

How the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program is helping curb climate pollution and keep California affordable

Case Study: Anchor Place, Long Beach

The Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program is already making a significant positive contribution to our efforts to address the triple threat of our climate, transportation, and housing crises. In its first year, the AHSC provided over \$154 million in critical funding for 33 projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and help build more affordable, transit-oriented communities. The benefits of these projects to our climate, environment, and economy are significant and include:



- 810,000 metric tons of GHG emissions eliminated
- 2,558 new affordable homes near transit
- \$34 million in funding for projects that will make our streets safer for biking and walking
- 76% of funding to benefit disadvantaged communities

Affordable homes near transit maximize emissions reductions

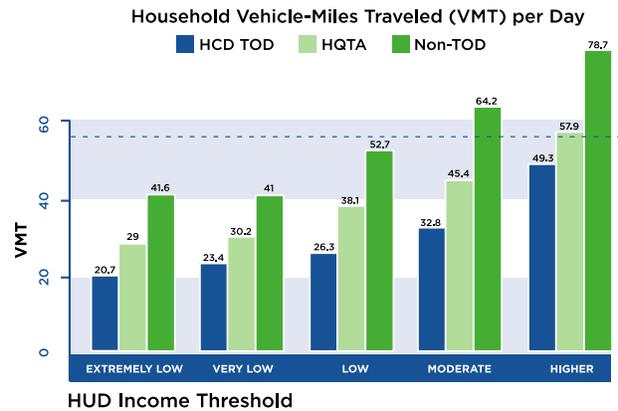
With the passage of SB 375 in 2008, California committed to reducing driving and increasing transit use, biking, and walking as one of the core strategies to reduce our state's GHG emissions.

Walkable, transit-oriented communities with parks and green space have long been recognized as key in any effort to reduce GHGs in the long-term. But the latest research has made another critical finding: **to maximize GHG emission reductions, transit-oriented neighborhoods must be affordable.**

Even as demand for these communities soars throughout the state, low- and middle-income households are finding themselves increasingly unable to afford to live in them. The obvious result is a continuation of a decades-long trend of families being forced to seek more affordable housing in sprawling communities without transit and further away from their jobs, their children's schools and other essential services. The result: more driving, more emissions, more heavily congested roads, more health impacts, and higher costs of living.

A lack of affordability in transit-oriented communities also hurts our efforts to reduce GHGs. In other words, not all transit-oriented communities are created equal.

A report by TransForm and the California Housing Partnership Corporation¹ found that low- and middle-income households near transit used transit at significantly higher rates, drove less, and owned fewer cars than those with higher incomes. The result of this study – and other new research – clearly demonstrates that walkable, transit-rich neighborhoods with affordable homes near jobs, schools, and other services are essential to achieving low-carbon neighborhoods and our overall climate targets. The AHSC is therefore a powerful tool for helping California meet the mandate of AB 32 by maximizing both GHG reductions as well as the benefits to communities throughout the state.



The AHSC is poised for even better things in year two

In year two, the AHSC is on the verge of spurring even more integrated and ambitious projects. In December 2015, The Strategic Growth Council adopted a revised version of its guidelines for the program that will not only encourage more projects that deeply integrate transportation and housing, but will also result in projects that include more parks and green space, buildings that incorporate high energy efficiency standards and more renewable energy, and deeper affordability. This means projects will increasingly include protected bike lanes, better access to transit, transit service extensions, LEED certified buildings, and drought tolerant parks and landscaping, among other elements. The new guidelines are poised to support achievement of GHG targets and improve quality of life.

With \$340 million available for award in September of 2016, the AHSC will fund many more projects, and those projects will be more innovative and effective at reducing GHGs.

An example of the AHSC in action: Anchor Place

In 2015, the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program awarded \$2.4 million to Anchor Place, a development being built in West Long Beach. The project will result in significant long-term GHG reductions and provide veterans, homeless, and low-income families with good homes and transit options. Anchor Place – like the other 32 AHSC projects funded in the first year of the program – is an important contribution to our long-term efforts to achieve a future where all Californians can thrive in healthy and resilient communities.

¹ Why creating and preserving affordable homes near transit is an effective climate protection strategy. <http://www.transformca.org/transform-report/why-creating-and-preserving-affordable-homes-near-transit-highly-effective-climate>. HCD TOD refers to areas within ¼ mile of a rail or ferry stop or a bus stop with 10 minute headways during peak weekday hours, and HQTA refers to a rail or ferry stop or a bus stop with 15 minute headways during peak periods.

One building can help solve many problems

Over the years, the community of West Long Beach has faced many obstacles to achieving a good quality of life for its residents. West Long Beach sits adjacent to the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach – the largest single source of air pollution in the region – as well as major freight corridors serving the ports. This location ensures that the community is beset by high levels of air, noise, and light pollution. Many of its streets are also designed to prioritize quick travel by heavy-duty truck traffic, compromising the safety of community residents. Collectively, the port and transportation systems have negatively impacted public health in many ways, including disproportionately high rates of cancer and asthma, lost days of work and school, and barriers to physical activity. The area is also economically depressed. West Long Beach has historically had higher unemployment rates and lower median income levels than surrounding communities and the state as a whole.



 ANCHOR PLACE VIEW INTO SOCIAL COURT 

The Anchor Place project is an important step in changing the future of West Long Beach. Anchor Place will benefit not only its residents but also the surrounding community. All of its 120 units will be affordable (below market rate), with 75 reserved for homeless and disabled veterans, 18 for homeless persons with severe and persistent mental health issues, and the remaining 27 units are for low-income families.

The project will also include a new bus stop which will bring bus traffic into the Century Villages Campus for the first time and transit hub with public bathrooms and a transit office, improve an existing bus stop, make surrounding streets safer for biking, improve accessibility, and install new lighting and landscaping. Secure bike parking will also be made available. Having a transit hub on campus will provide residents with a sense of normalcy and interconnectedness with the community- residents will no longer have to travel outside of their neighborhood to access transit.

Efficient, safe, and affordable options for public transportation, walking, and biking are important for the residents of both Anchor Place and the neighborhood as a whole. Anchor Place is located next to a high school, the Long Beach Job Corps, the CSU Long Beach Foundation Tech Park, so residents will more easily be able to walk and bike to these destinations. The transit lines that serve Anchor Place and the neighborhood provide important connections to Cal State Long Beach, the Long Beach VA Medical Center, downtown Long Beach, the Long Beach Airport, and the LA Metro Blue Line; the improved bus stops and transit hub will make it easier for residents and community members alike to get to these places. In total, safe streets and better access to these job, healthcare, and education centers means more economic opportunity and the promise of a better future.

It also means fewer greenhouse gases and less dependence on cars. In the coming years, Anchor Place is projected to prevent over 28,300 metric tons of GHGs from entering our air

and contributing to climate change. That's equivalent to reducing gasoline usage by nearly 3.2 million gallons and making the air cleaner and healthier to breathe. It also means residents will be less dependent on cars for transportation, which will save them money and reduce congestion in the community – and the region overall.

Anchor Place and the other AHSC projects funded in the first round are making a down payment on fighting climate change that will save Californians money and provide real, sustainable transportation and housing choices. In the long term, these projects and the AHSC program are core elements of a strategy to protect our climate and build a more sustainable, equitable, and healthy California.

This document was compiled by TransForm, Housing California, the Sustainable Communities for All Coalition, and Century Villages at Cabrillo – the developer of Anchor Place. For further information, contact Ryan Wiggins at rwwiggins@transformca.org or 760-707-7019.

Visit www.climatebenefitsca.org to learn more about the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program and other climate programs that are reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving people's lives throughout California.