



Extending the Timeline for the Blueprint Plan Update

Action

Prepared by: Clint Holtzen

Attachments: Yes

Approved by: James Corless

Referring Committee: Transportation

1. Issue:

Board direction on extending the update schedule for the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (Blueprint).

2. Recommendation:

The Transportation Committee recommends that the board authorize staff to pursue an extension of the Blueprint schedule to Fall 2025 including pursuing necessary legislative action, state and federal regulatory agency coordination, and to report back to the appropriate committees and the full board on progress including additional related risks and steps necessary to secure the extension.

3. Background/Analysis:

Federal and state laws require that SACOG update our Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, referred to as Blueprint, every four years. Under this timeline, the next update of our plan would technically need to be adopted at the end of 2023. SACOG advanced the adoption of our last plan update by several months to avoid a potential conflict with a change in federal fuel economy standards that occurred late in the planning process and could have impacted SACOG's ability to adopt the plan on the anticipated schedule for Spring 2020. SACOG was already looking to push the current plan update back onto the normal update schedule with a Spring 2024 adoption, well within the grace period allowed by the federal government. Under federal law, SACOG would have a 12-month grace period during which the current plan adopted by the board in November 2019, would allow the region to maintain adherence to federal air quality requirements and continue to be eligible for federal funds. Under state law, there is not a similar grace period for the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the region will need to have a valid plan in place to allow the region to compete in SB1 transportation funding programs.

SACOG is considering extending the timeline for the 2024 Blueprint to allow for a more holistic update with greater focus on engaging regional partners, community-based organizations, elected officials, and the public in the planning process. To achieve this while maintaining compliance with the Clean Air Act and eligibility for funding, SACOG will need to pursue state legislation and consider an interim plan adoption for federal purposes.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

In October, the Transportation Committee discussed the potential to extend the schedule to update the

Blueprint to Fall 2025. Attachment A includes the summary of benefits and risks related to a timeline extension that staff has identified thus far and were presented to the committee during their October meeting. Based on the positive feedback received from the Transportation Committee, staff returned to the committee in November to request a formal action recommending that the SACOG board of directors authorize staff to pursue an extension of the Blueprint schedule to Fall 2025 including pursuing necessary legislative action and any additional state and federal regulatory agency coordination. The Transportation Committee also recommends board direction to regularly report back to the appropriate committees on additional risks or necessary steps as we identify a sponsor for legislation and begin conversations with state and federal agencies.

Based on the discussion at the Transportation Committee meeting, staff has added additional information to Attachment A related to two risk areas identified by committee members including potential for changes in federal fuel efficiency standards and implications on the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Process. These additional sections are noted at the bottom of the attachment.

Following board direction, staff will create a full work plan and calendar outlining a new schedule for the Blueprint update including additional outreach activities, technical analyses, interim regional transportation plan adoption, and integration of other ongoing work such as the federal RAISE grant and Racial Equity Action Plan implementation. Additionally, staff will begin more formal discussions with federal and state regulatory agencies as well as partners such as the region's other two Regional Transportation Planning Agencies and Megaregion Working Group. Finally, staff will work to identify potential sponsors from the state legislature to carry the extension request that would allow the region's current Sustainable Communities Strategy to remain valid for an additional two years.

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

Work on the Blueprint is included in SACOG's budget and Overall Work Plan. An extension of the time spent working on the plan will have an impact on future budgets and will depend on specific additional activities SACOG engages in with an extended timeline. Advocacy activities including sponsoring legislation is paid for with SACOG membership dues.

6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Objectives:

Goal 1 : Advance Economic Prosperity

Goal 2 : Connected Communities

Goal 3 : Vibrant Places