



What Senate Bill 375 Means for SACOG

Overview

The goal of Senate Bill 375 (SB 375) is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks. In addition to connecting regional planning processes, SB 375 will make it easier for communities to build housing and transportation choices.

The California Air Resources Board (ARB) will develop regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for automobiles and light trucks. SACOG and other regions in California will each create a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), combining transportation and land use elements, which will serve as a plan for achieving the emissions reduction target, if feasible.

SB 375 connects land use planning, transportation planning, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reform, and affordable housing planning. It requires SACOG and the 16 other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in California to pursue and implement an SCS. SB 375 has three primary sections: Sustainable Communities Strategies, CEQA reform, and affordable housing planning. This is a brief overview of the impact of SB 375 in the Sacramento region.

Linking Land Use and Transportation Planning

By July 1, 2010, the ARB will provide targets to SACOG to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for cars and light duty truck trips in our region. As part of the next Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), SACOG will involve cities, counties, and the public in preparing an SCS that meets the target, if feasible. The MTP must be internally consistent, including only spending transportation funds on projects included in the MTP.

If SACOG's SCS does not meet the target, it will adopt an Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) that does. The APS gives SACOG the opportunity to show how the target could be met with additional transportation funding or land use changes. SB 375 does not require SACOG to implement the APS, as it may rely on revenues or other factors that are too uncertain to meet federal requirements for the MTP. Because APS is a plan for when the target cannot be reasonably met, SACOG would not have to implement the APS. SB 375 does not change any local government land use authority.

The ARB will accept or reject SACOG's determination that the SCS or APS meets the target, but it does not approve the SCS or APS, nor may it suggest or require any changes.

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REGIONAL HOUSING & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PROCESS

Regional Targets Advisory Committee recommends regional targets to Air Resources Board

Air Resources Board sets targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

SACOG takes public and technical input toward transportation and land-use issues

SACOG develops the Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The MTP includes a Sustainable Communities Strategy

The MTP includes a Regional Housing Needs Allocation

The Air Resources Board reviews the Sustainable Community Strategy



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Substantial CEQA Benefits for Blueprint Implementation

SB 375 provides some streamlining for residential projects and transit projects when they are going through California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. Both must be consistent with the SCS or APS and the related regional EIR for the SCS or APS.

A residential or mixed-use project that is consistent with the general use designation, density, building intensity, and other policies for the project area is not required to cover growth-inducing impacts or impacts from cars and light-duty truck trips on climate change or the regional transportation network if the project incorporates certain mitigation measures. Additionally, the project's environmental impact document is not required to cover a reduced residential density alternative to address the effects of car and light-duty truck trips generated by the project.

There are three types of CEQA streamlining available for Transit Priority Projects that meet three criteria: at least 50 percent residential use; commercial use, if any, must have floor-area ratio of not less than 0.75; minimum net density of 20 units per acre; and located within one-half mile of a major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor included in the MTP. Transit priority projects may qualify for full CEQA exemption, a Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment, or traffic mitigation measures, depending on specific criteria.

As SACOG develops its SCS or APS, it will work with cities and counties in the Sacramento region to help them better understand how they can use these streamlining options to support infill and transit-oriented developments, as well as provide housing closer to jobs and services in their communities.

Syncing Affordable Housing and Transportation Planning

After the development of the initial SCS, SACOG's process for updating its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) would occur every eight years instead of every five years to sync it with updates to the MTP, which occur under federal law in four year increments. This will help match housing with projected employment. Local governments must rezone their properties to be consistent with their updated Housing Element within three years (four years if the local government has completed 75 percent of its rezoning by the third year and meets one of three conditions: circumstances out of its control, lack of infrastructure to serve the sites, or need for a major update to its general plan to meet its RHNA allocation). If a local government does not update its housing element within 120 days of the statutory deadline, then it will have a four-year RHNA update cycle instead of an eight-year cycle.

SB 375 IMPLEMENTATION IN THE SACOG REGION

February 2010
Updated Employment, Population, and Housing Growth Forecast

March 2010
Updated MTP2035 Financial Plan

May 2010
SACOG Proposes Regional Target to ARB
Public Outreach Begins

June 2010
ARB Issues Draft Regional Target

September 2010
ARB Assigns Regional Target

May 2011
Public Outreach Wraps Up

December 2011
MTP Adopted & Draft RHNA Issued