

Notice of Preparation for a Environmental Impact Report

Connected 2050 – Santa Barbara County Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategy

Notice is hereby given that the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) will be the lead agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Connected 2050, the update of SBCAG's Regional Transportation Plan ("RTP") and Sustainable Communities Strategy ("SCS"). Pursuant to section 15082 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), SBCAG is soliciting comments from all interested persons, responsible and trustees agencies and organizations concerned with the project as to the scope and content of the of the EIR and the environmental information to be analyzed in connection with the proposed project.

The project description, location, environmental review requirements, and probable environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR are attached. An Initial Study is not attached and is not required, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d). The RTP will guide the development of the Regional and Federal Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIP and FTIP) as well as other transportation programming documents and plans throughout Santa Barbara County. Specifically, the project is to update the County's regional goals and policies for meeting current and future mobility needs and identify programs, actions, and a revised plan of projects intended to address these needs consistent with adopted goals and policies.

The SCS is required by California Senate Bill 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 ("SB 375"). SB 375 mandates regional greenhouse gas ("GHG") reduction targets for passenger vehicles and, pursuant to that law, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has established 2020 and 2035 GHG reduction targets for each region covered by one of the state's metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). As the MPO for the Santa Barbara County region, SBCAG is required to prepare an SCS or Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) that demonstrates how GHG reduction targets will (or, in the case of an APS, can) be met through integrated land use, housing, and transportation planning. SBCAG will identify multiple potential growth scenarios to will meet the goals of SB 375.

SBCAG will host a virtual EIR Scoping Meeting/Public Workshop. The purpose of the meeting is to solicit input on the scope and content of the environmental analysis that will be included in the EIR, to inform the public of the updates to the RTP and SCS, as well as solicit public input on the RTP and SCS, including changes to the preferred future scenario for the SCS and a range of transportation and land use alternatives. The date, time and virtual location of the meeting is:

- Tuesday January 5, 2021 from noon to 1:00 PM (Can log in starting at 11:45 AM)
- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87825984392?pwd=RHF6TVZid0tJUy85SEhGbnJuMnFPUT09>
- Meeting ID: 878 2598 4392; Passcode: 626049

Mail comments to Jared Carvalho at SBCAG, 260 North San Antonio Road, Suite B, Santa Barbara, CA 93110, or e-mail comments to JCarvalho@sbcag.org no later than thirty days after receipt of this notice or by

For more information, visit www.connected2050.org Spanish website www.conectados2050.org or call 805-961-8900.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Project Title

The RTP/SCS update is referred to as Connected 2050. This EIR will be prepared to evaluate the update to the SBCAG's Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS).

Project Location

The geographical extent of the updated RTP/SCS includes the area within the limits of Santa Barbara County, California, including the incorporated cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Solvang, and all unincorporated areas under the jurisdiction of the County of Santa Barbara. Capital improvement projects identified in the RTP/SCS are primarily located on state highways, county roads and locally owned streets, as well as on airport property, transit district property and public utility lands.

Project Description

The proposed project is the update of SBCAG's RTP/SCS. SBCAG is in the process of revising the RTP/SCS as required by California Government Code Section 65080 et seq., and federal guidelines pursuant to the federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). SBCAG's previous RTP (Fast Forward 2040) was adopted in 2017. Connected 2050 (also referred to as the "Plan" herein) is the culmination of a multi-year effort that aims to improve the balance between land use and transportation systems. SBCAG is required by federal and state law to develop an RTP/SCS that determines the needs of the transportation system and prioritizes proposed transportation projects. The RTP/SCS has a preferred scenario that includes a future land use pattern for the region and identifies policies, programs, actions, and a plan of projects intended to meet regional transportation needs and policy goals, including a regional greenhouse gas emission target for passenger vehicles for 2035 and climate goal for 2050.

