



# Chapter 1

## Our Region, Our Future





# 1

## Our Region, Our Future

A vision of healthy and thriving communities



### The San Diego Region: A Special Place at a Crossroads

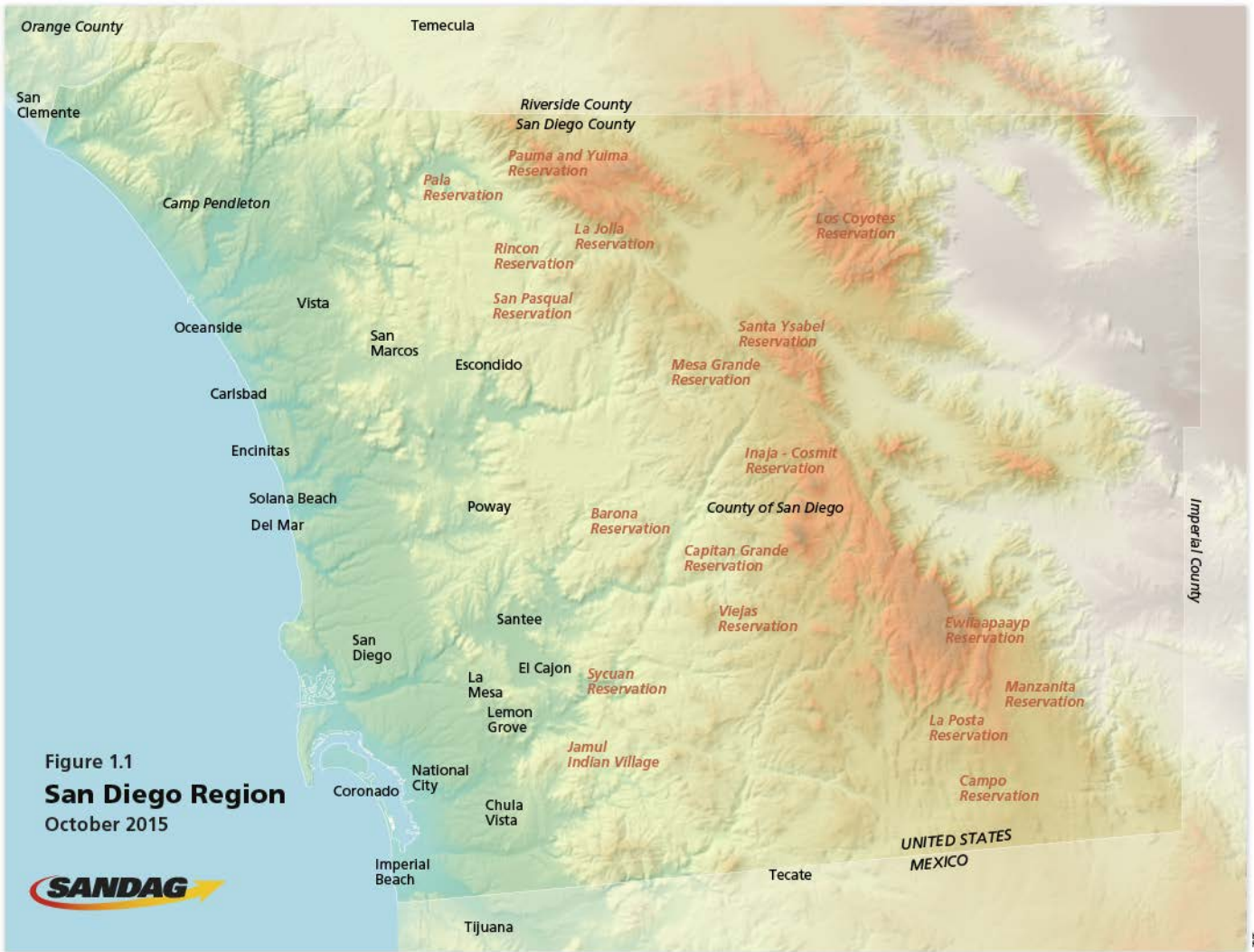
Here's a thought to get us started: we live in a place where people come to vacation, a place where they dream of living and find almost impossible to leave once they make it their home.

What draws people here? Certainly it's the gorgeous weather year round, a spectacular coastline, big open spaces, first-class family entertainment, a fantastic metropolitan area, a booming biotech industry, and an enticing international border. Those things make us proud to show off our region to out-of-town family and friends. But it's bedrock qualities like our strong economy, healthy neighborhoods, great schools, and top universities that make us grateful to live here.

Still, our region is at a crossroads. The same things that draw people here, to visit or stay, place pressures on our daily lives. Traffic can be challenging. Neighborhoods can be expensive and out of reach. Pick a summer day, any summer day, and it seems everyone is at the coast. The fact is, our region is growing. And while our

*San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan serves as a blueprint for how our region will grow, and how SANDAG will invest in transportation infrastructure that will provide more choices.*





population will continue to increase in the coming decades, we will have important choices to make – choices about how to grow, where to grow, and how to get around. We have big decisions to make to sustain the qualities we love most about the San Diego region.

This document, San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan (Regional Plan), serves as a blueprint for how our region will grow, and how SANDAG will invest in transportation infrastructure that will provide more choices, strengthen the economy, promote a healthy environment, and support thriving communities.

