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MEETING OF THE

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Thursday, August 20, 2020
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Zoom Link on following page.
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Technical Working Group

August 20, 2020
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Web Meeting

Agenda

Introductions

Discussion Items

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Draft Technical Refinements for Connect SoCal & PEIR | Kimberly Clark &
Roland Ok | 35 minutes |
| 2. Update on Meeting Schedule | Staff | 5 minutes |

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Technical Working Group

Agenda Item 1

DRAFT Technical Refinements for Connect SoCal & PEIR
August 20, 2020

Connect SoCal (2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy) is a long-range visioning plan that builds upon and expands land use and transportation strategies established over several planning cycles to increase mobility options and achieve a more sustainable growth pattern. Over 4,000 individual transportation capital projects and programs, advanced through local and countywide plans, form the foundation of Connect SoCal. The implementation of the plan is anticipated to generate and support 168,400 annual jobs stemming from direct transportation investments and 264,500 jobs annually from the enhanced economic competitiveness that infrastructural improvements will provide. SCAG completes a comprehensive update of the plan every four-years to update the Growth Forecast, integrate new projects and programs funded by the six county transportation commissions, confirm alignment with federal and state performance standards and environmental requirements, and to review and refine regional strategies to address gaps in achieving the region's vision for greater mobility, sustainability and economic prosperity. The plan is a "living" document that can be amended and refined in between the four-year cycles, as necessary, to address regionally significant changes in transportation programs and funding. The Final Connect SoCal outlines more than \$638 billion in transportation system investments through 2045. It was prepared through a collaborative, continuous and comprehensive process with input from local governments, county transportation commissions, tribal governments, non-profit organizations, businesses and local stakeholders within the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura.

In light of the unique challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presents to our region, SCAG's Regional Council directed staff to conduct additional outreach with residents and stakeholders to better understand how Connect SoCal would be impacted in these unique times. Staff were also directed to engage with local jurisdictions to make refinements to the Plan's Growth Forecast in relation to entitlements, and to conduct analysis on the differences within the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and locally-approved General Plans. Regional Council Resolution No. 20-621-1 established a 120-day timeframe to conduct this work following the May 7, 2020 adoption of Connect SoCal for federal conformity purposes only. The Resolution also postponed the date by which the Regional Council would be asked to consider approval of Connect SoCal in its entirety and for all other purposes, including but not limited to submittal to the California Air Resources Board (ARB).

Based on direction from the Regional Council, SCAG staff engaged in several outreach activities during summer 2020 to fulfill the expectations under Resolution No. 20-621-1:

- To learn more from stakeholders about how their communities had been impacted by the pandemic and to learn how Connect SoCal could best be positioned as a tool for recovery and regional resilience, SCAG engaged with regional planning working groups, conducted direct outreach to specific stakeholders, held focus groups with community-based organizations, completed a public survey, and held a public virtual town-hall;
- On the topic of entitlements, SCAG conducted targeted outreach in May and June to jurisdictions where quantitative analysis indicated the need for direct discussion, and also

welcomed all jurisdictions to again review SCAG’s Growth Forecast to ensure entitlements (with anticipated phasing) were captured and general plan maximums were reflected;

- In identifying and quantifying differences within the SCS and locally-approved General Plans, SCAG conducted quantitative analysis to compare Connect SoCal’s Growth Forecast (a modeling input for the SCS) with local general plan dwelling unit capacities, and sought feedback from local jurisdictions on general plan capacities and entitlements in late May and early June; and
- SCAG staff provided an update on these activities and described the technical refinements to the SCS and associated modeling and analysis at the July 2 meetings of SCAG’s Policy Committees and Regional Council.

