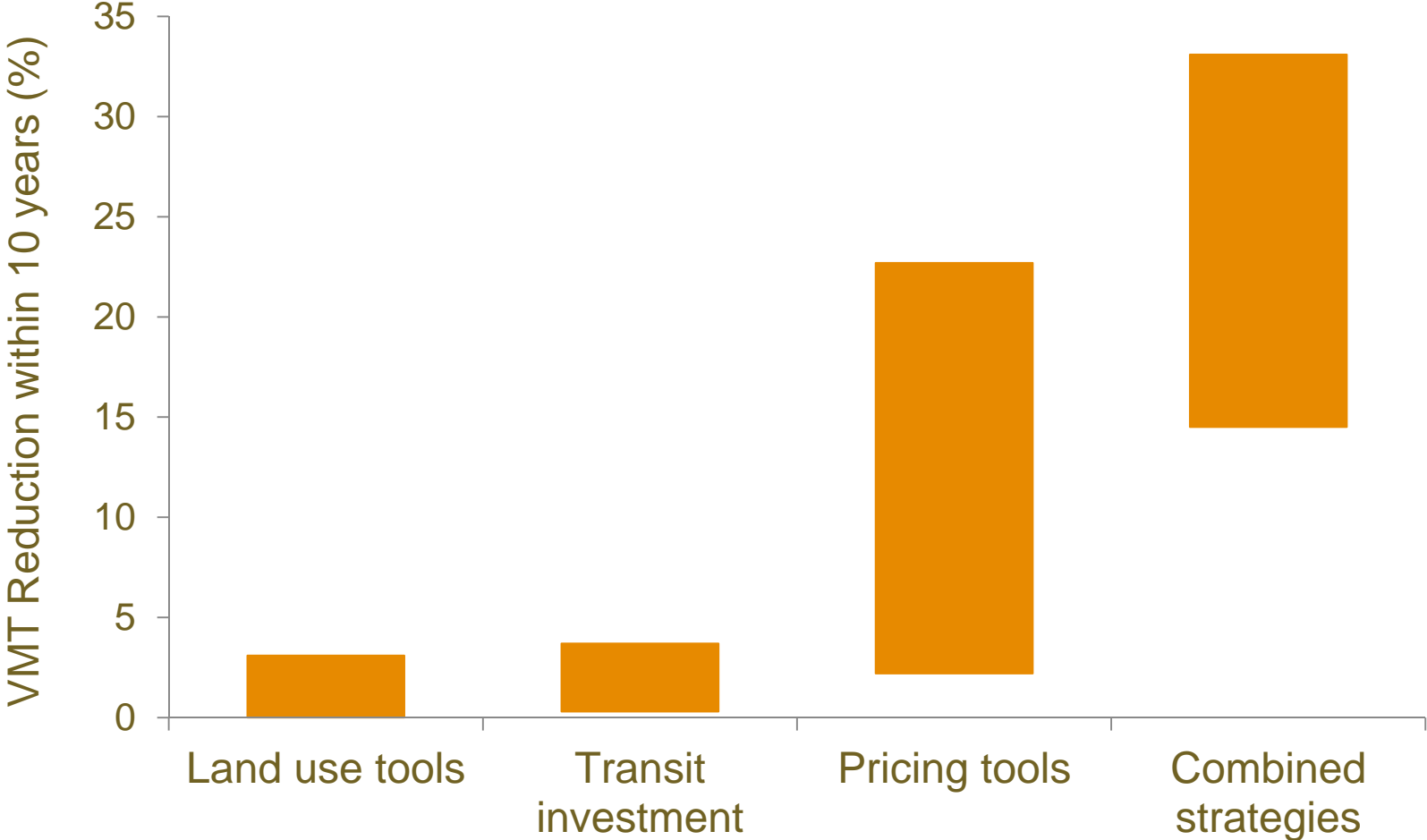


# Three Primary Approaches for Reducing Driving

1. Encourage denser development, closer to transit
  2. Invest in transit and other alternatives (walking, biking)
  3. Use pricing incentives to raise the cost of driving (e.g. fuel tax, toll lanes, carpool lanes, parking fees)
- Using these tools, SB375 aims to reduce per capita emissions by
    - about 7% by 2020
    - about 15% by 2035



# California Can Meet SB 375 Goals With Integrated Approaches



# SB 375 Relies on Regional and Local Coordination

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- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) – the regional transportation agencies – must meet new regional targets
- But cities and counties are key players:
  - Responsible for land use, some transportation, and parking policies
- How well are they doing?



