ASSESSING POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF SMART (STRATEGIC) GROWTH

- How can we attain smart growth land uses in our local communities?
- How do we encourage major institutions in our communities, such as universities, hospitals, and other facilities to consider smart growth solutions?
- How can we better match our transportation investments and existing/planned land uses?
- How should we prioritize and fund transit investments in smart growth areas?
- How can public/private partnerships assist in improving our transportation and land use connections in the region?

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.

Some of the key initiatives for implementing the RCP include development of the smart growth concept map and a comprehensive update of the adopted Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) (also known as MOBILITY 2030).

SMART GROWTH CONCEPT MAP

The RCP recognizes that smart growth is not a "one-size-fits-all" proposition in the San Diego region, and defines seven categories of smart growth place types, ranging from “metropolitan center” to "rural village."

A key step in RCP implementation is the preparation of a Smart Growth Concept Map to identify specific locations where smart growth development exists, is planned, or has the potential to exist in the future.

During the past year, SANDAG staff, in conjunction with local planning directors, stakeholders, and the Regional Planning Committee, has prepared a Preliminary Draft Smart Growth Concept Map. The map indicates that there are smart growth opportunities in every jurisdiction within the region. Jurisdictions have identified approximately 200 smart growth areas in the San Diego region, based on land use and transportation targets included in the RCP (see page 25).

About one-third of the areas identified by jurisdictions qualify as existing or planned smart growth areas. These areas either contain existing smart growth development or allow planned smart growth in accordance with RCP land use targets, and are accompanied by existing or planned transit services. The remaining two-thirds represent potential smart growth areas where smart

growth development could occur if local plans are changed and/or if the RTP is modified to provide adequate levels of transit service. Through this process as well, consideration will be given to the use of public/private partnerships to enhance land use - transit connections. In this context, particular attention should be paid to promoting smart growth solutions at major existing and planned institutional uses such as universities, hospitals, and certain military facilities.

INDEPENDENT TRANSIT PLANNING REVIEW

The upcoming update of the RTP will be one of the most important RCP implementation actions. The ultimate objective is to develop a comprehensive update to the RTP that incorporates the smart growth and sustainability policies from the RCP and makes progress in achieving the plan's vision and goals.

In 2004, SANDAG directed that, upon passage of Proposition A, the *TransNet Extension,* an independent review of the existing regional transit plan (which is contained in MOBILITY 2030) should be conducted.

SANDAG subsequently directed staff to proceed with this study as part of the *TransNet Extension* Early Action Program.

The transit plan review focuses on the transit service concepts for regional corridors contained in MOBILITY 2030. Last year, SANDAG hired a transit planning consulting firm with extensive experience in the planning, development, and operation of regional transit facilities of the type that are planned for the San Diego region. The results of this study will be used in developing alternative transit networks in the update of the RTP.

As part of this effort, an independent peer review panel was created to help select the consultant, define the scope of work, and review the consultant's findings. Transit professionals from regions with operating bus rapid transit (BRT) services, transit guideways, and light rail services were selected to participate on the peer review panel.

While the work of the peer review panel is still underway, some preliminary recommendations will likely include moving toward a graduated definition of the BRT concept based on the level of transit priority measures and passenger amenities. This graduated BRT definition would recognize the differences between BRT services in a Managed Lanes and arterial street environment. It also allows an incremental approach to development of BRT based on the opportunities and constraints present in different corridors.

ASSESSING SMART GROWTH PERFORMANCE

Performance Metrics

As the region moves toward smarter growth, it will be important to measure smart growth benefits and impacts in comparison to current plans. Currently, there is a mismatch between the forecasted number of additional jobs in the region in 2030 and the homes needed to accommodate the new workers and their families. By 2030, the mismatch will increase by approximately 90,000 housing units.

Preliminary analysis shows that in 2004, 144,000 homes (or 13% of the region's total homes) were located in existing/ planned smart growth areas, served by transit under the $42 billion Reasonably Expected Revenue Scenario of MOBILITY 2030.

In 2030, 256,000 homes (or 18%) are projected to be located in existing smart growth areas. If potential smart growth areas are developed at smart growth densities, an additional 209,000 housing units served by transit (or 35%) would be added to the region's housing inventory.

This analysis indicates that variations of the degree of smart growth development could yield significant results. In coordination with the comprehensive 2007 RTP update, staff will develop several alternative enhanced smart growth land use / transportation scenarios based on variations of the Concept Map and transit service concepts. Staff will then test which of the alternatives best implements the RCP policy objectives associated with housing, transportation, urban form, and the environment.

Using Technology to Improve Regional Comprehensive Plans

SANDAG has long used technology to generate, analyze, and display data from geographic information systems (GIS), transportation and growth forecasting models, and the like. In the past, these data were typically presented to planners and decision-makers statically (e.g., in reports and slide presentations).

New data analysis and display technologies help the user to correlate the new information being presented with a known or familiar foundation, such as super-imposing various land use scenarios on 2D photo imagery or 3D flyovers. These new technologies help planners, decision makers, and the public visualize the effects of different scenarios and make more informed decisions, resulting in more effective and comprehensive regional plans.

To initiate this part of the retreat, staff will demonstrate some of these new visualization techniques including: using time-lapse regional photo imagery to visualize growth; using Google Earth to identify Smart Growth opportunities along a transit corridor; and testing alternative land use scenarios in real time using a Web-enabled sketch planning tool (I-PLACE3S).

REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
MINIMUM LAND USE AND TRANSIT TARGETS FOR SMART GROWTH PLACE TYPES

Smart Growth Place Type	Minimum Residential Target	Minimum Employment Target	Minimum Transit Service Characteristics
Metropolitan Center	75 du/ac	80 emp/ac	Regional
Urban Center	40 du/ac	50 emp/ac	Corridor
Town Center	20 du/ac	30 emp/ac	Community Buses
Community Center	20 du/ac	N/A	High Frequency Local
Rural Village*	10.9 du/ac	N/A	N/A
Special Use Center	Optional	45 emp/ac	High Frequency Local
Mixed Use Transit Corridor*	25 du/ac	N/A	High Frequency Local

Public Transit Service Characteristics:

Public transit service characteristics as described in the Regional Transportation Plan.

- **Corridor or Community Buses** – Designed for short-distance trips in neighborhood/employment areas, and feeder access to/from corridor and regional services

- **High Frequency Local services** – Designed for shorter-distance trips with frequent stops (e.g. current local bus services)

- **Corridor or Community Buses** – Designed for medium distance trips with station spacing about every mile on average (e.g. trolley services, future arterial based bus rapid transit (BRT) routes)

- **Regional services** – Designed for longer distance trips with stations spacing every 4-5 miles on average (e.g. COASTER, future freeway-based BRT routes)

Acronyms:
- du/ac = dwelling units per acre
- emp/ac = employees per acre
- N/A = Not applicable

* The original names of these place types as included in the RCP Smart Growth Area Classifications matrix are “Rural Community” and “Transit Corridor.” Due to a request by the County of San Diego planning staff for consistency with current planning efforts in rural areas and due to the need for clarification regarding the type of development within high-frequency transit corridors, SANDAG staff proposes that the names of these place types be modified to “Rural Village” and “Mixed Use Transit Corridor.” These revisions would more clearly reflect the County’s General Plan 2020 Update terminology and the intent of the land use mix within the transit corridor place type.