**Defining Sustainability:**

Sustainability means simultaneously meeting our current economic, environmental, and community needs, while also ensuring that we are not jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. (Regional Comprehensive Plan, 2004)

**An Opportunity to Shape Our Region**

Sustainability. Our Regional Plan will talk a lot about what that word means, not just the dictionary version, but what it means *for us*.

This Regional Plan is built on input from people throughout our region, young and old and from neighborhoods big and small. The Regional Plan’s success will depend on the degree to which our region feels invested in its success – a sense of buy-in and ownership. It’s our region, after all. And our future. As we plan for the years ahead, it’s important to recognize that we live in a unique place that is interconnected with our neighbors. We are surrounded by tangible boundaries: the Pacific Ocean to the west, the mountains, Anza-Borrego Desert, and



Imperial County's agricultural fields to the east, the international border with Mexico to the south, and Camp Pendleton as well as Orange and Riverside counties to the north. San Diego is also unique in that we have neighbors within our boundaries, as 18 tribal nations call the region home (see Figure 1.1). But we don't live in a vacuum, and we must coordinate with our regional and international neighbors.

Before us lie challenges and opportunities to help guide the future growth of our region and build a transportation system that works for everyone, all in ways that protect our environment, support our economy, and maintain our quality of life.

This Regional Plan presents an opportunity to shape our region for the 21st century. Over the next three and a half decades, more than \$200 billion will be invested in our region to create, maintain, and improve a balanced transportation network. Our Regional Plan does two main things to ensure that these tax dollars will be spent for the greatest public good: It provides a roadmap to grow and evolve, and it prioritizes 35 years of regional transportation projects to create a framework for much of the region's transportation infrastructure. The transportation decisions detailed in the Regional Plan serve an overarching goal: create more transportation choices, which ultimately will lead to healthier communities, healthier people, and a healthier environment.

In addition, the Regional Plan has been organized to include several important required elements,<sup>1</sup> starting out with the Policy Element included in this chapter. The required elements and locations where they can be found in the Regional Plan are described in Table 1.1 on page 4.

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**Table 1.1**  
**Regional Plan Required Elements**

Element Name	Description	Location
Policy Element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes the transportation issues in the region; identifies and quantifies regional needs expressed within both short and long-range planning horizons; and maintains internal consistency with the Financial Element and fund estimates.</li> </ul>	Chapter 1
Sustainable Communities Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies the general location of uses, residential densities, and building intensities within the region.</li> <li>• Identifies areas sufficient to house all of the region’s population and an eight-year projection of the regional housing need.</li> <li>• Identifies a transportation network to serve the transportation needs of the region. Gathers and considers the best practically available scientific information regarding resource areas and farmland in the region. Considers state housing goals.</li> <li>• Sets forth a forecasted development pattern for the region, which, when integrated with the transportation network and other transportation measures and policies, will reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks to achieve, if there is a feasible way to do so, the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets approved by the California Air Resources Board.</li> <li>• Allows the regional transportation plan to comply with Section 176 of the federal Clean Air Act.</li> </ul>	Chapter 2 and Appendix C
Financial Element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarizes costs to operate and maintain the current transportation system. Estimates costs and revenues to implement the projects identified in the Action Plan.</li> <li>• Provides an inventory of existing and potential transportation funding sources. Lists candidate projects if funding becomes available. Identifies potential funding shortfalls.</li> <li>• Identifies alternative policy directions that affect the funding of projects.</li> </ul>	Chapter 3, Appendix A and Appendix E
Action Element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes short- and long-term activities and strategies that address regional transportation issues and needs.</li> </ul>	Chapter 5





## The Importance of Planning

We all know that having a plan for the future is a good idea. Over the years, SANDAG has coordinated regional efforts to address a large number of important issues. These include using land more wisely; building an efficient and more accessible transportation system; protecting the environment; improving public health; promoting a strong regional economy; better managing our access to energy; ensuring adequate housing for everyone; incorporating equity into the planning process; addressing pressing needs on tribal lands; and supporting a vibrant international border.

More recently, planning has focused sharply on how the region can offer people *more transportation choices* – including more options for biking, walking, and public transit. We’ve also focused on what we can do collectively to better reduce greenhouse gas emissions and better adapt to the effects of climate change. We’ve drawn stronger links between how we use land and how we get around, and achieved a better understanding for how our choices for both can improve or harm our health. We’re also working to make sure the region can benefit from emerging technologies that will make transportation more efficient. Finally, we’re ensuring that all groups, including low-income, minority, and senior populations, have the opportunity to be meaningfully involved in developing plans for the future.

As San Diegans, we all share the responsibility for shaping our region’s future. In a region as culturally and economically diverse as ours, crafting a plan for how best to grow and the smartest ways to get around isn’t easy. But it’s vital at a time when the challenges we face are being confronted by Americans across the nation. Among these are an increasing rate of obesity, which drives chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and asthma. Other challenges in our region include a “silver tsunami” of aging citizens who will have significant needs, and a growing

and dynamic young population of “millennials” with their own priorities and desires. These two generations have many overlapping interests, including an increasing desire for urban lifestyles and more options for getting around. These are just a few reasons why it’s important to plan for our future – locally, regionally, and across all of our borders.