# Outline

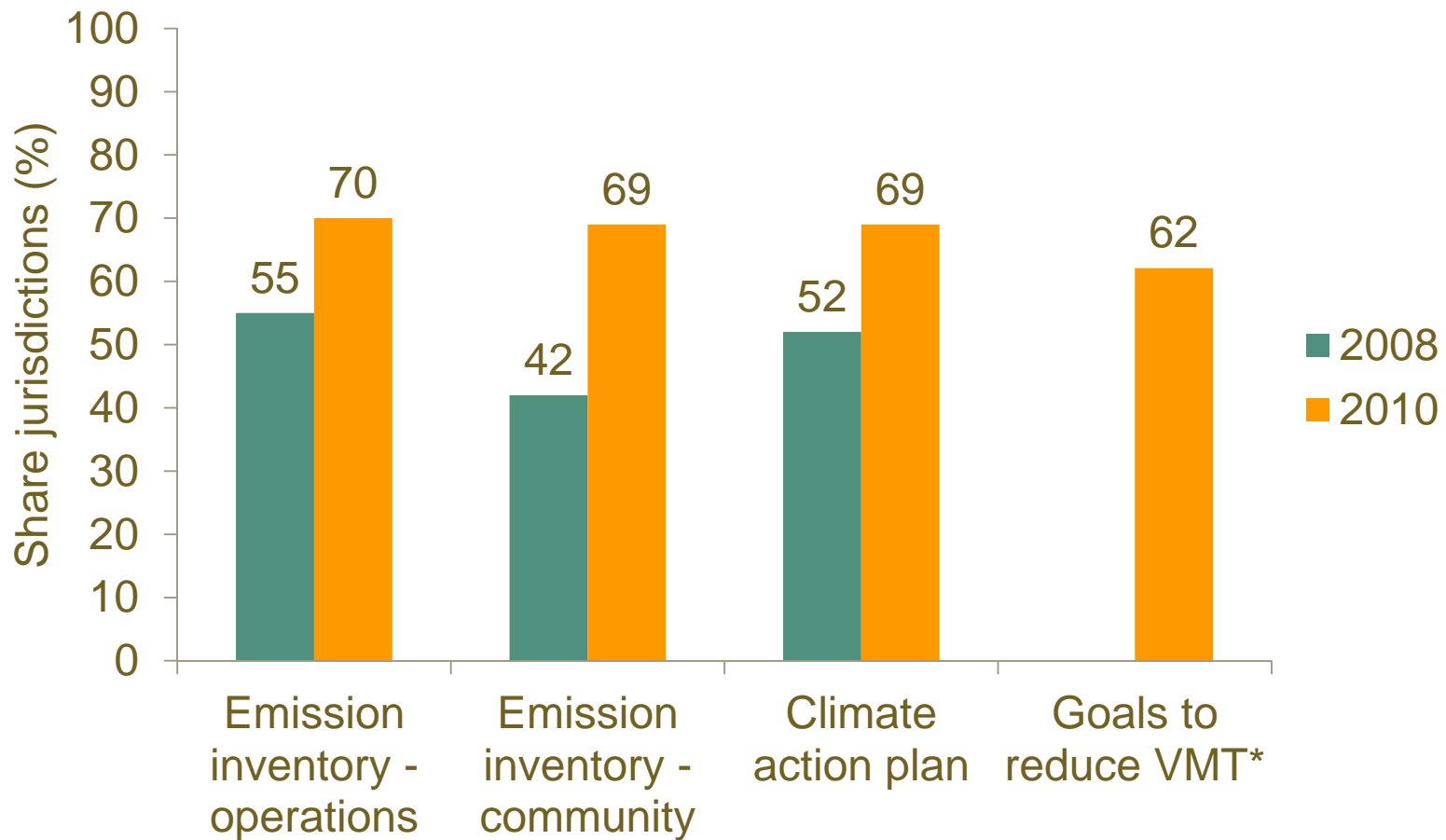
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# Despite Recession, Momentum Continues on Local Climate Action

