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AB 1246 CONSULTATION MEETING

*Friday, March 15, 2024
12:00 p.m. – 12:15 p.m.*

To Attend In-Person:

Metro

**One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Mullholland Conference Room, 15th Floor**

To Participate on Your Computer:

<https://scag.zoom.us/j/81060224918>

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**Call in Number: 1-669-444-9171
Meeting ID: 810 6022 4918**

PUBLIC ADVISORY

If members of the public wish to review the attachments or have any questions on any of the agenda items, please contact Maggie Aguilar at (213) 630-1420 or via email at aguilarm@scag.ca.gov. Agendas & Minutes are also available at: www.scag.ca.gov/committees.

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Instructions for Participating and Public Comments

Members of the public can participate in the meeting via written or verbal comments.

1. **In Writing:** Written comments can be emailed to: ePublicComment@scag.ca.gov. Written comments received **by 5pm on Wednesday, March 13, 2024**, will be transmitted to members of the body and posted on SCAG’s website prior to the meeting. You are **not** required to submit public comments in writing or in advance of the meeting; this option is offered as a convenience should you desire not to provide comments in real time as described below. Written comments received after 5pm on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, will be announced and included as part of the official record of the meeting. Any writings or documents provided to a majority of this committee regarding any item on this agenda (other than writings legally exempt from public disclosure) are available at the Office of the Clerk, at 900 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1700, Los Angeles, CA 90017 or by phone at (213) 630-1420, or email to aguilarm@scag.ca.gov.
2. **Remotely:** If participating in real time via Zoom or phone, please wait for the presiding officer to call the item for which you wish to speak and use the “raise hand” function on your computer or *9 by phone and wait for SCAG staff to announce your name/phone number.

General Information for Public Comments

Verbal comments can be presented in real time during the meeting. Members of the public are allowed a total of 3 minutes for verbal comments. The presiding officer retains discretion to adjust time limits as necessary to ensure efficient and orderly conduct of the meeting, including equally reducing the time of all comments.

For purpose of providing public comment for items listed on the Consent Calendar, please indicate that you wish to speak when the Consent Calendar is called. Items listed on the Consent Calendar will be acted on with one motion and there will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the legislative body so requests, in which event, the item will be considered separately.

In accordance with SCAG’s Regional Council Policy, Article VI, Section H and California Government Code Section 54957.9, if a SCAG meeting is “willfully interrupted” and the “orderly conduct of the meeting” becomes unfeasible, the presiding officer or the Chair of the legislative body may order the removal of the individuals who are disrupting the meeting.



AB 1246 Consultation Meeting

Date: Friday, March 15, 2024

Time: 12:00 PM – 12:15 PM

List of Members

1. **Kome Ajise**
Executive Director
SCAG
2. **David Aguirre**
Executive Director
ICTC
3. **Stephanie Wiggins**
Chief Executive Officer
Metro
4. **Ray Wolfe**
Chief Executive Officer
SBCTA
5. **Anne Mayer**
Executive Director
RCTC
6. **Martin Erickson**
Executive Director
VCTC
7. **Darrell Johnson**
Chief Executive Officer
OCTA
8. **Gloria Roberts**
District 7 Director (Acting)
CALTRANS



AB 1246 CONSULTATION MEETING AGENDA

Friday, March 15, 2023
12:00 PM-12:15 PM

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Members of the public wishing to verbally address the legislative body in real time during the meeting will be allowed up to 3 minutes to speak. The presiding officer retains discretion to adjust time limits as necessary to ensure efficient and orderly conduct of the meeting, including equally reducing the time of all comments based upon the number of comments received.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. AB 1246 Consultation Regarding Connect SoCal 2024 and associated Consistency Amendment #23-26 to the 2023 Federal Transportation Improvement Program

(Kome Ajise, Executive Director, SCAG)

ADJOURNMENT

Southern California Association of Governments
900 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1700, Los Angeles, CA 90017

To: CEOs AB 1246 Consultation Group (County
Transportation Commissions and Caltrans)

From: Kome Ajise, Executive Director, SCAG

Subject: AB 1246 Consultation Regarding Connect SoCal
2024 and associated Consistency Amendment
#23-26 to the 2023 Federal Transportation
Improvement Program

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Accept this report as fulfillment of the AB 1246-required consultation process for Connect SoCal 2024 and 2023 Federal Transportation Improvement Program Consistency Amendment #23-26.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This item supports the following Strategic Plan Goals:

Goal 1: Produce innovative solutions that improve the quality of life for Southern Californians.

Goal 7: Secure funding to support agency priorities to deliver work products effectively and efficiently.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

California State Statute Assembly Bill 1246 (AB 1246) requires that appropriate consultation occur between the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), County Transportation Commissions (CTCs), and Caltrans on formal planning and programming actions related to the Regional Transportation Plan and Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). This item is brought before you to comply with this requirement.

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region, SCAG is responsible for developing and maintaining the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) and the FTIP in cooperation with the State (Caltrans), the CTCs, and public transit operators. SCAG, working in cooperation with its stakeholders, developed Connect SoCal 2024 (2024 RTP/SCS). Connect SoCal 2024 outlines more than \$750 billion in transportation system investments through 2050. It was prepared through a collaborative, continuous, and comprehensive process with input from local governments, CTCs, tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and local stakeholders within the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura.

