



Land Use & Natural Resources Committee

Meeting Date: December 19, 2024

Agenda Item No. 7

Amend Implementation Commitments for the 2025 Blueprint

Consent

Author: Clint Holtzen

Attachments: Yes

Referring Committee: Land Use & Natural Resources

Issue:

Evaluating the performance of greenfield development in the context of SB 375 greenhouse gas reduction goals and the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS).

Request:

Approve

Recommendation for Board:

The Land Use & Natural Resources Committee unanimously recommended that the board direct staff to add the following statement to the implementation commitments adopted by the board in June 2024: "SACOG shall seek input during the preparation of the next comprehensive MTP/SCS update to determine which Developing Communities can most effectively assist the region in achieving its GHG and vehicle miles traveled reduction goals and prioritize such areas when preparing the land use scenario. SACOG will work with its partner agencies prior to the next update cycle to determine how GHG/VMT reductions in Developing Communities will be analyzed for purposes of this prioritization."

Recommendation for Committee:

That the Land Use and Natural Resources Committee recommend that the board direct staff to add the following statement to the implementation commitments adopted by the board in June 2024: "SACOG shall seek input during the preparation of the next comprehensive MTP/SCS update to determine which Developing Communities can most effectively assist the region in achieving its GHG and vehicle miles traveled reduction goals and prioritize such areas when preparing the land use scenario. SACOG will work with its partner agencies prior to the next update cycle to determine how GHG/VMT reductions in Developing Communities will be analyzed for purposes of this prioritization."

Background:

In the lead up to the June SACOG board action to adopt the 2025 Blueprint land use assumptions, the board requested staff explore the various ways that greenfield development, growth outside of the existing regional footprint, impacts climate goals. Specifically, there was interest in better understanding how greenfield developments in the region perform in relation to the (GHG) reduction target under SB 375 as well as a desire to unpack the distinctions between greenfield plan performance over time as plans move from

groundbreaking to buildout. The 2025 Blueprint generally refers to these greenfield developments as Developing Communities and relies on these areas to accommodate approximately 32 percent of future housing and 20 percent of future jobs through the year 2050.

Much of the board's interest in the role greenfield growth can play in meeting climate goals came out of an interest in understanding how SACOG's original 2004 Sacramento Region Blueprint project continues to guide development in the region 20 years after its completion and through the many plan updates that have occurred since. As a reminder, the original Blueprint is a smart growth vision for the region that was adopted by the SACOG Board of Directors in 2004 following two years of extensive outreach and engagement with elected officials, stakeholder groups, local jurisdictions, and residents. The vision of the Blueprint is to integrate land use and transportation planning to slow the loss of open space, farmland, and habitat to urbanization, cut down on vehicle emissions and congestion, and improve the quality of life for residents of the region. It accomplishes this by implementing smart growth, also known as Blueprint principles, that encourage a variety of housing options close to employment, shopping, entertainment hubs and daily needs, which reduces the distance people must travel and creates more options for people to walk, bike, or take public transportation in place of driving. These Blueprint principles apply equally to development within the existing regional footprint and to new greenfield developments around the urban edge.

The seven principles are:

- Housing Choice and Diversity;
- Provide Transportation Choices;
- Mixed Use Development;
- Compact Development;
- Design for Quality;
- Use existing assets; and
- Natural Resource Conservation.

Since the adoption of the Blueprint, SACOG has integrated these principles into each update of the region's long-range plan. And while it's been 20 years since the adoption of the Regional Blueprint, the principles remain relevant today. In combination with the board's decision to adopt the final land use assumptions for the 2025 Blueprint plan update in June, the board also adopted eight statements of commitment that define the relationship between the 2004 Regional Blueprint vision and the 2025 Blueprint plan and the challenges related to implementation (Attachment B).

Discussion/Analysis:

To operationalize the agency's commitment to the 2004 Sacramento Region Blueprint, the board directed staff to develop a recommendation for analyzing how greenfield development, by embracing the Blueprint principles, can support the region's efforts to achieve our greenhouse gas reduction target. Further, the board asked that staff consider how such an analysis can be used to inform future updates of the regional plan.

To begin this discussion, SACOG partnered with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) to bring a presentation to the November committee meeting discussing the roles and responsibilities for reducing GHG emissions in our region and how that relates to SACOG's GHG target under SB 375. SACOG staff discussed how greenfield development impacts regional climate goals. SMAQMD staff provided examples and case studies from the last two decades to help illustrate some of the challenges facing greenfield development in the context of SB 375 as well as other climate and air quality goals. At the end of

the presentation, the committee had a discussion on potential opportunities and considerations for minimizing climate and air pollution impacts in greenfield areas. Staff is returning this month to discuss next steps and a recommendation for making good on the commitment made by the board this past June.

Following the board's final adoption of the land use and transportation investment assumptions for the 2025 Blueprint, SACOG must now draft a plan describing those assumptions and outlining the policies, strategies, and implementation commitments needed to realize the vision of the plan. To ensure that the board's commitment to the 2004 Sacramento Region Blueprint is clear, staff recommends that this committee request that the board direct staff to add the following statement to the implementation commitments the board previously adopted in June 2024:

SACOG shall seek input during the preparation of the next comprehensive MTP/SCS update to determine which Developing Communities can most effectively assist the region in achieving its GHG and vehicle miles traveled reduction goals and prioritize such areas when preparing the land use scenario. SACOG will work with its partner agencies prior to the next update cycle to determine how GHG/VMT reductions in Developing Communities will be analyzed for purposes of this prioritization.

Per Attachment A, staff has added "comprehensive" to the proposed language since the 2027 MTP/SCS will be a minor update and thus the analysis would be far more relevant for the more comprehensive update of the plan that will be adopted by the board in 2031. While that adoption date is further out, staff would begin work on the analysis much sooner, likely in the next year or two.

Staff has also considered the second of the two proposed bullet points from June 2024 (see Attachment A) which proposes the creation of a new regional greenfield initiative to provide assistance to the higher performing greenfield developments as determined by the analysis performed as a result of the first bullet point. Staff does not recommend adoption of this language that commits to a major new initiative for several reasons: (1) the scope of a new greenfield initiative would potentially require significant staff time and resources that currently don't exist; and (2) such a new initiative would require picking 'winners and losers' among greenfield developments across the region which would be a major challenge.

With the committee and board's direction, SACOG staff will incorporate the language from the first bullet point from Attachment A into the final 2025 Blueprint plan. Staff anticipates asking the board to release the draft plan and environmental analysis by May 2025. Final adoption of the plan is due by the end of 2025.

Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

The 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 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 – Proposed Language to Statements of Commitment

Attachment B – Draft Statements of Commitment