



Notice of Preparation for an Environmental Impact Report

**2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
2045 Regional Transportation Plans for San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties**

Notice is hereby given that the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) will be the lead agency in partnership with the Council of San Benito County Governments (SBtCOG), the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC), and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), who are responsible agencies, for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). SBtCOG, SCCRTC, and TAMC are the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) for San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties, respectively. Each RTPA prepares a county-level long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that is consistent with the AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS.

Pursuant to section 15082 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), AMBAG is soliciting your views on the scope and contents of the 2045 MTP/SCS EIR. The Draft EIR will be a Program EIR. A Program EIR is an EIR that may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and acts as the first tier of environmental review. The EIR will serve as the Program EIR for the AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS and as the Program EIR for the RTPs prepared by the RTPAs for San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties.

The project description, location, environmental review requirements, and probable environmental effects to be addressed in the EIR are discussed below. An Initial Study is not attached and is not required, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d).

The 2045 MTP/SCS will guide the development of the Regional and Federal Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIP and FTIP) as well as other transportation programming documents and plans throughout San Benito, Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. The 2045 MTP/SCS outlines the region's goals and policies for meeting current and future mobility needs and identifies programs, actions, and a plan of projects intended to address these needs consistent with adopted goals and policies. The Regional Transportation Plans for the counties of San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey are developed for each of the counties to provide a sound basis for the allocation of state and federal transportation funds to transportation projects within each county for a long-range timeframe. The Regional Transportation Plans address major forms of transportation, and include the priorities and actions embodied in the plans prepared by each of the county's cities and unincorporated areas.

The SCS component of the MTP/SCS is required by California Senate Bill 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375). SB 375 mandates regional greenhouse gas reduction targets for passenger vehicles and, pursuant to that law, the California Air Resources Board has established 2020 and 2035 greenhouse gas reduction targets for each region covered by one of the state's metropolitan planning

organizations (MPOs). AMBAG is required to prepare an SCS that demonstrates how its greenhouse gas reduction targets could feasibly be met through integrated land use, housing, and transportation planning.

Mail comments on the EIR scope and contents to Heather Adamson at AMBAG, 24580 Silver Cloud Court, Monterey, California 93940 or e-mail comments to hadamson@ambag.org no later than **February 14, 2020**.

For more information, visit www.ambag.org or call (831) 883-3750.

AMBAG will host a series of EIR Scoping Meetings/Public Workshops. The purpose of the meetings is to solicit input on the scope and content of the environmental analysis that will be included in the Draft EIR, to inform the public of the 2045 MTP/SCS, as well as solicit public input on the 2045 MTP/SCS. The date, time and location of the meetings are as follows:

- **In Santa Cruz on January 22, 2020** from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM at the Live Oak Community Room - Simpkins Center - 979 17th Ave, Santa Cruz, CA
- **In Hollister on January 23, 2020** from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM at the San Benito County Board of Supervisors Chambers - 481 4th Street, Hollister, CA
- **In Monterey on January 29, 2020** from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM at the Marina Library Community Room - 190 Seaside Circle, Marina, CA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Project Title

AMBAG 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, SBtCOG 2045 Regional Transportation Plan, SCCRTC 2045 Regional Transportation Plan and TAMC 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

Project Location

The geographical extent of the proposed 2045 MTP/SCS includes San Benito, Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, and all incorporated cities and unincorporated areas contained therein. The geographical extent for each RTPA's Regional Transportation Plan is the boundary for each respective county, including its incorporated and unincorporated areas. See location map at the end of this NOP.

Project Description

As the MPO for the tri-county region of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties, AMBAG is charged with developing a 2045 MTP/SCS. The 2045 MTP/SCS is the metropolitan long-range transportation plan for Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties. SBtCOG, SCCRTC, and TAMC are the state-designated RTPAs for San Benito, Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, respectively. Each RTPA prepares a county-level long-range RTP, which will be evaluated in this EIR. The 2045 MTP/SCS is used to guide the development of the Regional and Federal Transportation Improvement Programs, as

well as other transportation programming documents and plans. The MTP outlines the region's goals and policies for meeting current and future mobility needs, providing a foundation for transportation decisions by local, regional, and State officials that are ultimately aimed at achieving a coordinated and balanced transportation system. The 2045 MTP/SCS sets forth actions, programs, and projects to address these needs consistent with adopted policies and goals. The 2045 MTP/SCS also documents the financial resources needed to implement the plan.

