



COMMUNITY HEALTH
IMPROVEMENT PARTNERS
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29 August 2014

SANDAG

Board of Directors, Chair Jack Dale
Transportation Committee, Chair Todd Gloria
Regional Planning Committee, Chair Lesa Heebner
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan (RP)

Honorable SANDAG Board and Committee members:

On behalf of the signatories below, we are pleased to submit these comments regarding the adoption of the Preferred Revenue Constrained Transportation Scenario for San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan (RP) and SANDAG's work going forward.

We want to thank those Board members that spoke eloquently at your August 15, 2014 hearing on the need to accomplish more with the RP, to begin to move away from auto-centric transportation, and to embrace a vision for a healthier transportation future the community has long been asking for. The human toll of our car dependent society includes asthma attacks and respiratory illness, obesity, diabetes and heart disease. The options SANDAG and municipalities provide for the public's mobility can translate directly to improving the public's health.

We are grateful that the Board took the important step to pursue the proposed Scenario 3, "Healthy People and Economy." We remain resolute on the importance of Scenario 3 to accomplish our air quality, public health, active transportation, and climate goals and commit to working with Staff to analyze and develop Scenario 3 in parallel with the Preferred Scenario.

- In the short term, we ask that the analysis move quickly in order to inform the preparation of the EIR and the ultimate decision in 2015.
- In the long term, we will continue to advocate for the "Healthy People and Economy" Scenario to be a significant element if not major driver of the Preferred Scenario in the next RP update.

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As we and many others noted in our testimony on August 15, the performance measures for Scenarios 1 and 2 both fall far short in key metrics for public health outcomes. The land use plans of the County and most of the 18 cities have been dramatically oriented to consolidate growth along transportation corridors and yet the projected increases in transit and active transportation are minimal. Over the next 36 years, the two scenarios increase transportation-related physical activity by only 2 minutes, increase transit trips by only 1.5 percentage points, from 2% to 3.5%, and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips by only 2 percentage points. Additionally, daily travel times on transit will continue to be nearly double those of driving alone. These scenarios clearly do not embrace the goals of SB 375 and will have a minimal benefit to air quality and public health.

We recognize that these metrics are averages across the entire region; reflecting urban and suburban land uses, small cities, and decentralized employment centers. Accordingly, we encourage SANDAG to drill deeper to provide more meaningful performance metrics to inform the public, transportation planners, and decision-makers.

Recognizing that transit is the backbone of a good active transportation network, and if we want to affect positive public health outcomes through mobility choices, we must focus our efforts to make real progress on these performance measures in the current and future scenarios:

- Increased transit mode split
- Increased active transportation mode split
- Increased transportation-related physical activity

We also ask that Staff move quickly to forward the appropriate data on the preferred scenario selected as well as the Healthy People and Economy Scenario to County Health and Human Services for the Integrated Transport and Health Impact Modelling (ITHIM.) The results from the ITHIM will provide critical information to the public to highlight the public health benefits of active transportation and what is possible to achieve through greater options for transportation-related physical activity. This information will inform future decision-making as SANDAG moves to prioritize public health outcomes through mobility choices. Furthermore, with the inclusion of the ITHIM output in the Plan EIR, we believe it will highlight the need to refine the Preferred Scenario toward better health outcomes.

In closing, we ask you to pursue the following goals in the scenario planning process:

- 1) Pursue the Healthy People and Economy Scenario and use the data and analysis of this third scenario to inform and improve on the preferred scenarios in the current San Diego Forward Process.
- 2) Strengthen the importance of transit and active transportation in the preferred scenario by assuring high quality transit service is provided as well as increased biking and walking infrastructure.
- 3) Move transit and active transportation investments earlier in the planning process rather than decades away.
- 4) Pursue increased revenue to meet enhanced transit and active transportation objectives.
- 5) Provide meaningful health analysis of scenarios using ITHIM and update the health and other performance metrics to clearly quantify outcomes.

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We must and can do better; the community has been asking for a visionary transportation future and the public's health and our economy demand it. As the Board discussions highlighted, what 2050 will look like starts with the discussions and decisions of today. With healthier planning, children can grow up breathing cleaner air with healthier places to play and seniors can have more opportunities to successfully age in place and lead more independent and healthy lives. We look forward to your continued leadership in helping to achieve the community's vision for a healthier transportation future for our region.

Thank you for the opportunity to play a vital role in the development of the Regional Plan to improve the health of San Diego County residents.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director
American Lung Association
In California-San Diego Office

Jim Stone
Executive Director
Circulate San Diego

Cheryl Moder
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Stay Cool for Grandkids