Climate Actions Completed, in Progress, or Planned

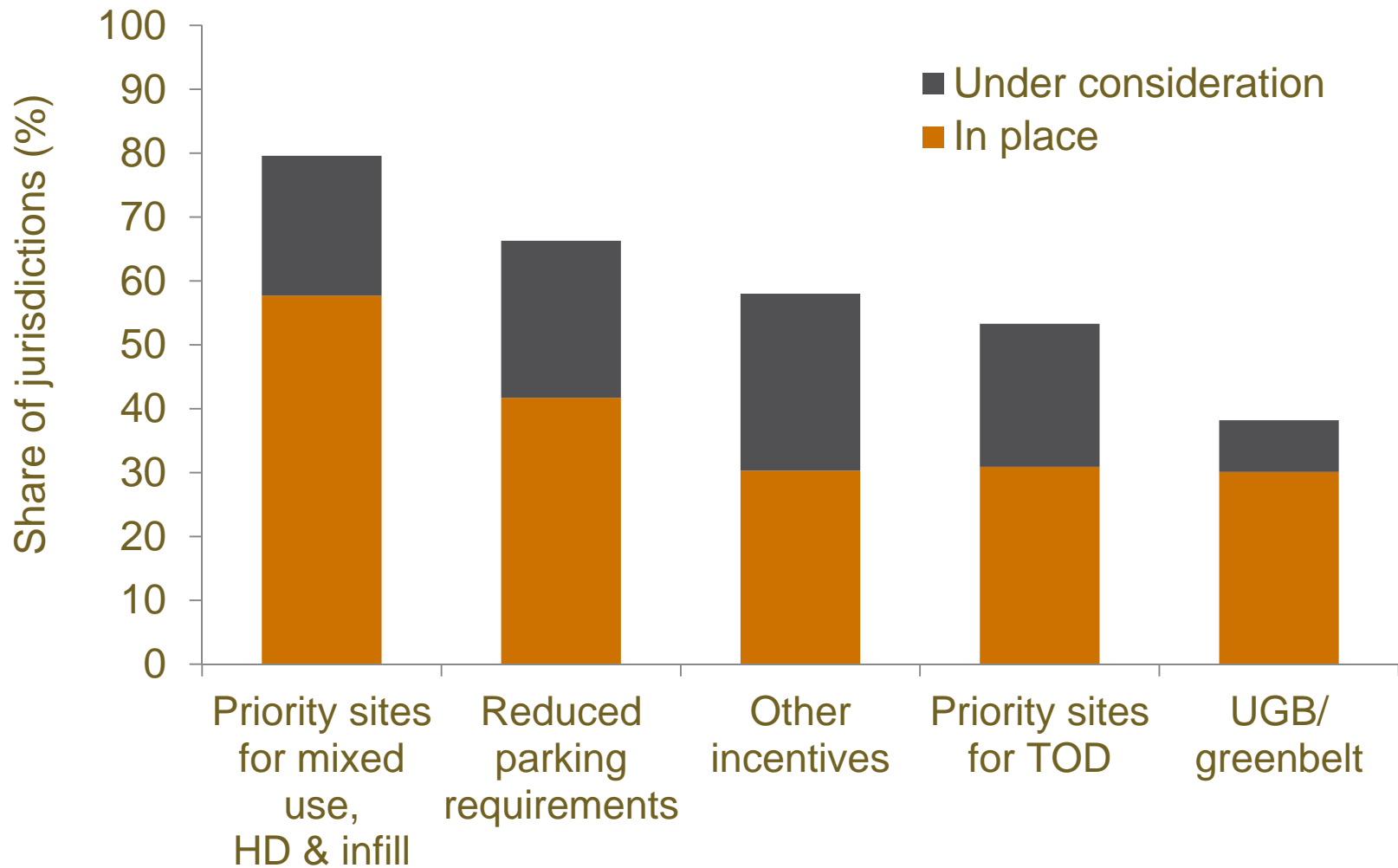


\*90% of those with climate actions

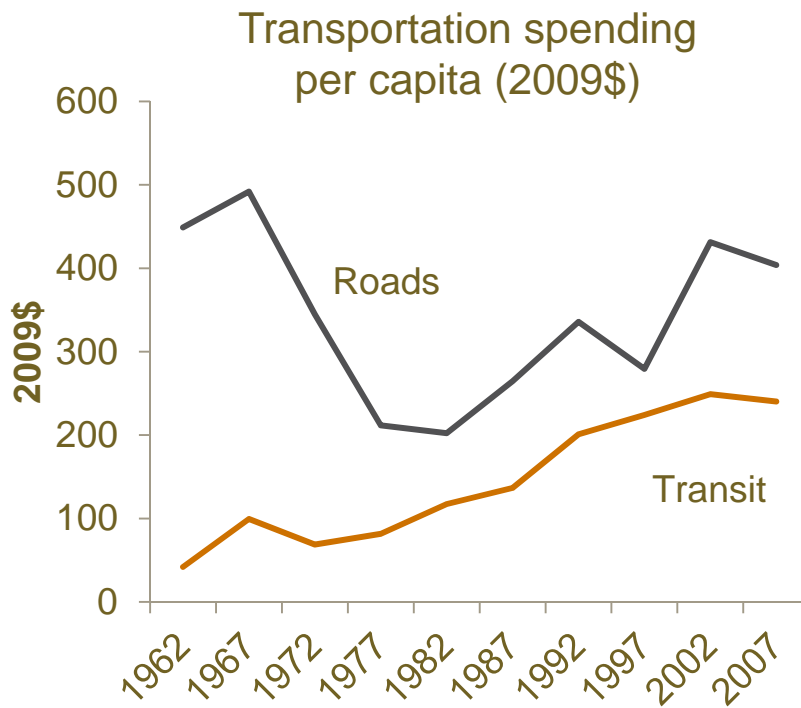




# Many Land Use Tools Are Already in Place



# Transit Now a Major Component of Transportation Spending



Source: Census of Governments

- Service has expanded:
  - Bus service widespread
  - Rail transit available in one-quarter of all communities (esp. most populous ones)
- Major efforts underway to expand biking and walking
- Widespread local concern over recent transit budget cuts