### Why “San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan”?

The Regional Plan isn’t starting from scratch. In fact, it combines the region’s two most important existing planning documents: the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), and the Regional Transportation Plan and its Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The RCP, adopted in 2004, laid out key principles for managing the region's growth while preserving natural resources and limiting urban sprawl. The plan covered eight policy areas including urban form, transportation, housing, healthy environment, economic prosperity, public facilities, our borders, and social equity. These policy areas were addressed in the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan and its Sustainable Communities Strategy (2050 RTP/SCS) and are now fully integrated into the Regional Plan.

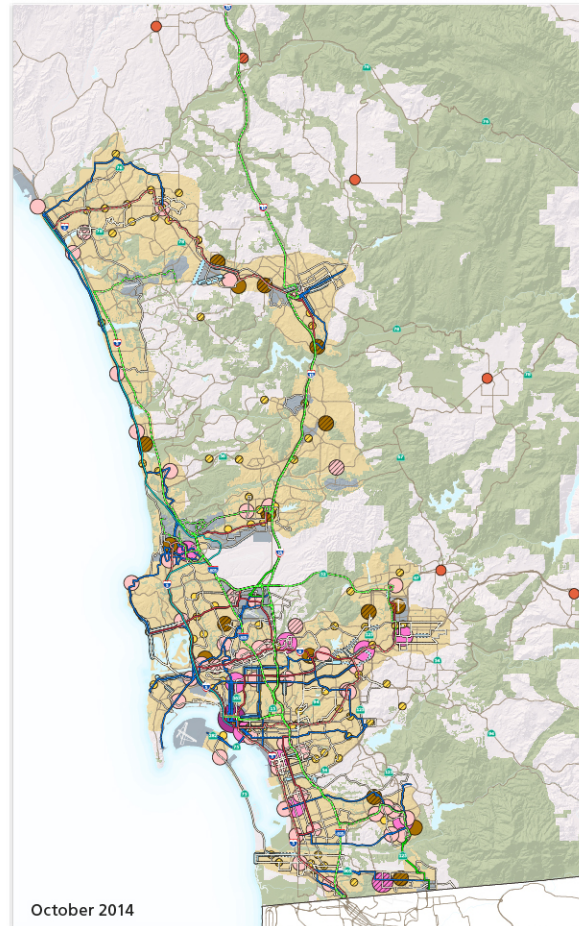
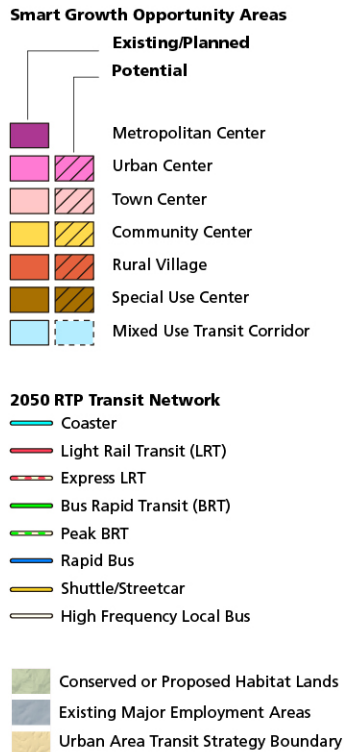
The RCP identified smart growth and sustainable development as important strategies to direct the region’s future growth toward compact, mixed-use development in urbanized communities that already have existing and planned infrastructure, and then connecting those communities with a variety of transportation choices. One of the early actions that followed the adoption of the RCP in 2004 was to develop a *Smart Growth Concept Map*.<sup>2</sup> The *Concept Map* includes locations where local communities have identified existing, planned, and potential higher density mixed-use development – meaning more housing and more jobs – near existing and planned public transit. This was accompanied by a *Smart Growth Tool Box*, which provided regional planners with tools and funding

**Defining Smart Growth:** Smart growth is a compact, efficient, and environmentally-sensitive pattern of development that provides people with additional travel, housing, and employment choices by focusing future growth away from rural areas and closer to existing and planned job centers and public facilities, while preserving open space and natural resources and making more efficient use of existing urban infrastructure. (Regional Comprehensive Plan, 2004)



programs to help communities achieve these big picture goals at the local level. The Tool Box has been widely used since the adoption of the RCP, and it's still in place today. The *Smart Growth Concept Map* and *Smart Growth Tool Box* are carried over and incorporated into the Regional Plan (see Chapter 2).

## Smart Growth Concept Map



*The Smart Growth Concept Map includes locations where local communities have identified existing, planned, and potential higher density mixed-use development – meaning more housing and more jobs - near existing and planned public transit.*

The 2050 RTP/SCS, adopted in 2011, took us beyond the vision of the RCP. It marked the first time that our regional transportation plan included a Sustainable Communities Strategy. The 2050 RTP/SCS provided a blueprint to improve mobility, preserve open space, and create vibrant and healthy communities – all of this with transportation choices designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet specific targets required by the state of California. These targets, described in more detail in Chapter 2: A Strategy for Sustainability, were set by the California Air Resources Board following the passage of Senate Bill 375 (Steinberg, 2008) (SB 375). The 2050 RTP/SCS outlined policies, strategies, and investments to maintain, manage, and improve the region's transportation system and meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets. An invigorated network of public transit options, based on a comprehensive transit planning effort known as the Urban Area Transit Strategy (UTAS), was a key part of the 2050 RTP/SCS. The 2050 RTP/SCS outlined strategies for success: focus on housing and job growth in the region's urbanized areas with existing and planned infrastructure; protect sensitive habitat and open space; invest in a transportation network that gives people transportation options and reduces greenhouse gas emissions; address the housing needs of all economic segments of the population; and implement the plan through incentives and

collaboration. As discussed in Chapter 2, these strategies are carried over and incorporated into the Regional Plan.

