

One Bay Area

[Home](#)
[SPOTLIGHT:
Greenhouse Gas
Targets](#)
[April 22 Summit](#)
[Get Involved](#)
[Upcoming Meetings](#)
[Meeting Archive](#)
[News](#)
[Background](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Links](#)

Spotlight:

Air Resources Board Adopts Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets

On September 23, 2010, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) adopted greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets for regions across California, as mandated by SB 375 (Steinberg), 2008. These targets will now be incorporated into the sustainable communities strategies that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are required to adopt, as part of their next regional transportation plan (RTP).

For the San Francisco Bay Area, the board followed the recommendation adopted by MTC on July 28 — a 7 percent per capita reduction target for 2020 and 15 percent per capita reduction target for 2035, relative to 2005 levels.

Targets for 2020 and 2035 for other regions of the state are as follows:

- San Diego Area: 7 percent and 13 percent
- Sacramento region: 7 percent and 16 percent
- Southern California: 8 percent and 13 percent, with the 2035 target conditioned on further discussions with the Southern California Association of Governments.
- San Joaquin Valley (includes eight planning organizations): a placeholder of 5 percent and 10 percent, to be revisited in 2012.
- Targets for the remaining six metropolitan planning organizations — the Monterey Bay, Butte, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Shasta and Tahoe Basin regions — generally match or improve upon their current RTPs for 2020 and 2035.

Because the targets are based on per capita emissions, rather than *gross* emissions, they still allow for an increase in overall emissions in each region due to population growth.

The Bay Area's target for 2035 will be no small feat, but it is feasible. The region has been working together to find solutions through its [FOCUS program](#). FOCUS is a regional development and conservation strategy that promotes a more compact land use pattern for the Bay Area, and promotes conservation of the region's most significant resource lands. Based on current forecasts which reflect these land use changes and modest improvements to the vehicle fleet, the Bay Area is on track to achieve a 3 percent per capita reduction by 2020 and a 2 percent per capita reduction by 2035. Examples of policy tools that will likely be explored to help reach the 2035 target are road pricing (to make alternatives to driving alone more attractive), travel demand management (such as increased telecommuting and other employer trip reduction programs) and smart driving programs that help drivers maximize fuel efficiency.

Public testimony at the hearing stretched on for almost six hours with speakers roughly balanced between those who supported the proposed targets and those who urged the board to adopt less ambitious targets, such as those proposed by the Southern California Association of Governments and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Prior to the public testimony, ARB Board Member Ken Yeager — who serves as a Santa Clara County Supervisor as well as on MTC and two other regional boards — invited MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger to speak about the targets. Heminger pointed out that the planning process engendered by SB 375 builds on over a decade of efforts in the Bay Area to focus on maintaining our existing transportation infrastructure and improving our public transit system. In addition, while the focus of SB 375 is climate change, the policies that will help achieve the targets will deliver other critical benefits, including improved mobility, social equity and public health.

Before voting to support the targets, the board spent considerable time discussing the need for additional transportation funding to help support the targets, acknowledging the lack of new funding on the horizon from the state or federal government and the need for ARB to take this into account when evaluating each region's sustainable communities strategy.

See also:

- [ARB News Release: California takes the first step toward more livable, sustainable communities](#)
- [MTC Presentation: GHG Target-Setting Impacts \(PDF\)](#)
- [MTC Resolution No. 3970 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Memo: MTC Resolution No. 3970 \(PDF\)](#)