RTP Framework

Connected 2050 includes several core components that will influence the future development of the region and local communities over the next 30 years. These core components include:

- The region's Sustainable Communities Strategy, which includes a preferred growth scenario. The preferred growth scenario recommends regional land-use patterns, development policies, and transportation strategies for local communities. These recommendations are intended to reduce GHG emissions, which cause climate change, so the region's current and future generations can thrive.
- Forecasts to help stakeholders and the public anticipate future needs related to housing, population, land use, and employment.
- An update of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, which determines what types and how much new housing each of our local governments must develop for their communities under state law.

- A social equity and environmental justice evaluation to determine how the plan affects the region's "disadvantaged" communities, including communities of color and low-income households that are more affected by poverty, pollution, and histories of marginalization.
- A Financial Element, which provides a reasonable estimate of the funding that will be available to meet transportation needs over the next 30 years and a list of transportation and mobility projects that are expected to be finished before 2050.
- An Action Element which evaluates the region's key needs, opportunities, and issues affecting local communities, such as:
 - Access to transportation, biking and walking (active transportation), passenger rail, and access to public transit services
 - Community health, environmental justice, clean mobility equity, transportation safety, and security
 - Goods movement, trucking, and related economic needs or opportunities
 - Improvements to highways, busy local roads (arterial streets)
 - Traffic congestion, long-distance commuting, and safer streets that serve all road users
 - Access to and conservation of open spaces, farms, natural lands, recreational opportunities, and community centers
 - The compendium of projects, policies and programs that make up the Programmed and the Planned projects together comprise the 2050 RTP/SCS.

Sustainable Communities Strategy

Connected 2050 will include an update to the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) in the 2017 RTP/SCS pursuant to the requirements of SB 375. The State of California legislature passed SB 375 in 2008, which requires all of our state's MPOs, including SBCAG, to develop a SCS when they update their Regional Transportation Plan. The primary goal of SB 375 and the SCS is to coordinate transportation and land-use planning at the local and regional level in ways that will reduce GHG emissions and help meet important public needs. The SCS includes recommendations for land-use and transportation that are consistent with predictions about future growth and housing needs in the region.

The transportation component of the SCS will include the network of road and transit networks, non-motorized transportation and transportation policies, as discussed in the 2050 RTP framework. Furthermore, SB 375 requires that the SCS identify general land uses, residential densities, and building intensities as well as areas to house future residents (see California Government Code Section 65080(b)(2)(B) for the full list of SB 375 requirements).

Issues to Be Addressed in the EIR

The impact categories listed below have been preliminarily identified as anticipated issues to be addressed in the Program EIR.

- Aesthetics/Visual Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural/Tribal Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Climate Change

