Policy Development Framework for Connect SoCal 2024

Connect SoCal 2024, the 2024 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), will be prepared by SCAG over the next two years, in anticipation of an April 2024 adoption date. Prepared in response to direction by the Regional Council, this Policy Development Framework presents the Draft Plan Vision and Goals and the Policy Priorities to be expanded and refined through the planning process to advance the vision and goals, and a policy development leadership structure and outlook to foster policy education, engagement, consensus building and decision-making.

DRAFT PLAN VISION AND GOALS

In January 2022, staff began engaging with stakeholders through the Regional Planning Working Groups and the Technical Working Group on the draft Goals & Vision for Connect SoCal 2024. Their feedback informed the updated draft Vision and Goals below.

The draft Vision is meant to capture what we want the region to be by 2050 and is supported by four draft Goals, each centered around a key theme (Mobility, Communities, the Environment, and the Economy). These goals are each further defined by supporting sub-Goals.

DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

A healthy, accessible and connected region for a more resilient and equitable future.

DRAFT GOALS

Mobility: Build and maintain a robust transportation network.

- Support investments and programs that are well-maintained and operated, coordinated, and resilient, and result in improved safety and air quality.
- Ensure reliable, accessible, affordable, and quality travel options while striving to enhance equity in transportation resources offered in underserved communities.
- Plan for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Communities: Develop, connect, and sustain communities that are livable and thriving.

- Reinforce vibrant, human-centered communities in urban, suburban, and rural settings to increase mobility options and reduce travel distances.
- Produce and preserve a diversity of housing types to improve affordability, accessibility, and choices for all.
- Foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity, and actively seek to reduce racial and economic disparities.

Environment: Create a healthy region for the people of today and tomorrow.

- Develop communities that are resilient and can mitigate, adapt to, and respond to chronic and acute stressors and disruptions, such as climate change.
- Integrate the region's development pattern and transportation network to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Conserve and restore the region's natural and agricultural resources.

Economy: Support a sustainable, efficient, and productive regional economic environment that provides opportunities for all.

- Provide physical and digital infrastructure to improve access to education, vocational training, jobs, financial systems, and to foster the growth of small businesses in underserved communities.
- Advance a resilient and efficient goods movement system that supports the economic vitality of the region, attainment of clean air, and quality of life for our communities.
- Improve regional multimodal transportation system infrastructure and efficiency to enhance the region's global economic competitiveness.

POLICY PRIORITIES

The Draft Policy Priorities are based upon policy direction established in Connect SoCal 2020 and recent Regional Council actions to address three of the emerging issues facing the region. The pillars of Connect SoCal 2020—the *Core Vision* and *Key Connections*—are outlined below followed by a summary of the emerging issues and related actions.

CORE VISION

Rooted in the 2008 and 2012 RTP/SCS plans, Connect SoCal's *Core Vision* centers on maintaining and better managing the transportation network we have for moving people and goods, while expanding mobility choices by locating housing, jobs and transit closer together and increasing investment in transit and complete streets.

- Sustainable Development
- System Preservation & Resilience
- Demand & System Management
- Transit Backbone
- Complete Streets
- Goods Movement

Many of the policies and strategies summarized as the *Core Vision* of the plan are reflective of the policies and projects developed at the local level and gathered by SCAG through the plan development process (through the Local Data Exchange with Local Jurisdictions and Project List submissions from County Transportation Commissions). The Core Vision strategies will be discussed during plan development to identify barriers to implementation and opportunities for enhancement.

KEY CONNECTIONS

Connect SoCal 2020 introduced *Key Connections* that build on the *Core Vision* to leverage technology or advance policy needed to accelerate reaching plan goals. Key Connections identify critical regional strategies to "close the gap" between what could be accomplished through intensification of core planning strategies alone, and what must be done to meet increasingly aggressive greenhouse gas reduction goals. The Key Connections lie at the intersection of land use, transportation and innovation, aiming to coalesce policy discussions and advance promising strategies for leveraging new technologies and partnerships to accelerate progress on regional planning goals. The policies and strategies identified as *Key Connections* became the focal point for SCAG implementation efforts in directing research priorities and local technical assistance.

- Smart Cities & Job Centers
- Housing Supportive Infrastructure
- Go Zones
- Accelerated Electrification
- Shared Mobility & Mobility as A Service (MaaS)

In developing both the Core Vision and Key Connections, SCAG works with stakeholders, identifies trends and data in the region, assesses local best practices and researches the efficacy of different strategies. SCAG also needs strategic input and direction from Policy Committee members and the Regional Council.

EMERGING ISSUES

There are three salient and interconnected challenges facing our region: equity, resilience, and the economy. Actions by SCAG's Regional Council over the past year and a half provide a policy foundation for work on the next plan development and expanded policy focus on these emerging issue areas.

Equity

On July 2, 2020, the Regional Council adopted Resolution No. 20-623-2[1] on Racial and Social Justice, affirming SCAG's commitment to meaningfully advance justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, and establishing the Special Committee on Equity and Social Justice to advance social justice throughout the agency.

