

Public Health Crossroads: Sustainable Growth for a Healthier San Joaquin County

California’s groundbreaking Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375) offers the San Joaquin Valley region an exciting opportunity to embark on a healthier, clean air future. By adopting and acting on strong Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS), local communities can become vibrant and healthy places for people to live, shop, work, play and study.

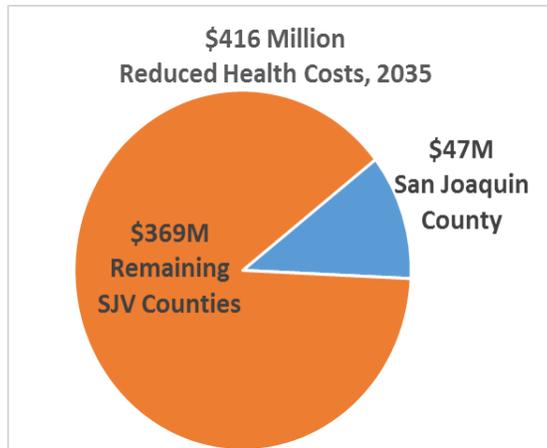
With community planning that prioritizes walking, biking, transit and infill development, San Joaquin County residents could see significant reductions in respiratory health impacts and costs related to traffic pollution. A new vision for healthier growth is necessary and should prioritize investment in existing communities and real transportation alternatives to driving, through more walkable, bike-friendly, diverse housing and transit-accessible neighborhoods.

What is SB 375?

Senate Bill 375 (Steinberg), known as the **Sustainable Communities Act**, promotes healthy growth by requiring a blueprint for coordinated land use and transportation planning called a **“Sustainable Communities Strategy”** (SCS). This June, the San Joaquin County Council of Governments will adopt a plan of **locally generated strategies** to reduce climate pollution and meet regional emission reduction targets.

More walkable San Joaquin County communities could reduce pollution-related health impacts by \$47 million

The American Lung Association in California has compiled new data on health outcomes and costs based on the Council of Infill Builders’ 2013 *A Home for Everyone* report, and compares a scenario with a greater emphasis on growth that is more walkable and interconnected with existing neighborhoods compared to a business as usual scenario. A future in which new growth in San Joaquin County is 75% more walkable and interconnected with existing built neighborhoods, compared to business as usual planning, could reduce traffic pollution-related health costs by \$47 million in 2035 alone. Valleywide, this healthier future growth scenario could reduce these health costs by \$416 million compared to historical planning. Growth that revitalizes existing neighborhoods, emphasizes active transportation and locally accessible services supports good health for all.



San Joaquin Valley leaders have a choice. They can set a new course for healthier development, or follow the past trend of inefficient growth that will cement asthma-causing traffic pollution, obesity, diabetes, heart disease and other chronic illnesses into the fabric of our communities, and particularly into communities that can least afford it.

Healthier Growth will benefit San Joaquin Valley Residents Reduce Health Damages by \$416 Million in 2035

A focus on making existing communities more vibrant with real walking, biking and transit opportunities could help reduce pollution-related health costs in San Joaquin County in 2035:

- **\$47 Million in reduced traffic pollution-related health and economic impacts**
- **5,070 fewer asthma attacks and other respiratory health impacts**
- **942 fewer lost work days**

Health incidences include only traffic pollution-related health impacts and deaths (e.g. asthma attacks, bronchitis and other respiratory symptoms, ER visits, hospitalizations, heart attacks, work loss days). Impacts reported here do not include the significant physical activity-related health conditions or deaths (e.g. obesity, diabetes, heart disease, mental health, cancers) or traffic safety related injury or deaths (e.g. bike, pedestrian, motorist) that can be avoided through safer, more active community designs.

