

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION FOR THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
REPORT FOR THE 2016 MTP/SCS UPDATE**



June 18, 2014

To: All Interested Agencies and Persons
From: Sacramento Area Council of Governments
1415 L Street, Suite 300
Sacramento, Ca 95814 (916) 321-9000

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a programmatic environmental impact report for the 2016 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy for 2036 (MTP/SCS) Update (Proposed Project). This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is intended to alert regulatory and trustee agencies, interested agencies, organizations, and individuals of the preparation of the 2016 MTP/SCS Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The EIR will be prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

SACOG is interested in your views about the scope and content of the information and analyses to be included in the EIR for the Proposed Project. If you represent an agency that may use the program EIR for tiering purposes, SACOG is particularly interested in learning what information may be helpful for such tiering in connection with your project-specific environmental review.

This NOP includes:

- A list of potential environmental effects
- A map of the Sacramento metropolitan area, which is the study area for the Proposed Project and the EIR. The metropolitan area includes the counties of Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba, and the portions of El Dorado and Placer Counties outside of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

SACOG seeks your views on the following questions:

- Are there potential environmental issues that SACOG has not identified in the list of potential environmental effects or the attached outline? If so, please identify these potential issues.
- Are there any alternatives you believe SACOG should evaluate?
- What types of mitigation measures do you think would help avoid or minimize potential environmental effects?

SUBMITTING COMMENTS

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. Please submit your written responses **no later than July 25, 2014**, through any of the following methods:

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By Mail	By Fax	By E-mail
Sacramento Area Council of Governments 1415 L Street, Suite 300 Sacramento, CA 95814	(916) 321-9551	eircomments@sacog.org

A public scoping meeting for the EIR will be held on **July 23, 2014**, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the SACOG offices, 1415 L Street, Suite 300, Sacramento, CA 95818.

Comments regarding the scope of the EIR received during the 30-day NOP review period will be incorporated, as appropriate, in the environmental document.

BACKGROUND

SACOG is the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the counties of Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba, and for Placer and El Dorado Counties except for the Lake Tahoe Basin. Map 1 depicts the Sacramento Metropolitan Planning Area. An MTP, also referred to in other regions as a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) or Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), is the mechanism used in California by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to conduct long-range (at least 20-year) planning in their regions. SACOG must adopt an MTP and update it every four years, or more frequently, if the region is to receive federal or state transportation dollars for public transit, streets/roads, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

An SCS is a required element of the MTP under California’s Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, also known as Sen. Bill 375 (Stats. 2008, ch. 728) (SB 375). While other efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions focus on alternative fuels and vehicle efficiency, SB 375 is intended to more effectively reduce emissions by integrating land use and transportation planning to reduce overall passenger vehicle miles traveled. Through the development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that accompanies the MTP, policies and strategies will be identified to reduce per capita passenger vehicle-generated GHG emissions. The SCS will identify the general location of land uses, residential densities, and building intensities within the region; identify areas within the region sufficient to house all the population of the region; identify areas within the region sufficient to house an 8-year projection of the regional housing need; identify a transportation network to serve the regional transportation needs; gather and consider the best practically available scientific information regarding resources areas and farmland in the region; consider the state housing goals; set forth a forecasted development pattern for the region; and allow the regional transportation plan to comply with the federal Clean Air Act. (Gov. Code, § 65080, subd. (b)(F)(2)(B).) If the SCS for the MTP update does not achieve the GHG emission targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), an Alternative Planning Strategy must be developed to demonstrate how the targets could be achieved.

The 2016 MTP/SCS sets policies to guide transportation decisions and proposes a program of capital, operational, and management improvements needed through the year 2036. In addition,



if the SCS achieves its GHG emission target and the CARB accepts SACOG's determination that the SCS, if implemented, would achieve its GHG emissions target, certain land development projects may be eligible for CEQA streamlining if they are consistent with the general use, density, intensity and applicable policies of the adopted SCS.

The EIR for the 2016 MTP/SCS Update will include GHG emissions baseline measurements and projections, as well as potential mitigation measures to reduce those emissions. The EIR also will include analysis of the environmental effects of the MTP/SCS.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The following types of potentially significant and adverse environmental impacts could result from the implementation of the 2016 MTP/SCS:

1. Aesthetics
2. Agricultural and Forestry Resources
3. Air Quality
4. Biological Resources
5. Cultural and Paleontological Resources
6. Energy and Global Climate Change
7. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
8. Geology, Seismicity, Soils and Mineral Resources
9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
10. Hydrology and Water Quality
11. Land Use and Planning
12. Noise
13. Population and Housing
14. Public Services and Recreation
15. Transportation
16. Utilities and Service Systems

The MTP EIR will also address cumulative impacts, growth inducing impacts, and other issues required by CEQA.

ALTERNATIVES TO BE ANALYZED IN THE EIR

SACOG will evaluate several project alternatives in the EIR. These scenarios will be studied and further refined during public scoping meetings and workshops. Each scenario will be compared for its potential to achieve the goals of the 2016 MTP/SCS, while reducing the significant regional environmental impacts. In addition to the project, the following alternatives will also be evaluated:

No Project Alternative – The No Project Alternative is required by CEQA. For this EIR, the No Project Alternative is defined as a continuation of the current land use patterns and accompanying transportation network of the current MTP/SCS (adopted April 2012), without accounting for new land use and transportation plans that have been developed since plan adoption.

Scenario 1 - Land use patterns are less dense than under the adopted MTP/SCS with more growth on the edge of current urban areas and less infill. The accompanying transportation network is

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correspondingly more focused on road and highway expansion and less on expansion of transit and non-motorized modes (bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure).

Scenario 3 - Land use patterns are more compact focused on supporting high transit ridership and productivity. Transportation network has high investment in transit service and supportive road, pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure.

Although these scenarios have been preliminarily identified, SACOG is seeking input on these, and other, alternatives during the NOP process, which could result in modifications to the alternatives analyzed in the EIR, or modifications to the scenarios identified above.

DATE: June 18, 2014

SIGNATURE: _____
Kacey Lizon

TITLE: MTP/SCS Manager

TELEPHONE: (916) 321-9000

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.