



BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JUNE 23, 2006

AGENDA ITEM NO. 06-06-15
**ACTION REQUESTED - INFORMATION/
POSSIBLE ACTION**

**SMART GROWTH CONCEPT MAP: WORKSHOP SUMMARY
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM POLICY COMMITTEES**

File Number 3000200

Introduction

On July 23, 2004, the SANDAG Board of Directors adopted the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) for the San Diego region. The RCP provides an overall vision and policy framework for better connecting transportation and land use within our region, and promotes smart growth and sustainability as key principles.

One of the RCP's early actions is the development of a "Smart Growth Concept Map" illustrating the location of existing, planned, and potential smart growth areas, which would be used in updating the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and determining eligibility for smart growth-related incentives.

Over the past year and a half, SANDAG staff has been working with the Regional Planning Committee and its two working groups, the Regional Planning Technical Working Group (TWG) (consisting of planning and community development directors from each jurisdiction within the region) and the Regional Planning Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) (consisting of stakeholders appointed by the SANDAG Board from throughout the region) to develop a draft Smart Growth Concept Map. Steps to develop the Concept Map included the identification of the smart growth areas by local planning staffs, verification by SANDAG staff of the designated status of each of the areas based on RCP land use and transportation targets (place types), and input by the Regional Planning Committee and the SWG on the map's overall presentation and layout. In addition, all three groups participated in the development of the public outreach process.

The draft map, which was released for review by the Regional Planning Committee on March 3, 2006, and reviewed by the Regional Planning and Transportation Committees on June 2, 2006, illustrates the almost 200 smart growth areas identified by local jurisdictions in the San Diego region. Enclosures 1 and 2 include the most recent version of the map and related site descriptions, and Attachment 1 includes background information on the map, including how it will be used and the process for future updates.

In April, in partnership with the local jurisdictions, SANDAG held eight workshops around the region to identify the resources needed to make smart growth work and to obtain input on the

Recommendation

At their joint meeting on June 2, 2006, the Regional Planning and Transportation Committees unanimously recommended that the SANDAG Board accept the draft Concept Map for planning purposes.

This item is presented for information and possible action today. The SANDAG Board of Directors is asked to accept the draft Smart Growth Concept Map for planning purposes for the 2007 RTP update. If the Board wishes to take additional time to review the report, this action can be postponed to the August 4 Board meeting.

draft Smart Growth Concept Map as well as the forthcoming update of the RTP. In addition, SANDAG made presentations to local city councils and transit operators, and received correspondence regarding the map. This report summarizes the collective public input on smart growth and transportation planning issues, provides a list of comments and local responses on the draft Smart Growth Concept Map, and summarizes the changes to the map (Attachment 2). Additional comments from the Regional Planning and Transportation Committees also are discussed in a separate section below.

Discussion

Overview of Workshops and Summary of Major Outcomes

Smart growth workshops were held in April 2006 in the following locations: Escondido, Del Mar, Oceanside, Kearny Mesa, Balboa Park, La Mesa, National City, and San Ysidro. The objectives of the workshops were threefold: (1) to generate greater awareness of smart growth and transportation links; (2) to update the public on the implementation of the RCP and on the RTP update; and (3) to obtain public input on the draft Smart Growth Concept Map, transportation planning priorities, and urban design factors that promote smart growth. Attachment 3 provides an overview of the workshops and a summary of outcomes. The following section pulls from the workshop summary to provide a condensed overview.

Workshop Activities

The workshops consisted of four main activities: a background presentation providing an overview of major SANDAG transportation and land use planning initiatives; a community image survey intended to generate discussion about land use and urban design issues; facilitated break-out sessions focused on the resources necessary to make smart growth and public transit work; and a "dot exercise," where participants could prioritize which resources identified in the break-out sessions were most important to them. An additional activity was the Marketplace of Ideas, an informal gathering area where SANDAG, local jurisdictions, and Caltrans provided materials highlighting local and regional projects, including the draft Smart Growth Concept Map and various transportation maps.

In general, while participation varied by location, the workshops were well attended, with the highest attendance at the workshops in Oceanside, Escondido, and Central San Diego (Balboa Park).

Major Outcomes

Workshop participants expressed a variety of opinions on growth, smart growth, transportation, public transit, infrastructure, housing, natural resources, and the planning process. In general, participants from some areas seemed to be more accepting of smart growth, and focused much of their discussions on what it would take to either enhance the existing smart growth and transit in their communities or to make new smart growth work in their neighborhoods. Generally, these areas included South County, East County, and parts of Central San Diego and North County Inland.

Participants from other areas expressed more uncertainty about smart growth and, in some cases, advocated for the removal of smart growth areas from the draft Smart Growth Concept Map. These areas generally included North County Coastal and parts of Central San Diego. As mentioned above, Attachment 3 provides a more detailed summary of comments.

