SoCal Greenprint Public Hearing

Overview Presentation

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What is a Greenprint?

A tool to help users make better land use and transportation infrastructure decisions and support conservation investments based on the best available scientific data.
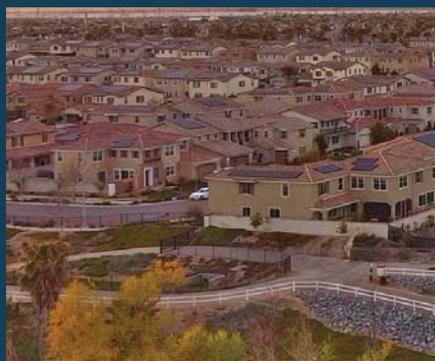
Implementation Pause & Subsequent Activities

On July 1st, 2021 the Regional Council voted to pause implementation on the SoCal Greenprint for at least 30 days and to hold a public hearing for further discussion, permitting staff to engage in further outreach with stakeholders.

Outreach since Pause Implementation:

- Proposed Data List & Survey
- August 24th Public Hearing
- Presentations to TWG and GLUE Council
- One-on-One Stakeholder meetings

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Goals of the SoCal Greenprint

- Implement Connect SoCal
- Balance growth with conservation
- Accommodate infrastructure while protecting natural resources
- Address the lack of consistent, regional data and tools
- Better prioritize lands for mitigation investments
- Resource for our member agencies and stakeholders

The SoCal Greenprint will

- Aggregate existing data in an interactive online format

- Help decision makers plan for development with nature in mind

- Encourage and highlight conservation efforts that provide multiple benefits for nature and people

- Function as open resource for conservation information that anyone can access

Key Users of the SoCal Greenprint

Infrastructure Agencies

Conservation Practitioners

Community-Based Organizations

Developers

Planners (Town, City, County, Tribal)

Regional Policy: Connect SoCal

Connect SoCal – Core Vision
- Maintain and better manage the transportation network
- Expand mobility choices & locate housing/jobs/transit closer together
- Increase investment in transit and complete streets

Regional Goals
- Promote conservation of natural and agricultural lands & restoration of habitats
- Balance with regional housing production
- Natural & Farm Lands Conservation Technical Report

Climate Emergency (Resolution 21-628-1)
- Regional Council adopted January 2021
- Greenprint tool to highlight the benefits of natural lands, water and agricultural lands

Regional Policy: Sustainable Communities Strategies

Sustainable Communities Strategies
- Climate adaptation, hazard mitigation, & community resiliency support
- Renewable energy production, urban heat island, and carbon sequestration support
- Local food production
- Resource efficient development
- Regional wildlife connectivity
- Reduce consumption of resource areas, including agricultural land
- Public park space access

THE 2020-2045 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY OF THE
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

CONNECT SoCal

ADOPTED ON
SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

Connect SoCal PEIR

Mitigation Measures

- **SMM AG-2:** "*SCAG shall use the Greenprint to identify priority conservation areas in support of advanced mitigation efforts in the region*"
- **SMM BIO-2:** "*New regional tools like the Greenprint will provide an easily accessible resource to help municipalities, conservation groups, developers and researchers prioritize lands for conservation based on the best available scientific data*"

Lead agencies may use, amend, or not use measures identified in the PEIR as appropriate to address project-specific conditions. The determination of significance and identification of appropriate mitigation is solely the responsibility of the lead agency.

What is a Greenprint?

- A **data tool** that can help to advance the pace and scale of voluntary conservation in a region.

- A **data tool** that identifies landscape features that are important to residents and communities, like recreation, habitat, water resources, habitat, climate change resiliency or community.

- A **data tool** that illustrates how conservation values may work in concert with each other and with other values, like climate resilience.

- A **resource** that helps stakeholders understand factors in a specific area to help facilitate collaboration.

- An **information tool** to support data-driven decision making for infrastructure investments.

A Greenprint is not...

- A regulation, policy document, report, plan, or manual.

- An acquisition map or regulatory plan that puts constraints on land use for any public or private entity.

- A complete inventory of everything important within an area or new data set.

- A comprehensive solution for natural resource protection.

- A requirement that stakeholders engage in projects.

- An effort to subvert private property rights.

