REPORT TO SHASTA COUNTY RTPA

SUBJECT		MEETING DATE	ITEM NUMBER
Coordination of Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Planning Cycles & SB 375 Update		4/28/09	6

RECOMMENDATION
It is recommended that the Board abstain from moving to the four-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) cycle, thereby maintaining the existing five-year RTP update interval.

SUMMARY
Under SB 375, regions may opt for a coordinated four-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/eight-year Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) cycle. Due to Shasta County's unique circumstances, there is no compelling reason to opt for the revised planning cycle.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is laying the groundwork for setting regional greenhouse gas (GHG) vehicle emission reduction targets as required by Senate Bill 375 (SB 375). Staff is monitoring progress and providing input.

DISCUSSION

Coordination of Regional Transportation and Housing Needs Planning Cycles

SB 375 requires that California's eighteen designated MPOs create a 'Sustainable Communities Strategy' (SCS) as part of the RTP. An SCS is a combined land use/transportation plan that effectively accommodates forecasted regional growth and development while meeting GHG vehicle emission reduction targets to be set for each region by CARB. Toward this objective, SB 375 includes provisions for alignment of the RTP and RHNA planning cycles.

In most California regions, conflicting deadlines between the RTP (updated every four years in areas that are "non-attainment" for air quality purposes) and the RHNA (updated every five years) creates a disconnect between regional transportation planning and regional housing policy. These functions are typically performed by the same agency.

Under SB 375, our region's three cities and the County have the option to update their RHNA every eight years (vs. the current five-year requirement). SCRTPA likewise has the option to update their RTP every 4 years (vs. the current five-year requirement). Under this option, the RTP and RHNA updates would occur concurrently every eighth year and be on the same cycle as other California MPOs. Regions have until June 1, 2009 to opt into the four-year RTP/eight-year RHNA cycle.

In consideration of this option, it should be noted that this Agency's position is unique among California regions:

- This Agency is not a council of governments and therefore has no explicit purview over the RHNA process. Instead, the RHNA is administered by the State Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD) in conjunction with Shasta County and the three incorporated cities.

- This Agency is one of a handful of MPOs in California that is also in "attainment" for federal air quality purposes. As such, the RTP cycle need only be performed every five years, or the same interval as the current SCS process. Although Shasta County's RTP and RHNA processes are prepared separately and independent of one another, the timing of respective update cycles happens to be in sync. The interval and timing of planning updates is therefore not an issue.

- This Agency is an island MPO surrounded by rural counties that are not required to participate in the SCS process. Planning schedule consistency with other MPO regions therefore, has little to no bearing on the decision to opt for the revised planning schedule. It would be more meaningful to seek planning schedule consistency with Tehama County and other neighboring rural county regions than it would with other California MPO regions.

While our local cities and the County would benefit from a less frequent eight-year RHNA cycle, most of that benefit would be negated by the additional cost of more frequent RTP updates. Furthermore, opting into the five-year RTP/eight-year RHNA cycle would result in the need to prepare an SCS in 2012 rather than in 2015.

Senate Bill 375 (SB 375) Update

Signed into law last September, SB 375 requires that CARB set regional targets for the reduction of GHG emissions from passenger vehicles for the years 2020 and 2035. CARB has appointed a Regional Targets Advisory Committee (RTAC) to provide recommendations on factors to be considered and methodologies to be used in the setting of regional targets. Information regarding the RTAC's meeting schedule, agendas, minutes, and access to web conferencing is provided online at http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/sb375/rtac/rtac.htm.

Staff is currently monitoring the RTAC's progress and providing input as appropriate. To date, the RTAC has been busy laying the groundwork for regional target setting, including: 1) surveying affected regions with regard to data availability/modeling capabilities, 2) identifying key factors within the control of local governments and MPOs that influence GHG emission levels from passenger vehicles, and 3) assessing the magnitude of change possible within land use and transportation sectors.

SB 375 encourages MPO regions to work with CARB to insure that the technical methodology being developed to estimate GHG emission reductions is accurate and agreeable. The following specific milestones and activities are laid out by SB 375:

September 30, 2009	RTAC provides recommendations for factors and methodologies to CARB for regional target setting
October 2009 - June 2010	CARB exchanges technical information and MPO holds at least one public workshop for CARB and local agencies to discuss the RTAC's report
June 30, 2010	CARB provides draft targets for each region to review
September 30, 2010	CARB provides each affected region with a GHG emissions reduction target

New Agency responsibilities introduced under SB 375 will require substantial additional resources. Immediate and long term funding sources are currently being pursued at the state level.

- The first funding for SB 375 implementation will come from Proposition 84 Environmental Quality Bond funds designated for planning. Sometime in FY 2009/10, $90 million will be made available statewide. MPOs are likely to receive funding priority. These one-time funds are intended to jump start the process while a more permanent funding solution can be established.

- If passed, Senate Bill 406 (DeSaulnier) would authorize the metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) to impose a $2 motor vehicle registration surcharge on vehicles registered within their respective region. Revenue generated would be expended to develop and implement a blueprint-like Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as defined by SB 375.

ALTERNATIVES
The Board may opt to modify the RTP schedule from the current five-year to a four-year cycle.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT
Shasta County and the three incorporated cities would be affected and must concurrently opt for the revised eight-year RHNA schedule in order for there to be any rationale or basis behind the move to a four-year RTP update cycle. Planning directors from local agencies have been consulted and concur that the limited benefits of less frequent RHNA cycles do not outweigh the accelerated RTP and SCS schedules.

FINANCING
The RTP and required EIR updates are financed through FHWA and state planning funds. The cost of updating the RTP more frequently (every four years versus the current five-year cycle) would require a larger share of these funds.

