

SCAG Connect SoCal 2024: Draft Regional Planning Policies

APRIL 2023 STAKEHOLDER REVIEW DRAFT

As required by federal and state law, SCAG prepares a long-range Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) every four years which provides a vision for integrating land use and transportation for increased mobility and more sustainable development. SCAG's next RTP/SCS, Connect SoCal 2024, will incorporate important updates of fundamental data, enhanced strategies and investments based on, and intended to strengthen, the plan adopted by the SCAG Regional Council in 2020.

For Connect SoCal 2024, SCAG has proposed to develop a set of Regional Planning Policies that will articulate broad regional policies or best practices for integrated land use and transportation planning. The below policies are meant to guide decision making for both SCAG and partner agencies as we work towards a sustainable, equitable, and resilient future for the region. It is also intended to be used as a resource by CTCs or local jurisdictions to refer to specific policies to demonstrate alignment with the RTP/SCS in seeking resources from state or federal programs.

Stakeholder review: Please provide input, suggestions and edits to the below regional planning policies by Friday, April 28 to connectsocial@scag.ca.gov. Your input will be used to inform an updated version of these policies to be presented as draft to SCAG Policy Committees on June 1, 2023.

Mobility

System Preservation and Resilience

1. Prioritize repair, maintenance, and preservation of the SCAG region's existing transportation assets first, following a "Fix It First" principle.
2. Prioritize transportation investments that advance progress toward the achievement of asset management targets, including for National Highway System pavement and bridge condition and transit assets (rolling stock, equipment, facilities, and infrastructure).

Complete Streets

3. Pursue the development of complete streets that comprise a safe multi-modal network with flexible use of public rights-of-way for people of all ages and abilities using a variety of modes (e.g., people walking, biking, rolling, driving, taking transit).
4. Ensure the implementation of complete streets that are sensitive to urban, suburban, or rural contexts and improve transportation safety for all, but especially vulnerable road users (e.g., older adults, children, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.).
5. Facilitate the implementation of complete streets and curb space management strategies that accommodate and optimize new technologies and micromobility devices, first/last mile connections to transit, and last mile delivery.
6. Prioritize the implementation of complete streets improvements in Priority Equity Communities, and particularly with respect to Transportation Equity Zones, to support enhanced mobility, safety, and access to opportunities.

Transit and Multimodal Integration

7. Encourage and support the implementation of projects both physical and digital that facilitate multimodal connectivity, prioritize transit and shared mobility, and result in improved mobility, accessibility, and safety.
8. Support connections across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to develop transportation projects and programs resulting in improved connectivity.
9. Encourage residential and employment development in areas surrounding existing and planned transit/rail stations.
10. Prioritize the implementation of transportation projects in Priority Equity Communities, and particularly with respect to Transportation Equity Zones, to support enhanced mobility, safety, and access to opportunities.
11. Create a resilient transit and rail system by preparing for emergencies and the impacts of extreme weather conditions.

Transportation Demand Management

12. Encourage the development of transportation projects that provide convenient, cost-effective and safe alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel (e.g., trips made by foot, on bikes, via transit, etc.).
13. Encourage jurisdictions and TDM practitioners to develop and expand local plans and policies to promote alternatives to single occupancy vehicle travel for residents, workers, and visitors.
14. Encourage municipalities to update existing (legacy) TDM ordinances by incorporating new travel modes and new technology, and by incorporating employment and residential sites that fall below current regulatory thresholds.

Transportation System Management

15. Pursue efficient use of the transportation system using a set of operational improvement strategies that maintain the performance of the existing transportation system instead of adding roadway capacity.
16. Prioritize transportation investments that increase travel time reliability.
17. Proactively monitor and plan for the development, deployment, and commercialization of new technology as it relates to transportation management and infrastructure integration needs.

Technology Integration

18. Support the implementation of technology designed to provide equal access to mobility, employment and economic opportunity, education, health and other quality of life opportunities for all residents within the SCAG region.
19. Advocate for data sharing between the public and private sectors to effectively evaluate the services' benefits and impacts on communities while protecting data security and privacy.
20. Advocate for technology that is adaptive and responsive to ensure that it remains up to date to meet the evolving needs of users and stakeholders.
21. Promote technology that has the capacity to facilitate economic growth, improve workforce development opportunities, and prioritize safety.
22. Proactively monitor and plan for the development, deployment, and commercialization of new technology as it relates to roadway infrastructure integration needs.