The EIR will serve as the Program EIR for the AMBAG 2045 MTP/SCS as well as the Program EIR for the RTPs prepared by the RTPAs for San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties.

The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375, Steinberg) enhances California's ability to reach its greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals by promoting coordinated planning with the goal of creating more sustainable communities. SB 375 mandates regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for passenger vehicles. Pursuant to SB 375, the California Air Resources Board established targets for 2020 and 2035 for each region covered by one of the State's 18 MPOs. AMBAG, as the regional MPO, must prepare a SCS that demonstrates how the region will meet its greenhouse gas reduction target through integrated land use, housing, and transportation planning.

AMBAG is currently preparing the 2045 MTP/SCS for the region. The 2045 MTP/SCS EIR will analyze the plan's impacts on the physical environment and identify measures to avoid or mitigate significant environmental effects. It also will be an informational document intended to inform public decisionmakers, responsible or interested agencies, and the general public of the potential environmental effects of a project.

If the targets established by the California Air Resources Board cannot be feasibly met, an Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) would be prepared by AMBAG to show how the targets would be achieved through alternative development patterns, infrastructure, or additional transportation measures or policies.

The transportation component of the MTP/SCS will include road and transit networks, non-motorized transportation, and transportation strategies and policies. Furthermore, SB 375 requires that the SCS identify general land uses, residential densities, and building intensities as well as areas to house future residents, including housing to accommodate the eight-year Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) (see California Government Code Section 65080(b)(2)(B) for the full list of SB 375 requirements for the MTP/SCS). The RHNA must be consistent with the SCS.

The RTPs for the counties of San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey are developed for each of the counties to provide a sound basis for the allocation of state and federal transportation funds to transportation projects within each county over a long-range timeframe through 2045. The RTPs address all forms of transportation, and include the priorities and actions embodied in the plans prepared by each of the county's cities and unincorporated areas. The RTPs follow guidelines established by the State of California's Transportation Commission (CTC) to describe the transportation issues and needs facing

each county; identify goals and policies for how each county will meet its needs; identify the amount of money that will be available for needed projects; and include a list of prioritized transportation projects to serve each county's long-term needs within the projected "budget" of transportation revenues with consideration towards environmental impacts, land use, and special transportation needs.

Impacts to Be Addressed in the EIR

AMBAG, with input from the RTPAs for San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties, is currently reviewing SCS scenarios to assess how future land use and transportation changes could achieve a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system while reducing greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles and light trucks to meet the regional greenhouse gas reduction targets set by CARB. Following public review and input, the AMBAG Board of Directors will select a preferred SCS scenario. The EIR will evaluate the environmental effects of the preferred SCS scenario in detail.

The 2045 MTP/SCS EIR will analyze the potential for significant environmental effects for the following resource topics:

- Aesthetics/Visual Resources
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality and Health Impacts/Risks
- Biological Resources
- Climate Change/Greenhouse Gases
- Cultural and Historic Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Wildfire

The EIR also will also address cumulative impacts and growth inducing impacts.

Preliminary MTP/SCS Project Alternatives Scenarios

The EIR also will evaluate the environmental impacts of alternative scenarios. The analysis of alternatives will focus on various land use and transportation scenarios that make different assumptions regarding the combinations of future land uses and transportation system improvements. The following preliminary MTP/SCS project alternatives may be addressed in the EIR:

- **No Project Alternative** – The No Project Alternative is required by CEQA. For this EIR, the No Project Alternative is defined as a land use base comprised of existing land use


plans and a transportation network comprised of committed transportation projects.

- **Active Transportation Mode and Transit Prioritized Alternative** – The Active Transportation Mode and Transit Prioritized Alternative would prioritize active transportation projects (e.g., bike lanes, pedestrian improvements) and public transit projects (e.g., bus stops, bus lanes) over projects that would improve or add to the road system that primarily serves personal motor vehicles. Thus, this alternative would encourage more active transportation and transit use in the region at an earlier date.
- **Intensified Land Use Alternative** – The Intensified Land Use Distribution Alternative will analyze a more compact land use pattern that further concentrates the forecasted population and employment growth in areas identified for more intensified use.

2045 MTP/SCS Location Map



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 Project Location
(County Boundaries)

