



**Government Relations and Public  
Affairs Committee**

**Meeting Date:** 8/6/2018

**Agenda Item No.:** 2018-August-7.

**Subject:** 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Update: Background on Equity and Economic Inclusion (Est. time: 5 minutes)

**Information**

**Prepared by:** Monica Hernandez

**Approved by:** Erik Johnson

**Attachments:** Yes

**1. Issue:**

How does equity and economic inclusion relate to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS)?

**2. Recommendation:**

This item provides background information for the board workshop this month and for the MTP/SCS Update. Staff will listen to comments and questions from the board to develop a board workshop that addresses the interest of the board.

**3. Background/Analysis:**

Since the beginning of this year, the Board of Directors has been asking staff to bring in experts to help strengthen and clarify the connection of regional prosperity to the policy choices and tradeoffs in the MTP/SCS. The issues have been explored with experts from the Brookings Institution, UC Santa Cruz, and others in the field. This month we have invited Dr. Manuel Pastor and Bob Weissbourd to lead a workshop on the importance of equity and inclusion to a strong regional economy.

In April, the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program released a report that assessed the economy of the region. Brookings measured how the region's economy is performing using indicators in these three areas:

- Growth: jobs, gross metropolitan product, jobs at young firms
- Prosperity: productivity, standard of living, average annual wage
- Inclusion: median wage, relative poverty rate, employment rate

According to the Brookings Institution, success in these three areas is the key to a vibrant and sustainable regional economy. This staff report is focused on the topic of inclusion because among the three topics it was the area that our region performed the poorest, and, it is an area that the MTP/SCS can impact. The Brookings assessment ranked our

region 84<sup>th</sup> out of the 100 largest metropolitan areas across the country over the last ten years for overall inclusion measures. Our region has been identified as one of the most racially diverse in the nation and is on track to become more diverse in the future and at a faster pace than most of the country. Having our region rank in the bottom 20 percent for inclusion is a call to action for our region's economic future. The region's performance in all indicator areas has improved in the last five years; however, more work needs to be done to continue strengthening our economy.

The full Brookings report can be found on SACOG's website at:  
[https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/sacramentoregioneconomicprosperity\\_fullreport.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/sacramentoregioneconomicprosperity_fullreport.pdf)

#### **4. Discussion/Analysis:**

The Brookings report outlines a framework for regional prosperity that focuses on the key factors that will drive future economic performance. Infrastructure is one of these key factors. Specific to inclusion and equity in the economy, there is a critical need to reduce racial disparities in educational attainment and to provide opportunities for all individuals in our diverse workforce to obtain the higher education and digital skills that employers are demanding. Transportation connects people to opportunities, including jobs, education and training, and vital services. As such, the investments and policies put forward in the MTP/SCS can play an important role in advancing inclusion and the region's economy.

The 2016 MTP/SCS has an Equity Chapter which covers the legal requirements to conduct an environmental justice and Title VI analysis, to determine whether the MTP/SCS benefits low-income and minority communities equally, whether the plan's transportation investments have any disproportionate negative effects on minority and/or low-income populations in the SACOG region, and whether the plan has disparate impacts on the basis of race, color, or national origin. It is important here to consider that these analyses are done by assessing the future investments on today's population. The plan does strive to go beyond the legal requirements to understand and compare the benefits and effects of the plan for the region's residents, including low-income and minorities. These analyses, while important, are often subject to criticism as not doing much to impact investment decision-making that intends to directly benefit low-income or minority communities.

Because of the importance of inclusion in our regional prosperity goals, we want to continue advancing our work in this area through the 2020 MTP/SCS update. Efforts to better inform and address economic inclusion include:

- Convening an equity-focused working group to provide guidance on methods for identifying communities of concern, feedback on outreach practices, and what indicators we measure in the MTP/SCS;
- Developing a focus group that met with staff from the Brookings Institution to advise on the assessment of the Sacramento region, and indicators or historical issues to be considered under the inclusion umbrella;
- Updating our Low-Income and High-Minority areas identified in the 2016 MTP/SCS;
- Researching best practices for equity analysis and performance measures; and,
- Looking at accessibility to education and jobs as a key performance measure for the MTP/SCS.

Staff plans to come to the board committees in September to debrief from the board workshop and discuss further how we might use the 2020 MTP/SCS to support inclusion.

**5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:**

This item does not have an impact on the agency budget. Staff time is already included in the Overall Work Program.

**6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Goals:**

1. Advance Economic Prosperity, 3. Assist Economic Development Strategies, 4. Connect Low-Income and Disadvantaged Populations to Jobs and Opportunity

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description

Attachment

### **SACOG August Board Meeting Workshop Speakers**

**Dr. Manuel Pastor** is Professor of Sociology and American Studies & Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. He currently directs the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity at USC and USC's Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration. Pastor's research has generally focused on issues of the economic, environmental and social conditions facing low-income urban communities – and the social movements seeking to change those realities. He has frequently collaborated with Dr. Chris Benner who presented to the SACOG Board in March of this year.

Pastor holds an economics Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and is the inaugural holder of the Turpanjian Chair in Civil Society and Social Change at USC.

**Robert Weissbourd** manages RW Ventures, LLC, an economic development firm specializing in technical analysis of urban assets and markets, and in creating the products and enterprises necessary to successfully grow urban and regional economies. He was a lead developer of the Greater Chatham Initiative, TREND, Chicagoland Food and Beverage Network, the Center for Financial Services Innovation, MetroEdge and the Metropolitan Business Planning Initiative, which he co-managed with the Brookings Institution. Weissbourd has been working with Brookings Institution and local stakeholders to develop specific strategies to advance an inclusive regional economy.

Weissbourd holds a J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School and a B.A. from Yale University.