Draft Summary of Findings:

Feedback from the COVID-19 related outreach efforts reaffirmed some of the known challenges in the region, such as housing affordability, but also raised new concerns such as declines in forecasted revenues and the persistence of unaddressed inequities. Many stakeholders highlighted data and trends related to the development of Connect SoCal that had been disrupted by the pandemic. Since updated data on impacts from the pandemic is limited and the longer-term trajectory of recent trends is yet to be determined, SCAG staff recommend that any necessary changes based on impacts from the pandemic be reflected in the 2024 RTP/SCS which are articulated, along with other emerging trends in the **2024 Connect SoCal Emerging Issues Outlook** staff report as part of this same September 3, 2020 Regional Council Meeting. Staff also developed a **Connect SoCal Implementation Plan** that aligns SCAG’s work programs with the immediate public health, safety, racial justice, resilience, local capacity building and technical assistance, inclusive economic recovery, and fiscal challenges faced by the region and raised by stakeholders through the outreach process. One key takeaway from the outreach activities is that Connect SoCal’s goals and strategies remain deeply relevant, and they are arguably even more important now, as we prepare to work together to address a multitude of planning issues. We now have the opportunity through the adoption and implementation of Connect SoCal to ensure that as we emerge from the pandemic, we enact policies and strategies that result in a more healthy, livable, sustainable, and resilient region.

For SCAG’s engagements this summer with the region’s towns, cities, and counties on the topics of entitlements and general plan capacities for the Connect SoCal Growth Forecast, twelve jurisdictions provided feedback to SCAG – with six asking for adjustments due to general plan capacities and/or entitlements, and others specifically asking that the Growth Forecast not be changed for their jurisdiction at all. For the six jurisdictions requesting revisions, SCAG made refinements to the Growth Forecast for jurisdictions in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino counties – specifically, the cities of Anaheim, Chino, Duarte, Malibu, as well as the unincorporated portions of Los Angeles County and San Bernardino County:

- In total, 5,880 households were shifted in 0.29% of the region’s 13,257 Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs) by local jurisdictions, and 33,037 jobs were shifted in 0.77% of TAZs;
- The largest refinements for growth occurred in Los Angeles County, where 3,080 households and 24,428 jobs were shifted within the jurisdictions of the City of Duarte, City of Malibu and unincorporated Los Angeles County;
- In Orange County, the City of Anaheim recommended a shift in growth of 2,598 households and 1,645 jobs within their jurisdiction;

- In San Bernardino County, refinements resulted in a growth shift of 202 households and 6,964 jobs within the City of Chino and the unincorporated area of San Bernardino County;
- There were no changes to growth in any TAZs in Imperial, Riverside, and Ventura counties;
- Household and employment shifts occurred within each respective jurisdiction at the TAZ level (i.e. shifts did not occur across jurisdictional borders); and
- Additionally, the jurisdictional level growth totals were held constant with the May 7, 2020 Connect SoCal Plan.

Although these refinements better help to capture entitled projects and local general plans within jurisdictions, it is important to note that Connect SoCal’s TAZ level data is ***“utilized to conduct required modeling analysis and is therefore advisory and non-binding, given that sub-jurisdictional forecasts are not adopted as part of Connect SoCal. TAZ level data may be used by jurisdictions in local planning as they deem appropriate and Connect SoCal does not supersede local jurisdiction authority or decisions on future development including entitlements and development agreements”*** (Connect SoCal Growth Forecast Guiding Principle #4). Further, for purposes of determining consistency with Connect SoCal for CEQA, grant or other opportunities, lead agencies such as local jurisdictions have the sole discretion in determining a local project’s consistency, and ***“consistency should be evaluated utilizing the goals and policies of Connect SoCal and its associated Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)”*** (Connect SoCal Growth Forecast Guiding Principle #3). Finally, the TAZ level growth forecast data is not referenced or included as part of the goals and policies of Connect SoCal nor is it included in the associated PEIR. TAZ-level growth projections are utilized by SCAG for regional modeling purposes and are not adopted as part of Connect SoCal nor included as part of the Forecasted Regional Development Pattern. The Forecasted Regional Development Pattern for Connect SoCal reflects the policies and strategies of the Plan and includes existing entitlements and development agreements conveyed by jurisdictions (as depicted in the Connect SoCal Sustainable Communities Technical Report).

