

Integrating Health and Equity into the Sacramento Region's Regional Plan

Sierra Health Foundation- Tuesday, December 13th – 9:00 am - 2:30 pm

Summary

Planning and Building a Healthy Sacramento Region

Larry Greene, Executive Director, SMAQMD

Larry introduced the themes of the day and the global push for reduced VMT and sustainable development. He introduced the progress SACOG has made in planning for improving air quality; and modeling projects and impacts. He stressed that modeling for health and understanding the impacts on health is a more difficult task.

Transportation and Land Use Planning, SB 375, and Public Health

Aimee Sisson, MD, MPH - CDPH

Aimee presented overall themes on climate change and health. Takeaways included: Climate change is bad for health; environments affect health; we can build healthy communities; and we can connect sustainability and health to lead to win-win solutions.

Neil Maizlish, PhD, MPH - CDPH

Neil presented his research and models for the co-benefits of transportation and health. He introduced VMT reduction as an indicator in the SCS and the concepts of increasing funding for active transportation and reducing the burden of disease. He presented opportunities to connect the SCS process with health, specifically the Integrated Transportation Health Impacts Model (I-THIM) which, in the Bay Area, shows a 15% reduction in Cardiovascular Disease (among other indicators) from increasing daily walking and bicycling from the baseline to 22 minutes daily. Dr. Maizlish's presentation focused on a discussion around performance measures and indicators to prioritize health in the SCS and the adaptability of evaluative tools to link in health and equity. He stressed the breaking down of silos to connect health and equity to this process.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments' Metropolitan Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS)

Kacey Lizon and Monica Hernandez, SACOG Staff

Monica and Kacey presented a summary of the MTP/SCS and an overview of the process to date. They stressed the fiscal constraints of the MTP, the time horizon, and the need to be conservative. The theme "making more with less" came through as they addressed slowing growth rates and reduced revenues in future years, leading to a 5% reduction in spending per capita from the last plan. Overall themes in the plan include a third of the budget devoted to transit operations, including maintaining existing transit and increasing transit hours and productivity – focusing on increased fare box recovery and boardings. The MTP will be adopted in April 2012; this plan exceeds the 2020 target of 7% GHG reductions (hitting 10% reduction) and meets the 16% reduction target for 2035. They also stressed that this MTP is not an endpoint; planning is an iterative process.

Jonathan London, U.C. Davis Center for Regional Change

Jonathan introduced indicators for equity and environmental justice analysis in the SCS. He presented the Social Vulnerability Index, which incorporates a broad range of indicators on economic opportunities, housing, and other social vulnerabilities as well as transportation; along with suggested measures for tracking this data. He also presented environmental justice analysis that looks at social vulnerability along with place; and opportunities to strengthen this analysis. Jonathan also presented some items for

action; designing youth-friendly places was a focus, as well as safe routes to and from school. Overall themes from his presentation were that equity can and should be quantified; community participation should be part of the process; and understanding the limitations and benefits of modeling strengthens analysis.

The Sacramento SCS as a Tool for Healthier Communities: How Does it Measure Up? Panel Presentation with Discussion and Dialogue

The panel consisted of presentations on the environmental conservation, active transportation, housing and equity, and performance indicator elements in the SCS; and takeaways include key strengths and areas for improvement in the strategy.

Strengths of the SCS include: RUCS, a model for analysis of rural land in the plan, decreasing the impact on agricultural land, increasing the percentage of \$ spent on walking/biking, decreasing emissions per capita, integrating land use and transportation, promoting infill near transit, complete streets, analysis on impact for EJ communities, consideration of mix of housing types and costs, focus on physical activity, shift to a 500' highway buffer, measurement of injuries and fatalities, and measurement of access to transit and jobs.

Potential areas for improvement include: extending RUCS and doing a more comprehensive natural resources analysis, growth of greenfields, developing a process for collecting comprehensive data on habitat and natural resources, a timetable for complete streets – goal = 12 years, creating a target for walk/bike trips – 20%, focusing on local bike networks, adding indicators for measures of health – injuries, activity, air quality; modeling non-commute trips; examining the 1000' highway buffer; promoting affordable housing in all places, preventing displacement; looking at a jobs-housing fit analysis tool; meeting the needs of transit-dependent youth; prioritizing equity; expanded analysis for an equity scenario in the next MTP; impacts of transit fares and subsidies; lost transit routes and paratransit; incorporating health metrics in monitoring plan and next MTP, and looking at stronger indicators for housing and transportation costs, physical activity, respiratory health, and access to schools, shops, food, childcare within a 10-minute trip.

After lunch, participants broke out into small groups to discuss strategies for action in four key areas: equity, active transportation, the natural environment, and performance metrics. When the group came back together, they shared priorities and strategies from the breakouts; and moved towards next steps and opportunities as a group.

Key points from the breakout sessions were:

Equity:

- 1) Make a significant effort on community engagement/public participation, including CBOs, neighborhood associations, using a variety of communication outlets. Securing commitment from SACOG to include genuine public participation-in updating public participation manual
- 2) Ensuring SACOG fulfills civil rights obligations throughout the plan, not just equity chapter. Account and analyze displacement and gentrification potential
- 3) Affordable transportation access – offer discounted passes, lobbying regional transportation board to consider income scales
- 4) Modeling transparency- models based on assumptions, can be flawed. Accountability for assumptions
- 5) Consider multi-generational households – cultural sensitivity in plan

Active Transportation

- 1) Complete streets implantation is key to active transportation – need to measure progress towards goal
- 2) Projects proposed for consideration- health proponents should be quantified and be able to be first priority in funding
- 3) Bike lanes and infrastructure needs to be tied with land use- interconnectivity, destination should be factored in siting of specific projects
- 4) “Ground truthing”
- 5) Democratizing data- not everyone can work through models, data as laid out- other groups can have access

Environmental Conservation

- 1) Have a regional plan that recognizes natural resources conservation
- 2) Get SACOG’s commitment to obtain data, partner with regional partners to gather data- conservation information hub for public use
- 3) Carbon sequestration analysis with natural lands;
- 4) Environmental vulnerability analysis could be developed
- 5) Regional coordinated strategy for conservation efforts

Performance Metrics:

- 1) Value to health and equity metrics for evaluation as well as for comparing land use and transportation in region
- 2) Monitoring and tracking projects in SCS projects moving forward
- 3) Who should track metrics- jurisdictions and advocates
- 4) Use existing data to track metrics but also important to establish better data tracking for future SCS
- 5) Baseline measurements to track, also measure and track qualitative metrics

Reflections and next steps:

Overall reflections on the afternoon breakouts and the whole day collected on a few points. First, that this SCS is the first step in a long process; strengthening health and equity in transportation planning will take constant pressure and effort – a marathon, not a sprint. Transparency and follow-up is a key part of this; as planning moves forward, it will be important to continue to connect and provide information for groups not in the room. Additionally, data availability and analysis is a key element for all groups – SACOG can make data available, help track data, be a link to public health groups. Civil rights emerged as another issue – more needs to be done to engage groups not traditionally at the table and strengthen civil rights throughout the plan.

Next steps are upcoming hearings – December 14 in Folsom and January 4 at SACOG offices in Sacramento. Letters – public written comment is encouraged, and the deadline is January 9. Public comment on both the Draft EIR and the MTP (both available online). Board – movement around meeting with Board members and bringing high priority recommendations to them. Transit priority areas – SACOG will engage in planning in the next 9 months to a year – issues around displacement and gentrification will arise. Quarterly stakeholder meetings – with SACOG – opportunity to continue to engage, support accountability, influence next MTP round.