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CREATING A PLAN FOR OUR FUTURE

The RTP/SCS is a long-range visioning plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with goals for the environment, regional economy, social equity and environmental justice and public health. Ultimately, the Plan is intended to help guide transportation and land use decisions and public investments.

This update, the 2016 RTP/SCS, reflects goals and guiding policies and a vision developed through extensive outreach to the general public and numerous stakeholders across our region. SCAG values the region's tremendous diversity and acknowledges that it cannot tackle challenges in the same way everywhere. This chapter discusses how the Plan was developed, and it offers an overview of SCAG's "preferred scenario" for land use and transportation in our region in 2040. SCAG developed this preferred scenario to guide its update of the 2012 RTP/SCS and then settle on a final set of strategies, programs and projects that will place the region more firmly on the road toward achieving its goals. Those strategies, programs and projects are reviewed in Chapter 5.

2016 RTP/SCS GOALS

1. Align the plan investments and policies with improving regional economic development and competitiveness.
2. Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region.
3. Ensure travel safety and reliability for all people and goods in the region.
4. Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system.
5. Maximize the productivity of our transportation system.
6. Protect the environment and health of our residents by improving air quality and encouraging active transportation (e.g., bicycling and walking).
7. Actively encourage and create incentives for energy efficiency, where possible.
8. Encourage land use and growth patterns that facilitate transit and active transportation.
9. Maximize the security of the regional transportation system through improved system monitoring, rapid recovery planning, and coordination with other security agencies.*

*SCAG does not yet have an agreed-upon security performance measure. Therefore, it is not included in the table.

GOALS AND GUIDING POLICIES

As SCAG updated the 2012 RTP/SCS, it evaluated its existing goals, guiding policies and performance measures to determine whether they should be refined. Since the adoption of the 2012 RTP/SCS, several developments have occurred that influenced the development of the 2016 RTP/SCS. These include:

- A surface transportation funding and authorization bill known as "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act" (MAP-21) was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012. MAP-21 includes specific goals for safety; improving the condition of transportation infrastructure; reducing congestion and making the transportation system more reliable; freight movement and economic vitality; and environmental sustainability. MAP-21 now requires that Metropolitan Planning Organizations such as SCAG set performance targets for improving transportation safety and system preservation in coordination with state departments of transportation.
- The rapid advancement of new technologies, such as real-time traveler information, on-demand shared mobility services enabled by smartphone applications, car sharing and bike sharing, is influencing how households travel and their choices about vehicle ownership. New technologies are encouraging more efficient transportation choices, which help public agencies manage the multi-modal transportation system more efficiently.
- There is a continuing emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, even after the adoption of SB 375. On April 29, 2015, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-30-15, which establishes a California greenhouse gas reduction target of 40 percent (below 1990 levels) by 2030. Because the transportation sector is the largest contributor to California's greenhouse gas emissions (more than 36 percent), SCAG anticipates updated and more stringent regional emissions reduction targets.

This Plan's goals are intended to help carry out our vision for improved mobility, a strong economy and sustainability. Based on our assessment of these developments, the goals of the 2016 RTP/SCS, which are represented graphically in this chapter, remain unchanged from those adopted in the 2012 RTP/SCS.

The guiding policies for the 2016 RTP/SCS are intended to help focus future investments on the best-performing projects and strategies to preserve, maintain and optimize the performance of the existing transportation system.

Two additional guiding policies have been added since 2012. The first addition (Guiding Policy 6) addresses emerging technologies and the potential for such technologies to lower the number of collisions, improve traveler information, reduce the demand for driving alone and lessen congestion related to road incidents and other non-recurring circumstances (a car collision, for example). The second addition (Guiding Policy 7) recognizes the potential for transportation investments to improve both the efficiency of the transportation network and the environment.

SEEKING PUBLIC INPUT TO REFINE SCENARIOS FOR OUR FUTURE

To develop a preferred scenario for the region at 2040, SCAG first generated four preliminary scenarios for our region's future – each one representing a different vision for land use and transportation in 2040. More specifically, each scenario was designed to explore and convey the impact of where the region would grow, to what extent the growth would be focused within existing cities and towns, and how it would grow— in other words, the shape and style of the neighborhoods and transportation systems that would shape growth over the period. To help the agency refine these four scenarios, SCAG reached out extensively to the general public and numerous stakeholders to seek their views and input. Refining the scenarios was an important step on the road toward settling on a preferred scenario – which offers a comprehensive picture of what kind of future we want. The scenarios and the selected preferred scenario proved to be powerful planning tools to solidify our vision for our region at the middle of the century.