Safety

23. Reduce transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries on the SCAG regional multimodal transportation system.
24. Integrate the assessment of equity into the regional transportation safety planning process, focusing on the analysis and mitigation of disproportionate impacts on disadvantaged communities.
25. Support the use of transportation safety data in investment decision-making.

Funding the System/User Pricing

26. Promote stability and sustainability for core state and federal transportation funding sources.
27. Establish a user fee-based system that better reflects the true cost of transportation, provides firewall protection for new and existing transportation funds, and equitable distribution of costs and benefits.
28. Pursue funding tools that promote access to opportunity and support economic development through innovative mobility programs.
29. Promote national and state programs that include return-to-source guarantees while maintaining flexibility to reward regions that continue to commit substantial local resources.
30. Leverage locally available funding with innovative financing tools to attract private capital and accelerate project delivery.
31. Promote local funding strategies that maximize the value of public assets while improving mobility, sustainability, and resilience.

Communities

15 Minute Communities

32. Promote 15-minute communities as places with a mix of complementary land uses and accessible mobility options that align with and support the diversity of places (or communities) across the region where residents can access most basic, day-to-day needs within a 15-minute walk or bike ride of their home.
33. Support communities across the region to realize 15-minute communities through incremental changes that improve equity, quality of life, public health, mobility, sustainability and resilience, and economic vitality.
34. Encourage efforts that elevate innovative approaches to increasing access to neighborhood destinations and amenities through an array of people-centered mobility options.

Housing the Region

35. Encourage housing development in areas with access to important resources (economic, educational, health, social, and similar) and amenities to further fair housing access and equity across the region.
36. Encourage housing development in transit-supportive and walkable areas to create more interconnected and resilient communities.
37. Support local, regional, state, and federal efforts to produce and preserve affordable housing while meeting additional housing needs across the region.
38. Prioritize communities that are vulnerable to displacement pressures by supporting community stabilization and increasing access to housing that meets the needs of the region.

39. Promote innovative strategies and partnerships to increase homeownership opportunities across the region with an emphasis on communities who have been historically impacted by redlining and other systemic barriers to homeownership for people of color and other marginalized groups.
40. Advocate for and support programs that emphasize reducing housing cost burden (for renters and homeowners), with a focus on the communities with the greatest need and vulnerabilities.
41. Support efforts to increase housing and services for people experiencing homelessness across the region.

Priority Development Areas

42. Increase the share of household growth in areas where there are varied multi-modal options, like transit and active transportation, to support reduced single occupant vehicle dependency and vehicle miles travelled.
43. Promote the linkage of origins and destinations.
44. Ensure that population and housing leverages the benefits of existing and planned urban infrastructure including transit and utilities by being proximate to it.

Priority Equity Communities

45. Prioritize community-centered interventions, resources, and programming that serve the most disadvantaged communities and people in the region with strategies that can be implemented in the short-to-long-term.
46. Promote racial equity that is grounded in the recognition of the past and current harms of systemic racism and one that advances restorative justice.
47. Increase equitable, inclusive, and meaningful representation and participation of people of color and disadvantaged communities in planning processes.

Environment

Sustainable Development

48. Promote sustainable development and best practices that enhance resource conservation, reduce resource consumption, and promote resilience.
49. Support communities across the region to further innovative sustainable development practices.

Air Quality

50. Reduce hazardous air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions and improve the air quality throughout the region through planning and implementation efforts.
51. Support and prioritize investments that reduce hazardous air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.
52. Reduce the exposure and impacts of emissions and pollutants and promote local and regional efforts that improve the air quality for vulnerable populations, including but not limited to Priority Equity Communities and the AB 617 Communities.

Clean Transportation

53. Accelerate the deployment of a zero-emission transportation system and use near-zero emission technology to offer short term benefits where zero emissions solutions are not yet feasible or commercially viable.

54. Promote equitable use of and access to clean transportation technologies so that all may benefit from them.
55. Consider the full environmental life-cycle of clean transportation technologies including upstream production and end of life as an important part of meeting SCAG's objectives in economic development and recovery, resilience planning and achievement of equity.
56. Maintain a technology neutral approach in the study of, advancement of, and, where applicable, investment in clean transportation technology.