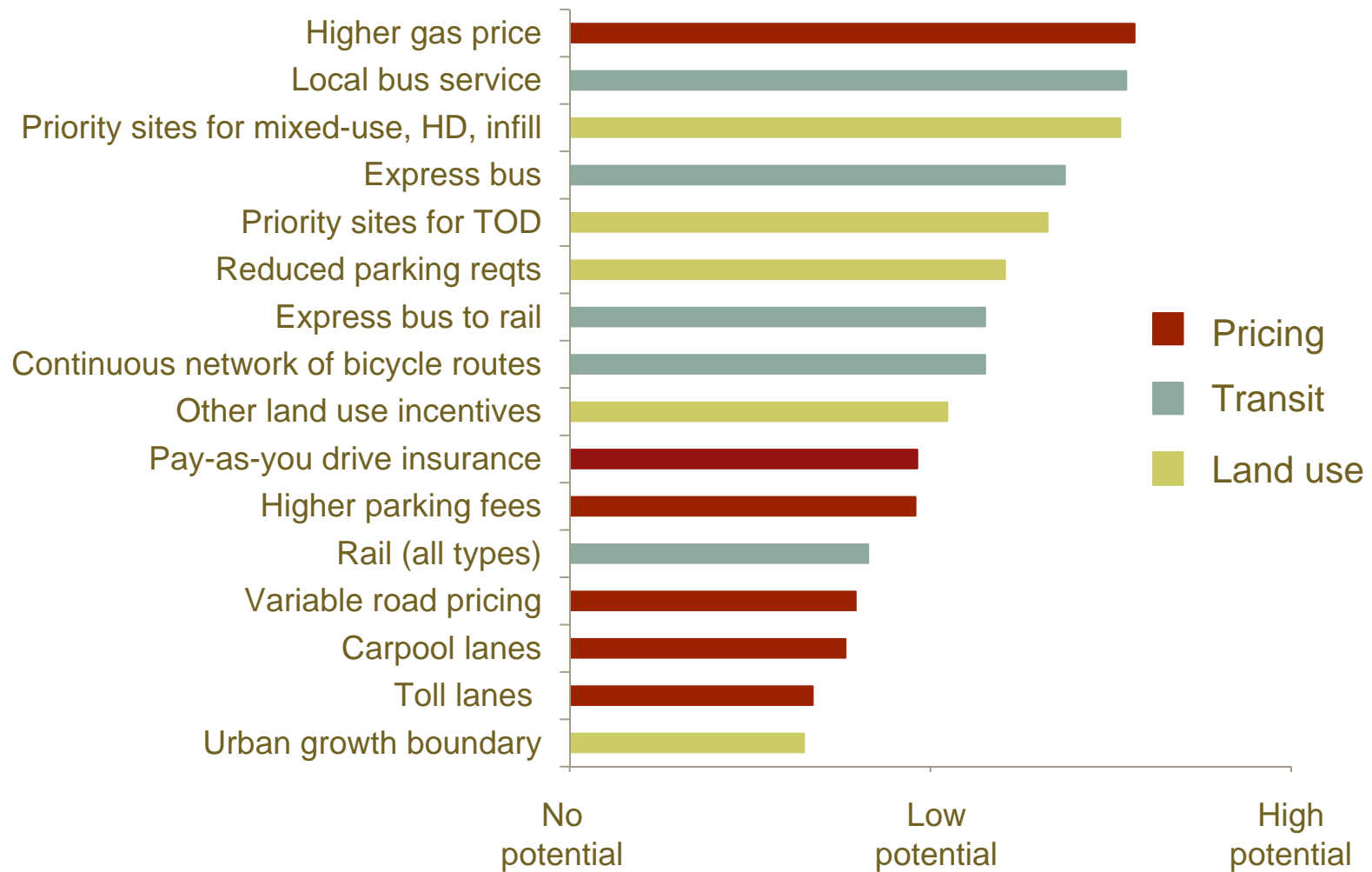
# Pricing Tools Effective, But Underutilized

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- State and federal fuel taxes unchanged since early 1990s
- Coastal regions are expanding high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes
- Local governments influence parking
  - Few charge for parking
  - Most require employee parking
- Public and business opposition is a major concern



