



STAFF REPORT
Board Meeting of July 23, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 5-D

PREPARED BY: Dylan Stone, Principal Regional Planner

SUBJECT:

2026 Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy Development Update

Enclosure: No

Action: Information and Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

As the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), the Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) develops and implements the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)—a 20-year planning document that guides transportation policy, strategies, and funding in the Madera region. Updated every four years, the RTP/SCS is developed by MCTC with consultant support for technical analysis and public outreach.

The RTP/SCS addresses future population growth, housing needs, and regional goals related to the economy, environment, and public health. It promotes the integration of transportation and land use to support fiscally and environmentally responsible growth. The plan also aligns with California's goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). State and federal regulations require regions to adopt an RTP/SCS for transportation projects to qualify for funding. The RTP/SCS must be fiscally constrained, consistent with the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), and comply with Federal Air Quality Conformity regulations.

Outreach Update

In August 2024, MCTC contracted with LSA to support the development of the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), including public outreach and technical analysis. The first task under this contract was to develop a Public Outreach Plan for the RTP/SCS. The key outreach objectives are to:

- Conduct broad outreach across Madera County to identify community priorities and values
- Raise public awareness and understanding of the plan

- Reach every resident multiple times through various channels
- Foster a transparent, inclusive engagement process by partnering with community leaders and stakeholders to champion sustainable transportation

Since then, MCTC has actively engaged with the RTP/SCS Oversight Committee, local agency staff, and the broader community by attending local fairs, festivals, parades, and community group meetings. These efforts have connected MCTC with hundreds of residents across the region.

To further educate the public, MCTC organized a series of in-person and online workshops focused on the RTP/SCS process, including key requirements and the importance of stakeholder input. These sessions featured in-depth discussions on integrating land use and transportation, as well as potential land use scenarios required for the SCS analysis. Additionally, two surveys were distributed: one to identify community transportation priorities and another interactive mapping survey to gather input on preferred housing types across the county.

MCTC has assembled an oversight committee for the plan. Staff have reviewed outreach feedback with the committee and discussed how it will inform the development of the SCS technical analysis, particularly the three distinct land-use planning scenarios required by SB 375:

- 2022 RTP/SCS Preferred Scenario – Updates the previous preferred scenario using the latest planning assumptions (e.g., population growth, transportation project changes, and other non-land use parameters).
- Transit Supportive Development Scenario – Emphasizes regional housing growth with more multi-family units, focused on infill and transit-oriented development near major corridors and the Madera Station/Community College area. It maintains roads, improves SR 99 and SR 41, expands transit services, and treats farmland as a development constraint.
- Affordable Housing Scenario – Prioritizes higher-than-trend multi-family housing in urban cores, community main streets, and the Madera Station/Community College area. It emphasizes walkability, bikeability, and transit access, preserves farmland, and anticipates transit-oriented development in the Madera Station area.

Feedback received and discussions with the oversight committee have helped staff begin developing key components of the RTP/SCS for analysis. Results of these efforts will be shared with the community and stakeholders starting in the fall at events such as the Madera District Fair, Oakhurst Fall Festival, and Chowchilla Classic Car Fest, along with another round of RTP/SCS workshops.

Technical Methodology

As part of the SCS development, MCTC must submit a technical methodology to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) for review and feedback. This methodology outlines the approach for estimating GHG emission reductions from passenger vehicles, in compliance with Senate Bill 375. It includes descriptions of the models, data sources, and assumptions used to forecast land use patterns, transportation networks, travel behavior, and resulting emissions.

Key elements of the methodology include:

- How integrated land use and transportation strategies will be evaluated
- How scenario modeling will be conducted
- How environmental constraints and considerations are addressed
- How model outputs will be validated
- How public input will be incorporated
- How consistency with state guidelines will be ensured

CARB reviews the methodology to ensure it is technically sound and capable of supporting an assessment of whether the SCS will meet regional GHG targets. While CARB does not formally approve the methodology, its feedback helps guide MPOs in developing credible and transparent SCS plans aligned with California's climate goals.

The methodology includes the following components:

- Existing Conditions – Overview of current conditions, including significant changes since the 2022 RTP/SCS
- Demographic Forecasting – Based on the recently adopted Madera County Growth and Development Forecast
- Modeling Approaches – Description of land-use and travel demand models, and integration with CARB's EMFAC emissions model
- Model Assumptions – Input data used to calibrate and validate the base year model and project future scenarios
- GHG Quantification Approaches – Steps to analyze modeling results and independently developed strategies
- Off-model Strategies – GHG reduction strategies not captured by the travel demand model
- Plan-over-Plan Incremental Progress Analysis – Comparison of 2026 SCS results to the 2022 SCS to demonstrate progress toward SB 375 goals
- Other Data Collection Efforts – Potential additional data sources to support SCS development

MCTC staff will continue to coordinate with CARB to address any comments or concerns regarding the technical methodology.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact to the approved 2025-26 Overall Work Program and Budget.