Chief Executive Officer's Report

The following is a brief status report on some of the major issues and projects currently being advanced by SACOG.

CONSENT ITEMS:
All of the items on the consent calendar received unanimous support in their respective policy committees.

ACTION ITEMS:
Item #11: Approve Transportation Demand Management Tier 2 Funding Program Recommendations. This item is coming to the full Board for consideration. Staff will make a presentation and be available for questions.

Notes:
At the request of our members, SACOG staff has been working on implementation of Senate Bill 743 (CEQA Reform). Since June, staff participated in workshops with Portland State University, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, the Southern California Association of Governments, and the California Transportation Commission on research related to the development of CEQA guidelines for Level of Service and some approach to Vehicle Miles Traveled. Concurrently, SACOG staff organized a working group of local agency staff, focused on concerns related to SB743 implementation. Staff will continue to provide updates on this collaborative work.

The Transportation Committee hosted a special presentation from Social Bicycles (SoBi), the bike share operator and equipment provider that SACOG has selected to enter into negotiations with to provide a regional bike share system in the cities of Sacramento, West Sacramento, and Davis. SoBi's "smart bike" system avoids the pitfalls of traditional dock-based systems (e.g., New York City, Washington DC, Chicago, etc.) by incorporating payment and locking technology on the bike instead of the dock. This allows for checking out and parking a bike outside of docks, greatly expanding the possible destinations and avoiding the limitation of only biking between docks. SoBi also reduces operations costs related to the distribution of bikes within the system by offering cheaper rides to those that help rebalance the system. SoBi's business plan also creates the potential to expand the fleet from 900 to 1,200 bicycles over 5 years, with the ability to upgrade to electric assist bicycles in the near future. In the coming months, SACOG staff will complete negotiations with SoBi and plans to bring a recommendation for an award to the Board soon. SACOG staff is also drafting coordination agreement terms with public agency partner's to help share the risk of owning and operating a regional bike share system, to be brought to the Board for consideration this fall.
SACOG is co-hosting Transportation for America's Capital Ideas II Conference in Sacramento this November 16-17. The conference will offer an interactive curriculum of model state legislation, innovative policies, and peer-to-peer collaboration to help participants advance successful state policy and funding proposals. The focus will be on innovations from cap-and-trade funding for infrastructure, to legislation covering ridesharing companies like Uber and Lyft, to the state’s rewrite of level of service standards governing transportation projects.

**LAND USE ACTIVITIES:**
SACOG conducted the following Blueprint Implementation Land Use Activities in response to requests from member agencies and/or developers or non-governmental organizations: 1) provision of data and/or technical support to member agencies implementing the Blueprint; 2) review and comment on development proposals regarding their consistency with the Blueprint principles or the MTP/SCS; and 3) educational presentations on the Blueprint.

In the month of April, SACOG staff conducted the following Blueprint Implementation land use activities:
- Consulted project proponents on the Sacramento Downtown Railyards Project and at the request of the City of Sacramento submitted a letter of Blueprint consistency.
- At the request of the City of Folsom, submitted a letter of Blueprint consistency on the Cresleigh Ravine and Campus at Iron Point Project.
- Consulted project proponents on the 19J project in Sacramento.
- Provided demonstration of IMPACS infrastructure tool to Rancho Cordova planning staff.

**CALENDAR:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 29</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Government Relations &amp; Public Affairs Committee Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Transportation Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Land Use &amp; Natural Resources Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>SACOG Board Meeting</td>
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Approved by:

Mike McKeever  
Chief Executive Officer  

Attachments
July 19, 2016

David Miller
Community Development Director
City of Folsom
50 Natoma Street
Folsom, CA 95630

Dear Mr. Miller:

This letter is in response to the City’s request for review of the proposed Cresleigh Ravine and Campus at Iron Point Mixed Residential Development project at the intersection of Willard Drive and Iron Point Road. Thank you for the invitation to comment on this project as it relates to the Preferred Blueprint Scenario map and principles.

The proposed project was compared to the Preferred Blueprint Scenario map and principles. The Preferred Blueprint Scenario is a conceptual map based on the principles of smart growth. This Preferred Scenario is not intended to direct how a specific parcel should or should not be developed in a particular manner, but rather illustrate how the region should develop in order to reap the benefits of the Blueprint principles.

SACOG staff evaluated the developer’s site plan, which proposes a residential community comprised of 46 detached single-family homes on 7.2 acres and 230 multifamily residential units and an associated clubhouse on 10.1 acres. In total the project proposes 276 residential units on 17.3 acres. Our analysis concludes the project is consistent with the Blueprint principles and specific findings are discussed below:

Findings and Evaluation:

- Compact development and a variety of housing options are important to the Blueprint planning principles. We understand that the proposed single-family lot sizes are under 5,000 square feet, which is the threshold for larger-lot housing. Therefore, the proposed project provides small-lot and attached housing, two products in short supply in the region and near regional job centers, such as Folsom.

