

**Environmental Council of Sacramento
Long Term Strategic Planning Document
and
Annual Work Plan 2015**

Developed by:

The ECOS Organizational Development Committee
and ECOS Board Members

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Introduction

The Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), a 501(c)3 organization, was born in response to the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970. Sacramento environmental leaders came together to create a visionary forum and an action oriented coalition for the region. Initially formed to coordinate the activities of member organizations, ECOS reformed itself in 1991 to become a hybrid organization that has both organizational and individual members.

In the 1970s, ECOS was involved in supporting improved air quality by challenging the open burning of waste from our region's rice fields, the establishment of the American River Parkway, the adoption of a Natural Streams Policy, and active in advocating for an end to nuclear power for our region with SMUD's closing of Rancho Seco.

In the 1980s, ECOS fought for protection for Bushy Lake at Cal Expo, the founding of an independent Sacramento Metropolitan Air District, preventing development in the floodplain, increased local commitments to cleaner fueled vehicles, light rail and transit funding from local sales taxes, and against urbanization of the Natomas floodplain.

In the 1990s ECOS advocated for, and helped achieve, the adoption of an urban services boundary (the urban growth boundary) in the Sacramento County General Plan, the establishment of the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, a transportation system to reduce air pollution, and the formation of Habitat 2020 to unite groups working on behalf of wild plants and animals.

In the 2000s through today, ECOS' major efforts and successes include:

- Developing the "ECOS 50-Year Transportation Vision"
- Coordinating the annual Sacramento Earth Day events
- Spearheading a grant-funded neighborhood community planning and urban revitalization project on Hurley Way in Arden Arcade
- Supporting a vision for the "Heartland Conservation Project"
- Developing the "Smart Growth Leadership Recognition Program" with the American Institute of Architects, Central Valley Chapter, to review and endorse specific development proposals representing the best in design and public engagement
- Using advocacy and litigation to ensure protections for smart growth, threatened species, farmland, watersheds, and neighborhoods facing environmental degradation
- Ensuring GHG impacts are accounted for in road projects
- Partnering with the Sacramento Housing Alliance and other community organizations to develop the Coalition on Regional Equity (CORE) to work on regional land use and health issues
- Working with local governments and community groups
- Celebrating "Environmentalist of the Year" for the last 39 years to recognize outstanding efforts by local individuals or groups

- Positively impacting major land use and transportation decisions

To ensure the continued success of ECOS, the following strategic plan has been developed by the Organizational Development Committee with input from members, member organizations and other interested stakeholders. This plan should serve to frame the long term work of the organization.

Mission Statement

Achieve regional sustainability, livable communities, environmental justice, and a healthy environment for existing and future residents.

Values Statements

ECOS will strive to energize and bring positive changes to the Sacramento region by proactively working with individual and organizational ECOS members, neighborhood groups, and local government to develop a thriving community, sustainable economy and promote environmental stewardship.

Who is ECOS?

ECOS is a coalition of community based individuals and organizations throughout the Sacramento region that help drive a community conversation and promote action. ECOS strives to implement its mission through several approaches.

Expertise Coalition

ECOS provides a forum for member organizations to enhance their networks and effectively collaborate to promote positive change and solutions to environmentally based challenges. Our members and member organizations represent a broad depth of knowledge and experience on a range of environmental, legal, economic, and social issues.

Community Partnership

The ECOS coalition works with environmentally and socially aware individuals and organizations on specific community issues to provide expertise and the tools for successful advocacy. We strive to promote the sustainability of the Sacramento region including, social equity, public health, economic viability and all of its diverse human and natural communities.

Environmental Activism

ECOS works to engage individual and organizational members on issues relating to all aspects of the region's environment, including: land use, transportation systems, air quality and climate change, urban and rural agriculture and food initiatives, solid waste and recycling, preservation of habitat and open spaces, and water and natural resources.