On November 2, 2023, SCAG's Regional Council (RC) authorized the release of the draft Connect SoCal 2024 and 2023 FTIP Consistency Amendment #23-26 for public review and comment. The public comment period ended on January 12, 2024. This item includes an overview of the comments received by SCAG during the public review and comment period and the proposed revisions to the draft Plan. SCAG staff are currently in the process of updating the draft Plan in response to the

comments received. The proposed final Connect SoCal 2024 will be available at ConnectSoCal.org on March 28, 2024.

On April 4, 2024, SCAG staff intends to seek approval from the RC to adopt Connect SoCal 2024, the 2023 FTIP Consistency Amendment #23-26, and the associated proposed final transportation conformity analysis. If the RC adopts Connect SoCal 2024 at that time, SCAG staff will proceed with submitting Connect SoCal 2024 and its adopted transportation conformity findings to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) who, in consultation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will review Connect SoCal 2024 to make the final transportation conformity determination in accordance with the federal Clean Air Act and EPA Transportation Conformity Regulations. FHWA/FTA final conformity determination is needed by June 5, 2024. SCAG will also submit the 2023 FTIP Consistency Amendment #23-26 to Caltrans (including conformity findings) for their review and approval. SCAG will also proceed with submitting Connect SoCal 2024 to the California Air Resources Board (CARB). CARB will then review SCAG's determination that the SCS would, if implemented, achieve the established greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

BACKGROUND:

California State Statute AB 1246 (Chapter 1333, Statutes of 1976) requires that appropriate consultation occur among SCAG, CTCs, and Caltrans on formal planning and programming actions related to the FTIP and RTP.

SCAG is the federally designated MPO for the six-county region of Southern California and the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) per state law. As such, it is responsible for developing and maintaining the FTIP in cooperation with Caltrans, CTCs, and public transit operators.

Over the past three years, SCAG completed many milestones in the development of Connect SoCal 2024, including but not limited to data collection, research, policy development and outreach. During this process, SCAG staff discussed elements of the Plan at over 90 working group or technical advisory committee meetings. SCAG's RC and Policy Committees reviewed over 100 staff reports related to development or specific elements of the Plan and three special subcommittees provided additional guidance on the policies and strategies for the Plan. SCAG staff collected key input from local jurisdictions on the Forecasted Regional Development Pattern and from CTCs for the Project List. To engage the public, SCAG held 27 public workshops in the Spring of 2023, partnered with 15 community-based organizations, and collected over 3,600 unique survey submissions.

On November 2, 2023, the RC approved the draft Connect SoCal 2024 and the associated Consistency Amendment #23-26 to the 2013 FTIP for public review and comment. The public comment period ended on January 12, 2024. During the public review and comment period, SCAG held 15 elected official briefings and three public hearings. In total, SCAG received comment letters or submissions

from 53 agencies/organizations and 28 individuals (including verbal comments at public hearings). These submissions included over 1,800 distinct comments. A direct response to each comment will be included in the proposed final Connect SoCal 2024 Public Participation & Consultation Technical Report.

SCAG staff are currently in the process of updating the draft Connect SoCal 2024 in response to the comments received. The proposed final Plan will be available at ConnectSoCal.org on March 28, 2024. The following sections summarize the changes being applied both to highlight the more notable changes and to inventory the changes by subject matter. Lastly, there were comments received for which direct changes to the Plan were either not feasible or not appropriate given the need for further discussion or analysis. Those comments and issues are also detailed below.

Notable Changes to Connect SoCal 2024

Mobility Goal

Based on comments from Caltrans, SCAG staff propose to amend the Mobility goal from “Build and maintain a robust transportation network” to “Build and maintain an integrated multimodal transportation network.”

Transportation Projects

A total of 95 project modifications have been made, most involving updates to cost or schedule. The proposed final Plan will include three new financially constrained projects:

- San Bernardino County: Reimagining and Reconnecting Route 66 Project, a complete streets project
- Los Angeles County: Four Commuter Coaches for new High Desert Connector route, a new intercity route between Antelope and Victor Valleys
- Los Angeles County: Rosemead/Lakewood Boulevard Complete Corridor Plan, a transit enhancement feasibility study

These revisions, both the project modifications and three additions, have been determined to result in minor to no impacts on transportation modeling, transportation conformity, financial constraint, and the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) determination.

Regional Forecasted Development Pattern

During the Local Data Exchange process during which SCAG collected input on land use data and growth projections for households and employment, the County of Los Angeles had noted two regionally significant development projects for which they did not yet have an accurate growth estimate. During the public review and comment period, the County of Los Angeles Planning

Department provided updated direction on two large development projects located in the North County planning area of unincorporated Los Angeles County. Based on these updates, SCAG staff amended the household and employment growth projections for Los Angeles County for the proposed final Connect SoCal 2024, which then results in a slightly higher population, household and employment projection for the county and SCAG region. No other changes were made to the draft Connect SoCal 2024 growth projections or the Forecasted Regional Development Pattern.

Sustainable Communities Strategy Consistency Language

Based on comments requesting standalone Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) consistency language, SCAG worked with stakeholders to refine and clarify SCAG’s interpretation of consistency and/or alignment with the SCS as well as the limited role of Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) data. This consistency language will be included within proposed final Connect SoCal 2024 in the main document, the Demographics and Growth Forecast Technical Report, and the Land Use and Communities Technical Report.