WHY WE NEED HEALTHY GROWTH

San Joaquin County faces serious air pollution and illness burdens related to built environments

Air Pollution: San Joaquin Valley communities face air pollution challenges unparalleled in the United States. The greater Stockton area remains ranked among the 15 American cities most impacted by deadly particulate pollution. It is well documented that air pollution burdens Valley residents, impacting children’s genetics and immune systems, including \$6 billion in annual costs to the economy, \$135 million in annual hospitalization charges for asthma, and taking the lives of 1,500 Valley residents per year.

- **All Valley Counties** have higher than state average rates of asthma
- 28.4 percent of **San Joaquin County** children have been diagnosed with asthma

State of the Air 2013 Most Polluted Cities in America by Short-term Particulates	
City	US Rank 2013
Bakersfield	1
Fresno	2
Hanford	3
Modesto	4
Merced	6
Stockton	12
Visalia	14

Watch for State of the Air 2013: April 30, 2014

Illness Rates	Obesity	Childhood Obesity	Asthma	Childhood Asthma	Diabetes
California	23.5	36.5	13.7	15.4	8.6
San Joaquin County	30.0	39.3	17.9	28.4	8.0

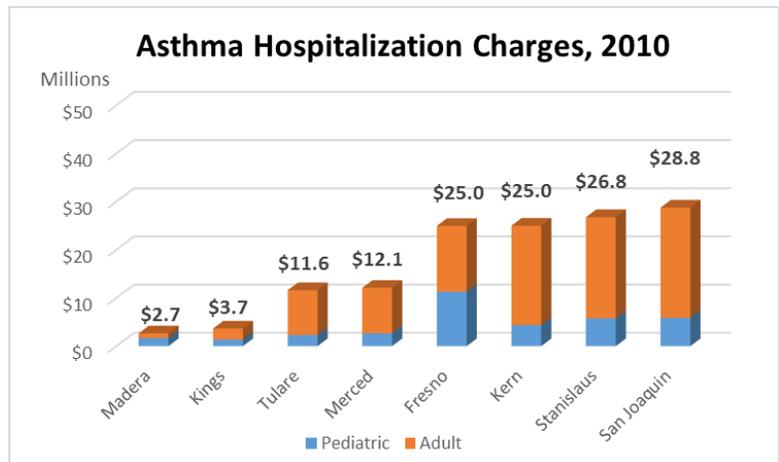
Sources: California Department of Public Health, San Joaquin County Dept. of Health

