

Transportation and Land Use Planning Principles

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is a national leader in land use and transportation planning for a smart, environmentally sustainable future. Planning efforts such as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) can help ensure that the Sacramento region will grow in a way that benefits all residents, preserves natural and historical assets, and builds and sustains productive and healthy communities.

In support of these important transportation and land use planning processes, the Coalition on Regional Equity and its Sustainable Communities Work Group have formulated a set of recommendations to help SACOG form plans that reflect the needs of all Sacramentans. These principles are suggested to ensure that the Sacramento region is a region with transportation and housing affordable to everyone, with reduced commute times, more jobs closer to home, and preserved natural resources.

1. A balance should be sought between housing and employment at all price and income levels.

MTP/SCS Action:

- As the only Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the state with an activity-based model (one with the ability to consider trip segments instead of entire trips, as well as multiple modes within a trip), SACOG should work closely with technical experts, as well as academic and nonprofit partners, to pioneer a method to measure jobs / housing fit, meaning the extent to which housing prices match residents' income levels, and its impact on Green House Gas (GHG) reductions.

2. The benefits of more compact development should be examined.

MTP/SCS Action:

- SACOG should model the additional benefits of more compact development to the extent possible including air quality, increased physical activity, walk-ability and other benefits.

3. Preserve the region's natural assets including farmland, open space, rivers and other habitats.

MTP/SCS Action:

- Present and adopt a comprehensive and coordinated open space conservation plan for the Sacramento region for wildlife habitat, agriculture, recreation and

education – a “greenprint.” This plan would create a connected network of parks, preserves, and conservation easements on working farms and ranches, creating access to open space for education and recreation, protecting the unique biological diversity found in the Sacramento Valley, and conserving our agricultural heritage.

- For the Sacramento region, remaining natural habitats and wildlife-friendly agricultural lands of national and international significance include: remaining complexes of vernal pools, California prairie, riparian forests, freshwater marshes, oak savanna and chaparral.

4. Transportation planning and funding should be shifted to promote compact development, bicycle, pedestrian and complete streets improvements, and public transit over new road creation and road expansion; these priorities will support reducing GHG production.

MTP/SCS Actions:

- Completing the streets for all users, including walkers of all ages and abilities, bicyclists, transit riders and others, should be the highest priority in transportation policy and funding.
- Prioritize funding required to build and sustain a comprehensive public transit network offering a competitive travel choice to jobs, schools and services which is affordable and accessible to all.

5. Expand families’ choices of affordable rental homes in a broad range of communities.

MTP/SCS Action:

- Identify affordable housing and mixed income housing development as central strategies to increase equity and reduce GHG production.
- Incentivize the production of affordable housing by linking transportation funding to local policiesⁱ that promote production of a full range of housing choices for all income levels.

6. The revitalization of struggling communities should be a priority with a special focus on avoiding displacement of existing residents.

MTP/SCS Action:

- SACOG should identify areas that have already gentrified and areas that are susceptible to gentrification. After reaching this baseline, evaluate strategies to mitigate displacement of existing residents. Potential methodology includes those developed by Karen Chapple,ⁱⁱ whose work evaluates risk factors for gentrification. Possible mitigations strategiesⁱⁱⁱ for projects in a gentrifying area must also be evaluated.

7. Evaluate how the land use scenario will impact low income and minority communities including air quality and levels of particulates and other pollutants.

MTP/SCS Actions:

- Place stations that will regularly monitor over the life of the SCS levels of pollutants, including particulate matter, nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide, in all communities, especially including Environmental Justice communities^{iv} and other low-income communities and communities of color in the SACOG region.
- Gather and analyze over time health (incidence, treatment, hospitalization, death) data on air pollution-related illnesses, including asthma, cardio-vascular illness and emphysema by income and race/ethnicity for residents of the SACOG region.
- Monitor and measure degree to which the plan's [SCS'] frequency of service goals (for example, 'no longer than a 15 minute wait for public transit everywhere by 2035') succeeds, emphasizing and breaking out analysis for residents in low income and minority areas (including EJ communities); build into current plan a mechanism for making necessary adjustments to meet the goal, particularly for these communities.
- Analyze the potential and actual negative impacts on low income communities and communities of color (EJ communities) of each action proposed or undertaken pursuant to the SCS, including displacement, exacerbation of racial and ethnic segregation and/or isolation, and increased transit times and costs, and have mechanisms designed to avoid, minimize or mitigate these outcomes.

8. Develop a fourth planning scenario that envisions a region with dramatically decreased GHG emissions that result from land use changes with a strong emphasis on creating social equity.

MTP/SCS Action:

- SACOG should develop a fourth Metropolitan Transportation Plan scenario that incorporates pedestrian and bicycle transportation, such as that suggested by WALKSacramento.^v

Notes

ⁱ Policies to promote the production of affordable housing include:

- Commit to identifying and zoning, early in the planning period, adequate higher-density zoned land to accommodate the projected and existing need for affordable homes. Exceed the minimum requirements of housing element law, by creating additional "affordable housing opportunity" zones that apply an over-lay zoning to appropriate commercial sites for mixed use or high-density affordable housing, by right.
- Adopt, implement, and preserve local policies that ensure a full range of housing choices for all income levels in all newly developing communities.
- Require mixed-income housing opportunities within 1/2 mile of transit stops.
- Policies that ensure an adequate supply of local funding for affordable housing, such as a commercial-linkage fee that provides funding for housing affordable to lower-wage workers employed in new commercial developments.
- Invest in existing neighborhoods, by committing a portion of redevelopment, HOME and CDBG dollars to funding rehabilitation.

ⁱⁱ The study referred to is "Mapping Susceptibility to Gentrification," and is available here:

<http://communityinnovation.berkeley.edu/publications.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Possible mitigation strategies include:

- A housing affordability preservation plan.
- An operating land banking program for affordable housing near qualifying transit stations or corridors.
- A mixed-income zoning policy for the area in which the revitalization project is located, requiring that at least 15% of all new rental or ownership homes built be affordable.
- A community benefits agreement between community organizations, public agencies, and the private developer that includes anti-displacement, affordability, local hiring, job training, or other elements to stabilize area residents and small businesses
- Adopted local hiring/first source hiring policies that set aside a portion of jobs generated by the development to local residents.
- Mitigation funds committed for small business disruption during the project construction period.
- Strategies in place to stabilize and attract small, neighborhood-serving businesses vulnerable to displacement (e.g. lease protections, small business assistance or commercial corridor program, zoning incentives).
- A local Housing Trust Fund with local funds dedicated to the revitalization project area.
- Documented funds committed to groups that work with tenants facing displacement.

^{iv} SACOG's Metropolitan Transit Plan defines "EJ areas" as census block groups where 40 or more of the households earn less than half the median income of the Metropolitan Statistical Area where they reside and/or where 60 percent or more of the population is Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American or other non-White ethnic group based on 2000 Census data.

^v Suggestions for a fourth scenario detailed in letter dated September 3, 2010 from WALKS Sacramento to Kacey Lizon at SACOG.