Regional Planning Policies

Commenters requested specific edits to several draft Regional Planning Policies. In Table 1, below, the text on the left reflects the text as written in the draft Connect SoCal 2024 and the text on the right reflects the revision for the proposed final Connect SoCal 2024. One policy is being removed based on the inclusion of the new SCS Consistency language, noted above, which better details the relationship and applicability of the Forecasted Regional Development Pattern.

Table 1: Regional Planning Policy Changes

Draft Connect SoCal 2024	Proposed Final Connect SoCal 2024
<p>Complete Streets, pg. 114 Ensure the implementation of Complete Streets that are sensitive to urban, suburban or rural contexts and improve transportation safety for all, but especially for vulnerable road users (e.g., older adults, children, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.)</p>	<p>Ensure the implementation of Complete Streets that are sensitive to urban, suburban or rural contexts and improve transportation safety for all, but especially for vulnerable road users (e.g., <u>people, especially older adults and children, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc. walking and biking.</u>)</p>
<p>Transit and Multimodal Integration, pg. 114 Create a resilient transit and rail system by preparing for emergencies and the impacts of extreme weather conditions</p>	<p>Create a resilient <u>transit and rail transportation</u> system by preparing for emergencies and the impacts of extreme weather conditions climate change</p>

Draft Connect SoCal 2024	Proposed Final Connect SoCal 2024
<p>Safety, pg. 115 Eliminate transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries on the regional multimodal transportation system</p>	<p>Eliminate transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries <u>(especially those involving vulnerable road users, such as people, especially older adults and children, walking and biking)</u> on the regional multimodal transportation system.</p>
<p>Sustainable Development, pg. 118 Implement the Forecasted Regional Development Pattern of Connect SoCal 2024, consisting of household and employment projections that have been reviewed and refined by jurisdictions and stakeholders to advance this shared framework for regional growth management planning</p>	<p><i>This policy is removed.</i> Implement the Forecasted Regional Development Pattern of Connect SoCal 2024, consisting of household and employment projections that have been reviewed and refined by jurisdictions and stakeholders to advance this shared framework for regional growth management planning</p>
<p>Natural and Agricultural Lands Preservation, pg. 119 Encourage the conservation of agricultural lands to protect the regional and local food supply and the agricultural economy</p>	<p>Encourage the conservation and viability of agricultural lands to protect the regional and local food supply and <u>the agricultural economy ensure the sustainability of local agriculture as a vital part of the region's economy.</u></p>
<p>Climate Resilience, pg. 119 Support local and regional climate and hazard planning and implementation efforts</p>	<p>Support local and regional climate and hazard planning and implementation efforts <u>for transportation, land use and other factors.</u></p>
<p>Tourism, pg. 121 Encourage the reduced use of cars by visitors to the region by working with state, county and city agencies to highlight and increase access to alternative options, including transit, passenger rail and active transportation</p>	<p>Encourage the reduced use of cars by visitors to the region by working with state, county and city <u>local agencies (e.g., park services, transportation agencies)</u> to highlight and increase access to alternative options, including transit, passenger rail and active transportation</p>

Implementation Strategies

Commenters requested specific edits to several draft Implementation Strategies. In the Table 2, below, the text on the left reflects the text as written in the draft Connect SoCal 2024 and the text on the right reflects the revision for the proposed final Connect SoCal 2024. Finally, the Implementation Strategies table will also be updated to acknowledge that the listing of “Responsible Parties” is not exhaustive.

Table 2: Implementation Strategy Changes

Draft Connect SoCal 2024	Proposed Final Connect SoCal 2024
<p>Transit and Multimodal Integration, pg. 125 Transit/Rail. Through land use planning, build residential development along high-frequency transit corridors and around transit/rail facilities and centers</p>	<p>Transit/Rail. Through land use planning, build <u>support</u> residential development along high-frequency transit corridors and around transit/rail facilities and centers</p>
<p>Priority Development Areas, pg. 129 Develop housing in areas with existing and planned infrastructure and availability of multimodal options, and where a critical mass of activity can promote location efficiency</p>	<p><u>Support the development of</u> Develop housing in areas with existing and planned infrastructure and availability of multimodal options, and where a critical mass of activity can promote location efficiency</p>
<p>Natural and Agricultural Lands Preservation, pg. 132 Work with implementation agencies to support, establish or supplement regional advance mitigation programs (RAMP) for regionally significant transportation projects to mitigate environmental impacts, reduce per-capita VMT and provide mitigation opportunities through the Intergovernmental Review Process</p>	<p>Work with implementation agencies to support, establish or supplement <u>voluntary</u> regional advance mitigation programs (RAMP) for regionally significant transportation projects to mitigate environmental impacts, reduce per-capita VMT and provide mitigation opportunities through the Intergovernmental Review Process</p>
<p>Natural and Agricultural Lands Preservation, pg. 132 Support the integration of nature-based solutions into implementing agency plans to address urban heat, organic waste reduction, habitat and wildlife corridor restoration, greenway connectivity and similar efforts</p>	<p>Support the integration of nature-based solutions into implementing agency plans to address urban heat, organic waste reduction, <u>protection of wetlands</u>, habitat and wildlife corridor restoration, greenway connectivity and similar efforts</p>
<p>Climate Resilience, pg. 132 Support implementing agencies' efforts to include climate-ready home-hardening strategies in housing construction to minimize the potential loss of housing units stemming from climate-related hazards</p>	<p>Support implementing agencies' efforts to include climate-ready home-hardening strategies in housing <u>new construction as well as retrofitting of existing structures</u> to minimize the potential loss of housing units stemming from climate-related hazards</p>
<p>Broadband, pg. 134 Promote the use of a regional or statewide universal permit, ordinance and fee for expedited broadband, EV charging and Smart Cities infrastructure deployment</p>	<p>Promote the use of a regional or statewide universal permit, ordinance and fee for expedited broadband, EV charging and Smart Cities infrastructure deployment</p>

