



SB 375 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Target

Receive and File

Prepared by: Zach Miller

Attachments: Yes

Approved by: James Corless

Referring Committee: Land Use & Natural Resources

1. Issue:

The purpose of this item is to: (1) provide a summary of what the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) is; (2) explain the regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction target for the region as established by the California Air Resources Board (CARB); and (3) inform the board of what the implications are if this target is not met.

2. Recommendation:

None; this item is for information only.

3. Background/Analysis:

SACOG is currently undertaking an update to the region's long-range transportation and land use plan, the 2025 Blueprint. Ultimately, the plan must outline the transportation investment and land use strategies needed to achieve various federal, state, regional, and local policy objectives within real world constraints (e.g., financial, growth, regulatory). Last year the board adopted a [Policy Framework](#) (see Attachment A) focused on the Triple Bottom Line goals of equity, economy, and environment that is being used to shape the analysis, board discussions, and recommendations throughout the development of 2025 Blueprint.

There are a number of federal and state performance measures that the MTP/SCS needs to address including achieving health standards for clean air under the federal Clean Air Act; addressing statewide climate goals; keeping transportation infrastructure in a state of good repair; and quantifying, monitoring, and working to improve congestion and travel time reliability. The GHG reduction targets associated with statewide climate goals that MPOs like SACOG are responsible for addressing are unique in that they are specific and quantitative targets.

What is the SCS?

In the coming months, the board will need to consider policies and strategies to advance the triple bottom line goals described in Attachment A. As part of these conversations, the board will need to think through strategies for how the region can reduce per-capita greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles.

Senate Bill (SB) 375, adopted September 30, 2008, helps meet the statewide goals of reducing GHG emissions from cars and light-duty trucks. SB 375 requires that regional planning agencies (e.g., SACOG) include an SCS in their regional transportation plan that demonstrates how the region could achieve the GHG emissions reductions set by CARB through integrated land use and transportation planning. Once the SCS is adopted by

the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) (e.g., SACOG), CARB must review the adopted SCS to accept or reject the MPO's determination that the SCS, if implemented, would meet the targets. If the SCS does not meet the regional target, the MPO must prepare an alternative planning strategy (APS) that shows how it could meet the targets.

Local governments retain control of land use planning authority; however, SB 375 amended CEQA (PRC Section 21000 et seq.) to ease environmental review of specific types of developments that are anticipated to reduce emissions if consistent with the SCS. Additionally, there are several State funding programs that require the region to have an adopted SCS to compete for funding. The funding sources requiring an adopted SCS be in place in order to compete for funding include competitive transportation funding programs created under SB 1, and other funding programs funded by California's cap and trade program.

What is the Region's GHG Reduction Target

The SCS must identify a transportation network and other programs that, when integrated with the forecasted development pattern for the region, will reduce GHG emissions from automobiles and light trucks in accordance with reduction targets set by CARB. In 2018, CARB revised established per-capita GHG emission reduction targets for MPOs across the state. SACOG's "target" for GHG reduction is stated as a percentage decrease in per capita GHG, compared to 2005. The revised GHG reduction target for the SACOG region was set by CARB at 19 percent per capita by 2035.

SACOG adopted MTP/SCS's in 2012, 2016, and 2020 which achieved the GHG reduction targets at the time and has had programs in place for supporting lead agencies in utilizing the various CEQA relief options provided by SB 375. Additionally, by virtue of having an adopted SCS which meets the GHG reduction targets the region has been able to compete for transportation funding under SB 1, and other funding programs under California's cap and trade program. Since 2018, the region has received over one billion dollars in transportation funding from the state through these programs.

What if the SCS Does Not Meet the GHG Reduction Target?

As stated above, if the regional GHG reduction target is not achieved, the MPO must prepare an alternative planning strategy (APS) that shows how it could meet the target. An APS is an additional scenario for the MTP/SCS horizon year, which includes additional measures necessary to meet the GHG emissions reduction target. Beyond the cost of preparation and maintenance of an APS, the main risks to SACOG and its member agencies would be potential loss of some CEQA streamlining benefits, and potential loss of competitive grants.

There are several state funding programs that require the region to have an adopted SCS (and not an APS) in order to compete for funding. The funding sources at risk if the regional GHG reduction target cannot be met and an APS was prepared, include competitive transportation funding programs created under SB 1, and other funding programs funded by California's cap and trade program. The specific funding programs which would not be available to jurisdictions within the region if an APS was prepared include the following:

- The Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP) Program under SB 1;
- The Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) under SB 1;
- The Local Partnership Program (LPP) under SB 1;
- The Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program funded under California's Cap and Trade program;
- Transit and Intercity Rail Capitol Program (TIRCP).

As detailed above, since 2018 the region has received over one billion dollars in transportation funding from the state through these programs which require an adopted SCS.

We know that achieving the 2035 GHG reduction target for the region as part of the 2025 Blueprint is going to be especially challenging due to several factors including the following:

- Population growth at the national, state, and regional level is slowing down, which can create a challenge for achieving a per capita target.
- While the region has had many successes in planning for and even catalyzing the growth patterns called for in the MTP/SCS, we continue to struggle with unlocking the infill potential in many corridors within the region's existing footprint.
- While still a critical service for many residents in the region, transit ridership has declined during and following the pandemic.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

Staff provided an overview at the Transportation and Land Use and Natural Resources Committees describing what the SCS is, defining the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction target for the region, and discussing the implications for the region if this target is not met. SACOG staff will be bringing the topic of the GHG target back to the committees in November with a discussion focusing on what was learned from the Pathways testing as it relates to the modeling of GHG emissions, some of the factors contributing to the results, and the land use and transportation strategies available to help reduce GHG emissions.

As part of the committee presentation, staff also received feedback from directors on topics of interest to incorporate into future discussions including:

- Zero-emission and electric vehicle deployment in the state and their impact on the regional greenhouse gas target.
- Slower growth projections for population, housing, and employment relative to previous plan updates and how they might affect the strategies SACOG explores as part of the Blueprint update including those related to land use, employment, and housing.
- The role telework may play in changing travel behavior in the future and what is the latest data telling us about how telework is playing out post-pandemic.

5. 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 the 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.