

Policy Framework

Included in this attachment is a discussion of the criteria that has guided the establishment of new initiatives. What follows is how shared services initiatives fit within the context of the SACOG Strategic Plan and Overall Work Program (OWP).

Criteria for Establishing New Initiatives

At an October meeting of the Shared Services Task Force, staff committed to providing a summary of the policies that have guided SACOG's participation in new initiatives and how shared services fit within SACOG's existing strategic plan. Criteria to consider the launch of a new initiative or activity were established by the Board in 2006/07. The 11 areas, which are listed below, provide a foundation for measuring new initiatives and key questions to address for successful implementation.

These criteria were first applied to form the Task Force on Flood Protection established in 2006. SACOG's role and the activities undertaken by this two-year effort were guided by the criteria.

The adopted criteria for new initiatives are:

1. Does the issue significantly relate to SACOG's primary responsibilities, such as: growth forecasts, projecting future land use patterns for the MTP, writing and implementing the MTP/MTIP/STIP, air quality findings, regional housing plan?
2. Are there economies of scale from conducting the function regionally?
3. Is their knowledge or value that is uniquely attainable through conducting the function at a regional scale, and is there anyone else better suited to provide the regional connections (i.e., is there a vacuum)?
4. What function(s) would SACOG provide (circle as many as appropriate)?
 - Develop data
 - Conduct analysis
 - Convene stakeholders for purpose of increasing their knowledge
 - Convene stakeholders for purpose of reaching agreement about taking some kind of action
 - Be a source of funding
 - Directly provide a service
5. What would be the role of SACOG's members? Would this add value for them? Save them money? Duplicate anything they currently are doing?
6. What would be the role of other key public and non-governmental stakeholders? Would this add value for them? Would it duplicate anything they currently are doing?
7. Would this be something the region might leverage into entrepreneurial activities or innovations in the public or private sector in the future?
8. Would this be something SACOG would do once, a few times, or would it become an on-going part of SACOG's work program?
9. How would the function be funded? Dedicated funding sources? New or old funding? Short-term or permanent?
10. Where the expertise would be attained? Existing SACOG staff? New SACOG staff? Staff from members of other public or non-governmental stakeholders? Consultants?

11. Would performing the function require SACOG to reduce performance in other areas of its work program? If so, which areas? How much? For how long? Would the consequence be major or minor?
12. What are the chances for success?

Shared Services in the Context of SACOG Strategic Plan and Overall Work Program

SACOG launched a strategic planning effort in 2009 to guide decision making and priority setting. Three goals with supportive strategies and performance indicators were established through a collaborative process engaging the Board and staff, and culminating in the strategic plan the Board adopted in 2010.

In addition to assisting the Board in organizing and establishing its priorities, the Strategic Plan helps the agency modernize and improve the Overall Work Program (OWP) development process. It does this by better linking the agency's annual budget and staff allocation to activities determined to offer the highest strategic value.

The Strategic Plan and OWP offer a framework that can guide SACOG's work as a partner with its member agencies to meet the demands of providing high quality services in a time of scarce resources. In order to illustrate this point, illustrative concept proposals are briefly described below by the performance indicator they most closely support. Note that these are just examples of the various shared service concepts surveyed that align well with SACOG's Strategic Plan and OWP priorities.

Strategic Plan Goal 1: Sustain the agency's emphasis on information-based decision making by providing state-of-the-art data and tools to members, partners, stakeholders and residents to help them shape the futures of their communities and the region.

Strategies:

- Increase opportunities for member jurisdictions to utilize regional data, models and analysis to analyze impacts of their decisions on transportation, land use, air quality and other policy areas that affect quality of life.
- Increase agency capacity to provide scientific information and analysis of transportation, land use, air quality, and other matters of regional importance.

OWP Context:

In recent years, Goal 1 work activities focused on regional travel model enhancements and ongoing technical analysis to support the completion of the region's first Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) / Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and associated environmental impact report (EIR). In the current OWP, the focus shifts to sharing with member agencies the new tools and data developed that can inform and support local decision making. One of the means to achieve this outcome will be an update of SACOG's website to more easily share new maps and data from the MTP/SCS development process. In addition to increased technical support for member agencies, further refinements of existing tools are planned and new ones will be developed that integrate the agency's core expertise in transportation and land use planning with new topical areas, including land use economics and public health. Additional priority Goal 1 activities in the current OWP include increased education, engagement and policy analysis in support of SACOG's Strategic Plan. Other Goal 1 activities that may eventually lead to shared service opportunities include the deployment of a universal transit fare card (Connect Card) and new 511 traveler information tools.

