

Gateway Cities Subregional Sustainable Communities Strategy

Introduction to the Draft SCS

Ken Farfsing, May 4, 2011

We are pleased to present the Draft Subregional Sustainable Communities Strategy for review by the COG Board of Directors. We hope that you will be pleased with the results of the draft SCS – which clearly demonstrates that our region can comply with the Green House Gas Reduction targets established by the California Air Resource Board for 2020 and 2035. We want to thank all of the Cities who participated in the funding of the Gateway Cities contract and provided staff support.

This draft SCS would not have happened without the efforts of the SCS Policy Development Committee, which consists of the city managers, community development directors, public works officials and other key staff from our region. The SCS also benefited from input from stakeholders early in the process. Public workshops are currently underway seeking additional input prior to finalizing the plan. We also want to thank SCAG staff for assisting the cities with technical and logistical support. Several of our cities worked closely with SCAG using the Sustainability Tool model, refining and testing their general plan land use elements. We also thank Cambridge Systematics, Wildan, MIG and ESTC, our consultant team, for guiding us through a very complicated process. The Cambridge team provided the expertise that we needed for a successful plan. We also thank COG staff, including Dick, Jack, Nancy, Karen and Jerry for their assistance, along with Dick Jones and Ivy Tsai for their legal advice. When the Board voted to authorize our Subregional SCS, no one exactly knew what a SCS looked like. So you demonstrated leadership in moving forward, knowing the outcome could be controversial and uncertain.

When SB-375 was passed in September of 2008, there was great uncertainty as to the impact of the regulation on local development controls and general plans. There was uncertainty on the legislations impacts on local housing elements. There was uncertainty as to whether local transportation projects (that our cities have been funding since 2005) would result in substantial GHG reductions. There was uncertainty as to the level of GHG reductions from regional transportation projects in the Gateway Cities subregion. There was also uncertainty on the impact of the regulation on our local economy and city budgets.

The draft SCS has not removed all of the uncertainties, however this draft SCS provides clear evidence that each of our communities have been moving in a positive manner to create sustainable cities and to reduce GHG emissions – without having to be dictated to.

You will be pleased that the SCS was built from the bottom up with each City selecting GHG strategies that work for their individual community. The Gateway SCS includes the many regional, subregional and local projects that the Gateway Cities COG and our communities have been pursuing over the last decade. The results are that the Gateway SCS complies with SB-375 and the CARB targets with a single alternative.

There is an intangible product from the Subregional SCS – one that is hard to measure, but exists. The SCS is important for it is collection of the various programs that each of our 26 communities is implementing and plan to implement. City staff was able share these programs with each community in the sub-region and each community that participated in the planning process was able to gain information on the relative success of local programs to reduce GHG. This communication is a major benefit.

I believe that our SCS will provide tangible benefits. It will be our roadmap for the Gateway Cities to insist that our Measure R projects receive full funding. It will be our roadmap to insure that our Region receives its fair share of housing in the upcoming RHENA process. Our SCS will assist us in applying for additional State and Federal funding for a range of programs that promote sustainable communities, including transportation projects, intersection improvements, bikelanes, pedestrian and trail improvements, utility infrastructure development, environmental clean-up and other programs necessary for sustainable communities.

Let me now turn over the presentation to Nancy, who will walk us through the SCS development process and the results of the draft SCS.