



## Land Use & Natural Resources Committee

Meeting Date: August 1, 2019

Agenda Item No. 6

### Shifting Suburbs: Revitalizing Commercial Corridors in the Sacramento Region

Information

**Prepared by:** Adrienne Moretz

**Approved by:** Clint Holtzen

**Attachments:** No

#### 1. Issue:

Thriving suburban commercial corridors are essential to the region's success, but present unique challenges. Despite these challenges, transformation is on the horizon. The SACOG board has developed several projects and programs to enable revitalization of these places. This item is an introduction to the August board workshop that will focus on revitalizing suburban commercial corridors.

#### 2. Recommendation:

Staff is recommending that the committee provide feedback on this topic to share with the workshop speaker.

#### 3. Background/Analysis:

Commercial corridors are classically defined as auto-dependent arterials that are characterized by large parking lots, set-back storefronts, strip malls, and large commercial buildings. At the heart of many of these corridors are places where there is opportunity for commerce and community to come together. These older corridors are ripe for new development and pilot projects.

Transforming suburban commercial corridors in the Sacramento region provides a set of unique revitalization challenges. While these auto-centric corridors are the products of past patterns of successful investment, many corridors now lack an identity that reflects current community values and vision. Faced with property/business owner disinvestment, a lack of diverse housing, changing retail habits, and outdated policies that inhibit redevelopment, the SACOG board has taken steps in recent years to enable transformation:

- Making smart transportation funding investments that implement the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy and support the seven Blueprint principles
- Continuing committee and board discussions informed by expert-led workshops, peer region suburban tours, and relevant policy efforts
- Framing housing planning discussions at the state level through Green Means Go policy efforts
- Implementing innovative programs such as Civic Lab Year 2
- Providing grant writing and development support to member jurisdictions and partner agencies
- Providing technical assistance to members in the form of best practice policy documents (e.g., Housing

## Policy Toolkit) and peer information sharing

Achieving revitalization will require a variety of implementation strategies. Programs like Civic Lab, which is designed for member agencies in the region to develop agile pilot projects, support the transformation of suburban corridors. Twelve project teams representing four counties are working to bring rapid solutions forward at a low cost and with a diverse set of partners that will build capacity for our region to address these challenges, inform future policy decisions, and set our members up to perform better in funding opportunities.

### **4. Discussion/Analysis:**

During the August board workshop, SACOG Board Chair David Sander, City of Rancho Cordova, and Chris Zimmerman, Smart Growth America, will engage the board in a discussion of the challenges faced by suburban corridors, revitalization efforts taking place at the regional and national level, and strategic actions to continue to enable transformation into the near future. The goal of this workshop is to better understand the strategies, tools, and innovative programs that can work together to revitalize these older corridors.

Mr. Zimmerman visited the region in 2017 to share insights and opportunities for the Arden Way corridor in Sacramento County, and with the SACOG board. He particularly focuses on the interrelationships between land use, transportation, and development policies, including the impact of land use patterns and other policies on the economic and fiscal health of localities and regions.

To help frame the August board workshop, staff is seeking feedback from the committee in the form of questions, points of consideration, or examples to share with Mr. Zimmerman.

### **5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:**

This work is budgeted in SACOG's adopted Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Overall Work Program, and a portion is being funded by SACOG member dues through the Board & Advocacy Budget.

### **6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Goals:**

- 3 - Assist Local Economic Development Strategies
- 5 - Establish the Sacramento Region as an Innovator & Test-Bed for New Ideas
- 8 - Build out our Council of Governments Functions