Board of Directors
Meeting Date: August 17, 2023
Agenda Item No. 17

2025 Blueprint Pathways: Public Health Performance Evaluation

Receive and File
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Attachments: Yes
Approved by: James Corless
Referring Committee: Land Use & Natural Resources

1. Issue:
The purpose of this item is to provide an overview of a consultant led effort to evaluate the public health implications of the 2025 Blueprint Pathways and the land use and transportation assumptions within.

2. Recommendation:
None; this item is for information only.

3. Background/Analysis:
SACOG is undertaking an update to the region's long-range transportation and land use plan, the 2025 Blueprint. For each Blueprint update, SACOG prepares a forecast of regional growth in population, employment, and households. The Blueprint must include a set of assumptions for the location and shape of that growth through 2050. The land use and transportation assumptions, policies, and investment priorities of the Blueprint work together to maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts across the Triple Bottom Line goals for equity, economy, and environment as outlined in the Policy Framework adopted by the board last year.

Before the board begins to develop a single set of land use assumptions and transportation investments for the 2025 Blueprint, SACOG is undertaking a scenario planning effort, referred to as Pathways, to better understand how the land use and transportation decisions we make today may affect the future, and to help identify strategies that can remain durable across a range of futures despite changing and disruptive uncertainties. Pathways will provide the analysis and metrics that will serve as a learning tool for unpacking the many complex and intersecting issues facing the region over the next three decades around housing and land use, transportation management, regional growth, environmental resources, economic development, systemic racial disparities, and climate change and resilience.

In March and April, staff presented an evaluation of the land use and housing assumptions of the Pathways, including a review of the growth the region is expecting by 2050 and the location of employment and housing and housing product types across pathways. For an in-depth review of the land use assumptions and metrics, visit SACOG's website at: 2025 Blueprint Pathway Land Use Evaluation - Sacramento Area Council of Governments (sacog.org). In June, staff provided an overview of the 2025 Blueprint Pathways transportation assumptions and evaluate each pathway's performance in terms of regional access, mode choice, vehicle miles traveled, and congestion.

4. Discussion/Analysis:
As part of this item, both the Land Use and Natural Resources and Transportation Committees received a presentation from SACOG's consultant, Urban Design 4 Health (UD4H). The powerpoint presentation is provided as an attachment to this item. UD4H works with national, state, regional, and local governmental agencies to address the health impacts of alternative approaches to transportation investments, land development, and urban design. With the help of UD4H, SACOG is hoping to connect the dots between the land use and transportation decisions we make in the Blueprint and key public health outcomes (e.g., physical activity, chronic disease prevalence, injuries and fatalities, pollution exposure, and healthcare costs). At committees, UD4H discussed the growing research consensus around how built environments that facilitate shorter vehicle trips, active modes, and transit, tend to have lower rates of obesity, heart disease, and critically, cost of illness related to these metrics. They also discussed what the early results of their analysis have been to evaluate the public health implications of the Blueprint pathways.

This work makes use of UD4H's National Public Health Assessment Model (N-PHAM), which leverages over a decade of investment and research. The end result has been the development of data and tools that can effectively predict the health, equity, environmental, and economic impacts of transportation investments and land use actions. Inputs to this model include SACOG's land use and transportation pathway assumptions, 2022 California Health Interview Survey for the SACOG region, household travel survey data, and other national datasets.

Preliminary results of this analysis show that Pathway 1, which includes the most dispersed land use development pattern, has the highest rates of BMI, obesity, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, and hypertension. Pathway 3, which includes the most compact land use development pattern, has the lowest rates of those indicators. The difference in those outcomes is largely a product of the extent to which the disparate built environments depicted in each pathway facilitate physical movement as a part of daily travel to destinations. UD4H explored this idea and the findings of their analysis of the Blueprint Pathways at committees, including implications for the public health and healthcare costs across each pathway. This work is part of SACOG's effort to examine the various economic, environmental, and social costs, benefits, and tradeoffs related to the land use and transportation decisions facing the region.

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:
Pathways are one component of the 2025 Blueprint Plan Update. 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.