Project Outreach Priorities - Overview
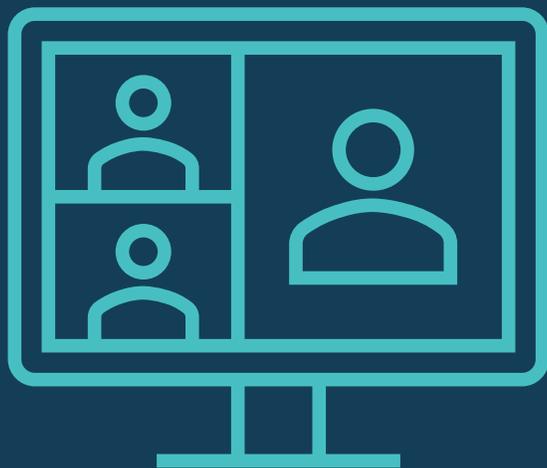
- Project Committees

- 60+ advisors/4 interactive workshops

- Direct stakeholder meetings

- 8 Rapid assessment interviews

- Developed 6 user profiles

- Consultation with SCAG's Regional Planning Working Groups

Summary of Feedback from August 24th Public Hearing

Verbal Comments

- 34 total speakers

- 41% expressed support

- 41% expressed concerns

- 9% expressed support and concerns

- 9% had general feedback or questions

Written Comments

- 39 total letters, 35 unique respondents/letters

- 74% expressed support

- 26% expressed concerns

- 17% of letters addressed specific data layers and 2 letters requested including additional data layers

Summary of Proposed Data Layer List Survey

4,200+

Stakeholders invited to take survey

33

Survey respondents

69

Comments on individual data layers

45

Data layers commented on

Summary of Proposed Data Layer List Survey: Data Layer Feedback by Data Theme
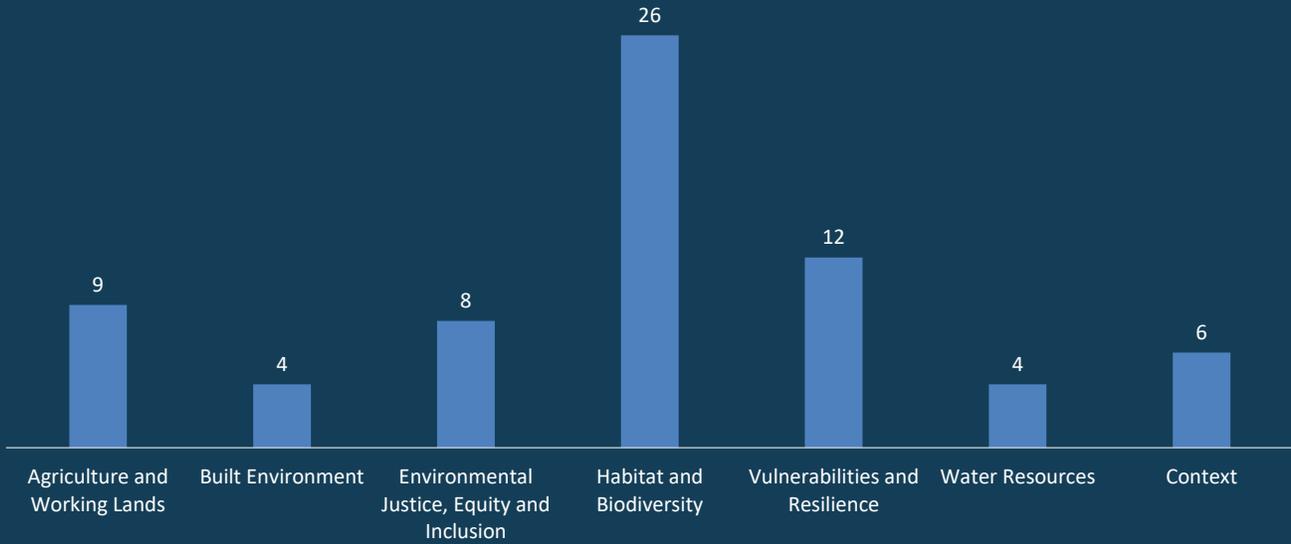
n=69 comments
Note: Respondents were invited to submit comments on one or more data layers

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Summary of Proposed Data Layer List Survey: Data Layer Feedback

Survey Question: "Please provide any comments or feedback you have on this data set."

75%
of comments were generally **supportive** of the data layer(s)

13%
of comments offered **suggestions** to improve the data layer(s) or consider additional data

9%
of comments were **neutral** with respect to the data layer(s)

3%
of comments **expressed concern** over the data layer(s)

0%
of comments **requested exclusion** of the data layer(s)

Supportive ← → Opposed

n=69 comments
Note: Respondents were invited to submit comments on one or more data layers

Summary of Proposed Data Layer List Survey: Sentiment on Project Goal

Survey Question: "… Do you have any questions or concerns about the goal of the SoCal Greenprint?"