Guiding Principals:

- Public engagement is essential for sustainability
- Create sustainability for everyone in and around the Sacramento Region
- A deep respect for nature is essential to have a healthy environment
- Private and public intuitions must be held accountable for their policy decisions regarding protection of a healthy environment
- Public policy should be for the common good

Top Environmental Policy Objectives:

Promote and Reinforce Smart Growth Principles

Goal:

ECOS will engage local, regional and state agencies to promote smartgrowth principles which reduce urban sprawl and natural resource destruction. Smartgrowth principles in all neighborhoods will support public health through increased transportation choices, increase opportunities for active transportation and recreation, and provide access for housing, jobs and services for all economic levels on a neighborhood scale.

Approaches:

- Focusing on increasing density of the urban core and revitalizing existing neighborhoods (greenfield development).
- Promotion of smartgrowth principles, practice and innovation with the region's cities, counties, the Local Agency Formation Commission, the Sacramento Council Of Governments, and other State and Federal agencies in all significant planning and regulatory action.
- Engagement and review of all significant land use and transportation projects and their corresponding environmental impact analysis.
- Be prepared, when necessary, to litigate on projects that violate the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Improve Air Quality

Goal:

ECOS will work with local, regional and state agencies to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and to effectuate local responses to climate change, with particular focus on facilitating changes in land use and transportation behavior. ECOS will continue to work to improve air quality that improves public health.

Approaches:

- Engage the California Air Resources Board, the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) and other regional stakeholders on development and implementation of AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act, to reduce GHG emissions by 20% by the year 2020.
- Develop communication strategies and public education.

- Engage SACOG in the development of the regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) and implementation of SB 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, with the aim of reducing emissions due to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through better coordination of land use and transportation planning.
- Successful Sustainable Communities Strategy implementation offers not only reduced GHG emission, but also extreme co-benefits in increased equity, public health, and natural resource conservation.
- Advocate for a reduction in criteria pollutants.

Establish a Regionally Coordinated Conservation Strategy

Goal:

Habitat 2020, the Conservation Committee of ECOS, has developed a natural resource conservation vision for the region, the California Heartland Project, which seeks to create a connected network of parks, preserves and conservation easements on working farms and ranches--creating access to open-space for education and recreation, protecting the unique biodiversity of the Sacramento Valley, and conserving our agricultural heritage.

Approaches:

- Work with SACOG in development of the Rural Urban Connections Strategy RUCS, and the new Working Landscapes initiative which seeks to develop a coordinated regional strategy, inspired by the Heartland Vision.
- Engage regional stakeholders including the agricultural and business communities, academic institutions, state and federal wildlife agencies, conservancies and other environmental organizations to promote the vision, and build partnerships in development and implementation of the strategy.
- Work with SACOG and regional and statewide partners to develop a natural resource data-base and modeling tool to inform both conservation planning and urban development decisions.
- Advocate for habitat protection funding

Establish a Sustainable Water Supply

Goal:

ECOS seeks regional policies and practice that will ensure a sustainable and just water supply and quality to meet the ecological needs of the region, as well as the demands of our municipalities and projected future growth. This includes particular attention to

disadvantaged communities that currently do not have a water supply of adequate quality.

Approaches:

- As a signatory member, continue engagement with the Sacramento Water Forum, a consortium of local governments, business interests, water purveyors and environmental organizations, in the development of a Flow Management Standard (FMS) for the Lower American River. The FMS aims to determine and meet ecological and municipal needs for the watershed to the year 2030.
- Work with local governments and regional stakeholders to establish transparent regional accounting of supplies, including groundwater, to appropriately inform land use and development decisions.
- Work with local governments and water agencies and the public to implement conservation practices in the Sacramento region, which uses twice as much water per capita than the Californian average.
- Communicate water's growth limiting factor in development plans.

Achieve Equity in Housing, Public Health, and Opportunities

Goal:

ECOS seeks an equitable community that meets the needs of all ethnicities and income levels, which includes equal access to housing, jobs and services, transit and active transportation choices, parks and open space, and healthy food. We feel that neighborhoods that provide such equal access will thrive at all income levels, and that no one portion of the population should be exposed to a disproportionate level of pollutants or other health impacts..

