



Transportation Committee

Meeting Date: September 5, 2024

Agenda Item No. 8

2025 Blueprint: Draft Transportation Project List and Investment Priorities

Information

Author: Zach Miller

Attachments: Yes

Referring Committee: Not Applicable

Issue:

Over the past year SACOG has made a great deal of progress on foundational pieces of the 2025 Blueprint. This culminated in the SACOG board's adoption of the land use assumptions in June 2024. The next step in the process is to create a transportation investment strategy that complements the land use assumptions.

The purpose of this item is to: (1) summarize how the draft transportation assumptions for the 2025 Blueprint were developed; (2) present and discuss the draft transportation project list and investment priorities for the 2025 Blueprint; and (3) present next steps in working towards adoption of a fiscally constrained transportation project list that helps the region achieve the goals and targets of the 2025 Blueprint.

Request:

Review & Discuss at Meeting

Recommendation for Board:

Staff is looking for board feedback and discussion on the presentation.

Recommendation for Committee:

Staff is looking for board feedback and discussion on the presentation.

Background:

SACOG is updating the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS), known as the 2025 Blueprint. This plan will outline a set of transportation and land use strategies that achieve various federal, state, regional, and local policy objectives while considering financial, growth, and regulatory constraints.

Where We Have Been

Since 2022, SACOG has taken steps to develop a long-range transportation and land use plan that is shaped by the Triple Bottom Line Framework (see [HERE](#)) goals of equity, economy, and environment and informed by the objective of achieving the region's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target.

At the August Land Use and Natural Resources (LUNR) Committee and the Transportation Committee meetings, staff presented a summary of the steps that have been taken to develop transportation assumptions for the 2025 Blueprint, provided an update of ongoing efforts to develop the transportation project list for the 2025 Blueprint, and presented next steps to develop a fiscally constrained transportation project list that helps the region achieve the goals and targets of the 2025 Blueprint. Links to the applicable staff report and presentation video from the August committee meetings are found here: [August LUNR Staff Report](#), [Presentation Video](#).

Discussion/Analysis:

Where We Are

The draft transportation project list developed for the 2025 Blueprint and included as Attachment A looks to answer the question of how the region can use our limited money to build, maintain and operate a multimodal transportation system; align state, regional, and local priorities; and attract a talented workforce to help drive a strong and diverse economy. Development of the draft transportation project list was fundamentally guided by achieving the policy priorities of the Triple Bottom Line Framework, meeting the federal requirement for fiscal constraint, and achieving federal air quality and state greenhouse gas goals.

Draft Revenue Forecast

The 2025 Blueprint must be fiscally constrained. Fiscal constraint is the demonstration of sufficient funding (Federal, State, local and private) to operate and maintain transportation facilities and services and to implement planned and programmed transportation system improvements. Fiscal constraint can also be thought of as the description of fully funded projects in the 2025 Blueprint based on the projected available revenues during the 25-year planning horizon. The financial forecast for the plan is based on the latest trends and information about existing funding sources for transportation. For every plan update, there are more transportation investments requested than money available to pay for them. For perspective and as presented to committees in May, during the 2025 Blueprint nominations process more than \$13 billion in road and highway expansion projects were proposed while only a little over \$6.5 billion was included for these types of transportation investments in the region's current long-range plan (the 2020 MTP/SCS). As a result, SACOG has been working with transportation project sponsors and the board to prioritize the most critical and cost-effective investment strategies. Links to the applicable staff report and presentation video from the May committee meetings are found here: [May LUNR Staff Report](#), [Presentation Video](#).

Staff have developed a preliminary breakdown of how the 2025 Blueprint could prioritize spending across major budget categories to advance the objective of the plan. It is important to note that much of the funding that pays for transportation, whether coming from formula sources or competitive dollars, is dedicated to certain types of projects which are categorized under the "Major Project Categories" in Table 1, below.

As shown in Table 1, more than seventy-five percent of the funding forecast for the plan is already dedicated to specific types of investments whether they are road and highway, transit, active transportation, or maintenance and rehab. Thus, while the 2025 Blueprint is a plan that will outline regional priorities for nearly \$40 billion in funding over the next 25 years, that money comes with many strings, priorities, and limitations. Attachment B summarizes the major sources that make up each of the major buckets of regional transportation funding.

Table 1: Draft 2025 Blueprint Expenditure Forecast

Major Project Categories	Adopted 2020 MTP/SCS	Preliminary 2025 Blueprint (#s are approximate)	Dedicated Funding	Flexible
Maintenance and Rehabilitation	\$12.6	\$13.6	\$10.7	\$3.0
Road and Highway Capacity	\$6.8	\$7.4	\$5.0	\$2.4
Transit Capital (including vehicles)	\$3.0	\$3.2	\$2.9	\$0.3
Transit Operations and Maintenance	\$7.1	\$7.8	\$7.8	(\$0.0)
Bicycle and Pedestrian	\$2.5	\$2.7	\$0.6	\$2.1
Programs, Safety, System Management, and Operations	\$3.1	\$3.4	\$2.7	\$0.7
TOTAL	\$35.1	\$38.0	\$29.6	\$8.1

Many transportation investments include elements that span multiple categories such as a road widening along an existing facility that will also improve pavement conditions and add bike lanes as part of the project. Or an intersection improvement that improves conditions for drivers, transit vehicles, and pedestrians. These multifaceted investments are an important part of creating an efficient and multimodal transportation system. However, it can also be informative to examine the 2025 Blueprint’s investment priorities across broad categories (see “Major Project Categories” in Table 1) to gain a greater perspective on regional spending. A brief explanation of each of the major project categories shown in Table 1 is provided in Attachment C.