Public outreach was integral to the development of the entire RTP/SCS, but particularly during the refinement of scenarios. To ensure that the 2016 RTP/SCS was developed openly and inclusively, the agency implemented a comprehensive public outreach and involvement program. This was based on a Public Participation Plan adopted by SCAG's Regional Council in April 2014. Specific public engagement strategies used during the development of the Draft 2016 RTP/SCS included:

- Developing materials for public outreach in a variety of formats to reach broad audiences, including a short video, fact sheets, surveys, PowerPoint presentations and poster boards.
- Centralizing RTP/SCS information on a new easy-to-use microsite, developed to be mobile/tablet friendly and compliant with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

2016 RTP/SCS GUIDING POLICIES

1. Transportation investments shall be based on SCAG's adopted regional Performance Indicators.
2. Ensuring safety, adequate maintenance, and efficiency of operations on the existing multimodal transportation system should be the highest RTP/SCS priorities for any incremental funding in the region.
3. RTP/SCS land use and growth strategies in the RTP/SCS will respect local input and advance smart growth initiatives.
4. Transportation demand management (TDM) and active transportation will be focus areas, subject to Policy 1.
5. HOV gap closures that significantly increase transit and rideshare usage will be supported and encouraged, subject to Policy 1.
6. The RTP/SCS will support investments and strategies to reduce non-recurrent congestion and demand for single occupancy vehicle use, by leveraging advanced technologies.
7. The RTP/SCS will encourage transportation investments that result in cleaner air, a better environment, a more efficient transportation system, and sustainable outcomes in the long run.
8. Monitoring progress on all aspects of the Plan, including the timely implementation of projects, programs, and strategies, will be an important and integral component of the Plan.

OUR COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONS

The SCAG region includes a total of six County Transportation Commissions (CTCs), one for each county – Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura. Each CTC is responsible for planning and implementing countywide transportation improvements, allocating locally-generated transportation revenues, and, in some cases, operating transit services. During each RTP/SCS update, the CTCs provide SCAG with extensive project lists that are then incorporated into the Plan. The projects included on these lists are regarded as regionally significant and/or anticipated to receive (or already receiving) federal funds. In addition, the CTCs anticipate that these projects will be initiated or completed by the Plan's horizon year (in this case, 2040). The 2016 RTP/SCS includes more than 2,000 projects – ranging from freeway improvements, railroad grade separations, bicycle lanes, new transit hubs and replacement bridges. CTCs are a wonderful resource for learning more about projects that are coming to your community by 2040.



- Supporting multiple committees, task forces and working groups made up of SCAG partners, stakeholders and interested groups to develop the key components of the Plan.
- Holding multiple public open houses before the release of the Draft RTP/SCS, to allow direct and interactive participation by interested parties.
- Announcing the schedule for the open houses through a wide variety of means, including community calendars, distributing flyers at local events and libraries, email newsletters, social media and ethnic media.
- Seeking the assistance of transit agencies, stakeholder organizations and their communication channels to maximize outreach opportunities.
- Reaching out to traditionally underrepresented and/or underserved audiences.
- Evaluating public participation activities to continually improve the outreach process.

The overall Plan was developed with input from local governments, county transportation commissions (CTCs), tribal governments, non-profit organizations, businesses and local stakeholders within Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties.

From past plan development cycles, SCAG had heard from many participants about the need for early engagement during the development of the RTP/SCS. For members of the public, SCAG conducted public engagement activities between May and July 2015, with 23 open house events held across six counties. These events helped educate residents on the goals of the Plan, explore topics included in the Plan and gather input on priorities with an electronic survey. Participants reviewed poster boards showing projected changes in population and demographics within their county and the region, and then were asked for their input on how the region could accommodate growth in a variety of areas. These include providing transportation options, improving public health, preserving natural lands and supporting economic opportunities.

During discussion of the scenarios, major components were presented with maps, charts and figures. SCAG presented results associated with each scenario at public open houses held throughout the region to help stakeholders understand regional growth options. Participants learned about:

- The impact that different options for growth would have on transportation, land use, the economy and the environment;

- The degree to which growth could be focused within the region's cities over the next 25 years;
- The potential shape and style of neighborhoods and transportation systems; and
- How varying combinations of land use and transportation strategies lead to different land consumption, travel, energy, water and pollutant impacts.

Specific details on the scenarios can be found in SCS Background Documentation Appendix.

