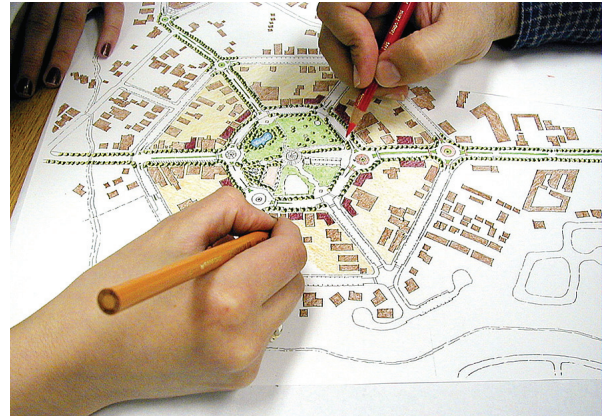


Healthy, Smart Growth Can Help California Save Lives and Billions of Dollars

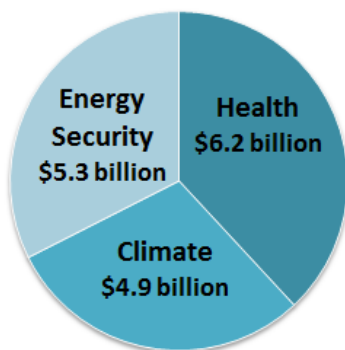
Healthy and smart growth is a top priority for the American Lung Association in California. Smart growth envisions communities built in ways that allow people more choices for transit, biking or walking, rather than being forced into their cars for even the shortest trips. Unfortunately, too few cities are built this way. Until now, most community designs have encouraged dependence on driving and dirty fuels that increases harmful air pollution emissions. Increased driving also equates to fewer opportunities for physical activity in our daily lives. This combination of increased emissions and lack of physical activity leads to increased rates of lung and heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other chronic health conditions.



A new analysis, *Growing Healthy in Southern California*, helps to quantify the pollution-related health costs and illnesses that could be avoided through smart growth strategies that reduce the growth in vehicle trips in the Southern California region by 2035. Conducted by Tiax LLC under contract to the American Lung Association in California, this analysis applies the latest U.S. EPA data on pollution costs and health outcomes to vehicle emissions information generated for Southern California between 2010 and 2035.

By pursuing a smart growth future in Southern California that reduces vehicles miles traveled (VMT) by 20 percent by 2035, the region covered by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) could avoid over \$16 billion in health and other societal costs from reduced traffic emissions and fuel consumption between now and 2035. In 2035 alone, the SCAG region could benefit from nearly \$1 billion in avoided costs. These avoided costs translate to less illnesses and deaths, less premature deaths, less environmental damage and less economic disruption.

20 Percent VMT Reduction Avoids \$16.3 Billion in Cumulative Costs



“I see too many children suffering because of asthma attacks and respiratory illness that is made worse by poor air quality. Healthier air is an immediate imperative for Southern California families.”

- Afif El-Hasan, M.D.
Chair, Orange County Leadership Board, American Lung Association in California, Pediatric Asthma Doctor, Kaiser Permanente

The Benefits of Smart Growth are Very Real.

Over the next 25 years, strong Southern California smart growth strategies to reduce driving could avoid the following:

- \$16 billion in health care and other societal costs
- 685 premature deaths
- 16,400 asthma attacks
- 415 ER visits and hospitalizations
- 53,300 missed work days
- 10,500 missed school days
- 320,800 respiratory symptoms

Strong SB 375 Implementation Is Vital To Achieve Health Benefits

Strong respiratory and health benefits can be achieved as the result of smart growth strategies incorporated into SCAG's Sustainable Community Strategy. The American Lung Association in California analysis shows that benefits from reducing vehicle traffic over time by 20% add up to real reductions in illnesses and related costs. A substantial amount of additional health benefits can be accomplished through increasing physical activity and active transportation as well as reducing traffic injury and death, but these benefits are beyond the scope of this study.



Based on this analysis, local and regional policymakers should factor in the billions in health benefits that will be achieved when they champion smart growth strategies including: more compact, transit oriented development; increased frequency and availability of transit; increased bicycle and pedestrian facilities; complete streets and other strategies that reduce demand for driving while increasing opportunities for healthy, active transportation. In addition to reduced health costs, policymakers should recognize that smart growth will result in savings to local infrastructure, road maintenance and household travel costs.

The Role of Cleaner Transportation

Reducing traffic in Southern California will not happen in a vacuum. As city and county leaders move forward to enact smart growth policies, vehicle and fuel regulations implemented by the California Air Resources Board will also be phased in. Cleaner fuel requirements should be fully implemented in 2035 (Low Carbon Fuel Standard) as should the next generation of advanced clean car standards (including Low Emission Vehicle (LEV III), greenhouse gas (LEV III- GHG), Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) and Clean Fuels Outlet regulations).



Evaluating the benefits of these state clean car regulations together with vehicle trip reduction from regional smart growth strategies, found a cumulative benefit of over \$100 billion in avoided health and societal damages between now and 2035. In terms of specific health outcomes, Southern California could avoid almost 5,600 premature deaths, over 143,000 asthma attacks and lower respiratory symptoms, over 3,500 hospitalizations and over 75,000 missed school days cumulatively over the 2010-2035 time period. Additional benefits could also be achieved through strategies to promote cleaner trucks and zero-emission goods movement.

In order to maximize the health benefits from smart growth strategies, policymakers must also strive to reduce near-roadway exposures to traffic pollution through both advanced planning and design strategies for new development and mitigation strategies for existing development.

State and local decision makers can and must work in unison to achieve the significant reductions in air pollution and climate change emissions and associated health improvements available through smart growth. The opportunities for action are before our state and local leaders today through the SB 375 process. Southern California must seize the opportunity to promote healthy people, healthy communities and a healthy economy.



For more information, visit lungusa.org/california

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