Transportation Project List and Performance

The draft transportation project list that was developed and is included here as Attachment A is intended to support the land use assumptions adopted by the board in June of 2024, demonstrate improvements in air quality over time, achieve the GHG reduction target, all while closely considering other considerations (e.g., transportation project sponsor priorities and the Triple Bottom Line). This month, the committee will dive deeper into the draft transportation project list and how it performs when coupled with the land use assumptions adopted by the board in June.

We will dig deeper into the overall performance of the Draft Final Scenario (i.e., draft transportation project list and the adopted land use assumptions) at the committee meeting. However, key highlights from testing thus far, as compared to the Discussion Scenario, the Draft Final Scenario:

- increases lane miles by over one hundred lane miles by 2035 and over two hundred and twenty lane miles by 2050;
- results in a slight increase of transit services; thus, increasing overall transit service hours;
- results in a slight increase in both VMT and GHG by a few tenths of a percentage change for both.

With the erosion of performance metrics relating to achieving our GHG reduction target, staff will continue to work on refining the project list based on project performance and sponsor feedback. Further plan performance metrics including GHG reduction numbers will be brought back to the board in October.

Where Are We Going

In November 2024, staff will recommend a list of transportation projects and programs for board adoption. The transportation project list must be financially constrained, support the land use assumptions adopted by the board in June 2024, demonstrate improvements in air quality over time, and achieve the GHG reduction target, all while closely considering transportation project sponsor priorities and the Triple Bottom Line. The list included in this item reflects SACOG staff's best effort to balance these many factors. This list is also draft and is circulating among project sponsors and stakeholders concurrent with the committee and board's review. We are currently working to schedule meetings and solicit feedback on refinements to the list that we can report back to committees in October, ahead of the planned adoption of the transportation investment strategy for the 2025 Blueprint in November.

How the Blueprint Project List is used

While the Blueprint does contain specific projects as is required under federal and state law, it is not a capital improvement program, nor does it identify every maintenance project or piece of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure the region will build over the next 25 years. Most of the project specific listings are for larger, regionally significant road, highway, or transit expansion projects or for near-term investments with some level of grant funding already secured. This doesn't mean that the project list doesn't matter. For capacity expanding projects such as road widenings, light rail extensions, interchanges, or adding managed lanes to the region's highways, inclusion in the project list allows these projects to compete for federal, state, and regional funding. Outside of constructing a project and opening it to traffic at which point a project must be included in the regional plan to demonstrate regional compliance with the Clean Air Act and greenhouse gas target, local agencies are able to analyze alternatives, spend local dollars on preconstruction activities, and maintain projects in their local plans even if they are not included in the regional plan.

For many types of projects that are not expanding the regional transportation system, such as operational improvements, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and safety improvements, consistency with the vision and objectives of the plan is sufficient to apply for grant funds. Because of this, it can be helpful to view the broad budget categories in Table 1 as a depiction of regional priorities. For example, throughout the development of the 2025 Blueprint and in the Regional Funding Round Working Group discussions, we have heard that maintaining and preserving the regional transportation system is both a local and regional priority. This is reflected in the largest share of the Blueprint budget prioritizing these types of investments.

Feedback Requested of this Committee

The direction and feedback we are asking board members to provide on the project list and draft budget falls into two main questions:

(1) Are there major capital or expansion projects that you know are near-term priorities for your jurisdiction that warrant further discussion with your local staff?

As described above, we cannot afford everything that local agencies nominated, and we must align the transportation investment strategy with the land use assumptions of the plan. However, your input in addition to the input we are seeking from local staff is critical to better understand local priorities and how they may align with the Triple Bottom Line goals of the 2025 Blueprint.

(2) Do the relative magnitudes of investment across the budget categories in Table 1 reflect your understanding of both regional and local needs and priorities?

For instance, there are few dedicated funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian investments. Because of this, the draft 2025 Blueprint investment strategy assumes the region will need to find ways to use more flexible sources of funding (e.g., local measures, flexible state and federal grants) to fund implementation of the Regional Trails Network. There are only so many of these more flexible dollars available, so this sort of decision reflects a regional commitment to pursuing grants or dedicating portions of future local measures to help pay for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Staff will use the committee's and transportation project sponsors feedback on the draft transportation project list to inform the final transportation project list we will present to the board in November for adoption.

Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

The 2025 Blueprint is funded by a combination of sources including Federal Metropolitan Planning funds, state Sustainable Communities Formula Program Funds, and Transportation Development Act-Local Transportation Funds. The Placer County Transportation Planning Agency and El Dorado County Transportation Commission also provide some funding to SACOG to support development of the 2025 Blueprint to assist with the planning activities, data development, and analysis that is necessary to ensure coordination and consistency between the regional plan and the county-level Regional Transportation Plans.

List of Attachments:

Attachment A: Draft Transportation Project List

Attachment B: Summary of Revenue Sources

Attachment C: 2025 Blueprint Major Project Categories