

Date: January 13, 2022
Subject: Notice of Preparation
To: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties
From : Sara Sanders, Transportation Planner
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)
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Project Title: SLOCOG 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP-SCS)

Project Proponent: SLOCOG

Responses Due By: 5:00 p.m. on February 16, 2022

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) will be the lead agency for the environmental review of the *2023 Regional Transportation Plan* and associated *Sustainable Communities Strategy* (RTP-SCS). SLOCOG prepared and certified a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the 2019 RTP-SCS (slocog.org/2019RTP). The environmental document for the proposed 2023 RTP-SCS has not yet been determined but may be an Addendum or a Supplement to the 2023 PEIR, or a subsequent PEIR, depending on the extent of proposed changes. We request your agency's perspective on the scope and content of the environmental information relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities and how they relate to the proposed project.

Due to the time constraints mandated by state law, **please provide us the following information at your earliest convenience, but not later than 5:00 p.m. on February 16, 2022:**

NAME OF CONTACT PERSON. Please also include the contact's business address, e-mail address, and telephone number.

PERMIT(S) or APPROVAL(S) AUTHORITY. Please provide a summary description and send a copy of the relevant sections of legislation, regulatory guidance, etc.

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION. What environmental information must be addressed in this environmental document to enable your agency to use it as a basis for your permit issuance or approval? Is the information summarized in the attached Project Description sufficient to address your concerns?

PERMIT STIPULATIONS/CONDITIONS. Please provide a list and description of standard conditions that your agency will apply to features of this project. Are there other conditions that have a high likelihood of application to a permit or approval for this project? If so, please list and describe. Are the conditions in the attached Project Description sufficient to address your concerns?

ALTERNATIVES. What alternatives does your agency recommend for analysis in the environmental document?

REASONABLY FORESEEABLE PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, or PLANS. Please name any future projects, programs, or plans that may have an overlapping influence with the RTP-SCS as proposed.

RELEVANT INFORMATION. Please provide references for any available, appropriate documentation that may be useful to SLOCOG in preparing this environmental document. Reference to and/or inclusion of such documents in an electronic format would be appreciated.

FURTHER COMMENTS. Please provide comments and/or information that will help SLOCOG evaluate the environmental document and determine the appropriate level of assessment.

Information on the project is available on SLOCOG's project webpage: slocog.org/2023RTP. A detailed project description, location map, and summary of probable environmental effects are below.

Additionally, **SLOCOG will hold a scoping meeting on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, at 5:30PM via Zoom.** Advance registration is required. Please register for the meeting at: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mUYb3q_4TEiTAj7AEbL_Gg.

Please send your response to Sara Sanders at ssanders@slocog.org and include the name and contact details for the appropriate contact at your agency.

1-13-22
Date


Sara Sanders
Title: SLOCOG Transportation Planner
Phone: (805) 597-8052

Notice of Preparation

SLOCOG 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP-SCS)

Project Location

The RTP-SCS project location includes the corporate limits of San Luis Obispo County, California, including the seven (7) incorporated cities of Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo, and all unincorporated areas under the jurisdiction of the County of San Luis Obispo. (Reference the map on page 5 of San Luis Obispo County identifying the area to be addressed by the environmental document and RTP-SCS.)

Capital improvement projects identified in the RTP-SCS are primarily located on or within:

- Public highways, streets, and roads
- Publicly owned land proposed for bicycle-pedestrian projects, park-and-ride lots, or other transportation facilities
- Land with recorded easements or other public right-of-way instruments sufficient to provide clear title for the construction, maintenance, and operation of transportation facilities open to the traveling public
- Transit agency property
- Airport property
- Port district property
- Railroad corridors

Certain projects, programs, or services included or referenced in the RTP-SCS may extend beyond the San Luis Obispo County corporate limits. For example, SLOCOG, its member agencies, and other stakeholders sometimes work cooperatively with MPOs, agencies, or stakeholders from other regions to address intercounty or interregional transportation needs.

Draft Project Description

The proposed project is the update of SLOCOG's RTP-SCS, which was adopted in June 2019. The RTP-SCS is the long-range transportation plan for San Luis Obispo County and is being updated in accordance with California Government Code Section 65080 et seq., Part 450 of Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR 450), and the California Transportation Commission's *2017 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines for Metropolitan Planning Organizations*.

This long-range plan aims to achieve a coordinated, balanced, and multimodal regional transportation system that speaks to improvements and investments in all modes, which include but are not limited to pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, highway, rail, maritime and harbors, goods movement, and aviation. The RTP must be action-oriented, fiscally constrained, and pragmatic, considering both short-term (FY 2023/24-2028/29), mid-term (FY 2029/30-2035/36), and long-term (FY 2036/37-2045/46) periods.