SANDAG is required by law to update its Regional Transportation Plan every four years, and this document is the latest update. Although many aspects of the 2050 RTP/SCS built upon the Regional Comprehensive Plan from 2004, a goal was to ensure that the broader, more comprehensive character of the RCP was included in this next update.

*Individuals from communities across the San Diego region, community-based organizations, elected officials, environmental groups, developers, business and healthcare professionals, and other stakeholders spent thousands of hours helping to shape this Regional Plan.*

As we've worked on this latest update, we've also continued to make progress on implementing actions included in the 2050 RTP/SCS. Planning for the region's future is an ongoing enterprise, with work progressing on several fronts continuously as plans are developed, implemented, evaluated, and updated to reflect new realities.

The Regional Plan reflects a broad range of public discourse and community engagement. Numerous people, organizations, and groups contributed to the development of this new Regional Plan. Individuals from communities across the San Diego region, community-based organizations, elected officials, environmental groups, developers, business and healthcare professionals, and other stakeholders spent thousands of hours helping to shape this Regional Plan.

The merging of the RCP and the RTP/SCS into the Regional Plan is truly a leap forward in charting our course far into the 21st century.





## Our Roadmap for San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan

All good plans begin with an overall vision and specific goals. What do we want to accomplish? Where do we want to be when our Regional Plan is fully realized? The goals of the Regional Plan are simple but ambitious: to provide innovative mobility choices and planning to support a sustainable and healthy region, a vibrant economy, and an outstanding quality of life for all.

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To provide innovative mobility choices and planning to support a sustainable and healthy region, a vibrant economy, and an outstanding quality of life for all.

Easily enough said. But how do we get there? For the Regional Plan, policy objectives point the way. With broad participation from many individuals and stakeholders, we developed policy objectives that together serve as a roadmap to guide our journey toward achieving our goals and vision.<sup>3</sup> We identified six general categories of policy objectives, and within each one there are two to three specific policy objectives. Collectively, these provide us with a framework for the strategy for sustainability described in Chapter 2: A Strategy for Sustainability, as well as concrete steps we need to take to implement our Regional Plan. These key actions are listed in Chapter 5: Ensuring Performance.





### Policy objective categories

Here are the six general categories of policy objectives, each with its own set of specific objectives:



#### Habitat and Open Space Preservation

- Focus growth in areas that are already urbanized, allowing the region to set aside and restore more open space in our less developed areas.
- Protect and restore our region’s urban canyons, coastlines, beaches, and water resources.



#### Regional Economic Prosperity

- Invest in transportation projects that provide access for all communities to a variety of jobs with competitive wages.
- Build infrastructure that makes the movement of freight in our community more efficient and environmentally friendly.



#### Environmental Stewardship

- Make transportation investments that result in cleaner air, environmental protection, conservation, efficiency, and sustainable living.
- Support energy programs that promote sustainability.



### Mobility Choices

- Provide safe, secure, healthy, affordable, and convenient travel choices between the places where people live, work, and play.
- Take advantage of new technologies to make the transportation system more efficient and accessible.



Mobility Choices

### Partnerships/Collaboration

- Collaborate with Native American tribes, Mexico, military bases, neighboring counties, infrastructure providers, the private sector, and local communities to design a transportation system that connects to the megaregion and national network, works for everyone, and fosters a high quality of life for all.
- As we plan for our region, recognize the vital economic, environmental, cultural, and community linkages between the San Diego region and Baja California.



Partnerships/  
Collaboration

### Healthy and Complete Communities

- Create great places for everyone to live, work, and play.
- Connect communities through a variety of transportation choices that promote healthy lifestyles, including walking and biking.
- Increase the supply and variety of housing types -- affordable for people of all ages and income levels in areas with frequent transit service and with access to a variety of services.



Healthy and  
Complete  
Communities





### **Recognizing the Connections in Our Regional Plan**

So, those are the guiding principles that define our work and shape the character of this Regional Plan. As we developed these policy objectives, it became clear that the topics addressed in the Regional Plan – and in other big picture visions for our community’s future – are interrelated. We must make a concerted effort to craft policies and actions that support livable communities and healthy places with a variety of transportation choices. And we must avoid decisions that lead us toward “silos” that fail to recognize the interconnectedness of the many issues that influence this region.

### **We’re in this Together**

As the region’s planning agency, SANDAG is uniquely positioned to bring together decision-makers from all areas of the region. The agency serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for our region, joining elected officials from all 18 cities and the County of San Diego as a regional council of governments. One of our primary responsibilities is regional transportation planning. We invest in public transit, highways, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, freight corridors, and technologies to better manage our regional transportation system and the everyday demands on it. We also provide financial incentives and offer grant programs to various jurisdictions and organizations. Through these activities, SANDAG influences policies for how local governments use land, protect the environment, and grow their economies.

