



Top left, courtesy of Calthorpe Associates; other photos from San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

Vibrant communities in San Diego offer pedestrian-friendly streets, mixed-use development, multi-family housing, and easily accessible biking and transit options.

## Communities Tackle Global Warming: A Guide to California's SB 375 (Steinberg, 2008)

California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, or SB 375, is the nation's first legislation to link transportation and land use planning with global warming.<sup>1</sup> SB 375 is an important step toward a cleaner, healthier, and more prosperous California. This groundbreaking measure shows us that where we live and how we get to work, go about our daily business, and take our kids to school matters a great deal in the fight against climate change. In fact, household transportation in California is the single-largest and the fastest-growing source of global warming pollution in the state. Locating housing closer to jobs and transportation choices and creating walkable communities can reduce commute times and cut millions of tons of global warming pollution, while improving quality of life.

### SB 375 Creates Livable, Climate-Friendly Neighborhoods

The bill is intended to foster development patterns that will reduce the need to drive. California households could reduce their transportation-related climate pollution by 30 percent or more from reduced fuel use alone if development patterns between now and 2020, both inside and outside the urban core, were more efficient.<sup>2</sup> This means additional compact single-family detached housing, apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and new developments that are served by good, reliable transit.

Successful implementation of SB 375 can also produce many benefits beyond reducing greenhouse gas pollution:

- **Taxpayer savings:** the costs of infrastructure to support our urbanized areas can be lowered, potentially saving taxpayers \$16 billion in the Sacramento region and \$48 billion in the Southern California region.<sup>3</sup>
- **Household savings:** reductions in fuel, infrastructure, energy, and water costs could save the average family three or four thousand dollars per year.<sup>4</sup> The average cost to own, maintain, and operate a private auto is \$8,670 per year; households that can reduce their need to drive can realize substantial savings.<sup>5</sup>
- **Reduced air pollution:** 50 percent of air pollution comes from car exhaust.<sup>6</sup> Compact development could reduce air pollution by 84,000 tons per year.<sup>7</sup>

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Read the full report about SB 375 online at [www.nrdc.org/globalwarming/sb375](http://www.nrdc.org/globalwarming/sb375)



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### Residents Want Smarter Communities

- 71 percent are very concerned about the impact of development on climate pollution.
- 83 percent support “building communities where people can walk places and use their cars less.”
- 88 percent support more public transportation.

Source: 2007 poll by the National Association of Realtors

*“Most of the serious work on climate change has occurred in the states, and no state has worked harder than California.”*

*New York Times* editorial, October 7, 2008

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- **National security:** cars and trucks currently account for 70 percent of petroleum consumption in California. Better land use patterns can conserve 1 billion gallons of petroleum per year by 2020.<sup>8</sup>
- **Water conservation:** compact development patterns can reduce water consumption by up to 20 percent. Saving water also reduces greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>9</sup>
- **Farmland and habitat protection:** SB 375 could save more than 1500 square miles of land from development by 2020.<sup>10</sup>
- **Quality of life improvements:** SB 375 can reduce commute times while increasing overall mobility. And compact development patterns better reflect changing demographics and create more of a mix of housing choices than currently provided.
- **Improved public health:** walkable communities improve residents' physical fitness and reduce obesity.

### SB 375 Offers a Path to Sustainable Prosperity

Left unchecked, global warming will have a serious effect on our health, our economy, and our communities. In California, SB 375 holds the promise of a more sustainable prosperity. By creating more livable communities and more transportation choices, SB 375 can reduce the miles we travel in our cars—one of the largest sources of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming.



Emeryville Marketplace is the first LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) platinum certified development in California. LEED-ND certification is independent verification that buildings and developers meet high levels of environmentally responsible, sustainable development. LEED-ND is a collaboration among the U.S. Green Building Council, the Congress for the New Urbanism, and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Realizing the promise of SB 375 through successful implementation and incentives will once again make California a model for reducing global warming pollution throughout the nation. SB 375 relies primarily on process and incentives rather than mandates, with the expectation that in the complex, controversial universe of land use and transportation planning, process and incentives will produce faster and more enduring outcomes than mandates. Changes in political leadership, market demand, and public opinion will fill the sails of the process—that is the promise of SB 375.

<sup>1</sup> The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act is authored by California Senate Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg and cosponsored by the California League of Conservation Voters (CLCV) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). It was signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger September 30, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Ewing, R., Bartholomew, K., Winkelman, S., Walters, J. and Chen, D, 2009, “Growing Cooler, The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change,” Urban Land Institute.

<sup>3</sup> Sacramento Area Council of Governments. <http://www.sacregionblueprint.org>, Southern California Council of Governments. <http://www.scag.ca.gov>.

<sup>4,7,8,10</sup> Modeling performed by Calthorpe Associates, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.apta.com/media/releases/090408\\_transit\\_report.cfm](http://www.apta.com/media/releases/090408_transit_report.cfm).

<sup>6</sup> California Air Resources Board: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/zevprog/factsheets/driveclean.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/growing\\_water\\_use\\_efficiency.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/growing_water_use_efficiency.pdf).