Recognizing that not all members of the public could attend the open houses, SCAG provided an opportunity to participate virtually by providing the workshop materials and the online survey. Hundreds of Southern Californians participated online and gave input on transit accessibility, transportation investments and other topics. A summary report from the survey was presented at a special joint meeting of SCAG's Regional Council and Policy Committees, and this report is also included in the Public Participation & Consultation Appendix.

In addition to these outreach efforts, all regular and special meetings of SCAG's Transportation Committee; Community, Economic and Human Development Committee; Energy and Environment Committee; Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee; Executive Administration Committee; and Regional Council were publicly noticed and opportunities for public comment were provided at each meeting. Federally required interagency consultation was done through the monthly meetings of the Transportation Conformity Working Group. Additional outreach strategies that were implemented are outlined in Public Participation & Consultation Appendix.

SCAG is not an implementing agency, so it is not directly involved in the construction or operation of transportation projects and other infrastructure improvements discussed in this Plan. The significance of the 2016 RTP/SCS is that the vision contained within the Plan sets the tone for policy development by other government agencies throughout the region. The public involvement discussed in this chapter helped the SCAG board and staff members understand the needs and concerns of stakeholders, leading to a more meaningful collective vision for the region's future.

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2040

INTEGRATING CALIFORNIA'S TRANSPORTATION FUTURE

The state of California, with direction from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), developed a statewide, long-range transportation plan with a 25-year planning horizon, the California Transportation Plan 2040 (CTP 2040). The Draft CTP 2040 provides a long-range policy framework to meet California's future mobility needs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Like the CTP 2040, the 2016 RTP/SCS aims to motivate the development of an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that is sustainable, improves mobility and enhances our quality of life. Though the CTP 2040 is not yet finalized (anticipated approval in the next year), it helped inform the goals, policies and strategies included in the 2016 RTP/SCS.



SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE: IT'S OUR CHOICE

To refine the scenarios and ultimately develop a preferred scenario, SCAG gathered a huge amount of feedback at the public meetings we have discussed. An important part of this process involved conducting comprehensive surveys.

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

Participants at public workshops were asked to complete a 37-question survey to provide input on their priorities, and open-ended feedback was encouraged. The survey was also available for completion on SCAG's website. Survey questions and a summary of responses are included in Public Participation Consultation Appendix. Between the 2016 RTP/SCS Open Houses and the 2016 RTP/SCS website, more than 650 residents from throughout the SCAG region participated in the survey. About 75 percent of open house attendees participated in the survey, indicating that stakeholders were engaged during the workshops and wanted to participate in a meaningful way. The majority of survey participants resided in Los Angeles County, making up 51 percent of the total, followed by Orange County at 15 percent and Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura Counties at nine percent each. Five percent of online participants did not state in which county they reside.

SURVEY RESULTS

Expanding transportation choices was clearly a priority for survey participants. Whether it is through public transportation, High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, bicycles or personal vehicles, our region wants as wide a range of choices as possible. When asked what our top priority should be for managing our regional highway and road system, the top two responses were almost evenly split. Most respondents wanted to protect and preserve existing transportation infrastructure — supporting a “fix it first” policy – and they wanted to achieve maximum productivity through system management and demand management.

Moreover, the general open-ended comments received suggested there should be less focus on constructing new roads and lanes to build capacity. When asked about transportation budget priorities, survey respondents primarily favored creating more public transportation options, followed closely by constructing bikeways and then improving traffic flow. Regarding transit, feedback received from comment cards was particularly helpful. The most prevalent comments stated a desire for:

- More efficient posting of time schedules;
- More accurate system maps;
- Better integration of fare systems;
- Increasing space for bicycles on public transit;
- Creating a comprehensive, efficient and regional-scale bus system;

- Exploring opportunities such as double-decker freeways that explicitly allow transit operations on one level; and
- Expanding transit commuter options.

Open-ended written comments provided helpful direction in the area of active transportation. Many commenters preferred enhancing non-motorized infrastructure such as bike lanes and sidewalks to improve access to transit and increasing transportation options for all. Suggested strategies included:

- Simultaneously funding road improvements and prioritizing pedestrian infrastructure;
- Increasing resources for complete streets and protected bike lanes; and
- Providing public education for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians to help everyone understand how roads are to be shared.

Survey participants recognized the connection between public health, active transportation and the environment. When asked about which areas of public health they were most concerned about, air quality was the top health concern among respondents. Having safe areas for walking, biking and physical activity was also a principal concern, as was access to healthy food.

