



Innovation Task Force

April 10, 2014

Travel Demand Forecasting and General Plan Technical Support Member Services

Issue: Report on the status of two pilot projects with member agencies, along with lessons learned and recommendations for next steps on Travel Demand Forecasting (TDF) and General Plan (GP) Technical Support, two of the original member/shared service concept proposals.

Discussion: Over the past few months, SACOG transportation analysis staff participated in TDF and GP technical support services as part of two member agency planning projects.

City of Woodland General Plan Update

The City of Woodland embarked on a comprehensive update of their General Plan (adopted in 1996, with an update in 2002 and 2009) in February 2013. The City is in the process of developing preliminary land use diagram, land use designations, and growth policies. It is anticipated that a preferred land use map will be selected by July 2014. From that point, the Administrative Draft Climate Action Plan will be prepared. It is anticipated that the public review drafts will be released by March 2015. As part of the public discourse relating to the preliminary growth policies, the City has chosen to analyze a range of possible growth rates through 2035, between 180 dwelling units per year (+0.8 percent annual growth, or 4,000 units over 22 years) and 400 dwelling units per year (+1.7 percent annual growth, or 9,000 units over 22 years)

The partnership effort between the City of Woodland and SACOG was initiated early in the project. Staff hoped that the City would benefit from a closer partnership with SACOG on this project by utilizing base year and forecast year data prepared for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS), both for the traffic modeling work and for the land use alternatives. For its part, SACOG would benefit by gaining a better understanding of the issues faced by the City in the GP update process. SACOG staff time is estimated at approximately 120 hours.

Outcomes:

- SACOG's involvement in preparing base year land use and demographic data for the travel demand modeling work saved some time for the City's transportation consultant (Fehr & Peers). The 2012 MTP/SCS land use forecasts were used to represent the regional context outside the City of Woodland, and provided a starting point for development of land use alternatives within the City; the MTP/SCS forecasts included very little growth in several of the new growth areas being considered by the City in the GP update. The City's GP consultant developed growth estimates for those new growth areas.
- City staff has developed a better understanding of the roles SACOG plays in developing data and analysis for both travel demand forecasting and land use planning.
- SACOG staff has developed a better understanding of the specific data and analysis needs for a general plan, and the schedule pressure related to these projects.

Lessons Learned:

- Future partnerships like this would benefit from SACOG developing an established menu of services it can provide in support of a general plan project, along with documentation of those services. This menu and documentation should be available *prior* to the publication of any RFPs. This would provide member agency staff with a better understanding of what SACOG can do, and would ensure that responses to the RFPs explicitly identify SACOG work that will be relied on in proposed work scopes and budgets.
- Partnerships between SACOG and member agencies for general plan services should clearly be documented. The written documents should specify tasks to be performed by SACOG directly, as well as tasks SACOG would provide indirectly or in a supporting role (e.g., advisory or review of consultant deliverables). The documentation should include schedules and deadlines for all work to be performed by SACOG.
- There may need to be more public involvement by SACOG at the local level, from an educational stand point, in order to address concerns or possible negative perceptions, and even fears, regarding involvement of a regional agency in affecting local control. There has been some concern that SACOG estimates, for example, may be overly conservative and restrictive and that adherence to the MTP/SCS would dissuade economic growth.

Jackson Highway Corridor Traffic Impact Study

In early 2013, Sacramento County initiated a comprehensive traffic impact study related to four planned developments along the Jackson Highway corridor: West Jackson Master Plan; Jackson Township Specific Plan; New Bridge Specific Plan; and Mather South Specific Plan Amendment. Because of the size and scale of the combined projects, Sacramento County and SACOG staff worked closely on issues related to travel demand modeling. At least one of the four developments was likely to use the LU-120 VMT/GHG Reduction Metric performance standard allowed for proposed UPA expansions. SACOG staff time is estimated at approximately 200 hours for the project.

Outcomes:

- SACOG provided technical advice to Sacramento County early in the project related to what travel demand modeling approach should be used. Sacramento County staff elected to utilize SACOG's current travel demand model, SACSIM, for the project. This is the first traffic study of a land development project undertaken using SACSIM.
- SACOG provided technical support to Sacramento County staff, the transportation consultant hired for the project, and the four applicants in utilizing SACOG "placetypes" as the land use typology for specifying and quantifying the key land use and demographic data needed for travel demand modeling. Using these project specifications, SACOG prepared the two key data files needed for use in the SACSIM model for the transportation consultant. SACOG provided technical review of the transportation consultant's forecasts using SACSIM.

Lessons Learned:

- This project reinforced both lessons learned from the City of Woodland GP update project.
- SACOG needs to provide a training and support program for transportation consultants using SACSIM for member agency projects.
- Given the complexity of preparing some of the SACSIM inputs, a specific member service for preparation of those files is needed.

Over the course of the calendar year, SACOG staff will consider additional pilot studies for TDF and GP technical support and will return to the Task Force with any recommendations for equitable opportunities for all member agencies.

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