



Smart Growth Is Healthy Growth

Join physicians, nurses and respiratory therapists in the fight against air pollution, climate change and chronic illness through smart growth.

Communities designed around cars and driving are responsible for traffic pollution and congestion, contribute to global warming, and limit opportunities for healthy, active lifestyles. According to the American Lung Association *State of the Air Report 2011*, California is home to some of the nation's most polluted cities and counties, and vehicle emissions represent the largest source — about 40 percent — of greenhouse gas emissions. As California's population expands, we must design our communities to reduce driving and encourage greater use of public transit, walking and cycling.



Health Impacts Associated with Car-Oriented Land Use Planning

Air Pollution, Lack of Active Transportation Choices

- Increased risk of respiratory disease (asthma attacks, respiratory infections, reduced lung function in children)
- Increased risk of heart disease (heart attacks, stroke)
- Increased rates of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure
- Increased risk for cancer and premature death
- Inequitable access to nutritious foods, medical care, good jobs and housing
- Traffic injuries and deaths to motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists



SB 375: An Opportunity for Healthy, Sustainable Communities

As part of California's landmark climate change and smart growth bill, SB 375 (Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act), California communities can benefit greatly by embracing and aggressively pursuing their region's greenhouse gas reduction targets. Some of these benefits include:

Smart Growth = Healthier Residents

Improved Public Health

Sustainable, mixed-use communities designed around mass transit, walking and cycling have been shown to reduce lung and heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and other chronic health conditions. Research has found that individuals who live in more walkable communities have a 35 percent lower risk of obesity.ⁱ A recent study of transportation in London found that increasing active transportation along with cleaner vehicles could avoid thousands of premature deaths and provide significant chronic illness benefits, including up to a 19 percent reduction in heart disease, and a 13 percent reduction in breast cancer cases in 2030 compared to a business as usual case.ⁱⁱ



Reduced Deaths from Air Pollution

By reducing driving, we also reduce air pollution and the substantial health damages associated with it. The California Air Resources Board currently estimates that over 9,200 Californians die prematurely each year due to air pollution.ⁱⁱⁱ

Smart Growth = Cost Savings

Reduced Health Costs

Failing to meet federal air quality standards in California led to 33,000 hospital admissions and emergency room visits, and cost the state \$193 million over a three-year period (2005-07), according to a 2010 RAND study.^{iv}

Reduced Costs for Households

More compact and transit-oriented communities can help households save on car-related expenses, and reductions in fuel, auto maintenance and insurance costs could save the average family \$3,000 to \$4,000 per year.^v

Reduced Infrastructure Costs

Caltrans estimates that compact, transit-oriented developments can help reduce overall infrastructure development, expansion and maintenance costs for local governments by up to 25 percent.^{vi}

For Additional Resources:

ⁱ Frank, L.D., Andresen, M.A., & Schmid, T.L. "Obesity relationships with community design, physical activity, and time spent in cars." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 27. (2004).

ⁱⁱ Woodcock J, Edwards P, Tonne C, Armstrong BG, Ashiru O, Banister D, et al. Public health benefits of strategies to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions: urban land transport. *The Lancet* 2009;374:1930-1943.

ⁱⁱⁱ California Air Resources Board, *Estimate of Premature Deaths Associated with Fine Particle Pollution (PM2.5) in California Using a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Methodology* August, 2010

^{iv} Romley JA, Hackbarth A, and Goldman, DP. *The Impact of Air Quality On Hospital Spending*, Santa Monica, CA. http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR777

^v California Department of Transportation, Business Transportation and Housing Agency. *Statewide Transit-Oriented Development Study -- Factors for Success in California; Final Report*, 2002. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/TOD/sw-study-final-report-Sept2002.pdf>

^{vi} Ibid

For more information, visit www.lungusa.org/california

1-800-LUNG-USA

ACT NOW—How Local Leaders Can Improve Community Health

In consultation with California’s Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), the California Air Resources Board (CARB) established regional greenhouse gas reduction targets in September 2010. While all have different schedules, your regional MPO is working now to coordinate SB 375 implementation among local cities and counties through the development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) to meet your region’s target.



Strategies that support health and social equity are a win-win for every community. They not only provide increased opportunities for physical activity, cleaner air and reduced asthma attacks and chronic illness, but they also increase transit choices for residents and make good fiscal sense for communities. Healthy growth strategies are cost-effective because they make better use of existing infrastructure and match the high level of public demand for more compact, affordable housing close to jobs.

How You Can Help

- ✓ Work with the American Lung Association in California to promote planning that will reduce driving and increase walking and biking.
- ✓ Become an advocate at your regional MPO for plans and strategies that support compact, complete and healthy communities.
- ✓ Support the inclusion of strong, measurable health and equity indicators in your regional planning process.

“Our growth in vehicle miles traveled is far outstripping our efforts to reduce either GHG or air pollution. We are not going to get where we need to go unless we get people out of their cars, and there are a lot of health benefits to doing that.”

Linda Rudolph, MD, MPH, Director,
Dept. of Chronic Disease Prevention,
CA Department of Public Health

The Public Health Community Supports Smart Growth

California's public health community is deeply concerned about the effects of poor land use and transportation decisions on individual and community health. SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategies, if they evaluate and maximize positive health-based outcomes, provide local governments with a transformative opportunity to reduce unhealthy vehicle emissions while promoting healthier, more active and equitable neighborhoods with reduced rates of chronic illnesses and premature death.



Excerpt from Public Health Organizations' Letter to the Southern California Association of Governments:

High levels of chronic disease, including diabetes, and asthma, are straining public and private resources and undermining quality of life across all regions of California. Evidence clearly demonstrates that environmental and behavioral factors have the greatest impact on health outcomes. One of most important opportunities for creating environments that support health is through careful transportation and land-use planning.Transportation systems impact health in many ways, for example through impacts on injuries and fatalities, environmental quality (e.g., air quality and noise), physical activity, and economic opportunity. These impacts are typically not distributed evenly across all populations, with lower income populations and communities of color often facing worse impacts for a variety of reasons.

We look forward to partnering with SCAG ... to ensure that the Sustainable Communities Strategy process beneficially impacts the health of residents of Southern California, particularly those whose health status is the most vulnerable.



For more information, please contact the American Lung Association in California:
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