SANDAG collaborates with a variety of partners. They include regional economic development corporations, chambers of commerce, environmental groups, water and energy providers, health providers, community-based organizations, labor, law enforcement, partners in Baja California, tribal nations, the military, universities and



community colleges, neighboring counties, Caltrans, transit operators, Port of San Diego, San Diego County Airport Authority, the private sector, and other organizations and stakeholders.

Working together, we have developed a shared vision for mid-century. This vision brings together local plans for sustainable growth, and it provides a regional framework that promotes a strong economy, an efficient transportation system, a healthy environment, and thriving communities.

## **Partners at Our Borders**

As we've mentioned, it's critical that we coordinate planning with our neighbors outside and within our geographic boundaries. We live in a binational region that includes San Diego and Imperial counties, and the northern cities of Baja California. About 6.4 million people live today in this binational region, and that number is projected to grow to 10.6 million by 2040. It's a place with diverse landscapes, politics, economies, languages, and cultures. Even so, we are linked socially and economically. People and goods flow across our borders in huge numbers every day.

The San Ysidro Port of Entry is one of the busiest land ports of entry in the world. It's the region's primary gateway for people who drive and walk across the border. Otay Mesa, our region's main commercial port of entry, is one of the ten busiest land ports of entry in the country. It's the busiest commercial crossing on the California-Baja California border.

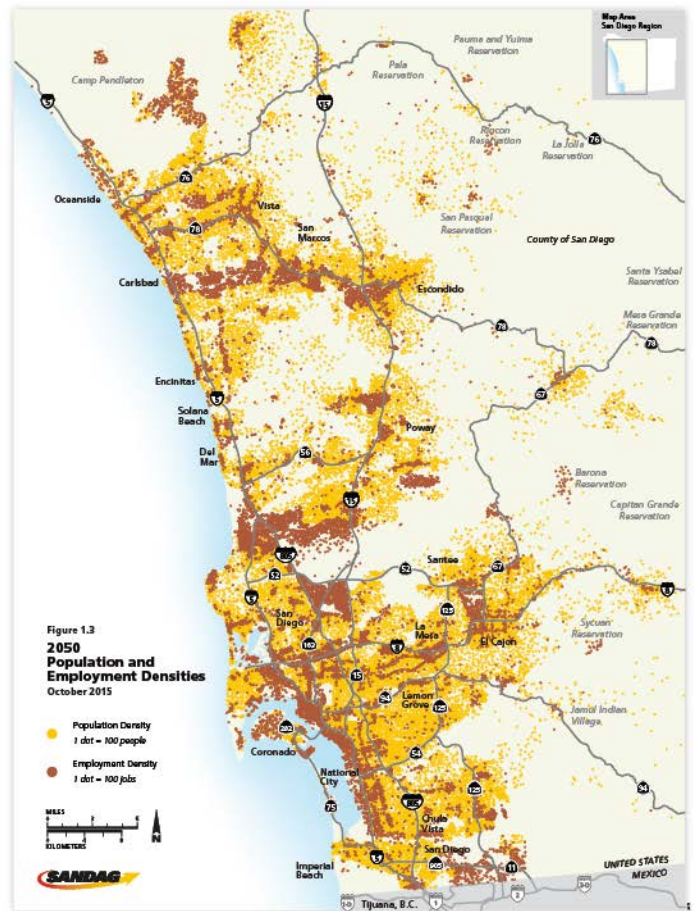
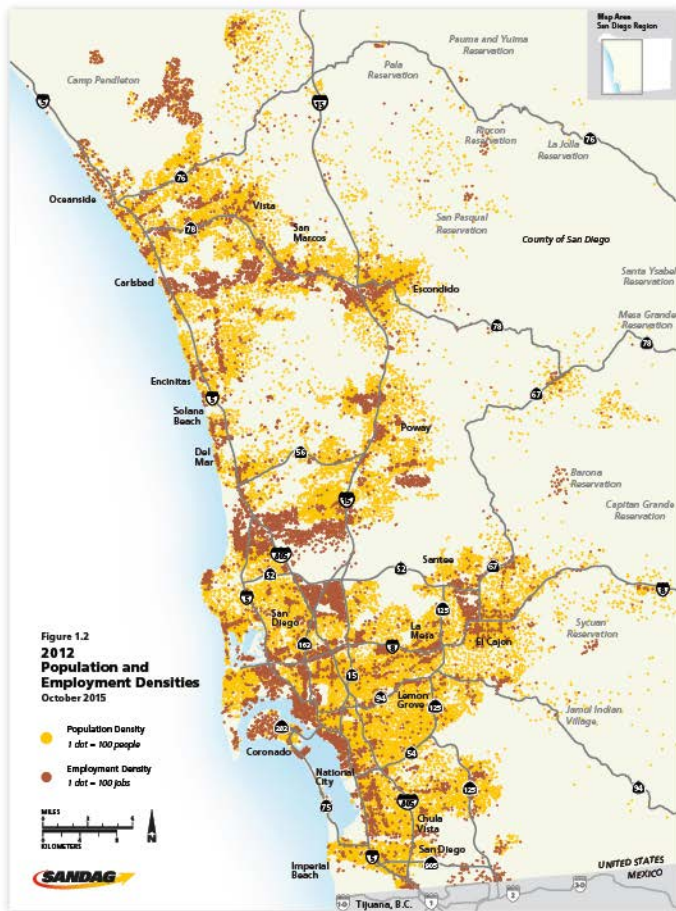
We also have neighbors within our region who have control over federal land: federally recognized tribes and the military. In the San Diego region, there are 18 independent sovereign tribal nations with jurisdiction over 19 reservations – the most in any county in the United States. Our region also has the largest military presence in the country, with Camp Pendleton, Miramar Marine Corps Air Station, North Island Naval Base, and Naval Base San Diego.

