



5 BIG MOVES // COMPLETE CORRIDORS / TRANSIT LEAP / MOBILITY HUBS / FLEXIBLE FLEETS / NEXT OS

Frequently Asked Questions about the Transit Leap

Learn more at SDForward.com/TransitLeap

GENERAL – TRANSIT LEAP

What does “grade separated” mean and why is it important?

Grade separation refers to a guideway or transit priority lanes that are separated from the roadway through elevated structures or in tunnels. This eliminates conflicts with pedestrians, bikes, and cars, which allows transit to move faster and safer.

Is true high-speed, protected/separated corridor bus rapid transit (BRT) a good option for the San Diego region? Could the current Rapid service on I-15 be improved through the Transit Leap?

The goal of the Transit Leap is to contribute to a balanced transportation network by improving our existing service as well as implementing additional and potentially new types of services. This could mean upgrading existing routes like the I-15 *Rapid* using dynamic lane management and capital investment or providing a more efficient mode of transit to facilitate connections along that corridor. South Bay *Rapid*, which opened in January 2019, has nearly six miles of fixed guideway and transit priority signalization. These prioritized segments facilitate on-time performance. Fully implementing priority elements can improve our existing services.

How are connected and autonomous vehicle technologies being applied to transit?

Connected and autonomous technology has the potential to make transit faster, safer, and less expensive. It also may change the form of transit in the future. Connected vehicle technology – such as enabling a bus to talk to traffic signals or provide enhanced safety features – is already partly deployed on buses in our region. While fully autonomous mass-transportation vehicles might be used in the future, smaller autonomous shuttles also could serve routes to neighborhood Mobility Hubs and provide connections to mass transportation options.

Emerging technologies are enabling our systems to get faster, smarter, and more integrated. The goal of the 5 Big Moves is to leverage these technologies to create a seamlessly integrated network orchestrated by the Next Operating System (OS). The Next OS is a digital platform that will connect transportation infrastructure to provide a real-time view of supply and demand. This coordinated transportation network will enable people to move around the region with more sustainable and lower cost travel options.

Does the Transit Leap include improvements to existing local bus service?

Yes, the Transit Leap will create a complete network of high-speed and high-capacity transit services that connect the region’s major residential and employment centers and regional attractions. These connections will be made at Mobility Hubs with links to supporting networks of transportation routes and services. New high-speed services covering longer distances with limited stops may be separated from vehicle traffic by a combination of bridges, tunnels, or dedicated lanes. Improvements and enhancements to existing transit services – such as the Trolley, COASTER, SPRINTER, and *Rapid* – could include double and triple tracking the rail lines, more frequent service, fixed guideways, dedicated lanes, and signal priorities to keep transit moving quickly.

Can the Transit Leap help with long wait times at the US-Mexico Border?

There is significant interregional travel demand between the US and Mexico as well as between San Diego and Los Angeles, Riverside, and Arizona. The goal of the Transit Leap, in concert with Complete Corridors, is to improve connections for the people and goods that travel within and through San Diego. Providing people with an efficient and reliable option to travel throughout the region without a car can help address the congestion that occurs due to interregional travel, such as on I-5 between San Diego and Los Angeles or at the San Diego-Mexico border. Additionally, SANDAG identified that a connection to the new Cross Border Xpress (CBX) Terminal could be developed to provide another option for cross-border travel.

GOODS MOVEMENT***If new high-speed rail service is in existing right of ways, does it have to work around freight train schedules?***

Currently, nearly all rail tracks are shared between freight services and passenger trains. Rail operations and schedules would be coordinated among various users.

Are there plans to incorporate small business package transportation within transit options?

Some companies are exploring the creation of delivery services that would allow customers to pick up packages during their commute using smart lockers on transit vehicles. Research also has been conducted on potential implementation of package delivery services by rural transit operators. Private intercity bus operators currently offer package delivery services (e.g. Greyhound Package Express).

HIGH-SPEED RAIL***What is the cost of building high-speed rail, like Virgin Trains?***

The cost of building high-speed rail will depend on the characteristics of the network – for example, the number of stops, miles of track, and costs to acquire right-of-way. Capital and operating costs to build a new network or upgrade our existing one should be complemented by an analysis of return on investment and monitoring performance measures like daily ridership, number of drivers removed from the roadway, and greenhouse gas reduction. This can help determine a successful investment, even if there is not a strong farebox recovery.

Is high-speed passenger rail diesel or electric?

Historically, high-speed rail systems have used diesel and electric power sources or a combination of the two. Today, emerging technologies are allowing transportation systems to evolve and become greener and faster. Maglev high speed-rail was recently tested in Japan and hydrogen-powered trains, with a current maximum speed of 87 mph, started service in Germany in 2018.

How does high-speed passenger rail compare to both cars and airlines in terms of costs and time?

Strategically designed high-speed rail systems can provide a competitive alternative for commuters and other travelers who choose to travel by rail instead of by airplane or personal vehicle. Cost, distance, travel time, geography, congestion, and airplane dwell times are just some components that must be considered when comparing modes and designing a rail system to be a successful alternative. There are key high-speed rail routes in Asia and Europe that are considered to be competitive with air travel in cost, time, and comfort. Virgin Trains' route between Fort Lauderdale and Miami, which provides an alternative to traffic congestion on Interstate-95, cuts an hour-long commute by car in half.