Draft Connect SoCal 2024	Proposed Final Connect SoCal 2024
<p>Universal Basic Mobility, pg. 135 Continue to develop an understanding of low-income travel patterns and needs, and the impact of shocks (e.g., COVID and telework adoption) on low-income travel</p>	<p>Continue to develop an understanding of low-income travel patterns and needs, and the impact of shocks (e.g., COVID <u>pandemic response</u> and telework adoption) on low-income travel</p>
<p>Workforce Development, pg. 135 Encourage the growth of, and equitable access to, family-supporting jobs throughout the region</p>	<p>Encourage the growth of, and equitable access to, family-supporting <u>living-wage</u> jobs throughout the region</p>

Modeling Enhancements and Improvements

Transportation Model

The SCAG transportation model has been enhanced to better accommodate the changes of future transit route patterns outlined in LA Metro’s NextGen bus plan (starting from 2025). Furthermore, the model has been augmented through the integration of a commuter rail access variable, aimed at more precisely capturing the improvements in service resulting from Metrolink’s Southern California Optimized Rail Expansion (SCORE) capital improvement program. This enhancement has resulted in an increase in transit boarding as well as the transit share, which correlates with the corresponding infrastructure enhancements, specifically the increase in revenue miles of transit services.

Scenario Planning Model

The Scenario Planning Model (SPM) has been updated with an increased coverage of agricultural land that is consistent with important farmland areas determined by the Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. In addition, SPM has been enhanced with updated development density data that better aligns with the Regional Planning Policies and regional growth vision. This update has fine-tuned the estimated benefits of our plan on conservation opportunities and ecosystems.

Model Input Changes and Updates

- Auto Operating Cost: SCAG updated auto operating cost calculation based on new data and assumptions commented from CARB.
- Bike Lane Density: SCAG updated the variable using bikeway data received from the Local Data Exchange (LDX) process.
- Highway Network: SCAG updated highway networks based on input from CTCs.

- Ontario Airport Passenger Forecast: SCAG updated 2050 passenger forecast for Ontario international Airport (ONT) using Million Annual Passengers (MAP) received from their submitted public comment.

Summary of Comments and Response by Category

SCAG staff reviewed and responded to all comments received. For each comment, staff assessed if any revision to the draft Connect SoCal 2024 was necessary and/or appropriate. Some comments could be addressed or clarified within the response itself. In general, most comments sought clarification or minor revisions to the draft text, which have been applied to the proposed final Plan. The sections below outline the comments and proposed revision approach for the main document and all Technical Reports, followed by a discussion of outstanding comments.

Connect SoCal 2024: Main Document

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Comments were focused on adding clarification text to descriptions of content and process, including the insertion of additional terms or language to better describe a topic. Several additions to the Glossary were requested along with clarification of acronyms used. Several requests were made by agencies to highlight other completed projects in Chapter 2.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG will make text clarifications throughout the document as requested. The SCAG logo has been added to maps as requested. SCAG applied updates to add or clarify original data sources in tables, charts, and maps as applicable. Several Regional Planning Policies and Implementation Strategies will be updated, as described in Tables 1 and 2 above.

Connect SoCal 2024: Technical Reports

Aviation and Airport Ground Access

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Most of the comments received were proofreading in nature (e.g., extra commas, spelling errors, redundant text, confusing text) but there were some comments that provided corrected or updated information (e.g., clarification on FAA programs, updated ONT forecast).

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG has updated the narrative text, including figures and tables to reflect the proofreading comments, and updated or corrected information.

Congestion Management

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Comments requested clarification regarding multiple strategies. For example, one comment sought clarification on the purpose of supporting the

development of Transportation Management Agencies/Organizations. Another comment requested more detail on SCAG's planned leadership in planning for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV), while another asked that clarifying language be added to note that park and ride lots supporting carpooling and vanpooling may evolve to function as mobility hubs. Multiple comments expressed concern regarding the potential for expanded roadways and highways and faster speeds and corresponding negative impacts (e.g., more fatalities). Other comments requested clarifying language be added in reference to OCTA's congestion management efforts. Finally, a couple of comments requested clarification on the Plan's performance measures.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG added clarifying language to note that park and ride lots supporting carpooling and vanpooling may evolve to function as mobility hubs. SCAG applied multiple revisions to reflect OCTA's congestion management efforts more accurately. SCAG also updated Map 1: Top 100 Bottlenecks to improve clarity.

