
Sprawl, Growth Targets of Global Warming Fight

As the city of San Diego revises its future development blueprint, attention increasingly focuses on growth's role in climate change.

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Thursday, July 12, 2007 | Facing legal pressure from the state Attorney General's Office, the city of San Diego has revised its future development blueprint to include ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from new growth.

But the city attorney and others say the revision still does not go far enough to eliminate the global warming impacts expected from the 360,000 new residents projected in the 20-year plan. Those residents will get in their cars and travel an additional 7 million miles daily -- adding tons of carbon dioxide to the air.

Hot About Sprawl

- **The Issue:** As San Diego plans its future development, it is being told to address its impacts on the environment and global warming.
- **What It Means:** The state attorney general has criticized the city's development blueprint for lacking specific steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **The Bigger Picture:** As the state looks to ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it's paying more attention to sprawling development that forces residents to drive farther to work.

The city is currently updating its general plan. The blueprint maps out how the city will grow over the next two decades and how that growth will impact the environment.

The Attorney General's Office says those plans must now mitigate the impacts to climate change, pointing to the recently passed Assembly Bill 32, which calls for 25 percent reductions statewide in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. The city could, for example, make recycling mandatory, require solar panels on all new development or provide incentives for green building.

"If you build out, you're going to have to drive further distances," said Gareth Lacy, a spokesman for Brown. "That can produce more greenhouse gases and create more problems. You have to take an inventory of what's being put in the air right now and set a goal for how to cut it down."

The debate about San Diego's growth comes at a time when land-use policies throughout California are increasingly being scrutinized for their contributions to global warming. In search of affordable housing, car-happy Californians continue moving farther away from city centers. They're commuting greater distances and spewing more carbon dioxide. In San Diego County, residents drive four miles farther daily than they did in 1990. Their daily commutes are five minutes longer.

With the state aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, global