Approaches:

- ECOS, as a founding member, will work with the "Coalition On Regional Equity" (CORE) to ensure that local projects and the SACOG MTP/SCS continue to develop and use improved equity analysis that aides in the planning of communities that have equal access in housing, jobs and services, transit and active transportation choices, parks and open space, and healthy food.
- Support the Sacramento Housing Alliance (SHA) and regional partners to promote development of Inclusionary Housing Ordinances in the region's jurisdictions that don't have them, and defend the housing ordinances in jurisdictions where they are already in place.
- Work with regional and statewide stakeholders to find solutions to problems presented by the loss of California's Redevelopment program, and to develop the anti-displacement measures needed in light of rising property values

in the urban core. Such displacement could undermine the goals of SB 375, and the co-benefits of "sustainable communities" planning.

- Advocate for strong cohesive community planning policies and guiding principals

Strategic Direction and Organizational Development:

Public Awareness and Engagement

Goal:

Improve communication to better inform and engaged the public. ECOS should continue to increase public awareness of how local policy decisions impact their environment, which is essential to build support for sustainability, equity, and to provide a high quality of life to residents. An informed and engaged public is essential to ensure public officials across the region take appropriate actions on project reviews, planning efforts, and implementation of other important environmental policies.

Approaches:

- Increase public outreach and education. Host workshops for the public on pertinent issues and current events
- Upgrade and develop communication and outreach tools such as social media
- Continue the Heartland vision for a regional conservation strategy and promote.
- Strengthen ties & solicit participation between ECOS and community groups/neighborhoods outside of the coalition.
- Develop a unified public relations strategy.
- Publish and distribute core vision documents.
- Develop an outreach program for children in and outside of schools.
- Take a holistic approach to the issues to increase awareness.
- Improve Board Member development, diversity, and generational strategy

Build Organization

Goal:

ECOS should continue to develop as a self-sufficient organization that represents its member organizations and its members. ECOS needs to add value for its member and member organizations by enhancing networks and increasing collaboration. A strong organization with active and engaged members provides the tools to work positively in the region to institute change and to respond to issues as they develop. Board member education is a significant component.

Approaches:

- Produce events as appropriate to increase public awareness of ECOS and to generate revenue for ECOS projects.
- Continue to build coalitions with Community Groups, Neighborhood Associations and other non-member organizations.
- Strengthen and manage ECOS membership base
- Maintain and build an active committee structure to support ECOS staff and the Board. Enforce bylaws that require Board Members to serve on a Committee.
- Actively recruit Board members and Committee members that have expertise in the areas of land use, transportation, air quality and habitat preservation
- Develop and utilize the volunteer corps.
- Use the broader coalition of member organizations, members, and the public to mobilize and respond to ECOS actions.
- Utilize outside legal advice when necessary to accomplish established objectives
- Apply for grant money that can be applied strategic direction
- Grow volunteer and membership base
- Continue to develop an identity that can be used by members and member organizations to describe ECOS (i.e. an elevator speech).
- Continue to develop internal organizational processes to better delineate Committee powers.
- Educate the public through the use of volunteers

Enhance Credibility, Power, Communication and Effectiveness

Goal:

To be a leading environmental voice in the region. ECOS needs to promote information and knowledge, which reflects its membership and member organizations that can be used to make good land use and other environmentally appropriate decisions. ECOS should also communicate with members and member organizations about political issues that affect them. ECOS should continue to build relationships with public officials as appropriate.

Approaches:

- Increase the dialog between ECOS, the news media, and local decision makers while maintaining the ECOS tax-exempt status.
- Use the email alert system and the ECOS newsletter to inform members of important actions that need their support.
- Develop a positive ECOS identity and power that public officials will respond to.
- As necessary provide support to litigate issues that result in better environmental decisions for the region.
- Publicize elected officials actions/votes (such as the Sierra Club scorecard).
- Emphasize positive alternatives and develop proactive programs.
- Improve fundraising efforts to sustain the organization.

Produce Programs and Events

Goal:

Host annual events that increase the public awareness of the organization and help build membership and revenue by providing members with valuable information. By expanding the events and developing new ones, ECOS can continue to shape its identity, grow its membership, ensure healthy revenue and inform the public about important regional issues.

Approaches to achieving the above strategy include:

- Continue to host the Environmentalist of the Year event and recognize outstanding environmental effort in the community.

