ADVANCING SOCIAL EQUITY IN REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

I. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this project is to promote the state goal of social equity in the integrated regional plans that address transportation, land use, and housing patterns. This project will advance our understanding of the social equity impacts of transit-oriented development in California and will identify strategies to minimize displacement as a result of transit investment. The results of this project will be useful to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in advancing the equity performance analyses of their Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). It will also provide local and regional governments in California with information to help them evaluate and advance the adoption of land use strategies and other approaches to minimize displacement. The results of this project will contribute to ensuring low-income communities also share in the benefits of transit-oriented development.

II. BACKGROUND

SB 375 requires MPOs in California to develop a SCS that demonstrates how they will meet regional greenhouse gas reduction targets set by ARB. Transit-oriented development is one of the strategies being adopted by regions as they work toward SB 375 goals. For instance, the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) recently adopted 2012-2035 RTP/SCS assumes that 51 percent of new housing developed between 2008 and 2035 will be within High Quality Transit Areas. Similarly, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments' (SACOG) 2012-2035 MTP/SCS assumes that 38 percent of new dwellings in their region will be in Transit Priority Areas by 2035.

While transit-oriented development is seen as a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve other health co-benefits, there remains concern that improving transit services and concentrating growth around transit services may have unintended social equity impacts, including the direct and indirect displacement of current low-income residents. Introducing or improving transit services and increasing development investment in existing neighborhoods may increase the desirability of the area, raising rent and housing prices, placing additional financial pressure on current residents or forcing current residents to relocate to more affordable areas.

In response to these concerns, two MPOs attempt to explore issues of displacement in their RTP/SCS. SCAG developed a methodology to track demographic changes over time in those areas designated as key growth areas; however, this method does not estimate potential impacts of their plans and cannot assess the potential displacement impacts of the land use scenarios they consider. The Bay Area analyzed risk of displacement among the five scenarios they were considering by identifying areas with a high percentage of financially strained renters and high percentage of projected growth. Neither of these methods takes into account the type

and magnitude of transit and development investment nor do they address market conditions and other complex factors.

To adequately address the potential adverse effects of future sustainable communities strategies on social equity, a stronger understanding of the potential for displacement, including the ability to quantify the potential magnitude of displacement, and the identification and evaluation of solutions is needed.

To address this need, this project will advance our understanding of the relationship between transit-oriented development and displacement; analyze the extent and magnitude of this relationship; create an off-model displacement assessment methodology to inform the planning process; and identify solutions that can be employed in California to reduce the potential adverse displacement effects. The project will result in information and a displacement assessment methodology that can be used by MPOs to supplement their analysis of the equity impacts of their regional plan and Sustainable Communities Strategies. The methodology may also be included in other impact assessment models employed by regionals and local governments (RapidFire, Urban Footprint, etc.). The project will help ARB minimize potential negative social equity impacts of implementing sustainable communities strategies.

III. Scope of Work

Building upon the state of the science conducted on transit-oriented development and displacement, this project will determine the extent and magnitude of the relationship between transit-investment, neighborhood characteristics, property and rent values, and displacement in California. This information will then be used to develop a method to assess the potential for displacement due to planned transit investment. Finally, real-world strategies to minimizing this displacement will be identified.

- Review the literature to identify operational definitions and measures of displacement and gentrification as well as to identify indicators of neighborhood vulnerability to displacement. The literature review should also explore the relationship between transit-oriented development and displacement, including a review of studies attempting to quantify impacts of transit investment and land use policies on property and housing values and direct and indirect displacement;
- Analyze the extent and magnitude of neighborhood change due to transit-oriented development in California. This analysis will take into account impacts of transportation investment of differing type and magnitude. It will also, to the extent possible, take into account other influencing factors, like market dynamics.
- Develop off-modeling methods for analyzing potential displacement impacts of scenarios and final RTP/SCS. Taking into account data availability, geographic scale, and data limitations, this displacement assessment methodology should look at neighborhood indicators of displacement, and link public investment type and magnitude to predict level of neighborhood change. To the extent possible, the method

should capture/account for market pressures. If possible, this methodology should be created for easy uptake into employed visioning and impact assessment tools;
- Explore the benefits, barriers, and magnitude of impact of land use, transportation, and/or housing strategies to minimize displacement from transit-oriented development investment. This can be done through a set of case studies within or applicable to California, or can take another form to be determined in consultation with ARB.

IV. Deliverables

- Quarterly progress reports
- Final report
- Additional deliverables to be determined in consultation with ARB

V. Timeline

It is anticipated that projects will be completed in 24 months from the start date. Note that this allows 18 months for completion of all work through delivery of a draft final report; the last 6 months are for ARB and RSC review of the draft final report and delivery of a revised final report and data files to the ARB.