Is high-speed rail feasible in San Diego, especially for shorter commuter routes?

As part of developing a regional vision, an in-depth analysis will be completed to evaluate different modes of transportation to determine which mode provides the optimal mix of speed, access, and cost effectiveness. The goal of the 5 Big Moves is to improve connections throughout the region. For example, connections might be made by a Flexible Fleet vehicle, a *Rapid* bus with signal priority and exclusive lanes, a light rail with transit priority, or a high-speed train.

How does SANDAG consider how the transportation network will impact existing wildlife corridors?

Through the *TransNet* Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP), SANDAG provides funds to protect, preserve, and restore native habitats as offsets to disturbance caused by the construction of regional and local transportation projects. Land is strategically acquired according to targets set in regional habitat conservation plans that prioritize continuous wildlife corridors and critical habitats.

How does Virgin Trains manage parking at its stations?

Virgin Trains provides spaces at their stations for overnight parking. Parking is currently priced at \$20 per night.

TRANSIT FARES AND FUNDING***How can transit fares be kept down so transit is competitive with the cost of driving a car? Are there plans to make the fare system more convenient?***

Part of the analysis being conducted for the 5 Big Moves includes reducing fares to encourage transit usage. The most recently approved MTS and NCTD fare changes are expected to begin in September 2019 and will simplify the fare structure immensely. In addition, a new fare technology system is underway to replace the Compass Card and is expected to be implemented in September 2021. The sky is the limit with the new technology and convenience is the main goal for the new system.

What are the options for funding the Transit Leap?

As part of this plan, funding options will be evaluated. To date, several options are being discussed including public-private partnerships; local, state and federal grants; and seeking assistance from taxpayers.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) AND EMPLOYERS***How are TDM ordinances enforced?***

TDM ordinances can be applied to new development projects and/or existing employers. Typically, a TDM ordinance requires submittal of a TDM plan that demonstrates how the developer or employer will provide on-site amenities, services, or strategies to reduce vehicle trips. TDM ordinances include monitoring and reporting to ensure compliance and effectiveness of the program.

How are equity concerns addressed in TDM plans?

SANDAG ensures that agency TDM programs benefit low income populations. SANDAG offers a \$400 monthly vanpool subsidy to make vanpooling an affordable option. The Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program is a free service for those that use alternative transportation to get to work and need to get home in case of an emergency. Participants can call to reserve a taxi or rental car with this program up to three times per year. There is no charge to reserve a SANDAG bike locker, only a \$25 refundable deposit that can be paid with check or money order through the US mail. These programs are promoted to all sectors of the population and help reduce the costs of commuting.

Is SANDAG coordinating with large employers in the region?

Yes, the SANDAG iCommuter program provides assistance and tools to help employers design and implement customized commuter programs that help meet financial and environmental goals. Participating employers receive specialized consulting services including customized marketing materials, promotional incentives, and on-site events tailored for each organization. Each year, SANDAG iCommuter recognizes employers that make strides to promote alternative commute choices in the workplace through the agency's Diamond Awards program. These employers are recognized at an annual SANDAG Board Meeting, in an agency press release, and in a local publication.

What are some of the parking strategies that employers are implementing in TDM plans?

Employers across the region have implemented a variety of programs that have been effective in reducing the drive alone rate for their employees. For example, Watkins Wellness provides dedicated parking for carpools and vanpools and provides a 50% transit subsidy for employees, and Vertex Pharmaceuticals has a robust commuter program that includes subsidized Lyft Shared rides. Employers interested in implementing a commuter benefit program can learn more at iCommuterSD.com/Employers.

TRANSIT STATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT***How is SANDAG planning to increase building density at transit stations?***

SANDAG is evaluating increasing density as part of this plan by coordinating with the private sector and local jurisdictions to ensure the conditions for transit supportive development are in place to complement any transportation investments. This would be done at major Mobility Hubs to encourage ridership and usage of the system.

What sorts of accommodations will transit stations have for bikes?

Bike accommodations will be determined based on the types of transportation services offered at a station. Types of bike accommodations could include bike lockers, bike parking stations, bike racks, etc.

How is public safety considered for crowds at transit stations?

Public safety is a large component of our overall transit systems and includes security personnel at stations and on vehicles, cameras at each of our stations, and transit riders self-reporting incidents and concerns.

GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS***How will the Transit Leap help reduce GHG emissions? What happens if we don't do this?***

To meet the San Diego region's GHG emission reduction targets, the transportation system needs to offer alternatives to driving alone, which can include transit, biking, walking, shared rides, and other micromobility options. Meeting the regional GHG reduction targets is one part of California's plan to combat climate change. SANDAG must have a plan that meets the GHG reduction targets in order to maintain the region's eligibility for state and federal funding.

King County similarly has goals to reduce GHG emissions from the transportation sector by increasing transit ridership; promoting compact, active, pedestrian and transit-oriented communities; supporting non-motorized travel; and using alternative fuels.

What is renewable natural gas?

Renewable natural gas is methane derived from naturally-occurring organic waste material, typically from wastewater treatment plants or landfills. Renewable natural gas can be used in place of pipeline natural gas, which comes from deep underground wells.