Goal 1 Performance Indicators:

- A. Members and planning partners routinely use a combination of appropriate planning tools (e.g., I-PLACE³S and SACSIM) to conduct technical analysis of general plan updates, corridor plans, transportation circulation plans, and neighborhood and community plans, and use of such planning tools by stakeholders and residents to evaluate proposed development projects.

Shared Service Concept Proposal: Travel Demand Forecasting (TDF) & Analysis Services

Direct SACOG involvement in TDF services would provide a higher level of consistency in data and assumptions across agencies than currently exists. For most projects and studies, SACOG's TDF model is more advanced and has more capabilities than the simpler models used by most agencies.

- B. Interactive, information-based citizen engagement practices are commonly used by members in support of general plan updates, development of neighborhood and community plans, and evaluation of the impacts of significant proposed development projects. The Agency has an effective and active process for sharing information about SACOG activities with staff in service to local government.

Shared Service Concept Proposal: IT & Web Support

Greater access to information for local agency staff and residents would improve public information and public engagement coordination in the region. For member agencies, increased web access to agency-specific demographic information would offer near-term support to prepare successful grant applications. Longer-term, improved data sharing offers benefits to land use monitoring, forecasting, housing elements, modeling and other planning activities.

- C. Appointment to the SACOG Board is viewed as an attractive opportunity for local elected officials and SACOG's Board members are actively engaged in pursuing the mission of the agency and the agency's local, state and national recognition for leadership in the implementation of information rich, consensus-driven regional efforts to improve the quality of life in the region continues to be enhanced. SACOG actively engages in providing information to all elected leaders about the role it plays in regional affairs and how this role contributes to an improved quality of life.

Shared Service Concept Proposal: Linking Local and Regional Plans to Support Economic Development

As the region slowly recovers from a deep recession, realizing economic development opportunities is a key to restoring the region's high quality of life. SACOG's role in regional-scale physical planning can support the implementation of regional to local economic development strategies with analytical tools and research. Additionally, the SACOG Board has the potential to be a forum that facilitates the coordination of small, medium and large jurisdictions in economic development support activities. Potential benefits include the regional sharing of assets and needs to leverage unique economic development opportunities.

Strategic Plan Goal 2: Maximize strategic influence for the region through developing and implementing integrated regional transportation plans that produce unique and significant quality of life benefits for residents of the region.

Strategies:

- Consolidate, expand and maximize strategic advantage from the agency's state and national leadership role and access to the best tools and methods for preparing an outstanding MTP.
- Maximize the benefits of comprehensive planning and project implementation in the Sacramento region.

OWP Context:

Realizing MTP/SCS implementation opportunities is a primary Goal 2 focus in the current OWP. The MTP/SCS strengthens transportation-land use-air quality connections and furthers the integration of the Regional Blueprint Strategy, Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS), and Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) with ongoing core activities, such as transportation programming and air quality planning. Helping member agencies realize CEQA streamlining opportunities made possible by the MTP/SCS is a priority effort in the new OWP, as is the launch of new RUCS initiatives that include a feasibility study on the potential for specialty crops to be the foundation of a local food system that benefits the rural economy. Other planned work activities to support Goal 2 include assistance to local agencies amending their general plan housing elements to incorporate new RHNA numbers, maintaining strong transportation project delivery, and developing implementation strategies for early year MTP/SCS investments. Short-range transit plans and a deeper analysis of new mobility options, including plug-in electric vehicles, are examples of new transportation-related MTP/SCS implementation efforts that may eventually lead to new shared service opportunities.

Goal 2 Performance Indicators:

- A. SACOG’s MTP will remain a leader in the state in improving per capita VMT, congestion, air emissions and other performance measures that advance the quality of life.

Shared Service Concept Proposal: General Planning Services

Enhancing quality of life performance outcomes can be supported by a greater coordination of transportation/land use/air quality planning efforts across the region. For example, greater alignment of growth forecasts and investment priorities in local general plans and the regional MTP/SCS helps achieve good performance measures that track quality of life. Also, clear and consistent documentation between general plan and MTP/SCS environmental documents may result in greater CEQA streamlining opportunities through SB375.