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DSL/DTW/jac

Attachment: California State Association of Counties Article on SB 375

Journal of the California State Association of Counties
March/April 2009

SB 375: A critical time for county action

Measure aligns greenhouse gas reduction goals with regional planning

BY DEANN BAKER AND KIANA BUSS
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It is not every day that sweeping legislation is ushered through the State Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. However, last year's SB 375 by Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg is one such measure. It is being touted as a landmark piece of legislation that will influence the future of California.

While dramatic change is often difficult, SB 375 provides state, regional and local governments the opportunity to partner on the issue of addressing climate change, while accommodating growth in a more sustainable manner.

The measure aligns three critical policy areas of greenhouse gas reduction with long-term planning for housing and transportation in urban and suburban regions. With SB 375 casting such a great challenge, it is important for counties to understand its requirements and know what is in store in the coming years as implementation begins.

The first step in implementation will be establishing the regional greenhouse gas reduction targets for the 18 metropolitan planning organizations captured under the new law. SB 375 provides for an extensive exchange between an advisory committee of major stakeholders and the California Air Resources Board in this process.

The next steps will be development of a long-range transportation plan that strives toward hitting those targets, while also accommodating growth and planning for the housing needs in California. While the transportation sector is a major contributor toward greenhouse gases, it is recognized that SB 375 lays the foundation to achieve these targets, but does not mandate that a region meet the target. Further, it is acknowledged that it will likely take years to recognize significant benefits through more efficient land use development.

What is SB 375?

In 2006, the Legislature passed AB 32 — the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 — which requires the State of California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels no later than 2020. According to the California Air Resources Board, greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks were 108 million metric tons in 1990. By 2004, these emissions had increased to 135 million metric tons. The transportation sector contributes more than 40 percent of greenhouse gases throughout the state. Automobiles and light trucks alone contribute almost 30 percent.

SB 375 provides a process for achieving AB

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32 reduction goals from cars and light trucks; however, local elected officials working with their regional agencies are responsible for defining the means of accomplishing that goal. The new law establishes a process for the Air Resources Board to follow when developing greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets for each of the 18 federally designated metropolitan planning organizations in the state, which includes 37 counties and approximately 97.7 percent of the population.

Metropolitan planning organizations must develop enhanced land use plans as part of their long-range transportation plans, known as sustainable communities strategies, which will detail how the region will strive toward meeting the greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets. These plans will lay the foundation for future growth in the state, as well as direct the investment of transportation funding to support more smart, compact and efficient growth consistent with these plans.

Furthermore, SB 375 affects all 58 counties in the state. It includes a provision that applies to all regional transportation planning agencies, recognizing that all 58 counties play a role in reducing greenhouse gases, since they are service providers to both county and city residents.

More specifically, the bill requires regional transportation agencies to consider financial incentives for cities and counties that have resource areas or farmland and want to invest in the preservation and safety of the city street or county road system, farm-to-market and interconnectivity transportation needs.

The measure states that a metropolitan planning organization or county transportation agency shall also consider financial assistance in counties that contribute toward the greenhouse emissions reductions targets by implementing policies for growth to occur within their cities. So while a county outside a metropolitan planning organization is not required to develop this more robust long-range transportation plan, SB 375 requires every region to recognize the role of county government as a contributor to smart growth and as an essential provider in maintaining sustainable communities.

Implementing SB 375: The next steps

While there are many stages ahead in the implementation of SB 375, the bill initially requires that the California Air Resources Board convene a Regional Targets Advisory Committee prior to setting regional greenhouse gas reduction targets. The committee is charged with recommending factors to be considered and methodologies to be used for setting the regional emissions reductions targets by September 30.

On January 23, the state Air Resources Board appointed 20 members to the committee, including notable county officials: Sacramento County Supervisor Roger Dickinson, CSAC representative; Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks, Southern California Association of Governments representative; and Sonoma County Planning Director Pete Parkinson, California chapter of the American Planning Association representative. The committee also includes representation from the League of California Cities, metropolitan planning commissions, developers, environmental organizations and other stakeholder groups. Once the committee makes its recommendations, the state Air Resources Board will provide draft targets to each metropolitan planning commission by June 30, 2010 and final targets by September 30, 2010.

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Once the targets are set, counties and cities, working with their metropolitan planning organizations, must develop their long-range transportation plans with the newly created sustainable communities strategies in an attempt to meet the target. SB 375 contains significant and strong processes for local government and public input into the entire process. Each metropolitan planning organization must hold at least one, if not two, workshops for local elected officials on the sustainable communities strategies. Additionally, metropolitan planning organizations must develop a public participation plan for the development of the sustainable communities strategies. Finally, the draft of these strategies must be circulated not less than 55 days prior to final adoption, and metropolitan planning organizations must also hold three public hearings on the draft.

Equally important as the required elected official and public process workshops is counties engaging their metropolitan planning commissions to discuss ideas for the development of regional sustainable communities strategies, possible methodologies, potential concerns, limitations or constraints, and even the development of a regional target that each metropolitan planning organization is allowed to suggest to the California Air

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Local governments are key in the development of successful long-range plans that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support vibrant economics and provide Californians with more travel and housing options — all goals of SB 375.

County supervisors and city council members make up the governing boards of regional agencies and have a direct role in the development of long-range transportation and housing plans, as well as with regional blueprint plans, which are in place in many regions throughout California. These plans are expected to serve as the building blocks of the sustainable communities strategies.

For more information on the Regional Targets Advisory Committee and information about upcoming meetings and agendas, please visit the state Air Resources Board Web site at: *www.arb.ca.gov/cc/rtac/rtac.htm.* ❖