- Continue to support the Heartland project.
- Continue to host Sacramento Earth Day and grow the activities to increase public awareness.
- Continue to host the Wild and Scenic Film Festival.
- Continue to spearhead neighborhood community planning and revitalization
- Revive the “Smart Growth Leadership Recognition Program” with the American Institute of Architects, Central Valley Chapter, to review and endorse specific development proposals representing the best in design and public engagement.
- Develop grant funding projects such as partnering with the Sacramento Housing Alliance and other community organizations to develop the Coalition on Regional Equity (CORE) .
- Develop and host events to support ECOS that include annual or one-time events such as classes, workshops, and speakers. Especially events for the public to attend that will lead to an informed public.
- Provide ECOS members with events to support membership value.

Annual Workplan and Board Retreat

The ECOS Board should have an annual board retreat to determine goals and workplan for the upcoming year. The committee envisions realistic and achievable goals that are grouped into Organizational Goals and Committee Goals. The committee responsible for achieving the approved goal(s) will be responsible for developing a separate detailed implementation plan to accomplish the goal. At the annual retreat, goals for the subsequent year are discussed and a review of previous year goals should be documented.

See Appendix A for the Annual Workplan/Goals

APPENDIX A

ANNUAL WORK PLAN FOR 2015

1. Environmental Policy Objectives

A. Promote and Reinforce Smart Growth Principles

Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
Work with staff and committees of LAFCo, SACOG and city / county agencies	continuous	Land Use, TAQCC and FEJ committees	
Review proposed projects	continuous	Land Use, TAQCC and FEJ committees	
Be prepared to litigate when all else fails	continuous	Executive Committee	

B. Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Mitigate Impacts of Climate Change

Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
Engage agencies around implementation of AB32	continuous	Land Use, TAQCC and FEJ committees	
Engage agencies around implementation of SB375	continuous	Land Use, TAQCC and FEJ committees	

C. Establish a Coordinated Regional Conservation Strategy

Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
Engage SACOG around its RUCS strategy	continuous	Habitat 2020	
Engage regional stakeholders around RUCS	continuous	Habitat 2020	
Pursue “Greenprint”	continuous	Habitat 2020	

D. Assure a Sustainable Water Supply

Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
Work with the Environment caucus of the Water Forum	continuous	Habitat 2020, ECOS water leadership	
Advance accountability for groundwater resources	continuous	Habitat 2020, ECOS water leadership	
Advance water conservation	continuous	“ “ “	

E. Achieve Equity in Housing, Public Health and Economic Opportunity

Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
Continue partnership with CORE MTP/SCS committee	continuous	Matt Baker	
Continue partnership with SHA around inclusionary housing and related housing policy	continuous	Alex Kelter	
Engage with movement to fill behind Redevelopment Programs	continuous	Kelter, Baker, Ellison,	

2. Strategic Direction and Organizational Development

A. Public Awareness / Engagement

Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
Host 2 workshops	End of 2015	Committees	Topical, Community forums
Maintain new ECOS website & update		ecos staff	In progress
Update Earth Day website			
Explore new e-mail alert system			Research options
Produce ECOS newsletter	Quarterly	Alex R	ongoing - Com. support. Free to all or just members?
Produce new Heartland scorecard	Annually	Habitat 2020	
Social Media	Always	Alex R	ongoing
Free Updates			

B. Build Organization

Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
Contact database	Jan 2015	Melinda/Alex R.	
Neighborhood Assn. outreach	2015	Land Use?	
Strengthen and Manage Org. Members	Feb 2015	TBD	
Board Member Participation	ongoing		
Recruit Board Members			
Apply for 3 Grants	End of 2015	ECOS Staff	

Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
Use volunteers effectively	June 2015	Org Dev	

Gage Financial Health	Jan 2015	Fiscal Review	

C. Enhance ECOS' Credibility and Power

Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
Be more proactive			How?
Develop ECOS identity			What do we want to be?
Communicate with media			
Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
Attend public meetings	Continuous		Ongoing
Inform public officials			
Increase Information exchange			

D. Produce Programs and Events

Task	Target	Lead	ODC notes
EOY	9/2015	EOY Committee	
Heartland	9/2015		
Earth Day	4/2015	Earthday Committee	
Smart Growth Leadership Recognition Program			
Wild and Scenic Films	5/2015	Habitat 20/20	
Produce events			movies, workshops, training