- Suburban residential infill, such as this project, is a strategy essential to the success of the Blueprint. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy envisions an improved jobs-housing balance for the City of Folsom – from a historically high ratio of jobs to housing of 1.95 to a ratio of 1.68. From a regional perspective, better jobs-housing balance within job centers translates into lower vehicle miles traveled per capita and lower congestion on already crowded freeways. This residential project helps achieve a better jobs-housing balance, which supports the Blueprint principle of mixed uses.

- More housing within close proximity to jobs, shopping and services results in more transportation choices for residents, another Blueprint principle. The site’s location across the street from a large employer, and a short quarter-mile walk to nearby shopping and services means that the residents of this community have viable options for traveling to daily destinations – whether by bike, walking, transit, or a shorter car trip.
• The design details of a land use development can influence the attractiveness of living in a compact development and facilitate the ease of walking and biking within and out of the neighborhood. These design details include street pattern and design, good architectural design, and the relationship of structures to the street. This is particularly important in a location such as this one, where there are destinations within walking distance. It isn’t enough to have a mix of uses next to each other, they must be safely and easily accessible by foot in order for a true walkable community to exist. Given the project’s suburban surroundings, it manages to create walking connections from within both the single family and multifamily sites to the street to Willard Drive, which is the shortest connection to the nearby retail destination.

Again, thank you for inviting SACOG’s input on this project.

Sincerely,

Mike McKeever
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Steve Miklos, Mayor, City of Folsom
    Steve Banks, Principal Planner, City of Folsom
    Deana Ellis, Vice President Land Resources, Cresleigh Homes Corporation
Sacramento Area Council of Governments: Basis for Comment on Development Proposals

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is comprised of six counties and 22 cities in the region, including the City of Sacramento. SACOG’s primary responsibility is developing and implementing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), a document that establishes transportation spending priorities throughout the region. The MTP must be based on the most likely land use pattern to be built over the 25-year planning period, and it must conform with federal and state air quality regulations.

The MTP must effectively address two, linked, challenges. Current land use patterns, transportation funding levels, and transportation investment priorities are projected to lead to an increase in vehicle miles traveled that exceeds population growth, an increase in congestion levels of 50%, and increases in mobile source emissions, particularly carbon dioxide and particulates\(^1\). To attempt to solve these challenges two and one-half years ago the SACOG Board initiated the Blueprint project, an extensive study of the linkages between transportation, land use and air quality. The study has examined a number of growth alternatives at the neighborhood, county and regional scales and reached several important conclusions, including:

- The region will experience strong growth for the next 50 years, approximately doubling the number of jobs, people and houses;
- The structure of the population will change significantly, with two-thirds of the growth in households 55 years and older, and only 21 percent of the growth in households with school aged children;
- Older households have different housing needs and preferences than younger households – over two-thirds of today’s householders over 55 express housing preferences for what might be termed non-traditional products in this marketplace – homes on small lots and attached housing;
- The rapid increase in housing prices in the region in the past few years has priced many people out of the home-buying market, emphasizing the need for alternative products such as small lot single family and attached housing that can be priced in a range that more people can afford;
- There is a strong connection between land use patterns, travel behavior and air quality;
- Specific land use patterns that lead to increased walking, biking and transit use and shorten the length of automobile trips include higher density housing and employment, locating jobs and housing near each other, and providing strong connectivity in the design of street and bicycle/pedestrian systems.

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\(^1\) SACOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan, 2002
July 27, 2016

Scott Johnson, Associate Planner
City of Sacramento, Community Development Department
Environmental Planning Services
300 Richards Boulevard, Third Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

Dear Mr. Johnson:

SACOG received a Notice of Availability for the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the Sacramento Railyards Specific Plan Update, KP Medical Center, MLS Stadium & Stormwater Outfall Project (SCH# 2006032058; Railyards project). Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this unique downtown redevelopment project as it relates to the Preferred Blueprint Scenario map and principles and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). The Preferred Blueprint Scenario is a conceptual map based on the principles of smart growth. This Preferred Scenario is not intended to direct how a specific parcel should or should not be developed in a particular manner, but rather give some direction on how the region needs to develop generally to reap the benefits of the Preferred Scenario. The MTP/SCS supports the Blueprint and proactively links land use, air quality, and transportation needs in a regional 20-year transportation plan.

**Proposed Project**
The Railyards project is comprised of approximately 6,000 to 10,000 new dwelling units and almost 19,000 to over 22,000 new employees. Residential development is planned at an average density of 100 units per acre at the low end of the housing unit range and 210 units per acre at the high end, with a maximum allowable density of up to 450 units per acre. Non-residential land uses include over 900,000 square feet of mixed uses, between 4.8 and 5.9 million square feet of employment uses (plus 1,100 hotel rooms and an MLS soccer stadium), and 30 acres of open space. The Railyards project includes five new major streets, a new boulevard, and several minor streets; two bridges allowing through traffic to pass over the realigned Union Pacific Railroad tracks; bicycle infrastructure ranging from Class 1 to Class 4 on most roads; two pedestrian tunnels; and sidewalks throughout. There are also a series of neighborhood parks and plazas included in the development, as well as the Riverfront, Museum, and Vista parks.