How we grow impacts our neighbors just as our neighbors' growth impacts us. Our collective growth – not only with Baja California but also within our tribal lands, military bases, and areas north and east of us – increases the demand for water, energy, housing, and roadways, and it places pressure on open space. Coordinated intergovernmental planning with our crossborder partners, neighboring counties, military partners, and tribal governments within the San Diego region helps promote collaborative solutions to protect our quality of life.

## **Where and How We'll Grow**

Our region is large and diverse, with 18 individual cities, unincorporated land governed by the County of San Diego, the 18 sovereign tribal governments and 19 reservations we've mentioned, 3 major military bases, an international border with Mexico, and 3 major land ports of entry between San Diego and Baja California. Today, about 3.2 million people live here. Every year that number, as well as the number of jobs and homes, goes up. These increases reflect a growing economy and new opportunities.

*We live in a binational region that includes San Diego and Imperial counties, and the northern cities of Baja California.*



*Rather than expanding “out” as we have in the past, the SANDAG Regional Growth Forecast is projecting that we will grow “up,” creating more compact communities.*

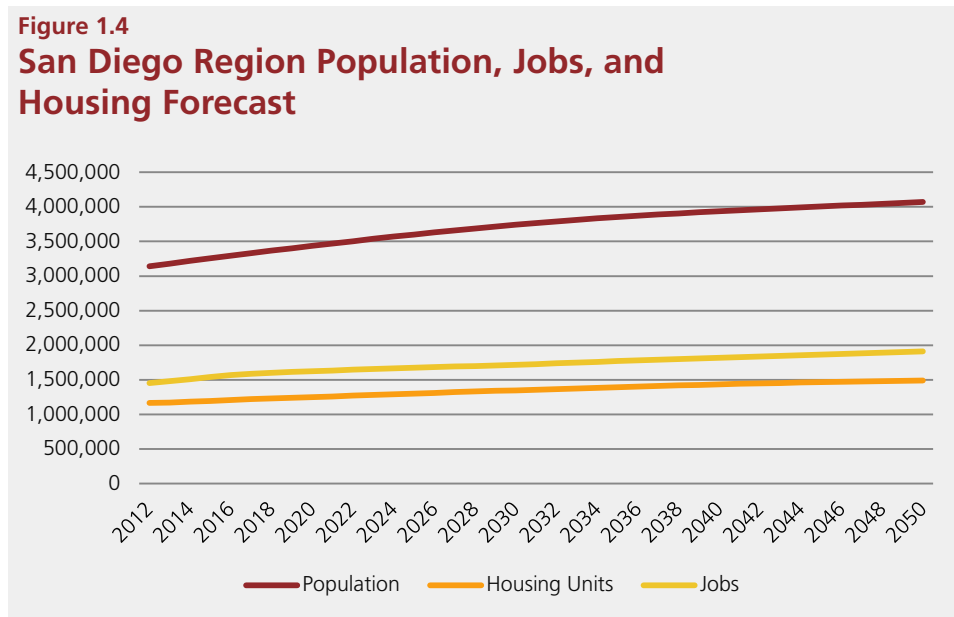
Our region isn’t just growing; it’s growing in new ways. Figures 1.2 and 1.3 show that rather than expanding “out” as we have in the past, the SANDAG Regional Growth Forecast is projecting that we will grow “up,” creating more compact communities.

The Regional Growth Forecast<sup>4</sup> uses the most recent land use planning assumptions from all 18 cities of the region and San Diego County. These planning assumptions are what SANDAG uses to develop the supporting transportation network, water agencies use for water planning purposes, and utility providers use for long range planning.

Denser neighborhoods, particularly in the western third of the San Diego region, will offer housing, jobs, and services closer to one another – and importantly, closer to the regional transportation network. While the western areas will grow over time through more compact communities, more land in the eastern two-thirds of the region will be preserved as open space.

## Our Population

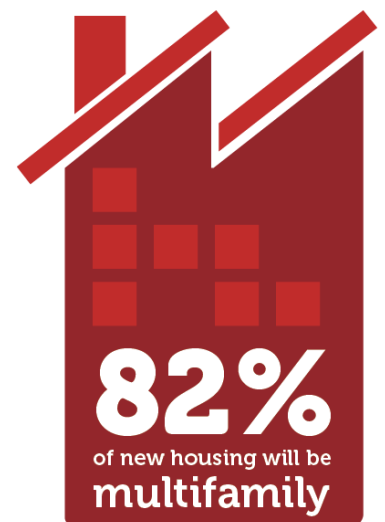
Now for some hard numbers: By 2050, our region’s population is projected to grow by nearly a million people. This growth will lead to about 460,000 more jobs and over 325,000 more apartments, condos, houses, and other types of housing. Figure 1.4 provides a summary of population, housing units, and job statistics as well as future trends through 2050.



