



## Green Means Go: Importance of Special District Partnerships

Receive and File

**Author:** Garrett Ballard-Rosa

**Attachments:** No

**Approved by:** James Corless

**Referring Committee:** Land Use & Natural Resources

### **Issue:**

Staff from the Sacramento Area Sewer District will provide a presentation to the committee on work relating to sewer infrastructure and opportunities for partnership.

### **Recommendation:**

None; this item is for information and discussion purposes only.

### **Background/Analysis:**

Green Means Go is a key implementation component of the region's Blueprint planning effort. Green Means Go aims to accelerate infill development in locally adopted Green Zones—areas identified for growth yet facing corridor-level challenges with existing infrastructure. Green Means Go addresses those barriers through infrastructure investment, technical assistance, policy support, and, importantly, partnerships with jurisdictions, utility providers, and other stakeholders.

### **Discussion/Analysis:**

Several years of Green Means Go outreach has identified 'backbone' infrastructure as a primary barrier to infill redevelopment: existing water, stormwater, sewer and other utility infrastructure in Green Zones is undersized and often outdated compared to the denser uses needed to meet the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy. The provision of these backbone utilities falls across many different agencies. Some utility services are provided by local jurisdictions, but most are provided by special districts that span multiple jurisdictions or even counties. Prior to Green Means Go, SACOG had limited opportunities to connect with many of these special districts. Moving forward, SACOG is looking to expand opportunities to partner and collaborate with other special districts, especially given the role backbone infrastructure plays in realizing the benefits envisioned in the Blueprint and Green Means Go.

At the May 2, 2024, Land Use and Natural Resources (LUNR) Committee meeting, staff from the Sacramento Area Sewer District (Sac Sewer) will give an update on their work around sewer infrastructure and how it may relate to Green Means Go. Serving over 1.5 million people in Sacramento and Yolo counties, Sac Sewer is one of the largest special districts in the region (and state), providing sewage collection, treatment and resource recovery services depending on location. Sac Sewer's board of directors (consisting of many of the same members as the SACOG board) has expressed interest in how this work relates to cross-cutting regional issues such as infill development. Sac Sewer's LUNR committee presentation will touch on efforts the agency has

taken, including the Infill Working Group and Confluence Program, in response to this direction.

Following the presentation from Sac Sewer, the LUNR committee held a discussion on the importance of special district coordination and potential roles SACOG Green Means Go staff could play in support. Committee members agreed that continued partnerships with the full breadth of infrastructure special districts (sewer, water, drainage, electricity, etc.) is needed not only for Green Means Go success, but also to tackle the shared challenge of commercial corridor and other redevelopment. LUNR committee members put forward several ideas for staff to explore as next steps:

- Conduct an exercise to establish the key questions, opportunities, and challenges (then returning to the LUNR committee with these themes as a framing)
- Create a matrix of fees within Green Zones across all infrastructure special districts in the region
- Complete an organizational structure of the sum total of special districts

Staff will incorporate this feedback into the Green Means Go charter, and gauge if the work could be completed as a standalone project or as part of a potential Request for Proposals (RFP) tied to infrastructure costing. Staff will report back for further direction from the LUNR committee following an assessment of next steps. The committee should expect to hear back from staff later this summer.

**Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:**

As a pilot program, Green Means Go has been funded by two state (Strategic Growth Council and REAP 2.0) and one federal (Reconnecting Communities) grant.