Transportation Top Issue – Public transit, transportation, and traffic issues received the highest number of comments at the workshops. Many of the comments focused on the need for more frequent transit service, faster transit service with reasonably competitive travel times, more dependable schedules, more affordable fares, and the need to spend more money on transit services and operations.

Support for More Infrastructure – Infrastructure was another highly discussed topic. Participants expressed the need for additional infrastructure and amenities to support smart growth, including more roadway and transit facilities, recreation centers, schools, libraries, public spaces, services at key transportation hubs, and others. Parking also received considerable attention, with a variety of opinions expressed, ranging from the need for additional parking at local transit stations for transit users to the need for reduced parking requirements for new development at transit stations.

Differing Opinions on Growth – Residents expressed a variety of opinions regarding growth issues. While some participants questioned the accuracy of the region's forecasts, others felt that growth was inevitable. Some participants felt that the region needs to concentrate growth in key areas and use our land more efficiently. Others felt that we need to limit densities and evaluate the impacts of density on our quality of life. Many recognized the interface between density and design, indicating that density needs to relate to the character of the community and that it needs to be aesthetically appealing.

Needs in Housing, Public Transit, and Natural Resources Recognized – There was recognition for the need for more affordable housing in the San Diego region, especially for seniors, the disabled, and the general public. Many participants expressed the need to better link employment centers, housing, and public transportation; to provide transit services more directly to job centers; and to provide more jobs where people live. In addition, many participants encouraged the preservation of natural and cultural resources, and the use of less land to preserve the environment.

Roles in Planning Process Clarified – Finally, there were questions related to SANDAG's role in the planning process. In response, it should be noted that SANDAG does not have land use or regulatory authority, and that SANDAG has been working closely with the planning staffs and, in many cases, elected officials of local jurisdictions to prepare the Smart Growth Concept Map.

Comments from City Councils and Transit Operators

In addition to the workshops, SANDAG offered to make presentations to local city councils and the County Board of Supervisors on the Smart Growth Concept Map. As a result of this effort, SANDAG staff made presentations to 17 local jurisdictions, as well as the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and the North County Transit District (NCTD) Planning Committee.

In general, while most local city councils expressed support for the regional smart growth approach and for the specific smart growth areas identified in their jurisdictions, concerns also were expressed. Generally, the concerns focused on housing affordability and gentrification in smart growth areas (a rise in housing prices beyond the ability of current residents to afford them due to increasing land values in the general vicinity); potential conflicts between proposed smart growth areas and existing habitat plans; increased traffic congestion in smart growth areas; inability to provide adequate transit services and frequencies to support the smart growth areas; the need for enhanced permanent funding for transit operations; and the need to continue working with local jurisdictions on the smart growth designations.

TWG and SWG Recommendations

At their May meetings, both the TWG and SWG recommended that the Regional Planning and Transportation Committees forward the draft map to the SANDAG Board of Directors for planning purposes for the 2007 RTP update. The TWG recommendation was unanimous, and all but one of the SWG members also supported the recommendation. The member of the SWG who opposed the recommendation, stated that "a cursory update of the Regional Transportation Plan should come before the Board's action on the Smart Growth Concept Map in order to identify transportation corridors that cannot handle additional traffic impacts. This would help rule out smart growth areas in locations where the transportation network is already overburdened, bottlenecks are occurring, and no possible work-arounds or easy solutions are evident."

The SWG also expressed additional general issues that should be addressed in the RTP update and in the implementation of the RCP. These issues, which are summarized in Attachment 4, were similar to the issues identified in the smart growth public workshops.

Comments/Recommendations by the Regional Planning and Transportation Committees

As stated earlier in this report, the Regional Planning and Transportation Committees held a joint meeting on June 2, 2006 to consider the draft Smart Growth Concept Map. At that meeting, after considerable discussion, both Committees unanimously recommended that the SANDAG Board accept the draft Concept Map for planning purposes for the 2007 RTP update. In addition to their recommendations, Committee members also expressed support for the following actions.

1. Acknowledge that Senate Bill (SB) 18 requires local jurisdictions to consult with tribal governments in the planning process and that SB 18 may apply to planning in some of the smart growth areas identified on the Smart Growth Concept Map.
 - Based on the comments at the June 2, 2006, joint meeting of the Regional Planning and Transportation Committees, staff will relay the tribal consultation provisions of SB 18 to Oceanside and Carlsbad officials.
2. Address the broader issues of sustainability in the region's planning process, including water availability, water quality, clean air, habitat conservation, energy, and others.
 - Smart growth and sustainability are key principles of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Sustainability and environmental impact issues will be addressed as SANDAG prepares the environmental document for the 2007 RTP update.
3. Where appropriate, consider refining the smart growth place types identified on the Smart Growth Concept Map.
 - Through the RTP planning process, place types and transit service levels will be reviewed and possibly refined.
4. Forward the detailed workshop summaries from each subregion to local planning directors and other appropriate representatives from that subregion in an effort to support smart growth implementation and provide adequate follow-up from the workshops.
 - Staff has forwarded the detailed workshop summaries from each subregion to local planning directors and other appropriate representatives from that subregion.

