California’s transportation sector is an integral part of the state’s economy enabling personal mobility and goods movement for millions of people. It also accounts for more than 38% of the state’s greenhouse gas emissions, with around 75% of these emissions coming from passenger autos and trucks. The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, Senate Bill 375 (SB 375) aims to help California reach its AB 32 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions targets by creating incentives for smarter land use and transportation planning with the goal of enabling more sustainable communities. As a result of the law, ARB set GHG targets for 2020 and 2035 for each of the areas covered by the largest 18 MPOs within California and each MPO created a “sustainable communities strategy (SCS)” that demonstrates how the region plans to meet its targets.

SB 375 provides a framework for regional planning agencies to integrate their transportation, land use, and housing plans with performance targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions. Multiple MPOs have now submitted their SCSs to the ARB and are well into the first phase of implementation. For example, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) SCS provides an example of how the Southern California region is guiding regional growth and transportation investments to meet its GHG emissions reductions targets while improving environmental quality, public health and the regional economy. The benefits modeled in the SCAG SCS include:

- Reduction in GHG & VMT/capita of 8% by 2020 and 16% by 2035
- Return on investment of $2.90 per $1 spent including:
  - $6B in Capital Infrastructure and O&M costs savings
  - $4K/acre in increased local revenues
  - $3K/household in avoided transport/energy/water costs (incl. transport)
  - $1.5B/year in avoided health costs
- Twice as many households living next to transit
- Reduced congestion, land-conversion, air pollution and increased safety

These results, if realized, indicate the potential for communities that provide better jobs-housing balance, multiple options for personal travel, and agricultural and natural-land preservation, all at a cost savings compared to business-as-usual. However, multiple questions remain including model accuracy, specific costs and benefits of different strategies, and local implementation challenges - realizing this potential will require a deeper understanding of these issues.
This policy forum series consists of four sessions that will bring together researchers, policy-makers, and stakeholders to discuss and explore the latest relevant research and real-world experience with implementation of SB 375 and related policies. Each forum session will include brief presentations, discussion and opportunity for the attendees to ask questions.

**Sustainable Communities Forum Sessions**

**Session 1: Sustainable Communities 101**  
Wednesday January 22\(^\text{nd}\), 2014  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Session 2: Evaluating Effects and Evidence**  
Wednesday February 5th, 2014  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Session 3: Improving the Models**  
Date TBD

**Session 4: Increasing Implementation Follow-through**  
Date TBD