

Pasadena Star News

ANOTHER VIEW

Transportation - the planning void

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IT seems almost inconceivable that the California Air Resources Board would fail to make land-use decisions a central part of the state's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

But as the board prepared for last Friday's public workshop in Santa Clara on its "scoping plan" to carry out Assembly Bill 32 - the landmark global-warming legislation - it proposed a reduction of a scant 2 million metric tons of emissions through better land-use decisions. Incredibly, that would be less than the air board plans to achieve from encouraging proper tire inflation.

California can and must do better. Transportation accounts for about 30 percent of greenhouse gases.

Anyone who has studied Bay Area traffic patterns would recognize the effect of land-use decisions on congestion - and its corresponding level of pollution. New housing developments are built with the expectations of long commutes. Too many have been built far from employment centers and in suburbs where public transportation is insufficient or nonexistent.

Fortunately, the Air Resources Board may be about to get strong guidance from the Legislature.

State Sen. Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, has done a remarkable behind-the-scenes job of building support for legislation (SB375) that would require the impact on greenhouse gas emissions to be included in regional housing and transportation plans. ...

If California is going to get serious about fighting global warming, it must confront the fact that its land-use patterns have been dooming us to long commutes and dependence on the automobile for simple daily tasks.

Passage of SB375 would represent a significant step toward identifying and addressing a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.