

2021 Regional Plan: Changes for Proposed Final Plan

Overview

On May 28, 2021, the draft 2021 Regional Plan, including its Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), was released for public review and comment through August 6, 2021. This report summarizes changes and clarifications proposed for the final 2021 Regional Plan. The draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was released on August 27, 2021, for a public review and the comment period ended on October 11, 2021. Public comments on the draft EIR will be addressed in the final EIR.

Key Considerations

During the comment period, SANDAG encouraged the public to provide comments via an online tool in English and Spanish. SANDAG also held six virtual public open house events, conducted two virtual public hearings with the Transportation Committee and Board of Directors, and partnered with community-based organizations to provide additional opportunities for residents to weigh-in on the draft 2021 Regional Plan. In addition, SANDAG held a Joint Working Group Forum and discussions with individual working groups and local jurisdictions. The 2021 Regional Plan Social Equity Working Group recommended that the Board include the “10 Transit Lifelines” and additional recommendations in the 2021 Regional Plan; responses to these recommendations are included in Attachment 1D. Attachment 1 summarizes these public engagement activities.

SANDAG received over 1,400 comments on the draft 2021 Regional Plan. Attachments 1A through 1E include comments and draft responses organized by source. Many comments on the draft 2021 Regional Plan resulted in a minor change or a response that directed the commenter to a section of the plan for additional detail. Other comments were focused on strategies of the plan and are addressed through the proposed changes described below. SANDAG also received comments that could not be addressed in the Regional Plan but would be considered in future implementation efforts. Examples of these include questions about project details that would be analyzed in future project-level planning and design, concerns about the equity of pricing strategies which would be addressed in future studies, and requests for further reduction of greenhouse gas emissions which would be supported by local and state actions beyond SANDAG commitments in the Regional Plan.

Based on feedback and comments from the public and staff-initiated changes, the proposed final 2021 Regional Plan will include the changes summarized below.

Cost and Revenue

The updated funding strategy will reflect implementation of a state and regional Road Usage Charge by 2030 to align with the latest planning efforts of the State to allow for adequate time to study and pilot pricing strategies, and to ensure that prior to implementing pricing strategies, there are adequate and available alternatives to the private automobile in place.

The funding strategy includes two half-cent regional sales tax measures – one following the 2022 election and one following the 2028 presidential election. There has been significant public discussion on the funding

Action: **Discussion/Possible Action**

Staff will list updates that will be reflected in the proposed final 2021 Regional Plan in response to public comments.

Fiscal Impact:

Funding for development of the 2021 Regional Plan is included in Overall Work Program Element Nos. 3102000 and 3102006 in the FY 2022 Program Budget.

Schedule/Scope Impact:

The proposed final 2021 Regional Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report will be presented to the Board of Directors for consideration in December 2021.

gap between the revenue coming in from the *TransNet* ½ cent sales tax and the region’s ability to initiate work on new priority projects and programs to advance regional environmental, economic and equity goals. The funding strategy proposes bonding out year revenue into the initial and midterm years so that projects can be initiated and opened for service earlier than if revenues are allocated to projects on a pay-as-go basis.

Land Use and Mobility Hubs

Explanations will be added about the regional Mobility Hub areas and assumptions of the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) land use pattern. The final 2021 Regional Plan will explain that the SCS land use pattern proposed in the 2021 Regional Plan focuses future growth and development primarily in the regional Mobility Hub areas and selected Smart Growth Opportunity Areas. The allocation of housing units to subregional areas represents general areas projected for future growth. Zoning and development decisions for specific parcels and development projects are within local jurisdictions’ land use authority. Mobility Hubs are conceptual coverage areas, and SANDAG will continue to partner with local jurisdictions to update and refine these areas.

Habitat Conservation

The region’s dedication to habitat and open space preservation will be emphasized. Proposed habitat investments to fully fund habitat conservation, management, and monitoring program; a nature-based climate solutions program; and a habitat mitigation for transportation projects.

Vision Zero: A commitment to end all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries

The region’s commitment to safety and Vision Zero will be highlighted with clarity on investments that support vulnerable road users, including implementation of the Regional Bike Network, addition of Chollas Creek and North Coast Bike Trail projects, complete street investments in mobility hub areas, Vision Zero programs, intelligent transportation systems that reduce traffic collisions, and commitment to prepare an updated Active Transportation Plan and Regional Safety Policy.

Projects and Phasing

Appendix A: Transportation Projects, Programs, and Phasing will be updated to describe and map the improvements to each major corridor area and the process used to phase projects. Updates to the project list include the removal of redundant freeway connector projects, inclusion of studies underway for transit projects and services, and addition of active transportation projects described above. In addition, clarity will be added regarding the commitment for highway improvements to be within the existing footprint and to avoid impacts to natural habitat. The documentation of strategies to reduce pollution exposure in disadvantaged communities required by Assembly Bill 805 will also be added to Appendix A along with a detailed list of future transit route frequencies and spans of service. Additional detail will be added on project phasing.

Transit

The transit program will be updated to include bathrooms at new rail stations and the following near-term actions: The Blue Line Express Feasibility and Conceptual Engineering Study, the Transit Station Bathroom Access Plan, and the commitment to get to free public transit for all by 2030.

Pilot Projects

Additional detail on Flexible Fleets will be added to emphasize the importance of pilot projects and public-private partnerships as a wide variety of on-demand, app-enabled services are implemented across the region. Pilots will enable SANDAG and local jurisdictions to scale and adapt these services across the region while noting key lessons learned. Mobility Hub locations will guide pilot project service areas while ensuring flexibility so connections can also be made to outlying communities.

Next Steps

The proposed final 2021 Regional Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be posted prior to the December 10, 2021, meeting where the Board will be asked to consider certification of the EIR and adoption of the 2021 Regional Plan.

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Attachments:

1. Draft Public Comments and Responses on the Draft 2021 Regional Plan
 - 1A. Website-Sourced Public Comments and Responses
 - 1B. Email-Sourced Public Comments and Responses
 - 1C. Voicemail-Sourced Public Comments and Responses
 - 1D. Public Meeting-Sourced Public Comments and Responses
 - 1E. Letter-Sourced Public Comments and Responses

Agenda Item 3 — Attachments 1:

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The full document in electronic format can be downloaded at sandag.org/index.asp?meetingid=5899&fuseaction=meetings.detail.

For a printed copy, please contact the Public Information Office at (619) 699-1950 or pio@sandag.org.