- B. SACOG will leverage its high performing MTP/SCS to secure additional funding and policy support from federal, state and local sources to build key projects sooner than would otherwise be possible.

Shared Service Concept Proposal: Regional Advocacy

SACOG has helped manage regional advocacy coalitions, and also has experience participating in statewide and national coalitions with varying degrees of effectiveness. Due to the recession over the past few years, several member jurisdictions have had to let go of, or dramatically reduce, the scope of their advocacy contracts and are relying solely on internal staff for a host of advocacy functions. There may be natural partnership opportunities on issues relevant to economic development, infrastructure and natural resources to support coalition effort on issues of regional and local significance.

Shared Service Concept Proposal: Grant Writing

Competitive funding opportunities require sufficient resources to research opportunities, develop an effective application strategy, and produce successful applications. Within the six-county region, there are varying levels of staff capacity for competing for these funding opportunities. There is an opportunity for SACOG to provide support for both individual local grants and partnership applications.

Strategic Plan Goal 3: Serve as a source of high quality information, convener, and/or advocate on a range of regional issues when the agency’s involvement would provide unique, added value to promoting a sustainable future for the region.

Strategies:

- Continue to expand SACOG’s data and modeling capability to include topics that influence transportation behavior and planning (e.g., energy, climate change, land use economics and infrastructure).
- Assist regional partners with the evaluation of functional service delivery opportunities and act upon ones that will most assist the agencies.
- Analyze options for increasing SACOG’s financial analysis and capacity so that it is able to serve the region if and when new service needs are identified.

OWP Context:

Work activities in the current OWP focus on facilitating a dialogue between member jurisdictions on opportunities for shared services. Outcomes from these planned efforts may lead to new SACOG initiatives later that reflect the agency’s unique role as a forum for issues of regional concern.

Goal 3 Performance Indicators:

- A. Deliver cost savings to local governments by building the capacity of the agency in areas of highest need to member jurisdictions, and/or leveraging new revenues in collaboration with local governments.

Shared Service Concept Proposal: Technical Capacity Services

In a Fall 2012 survey of SACOG members, technically-oriented shared services (Travel Demand Forecasting & Analysis Services, IT/Web Support, Support for Economic Development, General Plan Technical Support) demonstrated medium to high degrees of support. The shared service concepts in these disciplines may deliver near-term cost savings to local governments and a long-term benefit to SACOG through increasing staff technical capacity. The increased SACOG capacity provides an opportunity for additional collaborations with local governments and new leveraging opportunities that may result in even greater cost savings, efficiencies, and innovations across the region.

Shared Service Concept Proposal: Pooled Purchasing & Pooled Risk

In a Fall 2012 survey of SACOG members, a medium to high degree of interest was expressed by small or medium-sized jurisdictions. For these jurisdictions, a regional shared service may offer access to goods or services that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive. Several types of pooled purchasing and pooled risk could be coordinated at the regional level and may result in cost savings to local governments. These opportunities include pooled materials purchasing, pooled equipment purchasing, pooled service purchasing, and insurance/risk management pooling.

Shared Service Concept Proposal: Compensation Survey

In a Fall 2012 survey of SACOG members, many agencies ranked this as a medium or high interest area, and also an area where there is little current activity. There was high interest among SACOG Directors and city managers/county executives. Potential benefits include cost savings for HR support, improved and standardized compensation surveys, and access to up-to-date compensation information

- B. SACOG's member services program will increase coordination activities relating to assistance with policy development, joint project delivery, grant development, and requests for technical assistance as measured by increase in requests from member jurisdictions for assistance and resulting grant acquisition or more integrated policy making.

Shared Services Concept Proposal: Task Force, Board Retreat & Future Activities

Board guidance through the Task Force & Board Retreat is structured to provide critical input on the various shared service concept proposals and associated policy principles. These forums will also vet feasible governance models and identify future activities to move forward a regional shared services program.

Draft Shared Services Work Plan Element:

- *Research, analyze and prioritize new regional partnership opportunities and services*
- *Develop communication strategies and tools for sharing information and identifying partnering opportunities. Potential strategies & tools:*
 - *Web-based center for matching services & needs between local agencies*
 - *annual conference (highlight best practices and shared services focus initially)*
 - *work in advisory role with regional managers and sub groups*
 - *convene policy and department staff discussion groups as needed*
 - *expand best practice highlights/sharing opportunities*
- *Review interim successes and lessons learned for future work plans*