



FACT SHEET FOR AB 1335 (Zbur)

STRENGTHENING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES' STRATEGIES

AUTHOR: ASSEMBLYMEMBER RICK CHAVEZ ZBUR, ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 51

SPONSOR: ABUNDANT HOUSING LOS ANGELES

SUMMARY

To address the linked crises of housing affordability and climate change, AB 1335 requires local governments to report annually on what actions, if any, they are taking to align their land use regulations with the applicable Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and requires the population change estimates in the SCS to be prepared in a similar manner to those prepared for the Regional Housing Needs Allocation.

BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 375 (2008) established a regional land use planning process, the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), as part of the Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) prepare. The intent of the law is to align land use planning and transportation investments with the state's goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks. However, the SCS is non-binding on local governments. Local general plans are not required to be consistent with the SCS¹. Instead, local governments are incentivized to align their general plans and zoning with the SCS through CEQA streamlining options and priority for certain competitive grant applications, such as the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program. Local governments are required to update their housing elements to plan for the number of homes specified by the MPO in their Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The RHNA is developed based on several factors including consistency with the SCS².

Unfortunately, SB 375 has not been particularly effective at promoting denser, infill housing development that would allow people to be less reliant on driving in practice³. It is difficult to obtain information on what actions, if any, local governments are taking to align their land use regulations with the SCS.

The lack of alignment in population change forecasting methods between RHNA and the RTP/SCS, means that transportation investments that would support infill housing development are not necessarily prioritized as highly as they should be. The lack of alignment between these processes also increases the risk that housing developments will not be able to use existing incentives in state law, such as CEQA streamlining and AHSC grants.

SOLUTION

AB 1335 would address the linked housing affordability and climate crises by strengthening the incentives for local land use regulation to align with the SCS, in order to create more housing opportunities

¹ California Government Code [Section 65080.\(b\)\(2\)\(K\)](#)

² California Government Code Section [65584.04.\(m\)](#)

³ Mawhorter and Martin (2018). ["California's SB 375 and the Pursuit of Sustainable and Affordable Development."](#) Turner Center.

near jobs and transit, which will both alleviate the housing shortage and affordability crisis and allow people to be less reliant on cars for transportation, which reduces GHG emissions, makes it easier to build housing affordably and improves public safety. This includes two parts: 1) requiring local governments to report on their progress towards the recommended alignment of land use regulations with the SCS as part of their General Plan Annual Progress Reports and 2) avoiding divergence between RHNA and an SCS by clarifying appropriate population projection methods.

AB 1335 would require local governments to report on their progress towards aligning their land use regulations to the SCS as part of the General Plan Annual Progress Report (APR). This is a report that local governments already have to prepare and submit to the state. SCS alignment would continue to be voluntary. This enhanced reporting would create valuable data that members of the public could use to press their local governments for smarter land use policy that addresses our linked housing affordability and climate challenges. The data would also assist the state in evaluating the Sustainable Communities Strategy process. If local governments are not allowing more housing in priority growth areas near jobs and transit voluntarily, this would be an indication that further reforms are needed.

The second part of this proposal is ensuring that RHNA and an SCS do not excessively diverge in their population projections. Without proper alignment between RHNA and the SCS, opportunities to use CEQA streamlining and obtain grant funds through the AHSC program for affordable infill housing may be at risk. State law specifies a process for HCD to consult both Department of Finance and MPO population projections and reconcile differences when developing the Regional Housing Needs Determination (RHND) that is the basis for RHNA in each region⁴. However, when the RHNA is already established and an RTP/SCS is being developed, there is less clarity about how population projections should be performed. AB 1335 would require that MPOs follow a similar consultation and reconciliation process for population projections that feed into the RTP/SCS to the process that HCD follows when developing the RHNA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Jane Park, *Assemblymember Zbur's office*

Email: jane.park@asm.ca.gov

Phone: (916) 319-2051

- David Barboza, *Abundant Housing Los Angeles*

Email: david@abundanthousingla.org

Phone: (562) 221-1782

- Amy Hines-Shaikh, *Legislative Advocate*

Email: amy@consultwildcat.com

Phone: (925) 822-4213

⁴ See California Government Code [Section 65584.01](#).