While San Diego has long been thought of as a region of “transplants” where more than half of residents were born outside of California, future growth is expected to be largely homegrown. As people live longer and fertility rates rise, these two trends will fuel a natural increase in our region’s population. In fact, they account for nearly two-thirds of our region’s future population growth. Longer life expectancies also will contribute to the aging population seen in the outer years of the forecast. Currently, individuals aged 65 years and older make up 12 percent of the total population of our region. By 2050, this number is expected to swell dramatically. More than ever, our plans for the future need to consider all ages and life stages when planning for improved services, especially as individuals are living longer and pursuing more active lifestyles. The accessibility and efficiency of mobility options will continue to be important features of an effective transportation system.

Below are key projections for 2050, some of which we’ve discussed, that are influencing how we plan for the future:

- Most of the region’s population growth will come from growing families that already live here today.
- Our population is aging. Nearly 20 percent of the population will be at least 65 by 2050. That’s compared with 12 percent today.
- We’ll grow more diverse. Nearly half of the region’s population will be Hispanic, more than 15 percent will be Asian, and about 4 percent will be African American.





**55%**  
of the region is slated  
to be preserved open  
space and parks, habitat,  
and farmland in  
**2050**

- More than 82 percent of the growth in housing will be in apartment buildings, condo complexes, and other multifamily dwellings. That’s a dramatic change from the way the future looked back in 2000, when 48 percent of the land planned for housing in our region was earmarked for single-family homes.
- By 2050, 55 percent of the region will be preserved as open space and parks, habitat, or farmland<sup>5,6</sup> – an accomplishment driven significantly by the projected shift to multifamily housing and compact development patterns across the region.

We’ve discussed already how development is projected to shift toward urban areas and along key transportation corridors. To help you visualize what we mean, here are a few concrete examples from around our region:

- National City’s general plan provides opportunities for more than 10,000 additional multifamily homes near the Blue Line Trolley and the planned Trolley line connecting San Ysidro and Carmel Valley via the Interstate 805 corridor.
- San Marcos has drafted specific plans for the San Marcos Creek and University districts, adding mixed-use developments near California State University San Marcos and the SPRINTER rail corridor.
- More than half of the regional growth in new housing will occur within the City of San Diego. Downtown San Diego will continue to see growth over the next few decades, and it’s also expected in the Barrio Logan, Golden Hill, and Uptown communities.





On the jobs front, the Regional Plan projects that today's centers of employment will continue to expand:

- The University Towne Centre/Sorrento Valley/Torrey Mesa employment cluster will remain the largest job center in the region.
- Downtown San Diego will add another 30,000 jobs by 2050.
- The Otay Mesa border area will become a much larger job center, growing from about 15,000 jobs today to more than 45,000 by 2050.
- Chula Vista will add nearly 50,000 new jobs as the Chula Vista Bayfront, downtown investments, and new planned communities in eastern Chula Vista come online.

The Regional Growth Forecast projects that the San Diego region will continue to grow more sustainably. More compact and efficient communities, paired with a greater variety of transportation options and less sprawl, will result in preserved open space and habitat, and a more efficient use of water and energy.

These expected changes raise two important issues. We need to successfully invest in transportation to connect our population with an adequate supply of well-paying jobs. Secondly, we must provide an adequate supply of housing that people can afford. We'll be discussing these and other issues in this Plan.





## **The Importance of Housing**

Providing adequate housing for a growing number of people, from all income levels and at all stages of their lives, continues to be one of the major goals for our region. One way to do this is to provide more housing choices – more apartments, townhomes, condominiums, and single-family houses in all price ranges. These homes need to be affordable to people of all income levels, and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. They should be located in our urban communities close to jobs and transit. That will help preserve our open spaces and rural areas, bolster our existing neighborhoods, and keep commutes manageable.

How much housing is built, what type is built, and where it gets built will impact our future. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), updated every eight years and last updated in 2011 as part of the 2050 RTP/SCS, helps provide the framework for the planning and construction of housing, particularly affordable housing, in our region.<sup>7</sup> In Chapter 2, we'll go into more detail about housing.

## **The Importance of Water**

Providing enough water for our growing population is essential to our economy and our quality of life. The severe drought that we've experienced in recent years has reminded us that water is a precious and sometimes scarce resource. We are often asked how the region can accommodate new growth when the existing population is facing statewide conservation mandates due to the drought. But the fact is that nearly two-thirds of our projected growth in coming decades will be driven by the natural increase of today's existing population – that is, our children's children. The San Diego County Water Authority has plans and strategies in place intended to



manage droughts and ensure the reliability of our region’s water supplies for the long term – as we continue to grow.

SANDAG doesn’t directly plan for water supplies in our region, but it coordinates closely with the Water Authority. The Water Authority prepares an Urban Water Management Plan every five years to help ensure that the San Diego region has reliable water supplies. Updates to the plan are provided to SANDAG and to local jurisdictions to consult as they develop their own land use plans and policies.