0%

of respondents expressed **concern** about the goal of the project

12%

of respondents expressed concern over **pausing or not completing** the project

53%

of respondents expressed **no concern** about the goal of the project

18%

of respondents expressed **other concerns** about the project

n=17 respondents
Note: Not all survey respondents provided an answer to this question; n includes 3 null responses

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Summary of Proposed Data Layer List Survey: General Project Concerns

Survey Question: "If you have any concerns about the SoCal Greenprint, please share those concerns."

27%

of respondents expressed concern over the **data content**

47%

of respondents expressed concern over **pausing or not completing** the project

13%

of respondents expressed **other concerns**

13%

of respondents expressed **no concern**

n=15 respondents
Note: Not all survey respondents provided an answer to this question

Summary of Proposed Data Layer List Survey: Utility of the SoCal Greenprint

Survey Question: "… would the SoCal Greenprint be useful to your work?"

67%
of respondents reported "the SoCal Greenprint **would be useful** in my workflow"

7%
of respondents reported "the SoCal Greenprint would not be useful to me, but **could be useful to my colleagues and partners**"

3%
of respondents reported "I **would not use** the SoCal Greenprint, but **have no concerns**"

13%
of respondents reported "I **need to learn more** to decide"

3%
of respondents reported "**I have concerns** about the SoCal Greenprint"

Useful ← → **Have Concerns**

n=30 respondents
Note: Not all survey respondents provided an answer to this question; n includes 2 null responses

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Frequently Cited Questions, Comments and Concerns

- Land use authority & general plans inclusion
- Data alignment
- Intergovernmental Review Program (IGR)
- Dataset use
- Specific datasets
- Inoperable/misdirected links repaired
- Project timeline
- Consultant selection
- Connect SoCal Mitigation Measures
- Pertinence of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Data Vetting Criteria

- Data must be publicly available, meaning that existing datasets are available online or can be accessed if requested and/or licensed;

- Data was vetted for inclusion by science advisors; and,

- Data would support decision-making from the five key user groups identified through the planning process (planners, infrastructure agencies, developers, community-based organizations, and conservation organizations) based on suggestions and feedback from Science and Strategic Advisors;

Proposed Next Steps to Address Stakeholder Concerns

- Removal and/or replacement of certain data layers

- Expanded Stakeholder Engagement and User Testing

    - *SCAG's Technical Working Group (TWG)*

    - *Scientific Advisors*

    - *Advisory Committee*

- Disclosure and User Acknowledgement

- User Acceptance Testing

- Regional Council & Energy and Environment Committee Tool Demonstration

Staff Recommendation UPDATED

Staff recommends that the Regional Council continue ~~remove~~ the pause on Greenprint implementation as directed on July 1, 2021, ~~and~~ with additional direction that staff ~~direct staff to~~:

1. Develop a white paper and work with a 5-member advisory task group of the Regional Council (appointed by the President and which will automatically disband upon reporting its findings to the Regional Council as provided in Item 8 below) on establishing a policy framework for advanced mitigation in the SCAG region to ensure the Greenprint is aligned with policy objectives;

2. ~~Proceed with developing~~ Develop the SoCal Greenprint as identified in Connect SoCal and its associated Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) with explicit focus on helping cities, counties and transportation agencies make better land-use and transportation infrastructure decisions and conserve natural and farm lands;

3. Include features in the SoCal Greenprint to convey limitations and foster its proper use, such as a disclosure statement and mandatory user acknowledgement feature;

Staff Recommendation UPDATED (continued)

4. Conduct an open advisory meeting for further review and revision of data layers to meet the needs of cities, counties and transportation agencies;

5. Remove datasets for inclusion in the tool if they are not publicly available (i.e. layers are accessible for download online, or are downloadable via request and/or license to the author or custodian of the data);

6. Complete prospective user testing with at least ten stakeholders representing ~~the diverse array of potential users~~ cities, counties and transportation agencies to ensure that the tool is working and functional as developed with targeted audiences;

7. Engage in continued public outreach as described at the July 1, 2021 RC meeting; and

8. Return to the Regional Council and Energy & Environment Committee once prospective user testing is complete to demonstrate the tool, provide a report on the white paper and a proposed policy framework, ~~and~~ seek feedback prior to public launch and to remove the pause.

Thank you!

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