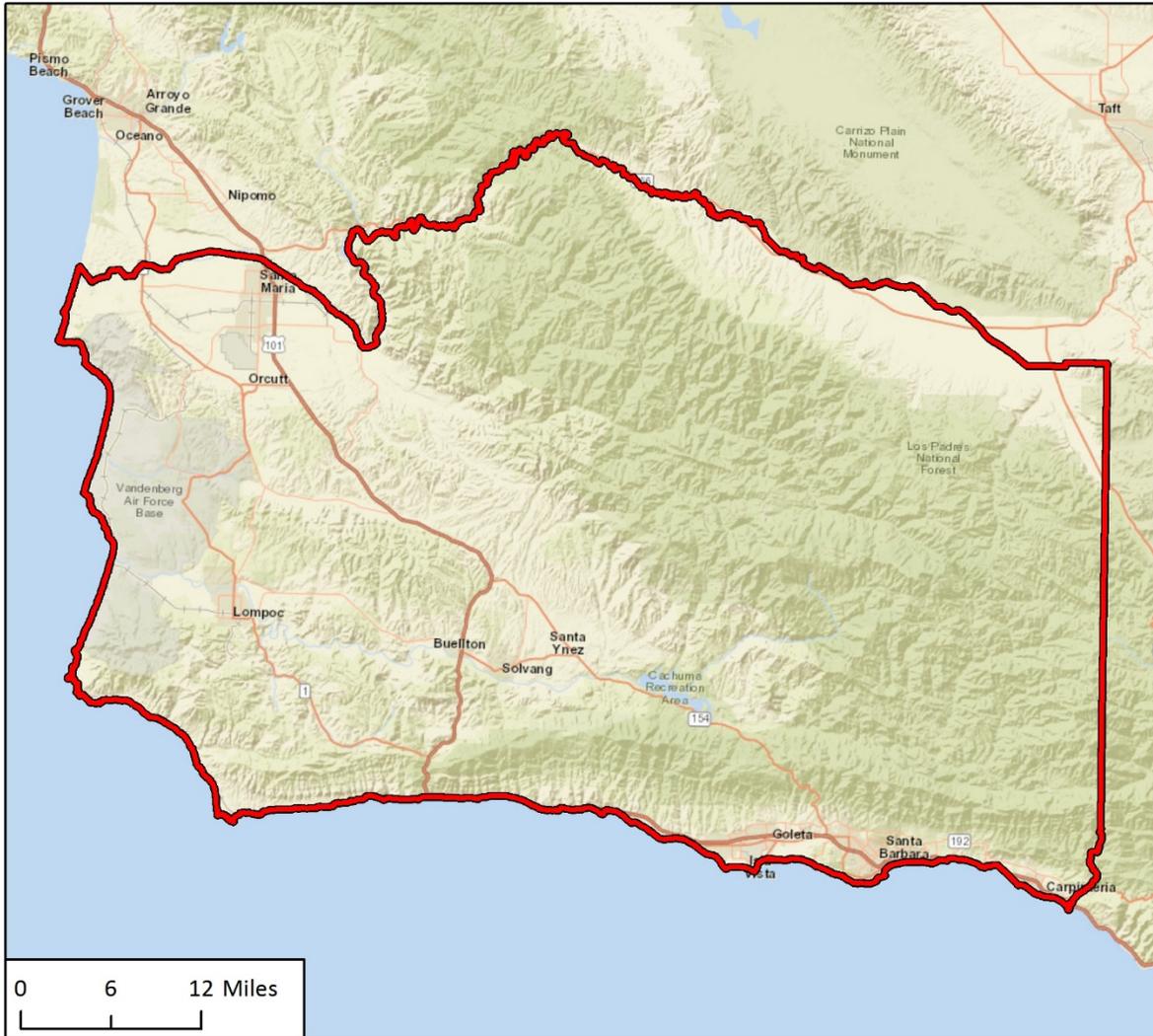
- Hydrology/Water Resources
- Land Use (including Agricultural Resources)
- Noise
- Transportation

As a Program EIR, the RTP/SCS EIR will have two primary purposes: (1) to provide a broad overview of the potential environmental consequences of adopting and implementing the proposed RTP/SCS; and (2) to serve as a mid-tier environmental document that will focus and streamline the subsequent project level review of individual future actions that will be undertaken under the RTP/SCS program. Therefore, the SBCAG Board will ultimately consider the Program EIR which would replace the Supplemental EIR for the 2040 RTP/SCS, which was certified in August 2017.

CEQA Streamlining

SB 375 contains CEQA incentives, or streamlining provisions, to encourage coordinated land use and transportation planning. Certain types of development projects (i.e., transit priority projects or residential/mixed use residential projects, as defined by the statute) may qualify for CEQA streamlining as long as the requisite criteria are met. Generally, meeting such criteria means that the proposed project is determined to be consistent with an adopted SCS. Consistency will be determined by the local jurisdiction that is the lead agency for each project to be streamlined. SBCAG's primary role is to include appropriate information in the SCS, such as land use information as required by SB 375 and/or guidance to aid in interpreting land use information that will allow a jurisdiction to make a consistency determination with respect to appropriate streamlining options on a project-by-project basis.

Project Map



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 Santa Barbara County



Fig 2 Regional Location