



For Immediate Release

April 13, 2011

SOUTHEAST AREA CITIES TO ADOPT PLAN TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GASES

Twenty-six cities in southeastern Los Angeles County, located in the area called the Gateway Cities, are working together to develop an unprecedented plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks by changing land use and transportation patterns. The plan, called a Sustainable Communities Strategy or SCS, is a new requirement of state law adopted in 2008 known as SB 375.

The Gateway Cities SCS is under development and is expected to be finalized in June. The plan compiles city, county, and regional strategies in three categories. The first category, transportation projects, includes bicycle and pedestrian improvements, such as separated bike lanes, intersection improvements, and traffic signal synchronization, among many others that will help reduce auto usage and emissions. For example, in 2009 the City of Bellflower reclaimed a bike and pedestrian path from an unused rail right-of-way.

The second category, land use changes, involves denser development near existing or planned transit stations. Examples can be seen on Long Beach Boulevard in Long Beach, along the Metro Blue Line.

The third category is known to planners as TDM, or travel demand management. This refers to programs like shortened work weeks and employer-sponsored ride sharing, which enable commuters to use their personal cars less often while still getting to and from work. The City of Commerce, for one, makes extensive use of this strategy.

The projects and strategies comprising the Gateway Cities SCS are expected to be implemented by one of two target years: 2020, or 2035. The California Air Resources Board has set regional emission reduction targets for each of these years. The targets must be collectively met by six Southern California counties that comprise the Southern California Association of Governments, or SCAG.

The Gateway Cities make up the area of Los Angeles County generally bordered by the City of Los Angeles on the west, Orange County on the east, and the Pomona (SR-60) Freeway on the north, and extending south to the cities of Long Beach and Avalon. The entire Gateway Cities region is home to about 2 million residents. The cities' collaboration dates back to their joint establishment of a regional authority, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (or COG) in the mid-1990's.

With SB 375, the Gateway Cities had a choice: to prepare their own plan, or allow the regional authority, SCAG, to prepare it on their behalf. According to Gil Hurtado, President of the COG's Board of Directors and Council Member from the City of South Gate, "The Gateway Cities have a long history of working together to address our unique situation: high density, built-out cities, and very diverse residents. The Gateway Cities wanted to create our own vision of a cleaner, lower-emissions future."

According to SCAG Executive Director Hasan Ikhata, "As a regional partner, SCAG is pleased that Gateway Cities is undertaking its own SCS. Their ability to work directly with their member jurisdictions will ensure an inclusive, bottoms-up approach. We look forward to including the Gateway Cities' strategies as a key component of a successful Regional SCS."

To learn more about the Gateway Cities SCS, please visit the COG web site at www.gatewaycog.org/sb375.html. Additionally, four public information sessions about the SCS will be offered in late April and early May at various locations around the Gateway Cities as follows:

- Tuesday, April 26: Cerritos – Cerritos Library, Skyline Room, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 3: Long Beach – Mark Twain Library, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
- Monday, May 9: Pico Rivera – Golf Course - Banquet Room, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
- Thursday, May 12: Commerce – Senior Center, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

The Gateway Cities Council of Governments is a California joint powers authority made up of twenty-seven cities and the County of Los Angeles, formed for the purpose of providing a vehicle for the members to voluntarily engage in regional and cooperative planning and coordination of government services for the collective benefit of the residents of Southeast Los Angeles County. The goal and intent of the COG is one of voluntary cooperation among cities and the County in the areas of transportation, air quality, housing, and economic development. For further information, please contact Richard Powers, Executive Director, 562-663-6850 or richardpowers@gatewaycog.org.

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