



Transportation Committee

Meeting Date: March 7, 2024

[[!Agenda Item No. {{item.number}}!]]

Sustainable Mobility Program Priorities

Information

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Attachments: Yes

Approved by: Kristina Svensk

Referring Committee: Not Applicable

Issue:

The Sustainable Mobility Program is developed to reflect our region's transportation challenges, possible solutions for these challenges, and approach problems from new angles with a willingness to partner. The current Sustainability Mobility Program priorities will guide staff efforts from 2024 through 2027.

Recommendation:

None; this item is for information and discussion only.

Background/Analysis:

SACOG implements the Sustainable Mobility Program (formerly referred to as the "Innovative Mobility Program") to support mobility projects and programs that reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions by way of competitive grants to partner agencies and other SACOG-led efforts. Staff developed priorities in 2021 to update to this program, midway through the pandemic. The 2021 program priorities identified the following goals:

- Reduce vehicle miles traveled and related vehicle emissions Leverage new technology, partners, and private sector investment to move people in new and efficient ways.
- Increase access to existing services like public transit, micro- and shared mobility (e.g., first/last mile connections).
- Inform the 2025 MTP/SCS (now known as Blueprint) with mobility projects and program outcomes.
- Support policies that increase access and benefit from new-, micro-, and shared mobility for underserved communities like the disabled and/or low-income.

Since developing the 2021 program priorities, the region has since seen several transportation and mobility-related changes. Significant shifts in transit ridership; national and regional interest in pricing strategies such as road user charges, congestion pricing, and tolling; a mass exodus of privately-owned-and-operated shared micromobility operators; and transportation technology advancements are all contributing to a changed regional transportation landscape.

Discussion/Analysis:

Last year staff engaged a consultant to identify near- and long-term industry trends that will shape how we can use mobility programs to approach transportation disruptions and challenges. This work also included an

assessment and inventory of emerging mobility programs and best practices throughout the nation. The assessment highlighted the role of regional agencies to provide the research, technical assistance, partner coordination, regional guidance, and funding needed for program implementation.

Staff also gathered input from regional partners working on mobility-focused projects and programs about what they appreciated from the 2021 priorities and what their pain points were when implementing mobility efforts. The most common feedback was the importance of reliability when choosing transportation options—this was a struggle with broad implementation of pilots that lacked a possible path forward at the end of the experiment. Without funding potential for extending the programs and clear communication to both residents and community and elected leaders, the transportation options were not sustainable.

Staff used this information to support an internal evaluation of SACOG’s mobility program work and to develop the Sustainable Mobility Program vision and priorities. As new technologies develop and evolve how people travel, SACOG must support and sustain the options that move our region regardless of a person’s race, ethnicity, income, location, or ability to own and operate a vehicle. SACOG will work with partners to achieve wider geographic coverage of and benefit from mobility options than would happen without our involvement.

The 2024 Sustainable Mobility Program works to find context-sensitive solutions that address the heart of transportation and mobility challenges in our six-county region. Regional studies, reports, and data analysis show that personal vehicles handle most trips in our region, yet many residents do not own a vehicle or are otherwise unable or unwilling to drive for their needed trips. With markedly less access to key destinations by transit, biking, or walking than by driving a car, the regional population without access or the ability to own or operate a car experiences lower access to opportunities. Lastly, cities and counties have shared challenges with maintaining existing transportation assets, much less the expanded facilities that would be needed for more private vehicles.

The Sustainable Mobility Program will work towards goals that align with the agency’s Equity, Economy, and Environment Framework and Metropolitan Transportation Program/Sustainable Communities Strategy policies.

- Provide new and affordable mobility options that do not require the use of a personal vehicle to access.
- Address barriers to mobility in disinvested and environmental justice communities.
- Improve and support economic development and community outcomes through access to key destinations.
- Facilitate mode shift to reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Invest, when appropriate, in emerging transportation technology to address specific community mobility needs.

Staff identified program priorities and example project types (attachment) to outline how the program will address the updated goals and mobility challenges.

Attachment: Sustainable Mobility Program Priorities (2024 - 27)

Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

The board approved \$6 million for two years of sustainable mobility programming in the 2021 funding round action at its April 2021, board meeting.