Demographics and Growth Forecast

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Some comments requested more information regarding the region's growth outlook and its implications for housing, transportation, and other performance measures. These centered on the region's recent population decline, out-migration, and working-from-home, which are discussed in this technical report as key factors considered in forecasting. Some comments related to the yearlong Local Data Exchange (LDX) process whereby growth input was sought from local jurisdictions. Given the December 2022 LDX input deadline—which serves as a de facto 'effective date' for local input into the Plan—the only changes that could be accommodated at this stage were specific follow-ups provided by local jurisdictions to data previously submitted prior to the deadline. As the regional plan process is ongoing, additional information, such as recent specific plan approvals or other new information affecting future growth, can be accommodated in future updates of the RTP/SCS.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG made clarifications regarding the growth forecasting process, the manner in which certain societal changes are captured or reflected in future projections, and minor stylistic improvements. Two large development projects in unincorporated Los Angeles County are the only instances in which household or employment growth projections were changed—this new information results in a slightly higher population, household, and employment projection for the county and SCAG region. These changes were presented to SCAG's Technical Working Group on February 15, 2024. The relationship between small-area growth forecast data and Connect SoCal 2024 policies and strategies was also described in its own section—stating, among other things, that fine-scaled data are intended to illustrate the Plan's policies and strategies and to facilitate modeling but are not binding.

Economic Impact Analysis

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Comments asked for clarification and made stylistic suggestions. In addition, comments requested more explicit citing of data sources and clearer labels in figures.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG incorporated all suggestions into the technical report and added clarifying language to address the questions raised in the comments.

Equity Analysis

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Comments included several questions, suggestions, and corrections to clarify definitions, sources, and analysis. Some comments requested clarification on the purpose and methodology of developing Priority Equity Communities and suggested improvements to the visualizations that helped describe them. Additional context on equity, including an expanded discussion of policies, was suggested in both the Equity Analysis Technical Report and in the Main Book.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG made text clarifications and corrections throughout the document as requested. SCAG revised several figures and tables for consistency and clarity. SCAG added more context on equity, Title VI, and Senate Bill 1000 to the report. Additionally, SCAG revised Priority Equity Communities to correct a calculation error and use the same High Quality Transit Corridors (HQTCS) used in the rest of the Plan.

Goods Movement

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Comments included numerous questions, suggestions, and corrections to clarify goods movement analysis, definitions, and sources for multiple technical report sections, and involving maps, tables, and figures. Comments also suggested modifications to the goods movement project list information. Additionally, some comments focused specifically on community challenges associated with goods movement impacts. SCAG addressed some of the comments by providing further clarification directly within the response and/or provided additional study, project, or program information for further reference.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG incorporated many of the questions, suggestions, and proposed corrections made by each commenter into the technical report, through clarifying language, and/or updated maps, tables, and figures and source and goods movement project list information.

Housing

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Most comments received included clarification on data sources, definitions, word usage, grammar, and punctuation. Additional comments sought consistent

data regarding race/ethnicity with other reports, understanding how communities of concern address homelessness and preservations of existing affordable housing strategies.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG made text clarifications throughout the report to address comments and provide further analysis. SCAG edited several definitions used in the technical report and the main document for clarification.

Land Use and Communities

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Most comments received included recommendations on additional study areas or use of specific datasets (e.g. projected sea level rise), clarification on data sources, definitions, phrasing, grammar. Several comments had questions on projected outcomes for conservation, habitat, water, farmlands and their alignment with the themes, Regional Planning Policies and Implementation Strategies featured in Connect SoCal 2024.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG added additional text throughout the report to clarify the use of specific datasets and their respective definitions. SCAG updated projected outcomes for conservation, habitat, water, and farmlands using revised model inputs (e.g. updated growth projections) and refined technical methods.

Mobility, by Chapter

Transit/Rail

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Comments requested clarifications regarding maps (e.g., year of source data, updating transit information) and miles of light/heavy rail, and revision of transit/rail project opening dates. Comments requested that SCAG define transit safety events, and further describe strategies to encourage seamless connections across modes. Comments requested that SCAG provide examples of how it would support transit/rail policy and planning, and to better describe Metrolink's efforts to adapt its operations to meet changing customer needs. Comments also requested that SCAG reference the impact of the Olympic Games in 2028. Comments requested that SCAG revise transportation-related policies to better reflect how they support addressing climate change. Comments requested clarification on HQTCs and connections to existing transit service. Comments requested clarification on the methodology used to develop Transit Asset Management (TAM) targets and connection to California's transit zero emission mandate. Comments sought clarification on SCAG's efforts towards better transit through bus lanes and transit priority treatments.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG applied updates to maps and clarified the miles of light/heavy rail along with transit/rail opening dates. SCAG provided a definition for transit safety events based on the National Transit Database Safety and Security Reporting Manual. SCAG described strategies to support more seamless connections across modes such as first/last mile projects and Mobility as a Service (Maas). SCAG described its work on the newly formed statewide Transit Transformation Task Force as a way to support transit/rail policy and planning. SCAG described Metrolink's efforts to adapt

to changing customer needs. Though planning for the Olympics is still in its early stages, SCAG referenced their potential impact. SCAG revised the text of multiple policies to include more specific references to climate change.

Active Transportation

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Most of the comments were wordsmithing in nature (e.g., rephrasing and reiterating/referencing details mentioned in other sections of the technical report). Some comments provided updated information (e.g., adding the Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan as a State guidance document and adding two plans for Orange County).

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG updated the narrative text, including figures and tables to reflect the wordsmithing comments and additional information.

Streets and Freeways

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Comments requested clarifications for figures and tables (e.g., delays and declining infrastructure figures) and for additional information on certain sections (e.g., speed strategies). Other comments requested map edits to improve clarity (e.g., Functional Road Classification).

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG applied updates to the relevant figures and tables, provided additional clarification within the sections identified through comments, and updated maps to reflect Functional Road Classification based on Caltrans' definitions.