The RTP must be an internally consistent document that includes the following elements:

- **Policy Element** – describes the goals and policies that inform regional transportation planning, programming, and prioritization of projects, programs, and services. The Policy Element informs the Action Element.
- **Financial Element** – determines how much money is likely to be available to maintain, operate, and improve the region’s transportation system over a 20+ year period.
- **Action Element** – describes the multimodal investment program of transportation projects, programs, and services that address the region’s transportation needs. The Action Element is subject to the funding limits outlined by the Financial Element, resulting in a fiscally-constrained list of projects. The Action Element may also include a list of projects that are determined to fulfill a need but are not expected to be fundable within the 20+ year timeframe of the RTP. This is labeled as an unconstrained list. Projects on this list may be funded if extraordinary revenue sources become available, such as the receipt of certain competitive federal or state grants, augmentation of federal or state formula funding, or approval of a regional transportation impact fee program. The Action Element will identify priority corridors, placing an emphasis on the balance of jobs and housing as well as connecting communities.
- **Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)** – detailed below.

Pursuant to SB 375 (2008), the *Sustainable Communities Strategy* (SCS) is an integral part of the *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP). The SCS must identify areas within the region sufficient to house all the population of the region, including all economic segments of the population, over the course of the planning period of the RTP, considering net migration into the region, population growth, household formation, and employment growth. The SCS identifies a “forecasted development pattern” for the region, which is informed by the inventory of existing land use throughout the region, along with the identification of sites where future development can be located, while still reducing vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The law establishes an approach to ensure that cities, counties, and the public are involved in the development of regional plans to achieve targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) for reducing GHG emissions. The SCS must also be consistent with the general plans of the region’s jurisdictions.

Because the SCS is a required element of the RTP, the terms “RTP-SCS” and “RTP” should be considered interchangeable for the purpose of this notice.

The transportation projects, strategies, and services recommended by the RTP-SCS must address factors relating to:

- Safety
- Security
- Passenger and Freight Accessibility
- Environmental Protection
- Energy Conservation
- Improved Quality of Life
- Consistency between Transportation Improvements and Planned Growth and Economic Development
- Connectivity and Integration of Various Transportation Modes
- Transportation System Management
- Economic Vitality and Tourism
- Transportation System Preservation and Resiliency

These factors must be addressed for both non-motorized and motorized modes of transportation.

Scope of Environmental Review

SLOCOG prepared a PEIR for the [2019 RTP-SCS](https://slocog.org/2019RTP) (slocog.org/2019RTP). The environmental document for the proposed 2023 RTP-SCS may be an Addendum or Supplement to the 2019 PEIR or a subsequent PEIR.

This environmental document will be prepared in compliance with the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA), as amended. In general, the purpose of this document is to: analyze the potential environmental effects of the proposed 2023 RTP-SCS; inform decisionmakers, responsible agencies, and members of the public of potential environmental impacts that enactment of the RTP-SCS may bring to fruition; recommend a set of measures to mitigate negative impacts deemed significant; and analyze several alternatives to the proposed RTP-SCS. The draft environmental document will be distributed for a 30-day public review period, at minimum.

Potential Environmental Impacts

The potential impact categories listed below have been preliminarily identified for 2023 RTP-SCS analysis:

- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Energy and Energy Conservation
- Environmental Justice
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Resources
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population, Housing, and Employment
- Public Services
- Social and Economic Impacts
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems

Draft Project Alternatives

Below is a summary of SLOCOG's approach to developing preliminary alternatives, or scenarios, that will be analyzed and included within the Plan. The scenarios are based on specific assumptions, such as the location and type of residential and employment growth in the region, and the assumed transportation projects to be built over the RTP-SCS planning period. The RTP-SCS and EIR processes allow opportunities for the public; local elected and appointed officials; private, public, and nonprofit organizations; and other stakeholders to inform these assumptions with their input. The assumptions are also influenced by the requirement that MPOs have targets set by CARB.

It is important to note that these alternatives will continue to be reviewed and refined before a draft environmental document is issued.

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative

The No Project Alternative, required by CEQA, addresses the effect of not preparing the 2023 RTP-SCS. This alternative would be in conflict with federal and state requirements to periodically update the RTP-SCS and would result in the ineligibility of the region to receive federal and state funding and expose the region to litigation for non-compliance with state and federal law.

Build Scenarios

Multiple land use scenarios will be modeled. Scenarios will be informed by the *2050 Regional Growth Forecast* totals for housing, employment, and population, which will vary housing type (e.g. larger lot housing vs. smaller lot housing) and location of new housing and jobs within the region. An intermodal investment strategy will be used to support each scenario; investments may vary based on the scenario.

Map of San Luis Obispo County