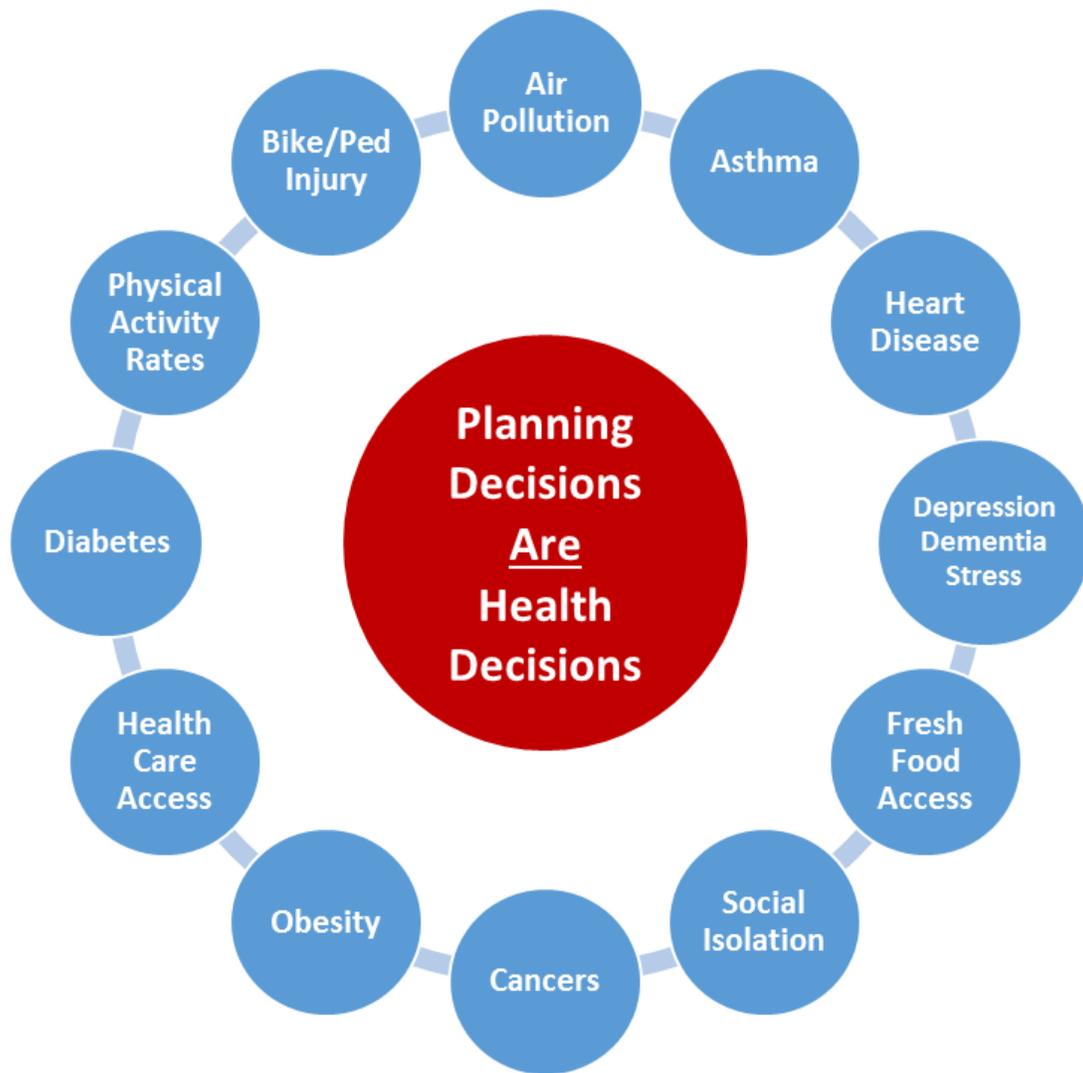
Chronic Disease: Beyond air pollution-related impacts, Valley residents are disproportionately impacted by chronic disease burdens that are related to the built environment, including heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

- Approximately 40 percent of children in **San Joaquin County** are obese.
- **San Joaquin County** has the state’s sixth worst rate of death due to diabetes, and the 14th highest rate of death due to heart disease.

“As a lung surgeon, I see the impacts of poor community design on my patients’ lungs and health. We simply can’t continue a pattern of growth that is designed almost exclusively for cars and contributes to air pollution and lung disease. We need to grow healthy communities.”

Dr. Stephen Maxwell, MD
Local Leadership Board Member
American Lung Association in California





WE CAN PLAN FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

San Joaquin County residents deserve healthier neighborhoods than past plans have delivered

As the San Joaquin Council of Governments moves toward adopting its initial SCS plan in 2014, it is critical that our elected leaders seize the opportunity to plan for a healthier future:

- Recognize that we can't afford another generation of unhealthy planning
- Adopt a strong plan that moves beyond "business-as-usual" planning of the past
- Plan a more balanced housing mix that limits over-investment in inefficient large lots and preserves natural and agricultural lands
- Prioritize growth and transportation investments to serve these existing downtowns and community cores, rather than fringe areas or new towns
- Front-load investments that enhance walking, biking and transit options
- Promote infill, transit oriented development and expanded access to transit, Bus Rapid Transit and other innovative cleaner air transportation options
- Focus investments to "fix it first" maintenance, rather than building expensive new roads
- Support more efficient and zero- and near-zero emission freight strategies
- Invest in planning models such as UrbanFootprint that can estimate health impacts and benefits of future planning scenarios

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