Clean Technology

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: The feedback received was positive and acknowledged SCAG's involvement in advancing clean transportation technology. Comments emphasized the importance of maintaining technological neutrality in clean transportation and ensuring equitable access to technology such as broadband and clean transportation.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG addressed most comments through clarification provided in the responses. In terms of revisions, SCAG added more information on the zero-emission charging/fueling infrastructure needed to meet state mandates. SCAG identified specific barriers to the adoption of clean technology, drawing from the Clean Transportation Technology Compendium. SCAG also added to the list of Other Responsible Parties for the Clean Transportation implementation strategies.

Performance Monitoring

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Comments received related to the Connect SoCal 2024 performance assessment and monitoring program consisted primarily of requests for clarification and minor edits to the narrative accompanying some of the graphics. For example, there were requests for clarification language in the draft Performance Monitoring Technical Report to present the

housing crisis as being a statewide issue, rather than only applying to Southern California and the SCAG region. Other clarification requests included an explanation of the difference between the use of the terms “percent” and “percentage points” in presenting the differential results of the Plan performance analysis, and a request to include the descriptor “miles” in the performance measures table to indicate the quantitative unit used to report average trip distance. Another comment sought clarification on the difference between the regional performance assessment results presented as “co-benefits” and those featured as Plan performance measures. The Connect SoCal performance measures are a specified set of modeled metrics used to quantitatively assess the ability of Connect SoCal 2024 to meet the regional goals defined in the Plan. These measures are then tracked over time through ongoing regional performance monitoring. Co-benefits refer to additional modeled performance outcomes related to the implementation of Connect SoCal 2024 that are also supportive of regional goals but are not necessarily included among the Plan’s designated set of performance measures. It is important to note that neither the Plan performance measures, nor the co-benefits constitute specific performance targets in and of themselves. For example, the co-benefit of land conservation does not constitute a numerical limit on development but rather compares the Plan development pattern to this historic baseline of development. Other comments received related to the presentation of the Plan overall rather than specific to any particular element, including an assertion that the presentation of statistics in the Plan may be perceived as being one-sided or skewed to present a more positive spin on regional progress. Other comments included a suggestion that post-pandemic changes in regional travel behavior be presented in more detail in the Plan, and a request that the impacts of potential project or funding delays be included in the Plan assessment process.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG will accommodate most requested edits and clarifications to the text. SCAG will also update the Federal System Performance Report section of the Performance Monitoring Technical Report with more recently available information on the status of the new federal GHG emissions reduction performance measure. Based on feedback from CARB, SCAG removed Electric Vehicle Incentives and Co-working from the list of quantified greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies. The removal of this quantification designation does not impact related Regional Strategic Investments, Regional Planning Policies or Implementation Strategies—it only impacts how SCAG quantifies Connect SoCal’s GHG emission reductions per SB 375.

Project List

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Public comments received on the Project List Technical Report involved corrections to scope, schedule, project cost, lead agency, and various changes to financially unconstrained projects in Table 3. Three new financially constrained projects were included from public comment, which did not involve increases to highway capacity.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG revised the project list introduction to elaborate on how SCAG determines regional significance. SCAG made approximately 95 project modifications. Most project

revisions involved updates to cost or schedule, which in part was due to recent FTIP amendments that came after the draft was prepared. Three new financially constrained projects were included in the proposed final from public comments. These included a complete streets project in San Bernardino County, an intercity bus route in the Antelope Valley region, and a complete corridor transit study in Los Angeles County. The remaining updates were minor corrections such as lead agency updates or the removal of duplicate project entries. Separately from the 95 project modifications, SCAG applied 32 project revisions on the unconstrained project list in Table 3 of the Project List Technical Report. The revisions applied per public comment or internal review were determined to result in minor to no impacts on transportation modeling, transportation conformity, financial constraint and the PEIR determination.

Public Participation and Consultation

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Comments received sought clarification on SCAG’s survey responses, further detail on SCAG’s engagement strategy review and evaluation, and noted the need for collaboration with community members.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG updated the survey respondent data to reflect 3,600 total unique individual survey forms were submitted with over 50 percent of respondents who provided demographic information noting Los Angeles County as their location. SCAG added content to this technical report to reflect the public participation and consultation activities that occurred since the release of the draft Connect SoCal 2024 in November 2023.

Transportation Conformity Analysis

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Most comments requested further enhancements to the reporting and documentation of the transportation conformity analysis for Connect SoCal 2024 to better demonstrate compliance with federal transportation conformity regulations. Some comments requested updated information on nonattainment or maintenance area designations for the applicable criteria pollutants in the SCAG region. Furthermore, some comments requested references to other technical reports of Connect SoCal 2024.

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG incorporated additional documentation, updated information, and references as appropriate.

Transportation Finance

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Most of the comments were proofreading in nature (e.g., spelling errors, redundant text, confusing text) but there were some comments that provided corrected or updated information (e.g., the opening of the I-405 express lanes in Orange County).

Proposed Revision Approach: SCAG updated the narrative text and figures to reflect the proofreading comments and updated or clarified information. Note, updates to the Project List and revenue data inputs from comments and stakeholder feedback may have impacts to the overall financial summary. This potential change will be reflected in the proposed final Connect SoCal 2024.