There is no “one size fits all” type of land use or density in a region as diverse as ours. However, it is fair to say that survey participants generally favored infill development rather than expanding our urban footprint into natural areas or farmland; 80 percent of respondents preferred development in existing areas. For example, when asked where future residential development should mostly occur, the majority of participants said they preferred part mixed-use, part urban areas. Some suburban mixed-use areas were also desired, but strictly urban or suburban areas were least favored. When asked what type of housing should be built to accommodate our region's future population, multifamily attached housing was the leading response. Small-lot detached homes and townhouses were somewhat favored and large lot detached housing was least favored. About 90 percent of survey participants found protecting natural habitat areas to be important or very important.

Collectively, the survey responses offered an invaluable guide to help finalize the Plan's investments, strategies and priorities. They reflect how regional stakeholders want us to address priority areas such as transit and roadway investments, system management, active transportation, land use and public health.

OUR PREFERRED SCENARIO

The extensive public outreach coupled with detailed analysis of each scenario and coordination with technical and policy committees led to our selection of a preferred scenario for the 2016 RTP/SCS based upon SCAG's "Policy Growth Forecast." This preferred scenario also incorporated inputs from local jurisdictions, including the land use and transportation strategies, investments and policies reflected in the 2012 RTP/SCS.

The preferred scenario envisions future regional growth that is well coordinated with the transportation system improvements of the approved 2012 RTP/SCS, as well as anticipated new transportation projects planned by the region's CTCs and transit providers. It also incorporates best practices for increasing transportation choices; reducing our dependence on personal automobiles; allowing future growth in walkable, mixed-use communities and in High-Quality Transit Areas (HQTAs); and further improving air quality.

Regional investments in making transit trips quicker and easier are expanded to increase transit ridership. New land use concepts such as "Livable Corridors" and "Neighborhood Mobility Areas" are also introduced. These are described in more detail later in the Plan. In the preferred scenario for the 2016 RTP/SCS, new residential growth from 2012 to 2040 is split between multifamily housing (69 percent) and detached single-family homes (31 percent). The preferred scenario is the result of an investment plan that is assumed to be financially constrained.

To help our regional partners envision how the preferred scenario fosters development on the ground, SCAG built upon its earlier outreach and solicited feedback from local jurisdictions on the distribution of new households and employment at the neighborhood level, through 2040. Jurisdictions were asked to provide input on the growth scenario, including information on specific planned development projects with entitlements, other planned projects, or recently completed developments. Accordingly, the following core principles provided the framework for the preferred scenario:

- **Principle #1:** The preferred scenario will be adopted at the jurisdictional level, thus directly reflecting the population, household and employment growth projections derived from the local input process and previously reviewed and approved by local jurisdictions. The preferred scenario maintains these projected jurisdictional growth totals, meaning future growth is not reallocated from one local jurisdiction to another.

- **Principle #2:** The preferred scenario at the Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) level is controlled to be within the density ranges* of local general plans or input received from local jurisdictions.
- **Principle #3:** For the purpose of determining consistency for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining, lead agencies such as local jurisdictions have the sole discretion in determining a local project's consistency with the 2016 RTP/SCS.
- **Principle #4:** TAZ level data or any data at a geography smaller than the jurisdictional level has been utilized to conduct required modeling analyses and is therefore advisory only and non-binding given that sub-jurisdictional forecasts are not adopted as part of the 2016 RTP/SCS. TAZ level data may be used by jurisdictions in local planning as it deems appropriate. There is no obligation by a jurisdiction to change its land use policies, General Plan, or regulations to be consistent with the 2016 RTP/SCS.
- **Principle #5:** SCAG will maintain communication with agencies who use SCAG sub-jurisdictional level data to ensure that the "advisory & non-binding" nature of the data is appropriately maintained.

The preferred scenario improves the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the region and enhances public health and other co-benefits from large transportation investments and improvements in technology – particularly those that focus on transit and first/last mile strategies.

Furthermore, the preferred scenario offers a vision for how we want our region to grow over the next quarter century and it gives us a clear-eyed view of what we want to achieve. Guided by goals and policies, built through sober analysis and refined with extensive public input, developing the preferred scenario set the stage for the hard work of building a comprehensive plan of land use and transportation strategies, programs and projects designed to confront our many challenges and move our region toward the vision embodied in the preferred scenario.

Chapter 5 reviews those strategies, programs and projects that collectively will propel the region toward realizing the outcomes seen in the preferred scenario – including more livable, healthy and economically strong communities and a more sustainable future.

*With the exception of the 6 percent of TAZs that have average density below the density range of local general plans.