To show that the region will have reliable water supplies over the next 25 years, the Urban Water Management Plan quantifies the mix of existing and projected local and imported supplies needed to meet future demands. This plan focuses heavily on water conservation, and also on the diversification of water supplies. The Water Authority is working with its member agencies to implement this diverse mix of water supplies, while also identifying changing conditions that should be reflected in the next update of the Urban Water Management Plan (the Water Authority is working on an update to the Urban Water Management Plan, which is scheduled to be adopted in 2016). Demand management is a key component to future supply reliability and by focusing future development in the western third of our region, the overall demand for water will be lower than if we had expanded urban and suburban areas to the east – as we’ve done in the past. One key reason is because landscaping and other outdoor water use is lower when development is more concentrated in established urban areas. SANDAG and the Water Authority will continue to work together on addressing future water issues.<sup>8</sup>

## **It’s All About Choices**

When we think about the future, most of us would prefer to have *more* choices than fewer choices. And, we’d like our range of choices to vary according to the stages of our lives and our personal circumstances.

If we are young adults heading off to college, we may want a dorm room or an affordable apartment with lots of travel options to get to class – including safe routes for walking and biking. If we have young children, we may want a home that’s close to our children’s local school, and in a neighborhood that can support walking, riding a scooter, skateboarding, or biking. If we are empty nesters, we may prefer a condo in an urban area so we can get around easily and enjoy an art show, play, or other cultural event. If we’re embarking on a blended family experience, we may need a larger home and more alternative ways of getting around. If we’re older, we may need assisted living choices with options for traveling to our medical appointments. If we’re facing health issues, we may need to build more physical activity into our daily schedules while also having ready access to medical care.

The ways in which our communities are built can make a difference in the kinds of choices available to us. By designing communities that better integrate the connections between how we use land and how we get around (i.e. transportation), we can create more opportunities for developing a wider variety of travel choices beyond the car, including options like the Trolley, SPRINTER,

*By designing communities that better integrate the connections between land use and transportation, we can create more opportunities for developing a wider variety of travel choices.*



COASTER, buses, biking, and walking. Emerging technologies can help us optimize these choices, by ultimately making it easier and more efficient to choose transportation options beyond driving alone.

The societal benefits of having access to a wider range of travel choices are numerous. We can spend less time in our cars and save gas money. We can reduce air pollution and maximize public health. And we can lower the amount of greenhouse gases that we emit into the atmosphere.

In coming chapters of this Regional Plan, we'll talk about our Sustainable Communities Strategy and regional housing needs. We'll review how our region grew in previous decades, and how new thinking about development, transportation, technology, and sustainability will improve the region's future. We'll outline how more compact development and a greater mix of land uses will create more vibrant communities, while also supporting existing and new transportation projects. We'll also review what it will take to pay for transportation improvements. Then we'll discuss the benefits of charting this course for the future. Finally, we'll review key actions that will propel us forward, and how we'll keep track of our progress to ensure the Regional Plan's success.

*Together, we can strive to achieve what we want for our future: a vibrant economy, innovative mobility, a healthy environment, and great communities.*

As Yogi Berra once said: "If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up somewhere else." As a region, thoughtful and effective planning for how we use land and invest in transportation will determine where we go in the future. Together, we can strive to achieve what we want for our future: a vibrant economy, innovative mobility, a healthy environment, and great communities. Do that, and we'll create a region we'd love to show off to out-of-town family and friends. Most of all, it'll be a great place to live.

Let's work together to move San Diego Forward!



## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> This Regional Plan includes the mandatory policy, action, and financial elements – in addition to the SCS as identified in California Government Code Section 65080 and detailed in Appendix C: Sustainable Communities Strategy Documentation and Related Information. The Regional Plan also includes the elements required by numerous other policy documents and regulations, such as the Regional Comprehensive Plan (Public Utilities Code 132360 *et. seq*) and the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). Given the interrelated nature of these requirements, they are integrated into various chapters of the Regional Plan.
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.sandag.org/index.asp?classid=12&projectid=296&fuseaction=projects.detail>
- <sup>3</sup> SANDAG prepared the Public Involvement Plan with input from the general public, community based organizations, SANDAG Working Groups, SANDAG Policy Advisory Committees, and the SANDAG Board of Directors. The Public Involvement Plan, which includes a detailed description of the consultation and participation of interested parties, is included as Appendix F: Public Involvement Program. Additionally, several key policy white papers were developed to inform the Regional Plan, and these are included as Appendix Q: White Papers.
- <sup>4</sup> Appendix J: Regional Growth Forecast
- <sup>5</sup> Based on the best practically available scientific information regarding resource areas and farmland in the region, as additionally shown in Appendix C.
- <sup>6</sup> “Open Space and Parks” include beach-passive (other sandy areas along the coastline with limited parking and access), open space park or preserve, and undevelopable natural area. “Farmland” includes Williamson Act Lands. “Habitat” includes SANDAG conserved lands.
- <sup>7</sup> The RHNA was developed as part of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan and its Sustainable Communities Strategy, and can be found as Appendix L: Regional Housing Needs Assessment Plan.
- <sup>8</sup> More information about the water forecasting process can be found in Appendix J.