Session One: Sustainable Communities 101

11:30am-1:30pm
Wednesday January 22nd, 2014

Partners: UC Davis National Center for Sustainable Transportation, and the UC Center Sacramento (UCCS)

Description: The goal of this forum is to set the stage for subsequent policy forums in the Sustainable Communities series. Speakers will address the role of SB 375 and related policies in meeting the state’s climate, environmental quality, public health, economic and community needs. The forum will also provide participants with information regarding the strategies that are being pursued to integrate transportation and land use planning to reduce greenhouse emissions from the transportation sector.

Speaker Bios

Gian-Claudia Sciara (Moderator) is a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute of Transportation Studies at UC Davis. She develops the Urban Land Use and Transportation Center’s institutional portfolio, centered in part on the implementation of California’s pathbreaking law SB375, which makes greenhouse gas reduction a new policy goal for metropolitan transportation planning. Her research addresses the problem of regional institutional capacity at a time when metro regions are celebrated as hubs of economic growth, creativity, and innovation, but also seriously challenged by infrastructure needs, continuing growth, and climate impacts. Dr. Sciara holds a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley; a Master’s Degree from UCLA, and a B.A. from Columbia University. She is an AICP-certified city planner who has served in the private, public and non-profit sectors and is an active member of the Transportation Research Board.

Louise Bedsworth is the Deputy Director of the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR). Prior to being named Deputy Director in 2013, she was a Senior Researcher at OPR. At OPR she has led the development of the Environmental Goals and Policy Report. Before joining OPR in 2011, Dr. Bedsworth was a research fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, where her work focused on climate change adaptation, local government action on climate change, and transportation. She has also held positions at the Union of Concerned Scientists, Redefining Progress, and the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis. She has a B.S. in Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an M.S. in Environmental Engineering and Ph.D. in Energy and Resources, both from the University of California at Berkeley.
Randy Rentschler serves as Director of Legislation and Public Affairs for the San Francisco Bay Area’s Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Bay Area Toll Authority. MTC is recognized across the nation as a premier transportation planning and financing agency. It is Mr. Rentschler’s job to advance the legislative, public outreach and external communications objectives of the 21-member Commission at the local, state and federal levels. Before joining MTC, Randy worked as an investment banker, structuring local government debt. From time to time, he also guest lectures on the subject of public finance or transportation at San Jose State, UC Berkeley, Stanford and the University of San Francisco.

Stuart Cohen is the Executive Director and co-founder of TransForm, an organization that builds powerful, diverse coalitions to promote walkable communities with great transportation choices. TransForm has shaped Bay Area campaigns for transportation funding measures that have brought over $8 billion for public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. From their Sacramento office they work on State Transportation Policy. Stuart was awarded an Ashoka Fellowship in 2010 for TransForm's innovative programs such as GreenTRIP which certifies and promotes model developments that dramatically reduce car trips, excess parking, and climate emissions while promoting more affordable homes. Stuart authored Creating Healthy Regional Transportation Plans. Published in collaboration with the California Department of Public Health, this guide identifies transportation strategies that can reduce greenhouse gases while delivering dramatic health benefits and addressing health disparities. He received a Master's Degree in Public Policy (MPP) from the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley.

Kome Ajise is the Deputy Director for Planning and Modal Programs at Caltrans Headquarters. He began his career with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in 1987 in District 6 (Fresno) and has served in various assignments at both the district and HQ offices. From February 2001, Kome served as the North Region Environmental Division Chief until April 2004 when he was appointed as the District 10 Director in Stockton, California. The eight-county District 10 covers the central Sierras, including four trans-sierra mountain passes, and northern San Joaquin Valley is a goods movement gateway from the valley into the Bay Area and north. Kome has a BS degree in Geography and Regional Planning from the University of Benin, Nigeria, and a Master of City and Regional Planning degree from CSU Fresno.