

Comparison of Draft Preferred Scenario to the 2012 MTP/SCS

The Board's adopted Policy Framework 1.0¹ focused the 2016 update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) on refinement of the current high-performing plan, with attention to the following policy themes:

- **Land Use Forecast:** what is the economic viability of projected greenfield and infill growth?
- **Transportation Funding :** capture all reasonably foreseeable revenues from local, state and federal sources;
- **Investment Strategy:** shift budget to road and transit system maintenance to the extent feasible;
- **Investment Timing:** consider changes to the timing of transportation investments in order to make budget available earlier for system maintenance and maintain or improve the travel and air quality performance of the transportation system;
- **Plan Effects:** make progress on developing new measures of the effects of the plan on different people & issues.

The following describes how the Draft Preferred Scenario supports these policy themes and compares to the adopted 2012 MTP/SCS.

Policy Theme: Land Use Forecast

The draft land use forecast is largely the same as the forecast of the 2012 plan. As reported in Attachment C, and consistent with the Board's Framework 2.0 for a Draft Preferred Scenario, the draft land use forecast changed slightly from the 2012 plan in overall regional distribution of housing growth. The draft forecast has two percent more growth in infill areas (Center and Corridor and Established Communities), and two percent less growth in greenfield areas (Developing Communities), than the 2012 plan.

At a subregional level, the draft land use forecast has a slightly higher rate of greenfield growth in Southwest Placer County and Folsom, and somewhat higher levels of infill growth in the urban core of the region (downtown Sacramento and West Sacramento) compared to the 2012 plan. Recall that the framework for evaluating growth plans and projects was presented to the SACOG Board and stakeholders in the fall.² Also new to this land use forecast is the partial buildout of two universities in southwest Placer County (a private university based in England and a new Sacramento State University campus).

¹ <http://www.sacog.org/calendar/2013/12/board/pdf/12B-Framework.pdf>

² <http://sacog.org/calendar/2014/10/transportation/pdf/6B-MTP%20SCS%20Land%20Use%20Methodology.pdf>

Policy Theme: Transportation Funding

The Draft Preferred Scenario revenue projections maintain all of the same funding sources from the 2012 plan and add a number of new revenue sources. Slower projected growth in fuel prices and consumption reduce the amount of traditional federal and state revenue sources by about \$500 million from the current plan. However, the Draft Preferred Scenario identifies three new revenue sources that increase the overall budget compared to the current plan by about \$2.6 billion:

- A new ½-cent sales tax in Placer County, which constitutes the largest change in the budget by adding \$1.5 billion for strategic capacity, operational, and maintenance projects;
- Nearly \$1 billion in projected state Cap and Trade revenues that could be available to the region for certain greenhouse gas-reducing investments;
- A more full accounting of \$600 million in state Highway Bridge Funding to replace or rehabilitate public highway bridges over waterways, topographical barriers, other highways, or railroads.

Policy Theme: Investment Strategy

Compared to the 2012 plan, the Draft Preferred Scenario budget adds more than \$2 billion to system maintenance needs by rearranging current sources of funding and finding new sources of funding to dedicate to system maintenance. Like the last two plans, the Draft Preferred Scenario includes revenue equivalent to a new half-cent sales tax in Sacramento County, which is assumed to be split equally between road maintenance and transit operations. As mentioned above, the Draft Preferred Scenario varies from the current plan in assuming two additional new revenue sources: a new half-cent sales tax in Placer County that would likely generate additional funding for road maintenance, and a portion of state Cap and Trade funding for road rehabilitation projects that would also enhance or complete streets for multi-modal travel.

The draft project list reduces the amount of funding for road and highway expansion by \$600 million by delaying until after 2036 or scaling down capacity expansion projects. Overall funding for transit capital increases by \$200 million compared to the current plan to help pay for additional vehicle replacements. Some capital-intensive transit expansion projects, such as a new streetcar in Rancho Cordova, were delayed past the plan period to make more funding available for vehicle replacements and operations of fixed route bus services.

