



**SANDAG**



Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
San Diego Association of Governments  
Southern California Association of Governments  
Sacramento Area Council of Governments

## Three Strategies to Update Regional Planning under SB 375

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are tasked with developing robust regional transportation plans (RTPs) that support federal, state, and local goals. The addition of Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCSs) with the passage of SB375 in 2008 improved the quality of RTPs and reframed how MPOs serve their member communities. The structure of SB 375 must now evolve to match California's newer affordability, housing, climate, and transportation objectives. Currently, MPOs should be equipped to refocus more of these resources on actions that implement state and local policy goals to:

- Improve transportation access for all people to jobs and daily needs as well as efficient movement of goods
- Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation sector
- Develop fiscally constrained and realistic transportation plans that meet federal and state requirements
- Support land-use patterns that conserve land and affirmatively furthers fair housing
- Increase investment in sustainable infrastructure that supports resilient regional economies that create opportunity for everyone

### Strategy 1: Further Improve Process Integrity

- a) **Target Transparency.** When setting targets, ARB should publish its methodology, fleet make up, and budget assumptions. It should also estimate how much of the reduction will come from state actions and how much will come from MPO strategies. This includes the extent to which the electrification of the fleet will be "credited." Similar transparency should apply to the adoption of the SCS/APS Guidelines.
- b) **Consistency in Air Quality Modeling.** The calculations for GHG emissions should be based on the same assumptions as those used for federal air quality conformity. Air quality analysis that demonstrates consistency and accountability in state and regional policy are critical for effective regional planning. Realistic plans require the best available information that reflects new research, updated trends, and new legislation.

### Strategy 2: Align State Planning Goals and Policies

- a) **Move to a "Four Plus Four" RTP/SCS Cycle.** Nearly four years of work goes into developing a the RTP/SCS. It's expensive. Revise the process to allow a full scenario-based plan every eight years (the same cycle as RHNA) and focus on a strategy and implementation report during the interim non-RHNA update (which still must meet federal air quality conformity standards). This would free substantial resources to focus on plan implementation.



- b) **Coordinate State Policies Early in the Process.** State, regional, and local entities bear a shared responsibility for reconciling different goals related to housing, equity, land use, transportation, climate, and safety. Sometimes, the action that achieves one objective has an unintended effect on the achievement of another. One example is the tension that can exist between strategies to encourage infill development to reduce vehicle miles traveled and policies to disperse housing to areas of opportunity to affirmatively further fair housing. The state should address these issues to provide greater implementation clarity.

### **Strategy 3: Resources to Execute**

- a) **Sustainable (Ongoing) Funding.** MPOs need an ongoing REAP 2.0-like source of funding that could be invested by MPOs (with state oversight) on the key transportation, housing and environmental projects and policies that will accelerate the implementation of the RTP/SCS.
- b) **Priority for State Funding.** The state should broadly prioritize different state funds to elevate key implementation strategies including land use, housing-supportive infrastructure, and transportation projects and policies that are critical for successful implementation of RTP/SCSs.
- c) **Support All GHG-Reducing Projects, Even Those Under an APS.** It's important for regions to attempt to achieve a SCS if there is a feasible way to do so. In some cases, however, a region may not have sufficient resources to fund the strategies that would be necessary to meet the target. Regions that do not have a feasible way to achieve their GHG target but have an ARB-approved Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) should be permitted the opportunity to pursue SB 1 funds for GHG reducing projects.