# Local Officials See High Potential in a Variety of Approaches



HD is high density; TOD is transit-oriented development



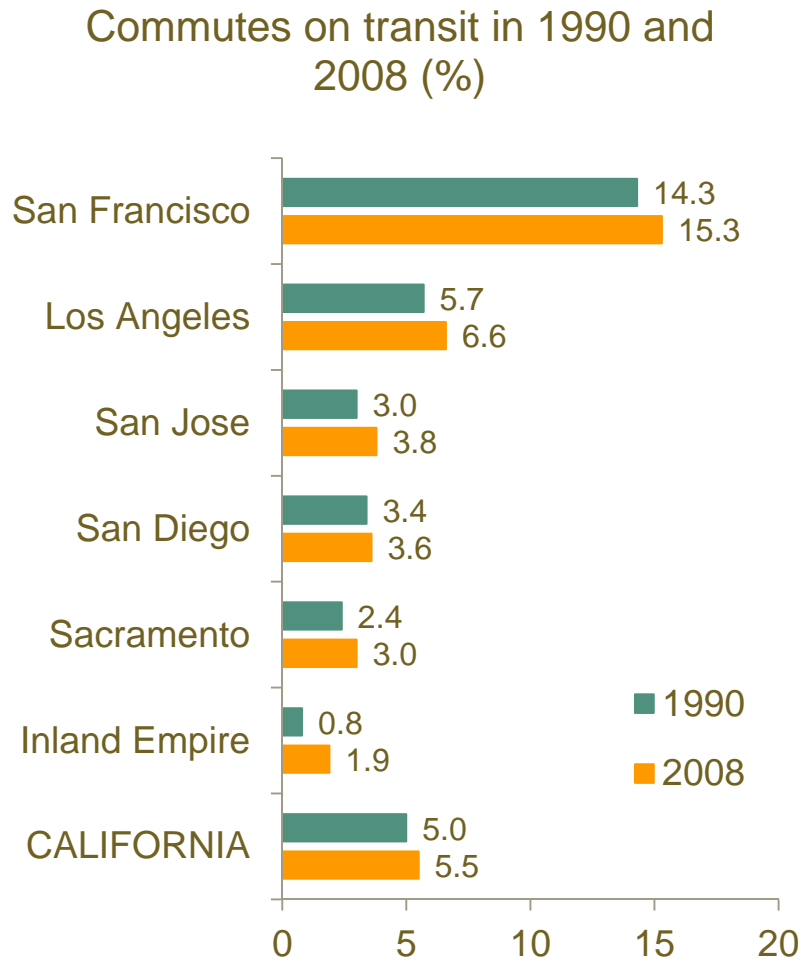
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# Spurring Transit Use Is a Major Challenge



- Transit usage up modestly in all metros, but still low (5.5% of all commutes)
- 75% still drive alone to work
- VMT per capita rose 3.5% in California, 1990-2008
  - Up 13.7% nationally



# Jobs Near Transit Raise Ridership

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- Job density, more than housing density, associated with higher transit ridership
- Rail ridership drops sharply when jobs beyond  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from station
  - Easier to park-and-ride from home
- Job location trends are unfavorable:
  - Housing density is high and increasing
  - Job density is low and falling





# Transit-Oriented Development Is Major Opportunity for California

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- New and expanding transit systems
  - 200+ new rail stations in 1992-2006
  - Additional systems and lines planned
- SB 375 streamlines environmental review for “transit priority projects”
- Can integrate parking strategies and walkable design
- Planners in jurisdictions with rail optimistic about TOD potential





# Has Job Density Increased Near Transit?



Fruitvale BART Transit Village

- Looked at all new transit stations 1992-2006
- Measured employment growth:
  - Within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of transit station
  - Before and after station opening

# No Boost to Job Growth Near Transit

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- New stations are in high density areas
- BUT no increase in job growth after stations opened, on average
- Growth increased around some stations, decreased around others
- Stronger growth near stations:
  - Farther from older transit stations
  - With higher initial density



# Adding Jobs Near Transit Requires Active Policy

- False optimism that jobs “take care of themselves”
- Existing zoning patterns and fiscal incentives not sufficient
- Current TOD strategies emphasize housing over jobs
  - SB 375 TOD favors residential over commercial development
- Case studies show need for active and coordinated planning



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# Optimism, with Warnings

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- Planners optimistic
  - Local climate-change activities rising
  - Active promotion of denser land use
  - Value of integrated strategies recognized
  - Perceived potential rises with experience
- Success means reversing some trends
  - California employment density is low and falling
  - Missed opportunity to boost employment near transit stations



# What California Should Do

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- Encourage job growth near transit
  - Shift from current tilt toward housing
- Increase cost of driving and parking
  - Most effective, but unpopular and underutilized
  - Large role for state and feds





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# Notes on the use of these slides

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These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.