Policy Theme: Investment Timing

To support the policy goal of increased investment in system maintenance, the Draft Preferred Scenario was developed with an eye toward identifying capacity projects – both road and transit projects – that could be right-sized or right-timed, in part to make room in the budget for more system maintenance, but also to honor financial constraint requirements and to help meet federal and state air quality standards. In the Draft Preferred Scenario, there are 196 fewer lane miles of new roads, a three percent reduction from the current plan, and 21 fewer daily vehicle service hours of transit, less than a one percent reduction from the current plan.

To determine where road investments were needed or could be delayed or scaled down, staff used a set of screening criteria. The screening questions were:

- 1) Is the roadway congested during peak demand periods, either in the base year (2012) or the planning horizon year?
- 2) Is the increase in capacity on the roadway greater than the projected increase in travel on the roadway?
- 3) Is the roadway significantly under-utilized during peak periods?³

SACOG staff used the screening criteria to work with local agency partners to recommend projects for delay or scaling. Most of the projects where construction was delayed past the plan horizon remain in the project list with project development-only funding. These projects are still eligible to seek federal or state funding and move forward with project analysis, environmental, and right-of-way activities that will prepare them for inclusion in future updates of the plan, as needed. Examples of projects that were delayed out of the Draft Preferred Scenario include portions of the Capital Southeast Connector, a widening of Hazel Avenue between Madison Avenue and the Placer County Line, the Feather River Expressway in Yuba County, and Sutter's Landing Parkway in the City of Sacramento. In total, over 100 road or highway capacity projects that were included in the 2012 MTP/SCS were delayed out of the Draft Preferred Scenario.

Despite fewer capacity projects, the Draft Preferred Scenario includes some new notable projects: an expanded set of improvements on the Capital City Freeway to address one of the region's major bottlenecks, additional capacity and operational improvements on Highway 65 in Placer County, and new capacity along Jackson Highway in Sacramento County. Region-wide, about 60 new road or highway expansion projects are included in the Draft Preferred Scenario that were not part of the 2012 plan. These new projects occur in areas where there is an anticipated increase in travel demand caused by housing or employment growth.

Policy Theme: Plan Effects

The project list refinement work that staff conducted with local agencies has resulted in a Draft Preferred Scenario that is more efficient in terms of expenditures and travel performance. Although the Draft Preferred Scenario projects four percent less transit ridership than the current plan, the combined reductions in road capacity investments result in greater reductions in vehicle miles traveled compared to the current plan (-8 percent per capita reduction in the Draft Preferred Scenario compared to -7 percent in the 2012 plan) while holding congested travel steady from the current plan. In addition to holding this congestion metric steady, the Draft Preferred Scenario achieves the region's SB 375 greenhouse gas targets for the years 2020 and 2035.

The Draft Preferred Scenario also has better overall transit performance than the 2012 plan despite less overall transit investment and forecasted lower fuel prices (lower fuel prices tend to result in more travelers choosing to drive over other modes of travel). This enhanced performance is due to a more efficient transportation system resulting from slightly more infill growth overall, and more detailed work with local agencies on the timing of transportation investments to match the projected land use pattern.

³ <http://www.sacog.org/calendar/2015/02/board/pdf/12-MTPSCS%203%20Screening%20Questions%20for%20Project%20Phasing%20Supplement.pdf>

Notably, the Draft Preferred Scenario improves both sub-regional jobs-housing balance from the 2012 plan and the supporting transportation investments that feed into regional job centers. This results in a number of travel improvements into regional employment centers:

- Average commute vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per worker within the regional employment centers declines over time by 15 percent;
- Transit, bike and walk mode share for commute travel to regional employment centers increases over time by 93 percent; and
- The number of jobs within a 20-minute drive of a residence increases by 36 percent.