**Findings and Evaluation**
SACOG staff evaluated the proposed project as identified in the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for consistency with the Blueprint Preferred Scenario and growth principles. We evaluated the buildout of the proposed project and find it consistent with the region’s Blueprint Principles and MTP/SCS. The combination of residential, retail, office, medical, public, and natural resource uses that comprise the
Railyards District embody the Blueprint growth principles. The following are our findings and evaluation:

- The Blueprint study revealed the need to aggressively utilize existing redevelopment opportunities and to balance housing and employment in the downtown/midtown area. To achieve the travel benefits that come from locating jobs near housing, the MTP/SCS forecast includes approximately 45,000 new jobs and 23,000 new housing units in this area by 2036. As the largest redevelopment opportunity within the area, the Railyards Specific Plan Update brings much needed jobs and housing to make progress toward that future. Due to the existing jobs-rich conditions, we are supportive of the project’s approach for allowing a range of housing units, up to a maximum of 10,000, to improve the area jobs-housing balance. We understand that large-scale projects such as this one need the flexibility of a capacity range as the site-specific details are developed as the project moves forward. We appreciate that the impact analysis includes this higher housing range and we believe that the existing jobs-rich character of the downtown area and the market indicate its strong economic viability. This is important because people who live downtown generate dramatically lower vehicle miles traveled per household (VMT/HH) than those who live in other parts of the region. SACOG modeling and observed data show that residents of locations like this project will walk, bike, or use transit at two to four times the rate of residents of typical suburban locations and generate less than one-half of the vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

- The Railyards project is located in an area that provides transportation choices, an important Blueprint Principle. The proposed project includes the existing Amtrak station, which is ideal for commuters heading to the bay area or the foothills and for travelers across the west coast. Additionally, the proposed north-south light rail extension along 7th Street would have a stop near the bike and pedestrian path crossing, south of South Park Street in the residential neighborhood. The proposed circulation plan would facilitate bicycling with the system of on-street and off-street bikeways. Good multi-modal street design will be important in providing safe access within the Railyards area for pedestrians and bicyclists. For a project of this size and in this location, it will be particularly important that the circulation plan facilitate safe and easy accessible options for all modes of transportation.

- Compact development and a variety of housing options are important to the Blueprint Planning Principles as a means of increasing quality of life and providing for the needs of all subsets of the population including seniors, young people, and other smaller households, as well as for lower-income households. The Railyards project clearly supports this principle by offering higher density attached housing products ranging from mid- and high rise residential buildings to mixed use developments with ground floor commercial uses. In addition to its location, the travel benefits of reduced VMT and increased walking, biking, and transit use noted above, are in part due to the higher density housing in the proposed plan.
The Railyards project supports the Blueprint Principle of conserving natural resources, because growth accommodated in the Railyards means less growth that needs to be accommodated at the urban edge. When applied in an urban setting, this principle also encourages the incorporation of public-use open spaces within development projects. The Railyards proposal includes approximately 30 acres of open space divided between a series of parks, public plazas, and riverwalks. This open space is particularly important as larger scale buildings are added to neighborhoods in terms of providing attractive, walkable public spaces that create a community.

While the overall plan is consistent with the Blueprint growth principles, we strongly encourage the applicant and City to refine important details as the project moves through the various approvals required for construction. As noted throughout the DEIR the site is the premier urban infill site in the city, arguably the state or even country. The urban design details identified below are critical to the project’s delivery of the multi-modal transportation and resulting air quality benefits envisioned for the site. Some of these issues below are related to the transition of the project area over time. We look forward to continuing our constructive partnership with the City and the applicant working on these issues as the project proceeds:

- The initial proposed parking ratios are high, more suburban than urban in character. While the structured parking quantities are appropriate and desirable for an urban setting, the extensive temporary surface parking area could be a deterrent to full buildout of the proposed urban district. Similarly, the proposed parking for the Kaiser and soccer facilities is more indicative of suburban campuses than downtown centers.
- Within the Railyards, the proper location and treatment of parking garages will be critical to enhance the activated, pedestrian focus of successful urban streetscapes. Prioritizing active uses at the street and project’s edges is important in order to connect the project to Downtown and the River District, drawing surrounding residents and employees into and around the area and vice versa.
- Some of the block sizes are long and inconsistent with the surrounding urban street pattern. Research shows that a finer-grained grid pattern (i.e. smaller blocks) improves circulation for all modes, from walkers to automobile drivers.

Thank you for inviting SACOG’s input on this important project.

Sincerely,

Mike McKeever
Chief Executive Officer