These technical refinements to the sub-jurisdictional Growth Forecast for Connect SoCal resulted in minimal impacts to the anticipated performance results for the Plan. **Importantly, Connect SoCal still achieves federal air quality conformity and meets the State’s greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2020 and 2035.** When looking at specific performance measures cited in the document, over 75 percent of the modeling results remain unchanged. The scale of these refinements is summarized here:

- Most performance areas that are impacted show improvement from the May 2020 modeling results. These include person delay per capita in Ventura County, VMT per capita for automobiles and light duty trucks in Ventura County, person hours of delay, mean commute times for walking and biking, percentage of trips less than 45 minutes by mode during evening peak periods, transit use, annual energy and water utilities costs per household, local infrastructure and services costs to support new housing growth, building energy use and cumulative energy costs;
- A handful of performance areas show fewer positive results than the May 2020 version but are still showing improvement over the 2045 Baseline Scenario. These include truck delays, mean commute times for automobiles and transit, pollution-related health impacts, annual

transportation costs per household, and rates of chronic disease for high blood pressure and heart disease;

Since the neighborhood-level Connect SoCal Growth Forecast is utilized as an input to the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), the average jurisdiction will see a change in their RHNA number of approximately +/- 1.0 housing unit, with no more than +/- 13 units being the largest change for any jurisdiction as a result of the technical refinements

Draft Addendum to the Connect SoCal PEIR:

Staff assessed whether the technical refinements addressed above would potentially result in any additional environmental impacts beyond the impacts identified in the Final PEIR, which would warrant further environmental review. Technical refinements resulted in minimal impacts to the performance results to Connect SoCal, and still achieves federal air quality conformity and meets State's greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2020 and 2035. In addition, SCAG received two comment letters from the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) on May 1, 2020, and May 6, 2020, where CBD requested expanded background information related to environmental setting, environmental impacts, and consideration of other mitigation measures. Additional information and refinements of mitigation measures as requested by CBD would not result in additional impacts.

Based on the results of the technical refinements and suggestions provided by CBDs comment letters, staff has prepared an Addendum to the previously certified Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Connect SoCal PEIR. The Addendum was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.; hereinafter "CEQA") and the Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000, et seq.; hereinafter "Guidelines").

Draft Contents of the Addendum:

The contents of the Draft Addendum are as follows:

- **Chapter 1.0, Introduction** describes the purpose and organization of this document. The introduction includes applicable statutory sections of the Public Resources Code and Guidelines, and a brief planning history.
- **Chapter 2.0, Technical Refinements to the Plan and Environmental Effects** describes the technical refinements and discusses the extent to which the changes would have effects on the environment.
- **Chapter 3.0, PEIR Clarifications** discusses refinements to the regulatory framework, existing conditions and analyses.
- **Chapter 4.0, Mitigation Measures** provides a list of refined SCAG and project-level mitigation measures. The proposed SCAG and project-level mitigation measures have been expanded to in the areas of agricultural and forestry, air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gases, and wildlife and to provide additional clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities.
- **Appendix** includes responses to comments received on the PEIR from the Center for Biological Diversity.

Potential Amended Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program:

SCAG has prepared an amended Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), which updates the MMRP that was adopted on May 7, 2020. The amended MMRP will reflect SCAG and project-level mitigation measures that were refined in the Addendum.

Staff determined that the impacts of the Plan with technical refinements falls within the analyses in the Final PEIR and would not result in 1) substantial changes in the Plan that require major revisions to the Final PEIR; 2) substantial changes to circumstances that require major revisions to the Final PEIR due to new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; 3) new information of substantial importance which was not known and could not have been known at the time to Final PEIR was certified which shows that the Plan will have more significant effects or substantially more severe effects, infeasible mitigation measures are in fact feasible, or other different mitigation measures which would substantially reduce significant effects are not adopted. Thus, neither a subsequent nor supplemental environmental impact report is required (Pub. Resources Code, § 21166; Guidelines §§ 15162, 15163).

Adoption of Connect SoCal:

The full adoption of Connect SoCal provides the basis for SCAG to move forward with various local and state partners to deliver projects and funding programs, regional studies, and pilot projects critical to realizing the vision and outcomes of the Plan. Approval enables SCAG to submit Connect SoCal to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) where it will undergo evaluation for meeting the State's GHG reduction target - an essential step for Southern California to access up to \$1.4 billion in transportation funding requested by County Transportation Commissions (CTCs) from the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program and the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (established by the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 or Senate Bill 1). Additionally, adoption of Connect SoCal allows SCAG to complete its obligations as part of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment process to issue draft RHNA Allocations to local jurisdictions based on the approved RHNA Methodology and consistent with Connect SoCal.