Centennial as envisioned still has a largely suburban look to it, and I am worried that this will lead to a repetition of standard housing tract development practices that will, in turn, generate huge amounts of traffic locally and on the highways connecting Centennial to the rest of LA County and to Bakersfield. Specifically, I am worried that if the roads are developed to prioritize automobile traffic, and the housing designed largely around each residence accommodating at least several vehicles, and the highway connections are again designed to maximize the volume of single-occupancy automobiles traveling to and from Centennial, it will negatively affect the function of the transportation routes and probably the quality of life within Centennial as well.

I was thinking that Centennial presents a good opportunity to explore rethinking transportation systems both within the development and linking to it. I don’t expect that any kind of rail transit would be feasible, but I think that dedicating circulation space within the community, and if possible, on the highways connecting to it, to a very well-developed bus transit system would help make it reasonable for residents and visitors to use the bus as the primary means of transportation to, from, and within the community (in other words, the opposite of what the city where I live was designed for and what the transit system has so far offered there). Something like what Curitiba and Bogota offer, but on a smaller scale and with reliable long-range connections to major job centers. I think that dedicated bus lanes like these could also double as emergency vehicle corridors, allowing more rapid response to any kind of emergency situation within the community.

To encourage residents to avoid unnecessary car use, parking maximums could be established in commercial areas and housing could be de-coupled from automobile storage requirements within the community and garage construction allowed as an option, and/or neighborhood car sharing facilities could be set up to eliminate the need for individual houses to garage vehicles. Non-automobile circulation within Centennial could further be promoted by systems protected cycletracks, wide and easily-navigable sidewalks, and minimized street space devoted to automobile traffic as compared to other modes, so that the car can still be a part of the circulation within the community but is not given priority over all others. I may be mistaken, but I believe that NACTO has some good guidelines related to developing streets in this manner. I am not sure how feasible it would be, but since the High Desert Corridor project is supposed to include a bicycle route component as well connecting Victorville and Palmdale, it might be good to explore the same for the 138 between Centennial and Lancaster.

The 5 is already a fairly miserable drive a lot of the time, and I can imagine that the 138 would become so well if it is developed along standard highway patterns. Hopefully there will be enough of the jobs and services that Centennial residents need to access within the city itself to avoid the need for additional highway trips, but I still think that it would be a good idea to look into alternatives to the standard highway expansion model to accommodate the expected trips generated by Centennial.

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