Natural and Agricultural Lands Preservation

57. Prioritize the climate mitigation, adaptation, resilience, and economic benefits of natural and agricultural lands in the region.
58. Support conservation of habitats that are prone to hazards exacerbated by climate change, such as wildfires and flooding.
59. Support regional conservation planning and collaboration across the region.
60. Encourage the protection and restoration of natural habitat and wildlife corridors.
61. Encourage conservation of agricultural lands to protect the regional and local food supply and agricultural economy.
62. Encourage policy development of the link between natural and agricultural conservation with public health.

Nature-based Solutions

63. Support nature-based solutions to increase regional resilience of the natural and built environment.

Addressing Climate Hazards

64. Prioritize the most vulnerable populations and communities subject to climate hazards to help the people, places, and infrastructure that are most at risk for climate change impacts, recognizing that disadvantaged communities are often overburdened.
65. Support local and regional climate and hazard planning and implementation efforts.

Water Resilience

66. Promote sustainable water use planning and practices that improve regional water security and resilience in a drier environment.
67. Support an integrated planning approach to help local jurisdictions meet housing production needs in a drier environment.

Economy

Goods Movement

68. Leverage and prioritize investments particularly where there are mutual co-benefits to both freight and passenger/commuter rail.
69. Prioritize community and environmental justice concerns together with economic needs and support workforce development opportunities particularly around deployment of zero-emission and clean technologies, and their supporting infrastructure.
70. Explore and advance the transition toward zero-emissions and clean technologies and other transformative technologies where viable.

71. Conduct comprehensive systems-level planning of inland port concepts and corridor/supply chain operational strategies, integrated with road and rail infrastructure.
72. Ensure continued, significant investment in a safe, secure, clean and efficient multi-modal transportation system, including both highways and rail, to support the movement of goods across the region.

Broadband

73. Support ubiquitous regional broadband deployment and access, to provide the necessary infrastructure and capability for Smart Cities strategies and to ensure that the benefits of these strategies improve safety and are distributed equitably.
74. Develop networks that are efficient, scalable, resilient and sustainable, to support transportation systems management and operations services and “tele-everything” strategies that reduce vehicle miles traveled, optimize efficiency, and accommodate future growth of regional economies.
75. Encourage investments to provide access towards digital activities that support upwards educational, financial and economic growth.
76. Advocate for current, accurate data to identify opportunity zones and solutions to support the development of broadband services to community anchor institutions and local businesses.
77. Promote an atmosphere which allows for healthy competition and innovative solutions which are speed driven, while remaining technologically agnostic.
78. Use a bottom-up approach and listen to and prioritize a community’s broadband needs.

Universal Basic Mobility

79. Encourage partnerships and policies to broaden safe and efficient access to a range of mobility services to improve connections to jobs, education, and basic services.
80. Promote increased payment credentials for disadvantaged community members and transition of cash users to digital payment technologies to address payment barriers.

Workforce Development

81. Foster a positive business climate by promoting regional collaboration in workforce and economic development between cities, counties, educational institutions, and employers.
82. Encourage inclusive workforce development that promotes upward mobility.
83. Support entrepreneurial growth with a focus on underrepresented communities.
84. Foster a resilient workforce that is poised to effectively respond to changing economic conditions (market dynamics, technological advances, and climate change).
85. Inform and facilitate data-driven decision-making about the region’s workforce.

Tourism

86. Consult and collaborate with state, county, and local agencies within the region charged with promoting tourism and transportation.
87. 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.

GLOSSARY

Priority Equity Community: Priority Equity Communities are census tracts in the SCAG region that have a greater concentration of populations that have been historically marginalized and are susceptible to inequitable outcomes based on several socioeconomic factors.

Clean Transportation Technologies: zero- and near zero-emission vehicles, their supporting infrastructure, and other facilitating products that reduce environmental impacts over their full life cycle including upstream production and end of life.

Technology Neutrality: a stance that does not give preference to a particular technology as long as it furthers the desired outcome of a zero-emission transportation system that meets or exceeds federal and state targets.

Transportation Equity Zones: Communities across the SCAG region most impacted by transportation-related inequities

Universal Basic Mobility: Universal Basic Mobility (UBM) programs provide qualified residents subsidies for transit and other mobility services.