Summary of Changes to the Smart Growth Concept Map

The draft Smart Growth Concept Map contains almost 200 existing, planned, or potential smart growth locations identified by the local planning staffs from each jurisdiction and reviewed in many cases by local city councils. Through the workshops, e-mails, and written correspondence, SANDAG received a number of comments on the locations identified on the draft map. Overall, most of the comments focused on smart growth areas in the cities of Carlsbad, Oceanside, and San Diego.

Because the map has been developed through a collaborative approach with the local planning staffs and because land use authority rests with the local jurisdictions, each jurisdiction is responsible for determining whether areas remain on the map, are removed, or are modified. Attachment 2 lists the comments received on the map by jurisdiction and provides a response by local planning staffs to the comments, including the recommended changes to the map. This document also includes comments made at the June 2, 2006, joint meeting of the Regional Planning and Transportation Committees, and corresponding responses.

In total, eleven changes have been made to the Concept Map based on public input and staff refinements. These include the addition of two smart growth areas (Carmel Mountain Ranch and Rancho Bernardo); seven boundary refinements (two in La Mesa, one in City Heights, one in Southeastern San Diego, and three in the Encanto neighborhood of the City of San Diego); and two consolidations (Mission Valley and Uptown). All of these changes are in the Cities of San Diego and La Mesa.

In addition, based on a request by the City of Oceanside, SANDAG coordinated a meeting in late May between the elected officials and key management of the Cities of Oceanside and Carlsbad to address smart growth areas along the boundaries of these two jurisdictions. That meeting resulted in an agreement to consider a subregional planning study to evaluate transportation issues associated with the potential smart growth areas identified in Carlsbad near the border with Oceanside. The City of Carlsbad has opted to maintain these potential smart growth areas on the map through the completion of the study, and re-evaluate the status of these areas at that time.

Next Steps

As described earlier, the Regional Planning and Transportation Committees have recommended that the SANDAG Board accept the draft Smart Growth Concept Map for use in planning purposes for the 2007 RTP. The Concept Map will serve as one key input in developing the alternative land use and transportation scenarios for the 2007 RTP update, coordinating the refinement of regional transit networks, supporting the update of the transportation project evaluation criteria, and determining eligibility to participate in the long-term Smart Growth Incentive Program funded through the local *TransNet* half-cent sales tax program. In addition, the map also will be used to coordinate infrastructure planning with local infrastructure providers such as water and energy providers, and can assist in developing and refining SANDAG's regional growth forecasts.

SANDAG analysis indicates that variations of the degree of smart growth development could yield significant results in addressing regional housing issues. By 2030, the region is projected to have a housing shortfall of approximately 88,000 housing units, contributing to additional increases in interregional and binational commuting from Riverside and Imperial Counties and Baja California, Mexico. In coordination with the comprehensive 2007 RTP update and the recommendations from the Independent Transit Planning Review, staff will develop one or more alternative land use/transportation scenarios based on variations of the Smart Growth Concept Map, Smart Growth

place types, and transit service concepts. Staff will then test how well each of the alternatives implements the RCP policy objectives associated with housing, transportation, urban form, and the environment. The results of the analysis will help inform transportation recommendations in the RTP and could result in modifications to the Smart Growth Concept Map.

The final Smart Growth Concept Map will be adopted in conjunction with the final adoption of the RTP. Following adoption of the Smart Growth Concept Map, staff will begin to develop guidelines for the *TransNet* Smart Growth Incentive Program, for which funding will become available starting in 2008.

The following table summarizes the schedule of next steps related to the comprehensive 2007 RTP update.

Timeframe	Action
June/July 2006	SANDAG Board reviews draft Smart Growth Concept Map and is asked to accept draft Smart Growth Concept Map for planning purposes for the 2007 RTP
June 2006 – May 2007	Prepare draft 2007 RTP and Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
May 2007	Distribute draft RTP and EIR for public review
November 2007	SANDAG Board is asked to adopt Final RTP and Smart Growth Concept Map
Fall 2007 – Spring 2008	Develop <i>TransNet</i> Smart Growth Incentive Program guidelines

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- Attachments:
1. Background Information on the Smart Growth Concept Map
 - a. Smart Growth in the San Diego Region – Brochure
 - b. Smart Growth Areas by Place Type
 2. Summary of Comments and Local Responses on the Draft Smart Growth Concept Map by Jurisdiction
 3. Overview of Workshops and Major Outcomes – General Summary
 4. Summary of Comments on the Draft Smart Growth Concept Map by the Regional Planning Stakeholders Working Group (SWG)

- Enclosures:
1. Regional and Subregional Scale Smart Growth Concept Maps
 2. Smart Growth Concept Map Site Descriptions

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Funds are budgeted in Work Element #3000200