On May 6, 2021, the Regional Council adopted the Racial Equity Early Action Plan[2], the purpose of which is to guide and sustain SCAG's regional leadership in service of equity and social justice. It reflects discussions and feedback provided to the Special Committee on the definition of equity and overarching goals and strategies to advance racial equity through SCAG's policies, practices and activities.

Resilience

On January 7, 2021, the Regional Council adopted Resolution No. 21-628-1[3] on Climate Change Action that affirms a climate change crisis in Southern California and identifies actions for SCAG to undertake, including: developing a regional resilience framework, initiating a regional climate planning network, and developing a regional advanced mitigation program (RAMP).

Economy

On July 1, 2021, the Regional Council adopted the Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy (IERS) Final Report and Recommendations[4], which identifies five core principles to drive SCAG's work and to act as a lens for identifying recommendations:

1. Center the economic recovery strategy on racial and gender equity; focusing in reducing the racial wealth gap;
2. Focus on rebuilding the middle class with high road employment;
3. Ensure that all strategies contribute to a climate ready region;
4. Tailor strategies to the needs of both industry sectors and geographic subregions; and
5. Bring new and diverse voices to the table.

On February 4, 2021, the Regional Council adopted Resolution No. 21-629-2[5] to establish a Broadband Action Plan to assist in bridging the digital divide. The Broadband Action Plan includes incorporating

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[1] https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/rc070220agn01.pdf?1602368143
[2] https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/rc050621fullpacket.pdf#page=91
[3] https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/rc010721fullpacket.pdf#page=12
[4] https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/rc070121fullpacket.pdf#page=13
[5] https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/rc020421fullpacket.pdf#page=13

broadband planning, data and research findings, and strategies, as appropriate, into existing SCAG programs and future Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategies.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT: LEADERSHIP & OUTLOOK

Policy discussions that occur during SCAG's Policy Committee meetings provide valuable direction to staff on areas for further research, potential strategies to address regional challenges, and priorities for what to include in the proposed plan.

Staff will bring forward informational and discussion items related to the relevant *Core Vision* and *Key Connections*; highlighting context and data from staff research; perspectives from academics, researchers or policy experts; and insights from local practitioners. Presentations may also focus on current subregional efforts and best practices to address the Connect SoCal 2020 Key Connections, as well as emerging trends and new issues related to each *Core Vision* or *Key Connection*. The plan issue areas organized by Policy Committee are outlined in the table below.

MAIN POLICY COMMITTEES

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE	COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Core Vision		
• System Preservation & Resilience • Demand & System Management • Transit Backbone • Complete Streets • Goods Movement	• Sustainable Development	• Sustainable Development
Key Connections		
• Go Zones • Shared Mobility & MaaS • Smart Cities & Job Centers	• Smart Cities & Job Centers • Housing Supportive Infrastructure • Water Resilience	• Water Resilience • Accelerated Clean Transportation Technologies
		Environmental Compliance
		• PEIR • Transportation Conformity • Environmental Justice • SB 375 Technical Methodology

JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE

The issues facing the region are intersectional and often do not neatly fit within one committee. For that reason, it is occasionally necessary to hold a Joint Policy Committee meeting of members from all three

Policy Committees (Transportation; Community, Economic, Human Development; and Energy and Environment) to share pertinent information, discuss key plan development issues or seek coordinated actions or recommendations.

SPECIAL CONNECT SOCAL 2024 SUB-COMMITTEES

As discussed at the February 2022 Joint Policy Committee Meeting, there are a number of trends disrupted by the pandemic and emerging issues setting the context for the next Connect SoCal. To help dive deeper into key areas for Connect SoCal, SCAG will establish three new sub-committees.

These three sub-committees will be comprised of members from each county with participation from invited business or civic leaders and practitioners with unique and valuable perspective on the given sub-committee focus area.

These sub-committees will prepare and make recommendations to SCAG Policy Committees on how to address these emerging issues within Connect SoCal 2024.

NEXT GENERATION INFRASTRUCTURE	RESILIENCE & CONSERVATION	RACIAL EQUITY & REGIONAL PLANNING
Purpose: Build on Connect SoCal 2020 and provide guidance on the priorities and strategies for Connect SoCal 2024, reflecting the rapidly evolving developments across the region specific to the future of mobility and associated implications for public policy. The need for more comprehensive understanding of these developments and consensus building on key regional strategies and policies is even more evident today in preparation for Connect SoCal 2024 as we continue to grapple with the pandemic, a more challenging economic environment, and shifting state and federal priorities with increasing uncertainties across the planning horizon.	*Purpose:* Advance the direction set in the SCAG Regional Council Resolution on Climate Change Action to consider opportunities for enhanced conservation and how can Connect SoCal support our communities in adapting to changing conditions or mitigating risks to become more resilient.	*Purpose:* Identify opportunities to advance racial equity through the policies and strategies in Connect SoCal and guide how our planning and investments over the next 30 years can address and rectify the effects of racially discriminatory policies in SCAG's environmental justice communities.