From Transportation to Climate Protection: Coordination at the Countywide Level

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New Partners for Smart Growth Conference - February 2011
Sonoma County: already a leader in addressing climate change

- County and all 9 cities have already set ambitious and progressive greenhouse gas reduction targets
- Solid anti-sprawl policies
- Cities and counties walking their talk for municipal operations
Big Challenges remain for Sonoma County and the Bay Area Region

- Transportation and land use related emissions are harder to influence

- VMT has continued to grow faster than population
A little “help” from the state . . .

- Senate Bill 375 signed into law in 2008
- Intended to serve as the transportation and land use implementation of AB 32
- State air board sets passenger vehicle greenhouse gas reduction targets for each metropolitan region
- Long range planning horizons: 10 and 25 years
SB 375 in a Nutshell

• A true regional planning bill; applies to 18 metropolitan planning organizations in CA
• Built around existing Regional Transportation Plan process
• More robust local and public participation
• Centerpiece is a new “Sustainable Communities Strategy” to be included in the RTP
What is a Sustainable Communities Strategy?

- Aligns planning for transportation, land use, affordable housing at regional scale
- Aimed at reducing GHG from passenger vehicles to meet targets set by state air board for 2020 and 2035
- Ultimately -- a huge shift in how planning is done in California
What SB 375 doesn’t do . . .

- Supersede local land use authority
- Limit authority of state air board
- Abrogate any vested right
- Require local general plans to be consistent with an SCS
- Authorize an SCS that is inconsistent with federal transportation planning law
- Provide relief from compliance with other laws
BIG Challenge: MPOs Don’t Control Land Use

- That’s where local governments come in
- But the MPOs do control most transportation investments
- SB 375 is NOT a mandate for local government; but it feels like one
- Local communities taking it very seriously—both electeds and citizens
San Francisco Bay Region
Broader Challenges for Regional Planning

- Regions are very diverse
- SF Bay Area region includes dense urban core cities (San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose) and very rural, agricultural areas (Sonoma and Napa counties)
- Infrastructure deficits exacerbated by declining transportation funds
- Environmental justice issues abound
SCS Process Just Getting Underway

- In Sonoma County, the SCTA/RCPA will play a key role as convener and coordinator
- Intense information exchange between local governments and the MPOs
- Initial vision scenario due next month
- Transportation funding a huge concern
But in Sonoma County, we’re not waiting . . .

- County and nine cities collaborating on a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Implementation Plan (GRIP)
- An inter-jurisdictional effort focused on making a difference - results driven
- Streamline environmental review for consistent projects
- Anticipate the SCS
Sonoma County G.R.I.P.

- **Strategy:** Builds upon past efforts to comply with new regulatory guidelines & institutionalize the plan
- **Integration:** A model implementation code & best practices book for integration into general plans and zoning codes
- **Implementation:** monitoring, sustainability indicators and GHG reduction
Sonoma County jurisdictions working together to implement planning for climate change