Travel and Tourism

Comments and Areas Seeking Clarification: Most of the comments were proofreading in nature (e.g., extra commas, spelling errors, redundant text, confusing text) but there were some comments that provided corrected or updated information (e.g., additional text to emphasize bike and walking travel options to travel/tourist destinations).

Proposed Revision Approach: The narrative text has been updated to reflect the proofreading comments and updated or corrected information.

Summary of Outstanding Comments

There were comments received for which changes or additions to the Plan were requested but are not going to be applied. A number of these comments requested additional data that SCAG does not have available or further analysis that SCAG staff would not be able to complete in advance of the anticipated Connect SoCal 2024 adoption. These requests may be considered for the next RTP/SCS update. Additionally, SCAG staff did not apply changes that requested edits that contradicted existing state policy or the draft Connect SoCal 2024 goals.

Will not be addressed:

Housing Technical Report: SCAG staff will not apply suggested changes that discourage Connect SoCal 2024's goal of promoting increased housing supply, choice, and affordability, such as only promoting housing only where they are more economically feasible to build. Additionally, SCAG staff will not apply changes based on strategies such as pre-approving housing sites for housing elements due to the difficulty of applying extensive individual local analysis at a regional scale to meet housing element compliance.

Land Use and Communities Technical Report: Recommendations to replace underlying data sources within Green Region Resource Areas (a key element of the Forecasted Regional Development Pattern) cannot be integrated as these layers helped to inform local jurisdictions' feedback on projected growth during the early stages of Connect SoCal 2024 development, primarily the LDX.

Will be addressed, outside the scope of the proposed final Plan:

Performance Monitoring Technical Report: One comment received by CARB requested that 2035 modeling results be provided to them in addition to the Base Year (2019) and Plan (2050) modeling results. Based on discussion with CARB staff, this request will be provided as part of the SCS Submittal Package, provided to CARB following the adoption of Connect SoCal 2024.

Topic Areas For Future Discussion and Development

There were several issues raised within the comments received and during the elected official briefings, for which direct plan changes were not applicable or feasible. Some of this was due to the requests or issue being process-based (e.g. stakeholder engagement) or in some cases it was due to SCAG receiving conflicting recommendations. Further discussion or additional data and development is needed to understand how to incorporate or reflect the issue in the next RTP/SCS update or through SCAG's other programs.

Overall Process Improvements

One comment letter noted the challenge with SCAG's schedule for this and the past RTP/SCS development cycles in that it does not currently allow for a recirculation or full discussion of requested changes. The comment letter also noted concerns about the existing SCAG Working Groups and offered suggestions about how to better integrate and leverage working groups. SCAG staff will consider these suggestions and have further conversations with stakeholders as part of preparation for the next RTP/SCS development cycle.

Application of Priority Equity Communities

SCAG received a comment regarding when Priority Equity Communities should be used in funding opportunities and the potential confusion with other equity area definitions. To fully respond to this comment, SCAG will continue discussing the use of Priority Equity Communities in funding applications developed by SCAG and in coordination with local, state, and federal equity area definitions.

Application of Priority Development Areas

Given the relationship between infill growth and the plan's environmental objectives, continual refinement and outreach will be needed for concepts such as Priority Development Areas (PDAs). Concepts such as PDAs, were used in Connect SoCal 2024 as a non-binding growth visioning tool. Given new legislation and changes to state practice, SCAG will need to engage with stakeholders on the differences between growth forecasting and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process.

Comprehensive Sustainable Freight Planning

The efficient movement of goods is critical to a strong economy and improves quality of life in the SCAG region by providing essential goods and supplies to residents and businesses, generating employment opportunities and providing access to markets through trade. However, increased volumes of goods moving across the transportation system also exacerbate issues such as congestion, safety, and harmful emissions, often disproportionately borne by our most vulnerable under-resourced communities. Connect SoCal 2024 includes an implementation strategy to perform a complete update of its prior regional goods movement plan. Such a Comprehensive Sustainable Freight Plan will produce updated data, tools, analysis, policies and strategies that address a wide range of issues including but not limited to forecast scenarios, clean technologies, freight demand management and operational strategies, community and health impacts, workforce development, system preservation and resilience, and warehousing and land use.

Addressing VMT Increases from Roadway Capacity-Increasing Projects

Connect SoCal 2024 includes some roadway capacity expansion projects that support the movement of people and goods. Although research indicates that roadway capacity expansion can induce new vehicle travel over the longer term, strategic improvements may be necessary for some communities to improve safety, reliability, and access. While the Plan includes a wide array of policies, strategies, and projects aimed at reducing VMT, additional work is needed to help offset potential VMT increases from roadway capacity projects. SCAG will continue to support development of local and regional VMT mitigation programs, including VMT bank and exchange programs and other programmatic approaches.

Aligning Growth with Regional Resilience

For regional economic, environmental, and social resilience it is important that regional growth meets the demand for housing and conserves natural lands. Natural lands clean our air and water, provide water storage, ensure access to green space and recreation, protect biodiversity and increase our ability to withstand the impacts of climate change and extreme weather. More work is needed to successfully collaborate with local and regional partners to implement the Plan, which can result in increased housing production and reduced greenfield consumption.

Supporting the Clean Energy Transition

The implementation of state regulations including Advanced Clean Cars II, Advanced Clean Fleets, and Innovative Clean Transit, are poised to significantly accelerate the adoption of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs). Connect SoCal 2024 emphasizes the significance of incentives in promoting ZEV adoption. Notably, CARB's Clean Vehicle Rebate Project (CVRP) offers up to \$7,500 to individuals who buy or lease a new EV. Despite this, the cost of new ZEVs can still be prohibitive for low-income families, even when factoring in such incentives. To tackle this disparity and ensure equitable access,

Connect SoCal 2024 includes implementation strategies to assist local jurisdictions both in developing an incentive program to further adoption of passenger ZEVs, and in accelerating deployment of supporting infrastructure. At the same time, SCAG recognizes the limitations and uncertainty regarding the capacity of the State’s energy grid to support such a rapid increase in ZEV usage. Connect SoCal includes an implementation strategy to maintain a robust Clean Technology Program that focuses on planning, research, evaluation, stakeholder support and advocacy. This involves continued collaboration with partners and stakeholders at all levels to evaluate, and inform policymakers about, impacts on the grid, existing gaps, and areas for enhancement.

Ensuring Equity in the Transition to User Fees

SCAG has been studying mileage-based road user fees to replace existing fuel taxes for funding transportation over the last two decades, incorporating into SCAG’s long-range planning work starting with the 2012 RTP/SCS. Since that time, SCAG has completed numerous studies including the “Mobility Innovations and Pricing (MIP): An Initiative to Elevate Equity in Planning” in March 2022. The MIP initiative focused on surfacing the priorities of historically marginalized populations that disproportionately bear the negative economic, environmental, personal safety, and public health impacts of our transportation system. Although more work is needed to better understand the equity implications of mileage-based user fees, they can address some inequities inherent in our current system. For example, ZEV drivers today are not paying the same for system usage as drivers of conventional vehicles. With the transition to ZEVs, the burden of paying for our transportation system via the existing fuel taxes will be increasingly placed on low-income and rural drivers who often own older and less fuel-efficient vehicles.

Identifying Needs and Strategies for Housing Infrastructure Investments

Addressing barriers to development due to the need of upgrading whole utility systems can involve multiple agencies and utility providers, which go beyond the scope of a single project. To address this, Connect SoCal 2024 promotes a regional approach to pursuing strategic partnerships to align utility, transit, and infrastructure investment with housing development and equitable outcomes. However, work is needed to further understand utilities need related to housing production and partnerships will be critical to address needs and identify strategies to upgrade and provide utility infrastructure and is included as an implementation strategy in the Plan.

Reforming Senate Bill 375 (SB 375)

Connect SoCal 2024 is SCAG’s fourth joint RTP/SCS. SB 375 legislation has helped to encourage better integration of land use and transportation planning during this time and agencies within the SCAG region have shifted transportation policies and investments toward more sustainable modes. However, there are diminishing returns in terms of eligible GHG emission reductions under the current evaluation framework. For example, the CARB Board approved GHG reduction target from

2018 and subsequent staff guidance reflected in “Final Sustainable Communities Strategy Program and Evaluation Guidelines” set in 2019 have failed to keep pace with technological and policy changes, most notably CARB’s passage of Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) regulation. ACCII is projected to result in nearly half of the passenger miles traveled by 2035, and 75 percent by 2050, being completed by zero-emission vehicles. Due to this policy change, CARB no longer allows SCAG to account for electric vehicle strategies in achieving its GHG reduction target, considering regional efforts as unnecessary to the transition. However, CARB has not updated its evaluation guidelines to account for the dramatic difference in GHG emissions generated from travel in a zero-emission vehicle versus an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle, nor pursued policy action to change the GHG reduction target to account for the benefits of zero-emission vehicles. This inconsistency compromises the integrity of the evaluation process and will need further consideration in future cycles. The update process should also consider the new federal GHG performance measure, which requires Caltrans to establish two and four-year statewide targets, while SCAG would establish four-year regional targets for reducing tailpipe carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions on the national highways system. Under the federal evaluation process, SCAG’s targets will consider both GHG emission reductions resulting from reduced travel as well as the benefits of clean technology. Recognizing and exploring opportunities to reconcile timelines and methods of assessment across federal and state law should be considered to reduce administrative burden and promote clarity of purpose. Based on existing state law, CARB can update the SB 375 targets in 2026. SCAG is committed to continued GHG emission reduction but SB 375 program reform is needed to allow MPOs to focus on robust regional planning and implementation.

NEXT STEPS:

On April 4, 2024, SCAG staff intends to seek approval from the Regional Council to adopt Connect SoCal 2024, including the associated proposed final transportation conformity analysis. If the Regional Council adopts Connect SoCal 2024 at that time, SCAG staff will proceed with submitting Connect SoCal 2024 and its adopted transportation conformity findings (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) who, in consultation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will review Connect SoCal 2024 to make the final transportation conformity determination in accordance with the federal Clean Air Act and EPA Transportation Conformity Regulations. FHWA/FTA final conformity determination is needed by June 5, 2024. SCAG will also submit the 2023 FTIP Consistency Amendment #23-26 to Caltrans (including conformity findings) for their review and approval. SCAG will also proceed with submitting Connect SoCal 2024 to the California Air Resources Board (CARB). CARB will then review SCAG’s determination that the SCS would, if implemented, achieve the established GHG emission reduction targets.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Work associated with this item is included in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Overall Work Program (010.0170.01: RTP Amendments, Management, and Coordination, 025.0164.01: Air Quality and Conformity, 030.0146.02: Federal Transportation Improvement Program, and 310.4874.01: Connect SoCal Development).