



NOTICE OF PREPARATION

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TO: Interested Agencies, Organizations and Individuals

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

DATE: March 9, 2015

LEAD AGENCY: Southern California Association of Governments
818 West Seventh Street, 12th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90017-3435

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), as Lead Agency, is publishing this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to prepare a Program Environmental Impact Report ("PEIR") in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan /Sustainable Communities Strategy ("2016 RTP/SCS" or the "Project").

This NOP has been prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.4 and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15082 and 15375. The purpose of this NOP is to notify local, state and federal agencies, and other interested agencies, organizations and individuals ("Interested Parties") that SCAG plans to prepare a PEIR for the 2016 RTP/SCS. For purposes of this NOP, Interested Parties include but are not limited to Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research as set forth under Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines.

SCAG is circulating this NOP to obtain input regarding the scope and content of the Draft PEIR for the 2016 RTP/SCS and on issues relevant to the 2016 RTP/SCS. The Project location, description, and the expected scope of environmental information and analysis are described on the following pages.

Two scoping meetings, each providing the same information, will be held at SCAG's Main Office (Los Angeles office, see above), Board Room, Tuesday, March 17, 2015, at 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.; and Wednesday, March 18, 2015, at 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Videoconferencing will also be available from SCAG's regional offices (see last page for addresses).

To ensure full consideration of environmental issues with potential significant impacts in the Draft PEIR, **all comments must be received within thirty (30) days of the start of the 30-day public comment period, which begins March 9, 2015 and ends April 7, 2015.** If you wish to be placed on the mailing list to receive notices regarding the PEIR for the 2016 RTP/SCS, or have any questions or need additional information, please contact the person identified below. SCAG will accept **written comments** regarding this notice **through the close of business or no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 7, 2015.**

Please send written comments on this notice to **Ms. Lijin Sun, Senior Regional Planner**, to the address shown above or visit SCAG's website at <http://rtpscs.scag.ca.gov/2016PEIR>. For future coordination, please identify a point of contact of your agency and organization. Comments may also be submitted electronically to 2016PEIR@scag.ca.gov.

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
2016–2040 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY**

INTRODUCTION

The California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”, Pub. Res. Code § 21000 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations (“CEQA Guidelines”, codified at 14 C.C.R. § 15000 *et seq.*) require the Southern California Association of Governments (“SCAG”) as the Lead Agency to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) for any discretionary government action, including programs and plans that may cause significant environmental effects. Specifically, the 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (“SCS”) (“2016 RTP/SCS,” “Project,” or “Plan”) necessitates preparation of a Program EIR (“PEIR”), which is a “first-tier” CEQA document designed to consider “broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures” (*CEQA Guidelines* §15168). The PEIR for the 2016 RTP/SCS will provide an opportunity to inform decision-makers and the public about potential environmental effects associated with implementation of the 2016 RTP/SCS and Alternatives. The analysis provided in the PEIR will evaluate potential environmental effects, such as direct and indirect effects, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts of the 2016 RTP/SCS at a programmatic level; and will include program-level mitigation measures and performance standards to offset any identified potentially significant adverse programmatic level environmental effects. Potential or probable environmental effects of individual projects included in the 2016 RTP/SCS Project List would not be specifically analyzed in this PEIR. Project-level environmental analyses should appropriately be prepared by implementing agencies on a project-by-project or site-by-site basis as projects proceed through the design and decision-making process. The PEIR will provide a foundation for the subsequent, project- or site-specific environmental reviews that will be conducted by implementation agencies, as projects in the RTP/SCS are developed (*CEQA Guidelines* §15385).

This first-tier, programmatic environmental analysis for a long-range, regional-scale plan document will also help local agencies evaluate and reduce direct and indirect impacts, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative environmental impacts with respect to local projects.

This Notice of Preparation (“NOP”) is prepared pursuant to Section 21080.4 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15082 and 15375. SCAG has determined that an Initial Study is not required to be prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d). The NOP is intended to alert Interested Parties of the preparation of the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS PEIR. Comments regarding the PEIR received during the 30-day NOP review period will be used to refine the scope and content of the Draft PEIR, as appropriate.

PROJECT LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

Project Location

SCAG is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (“MPO”) under Title 23, United States Code (U.S.C.) 134(d)(1). SCAG is a six-county region that includes the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura, and 191 cities (Figure 1, *SCAG Region*). To the north of the SCAG region are the counties of Kern and Inyo; to the east is State of Nevada and State of Arizona; to the south is the U.S.-Mexico border; to the west is the county of San Diego; and to the northwest is the Pacific Ocean. The SCAG region also consists of 15 subregional entities that have been recognized by the Regional Council, SCAG’s governing body, as partners in the regional policy planning process (Figure 2, *SCAG Subregions*).

SCAG is one of the 18 MPOs in the State of California. The total area of the SCAG region is approximately 38,000 square miles. The region includes the county with the largest land area in the nation, San Bernardino County, as well as the county with the highest population in the nation, Los Angeles County. The SCAG region is home to approximately 19 million people, or 49 percent of California's population, representing the largest and most diverse region in the country.

Figure 1: SCAG Region

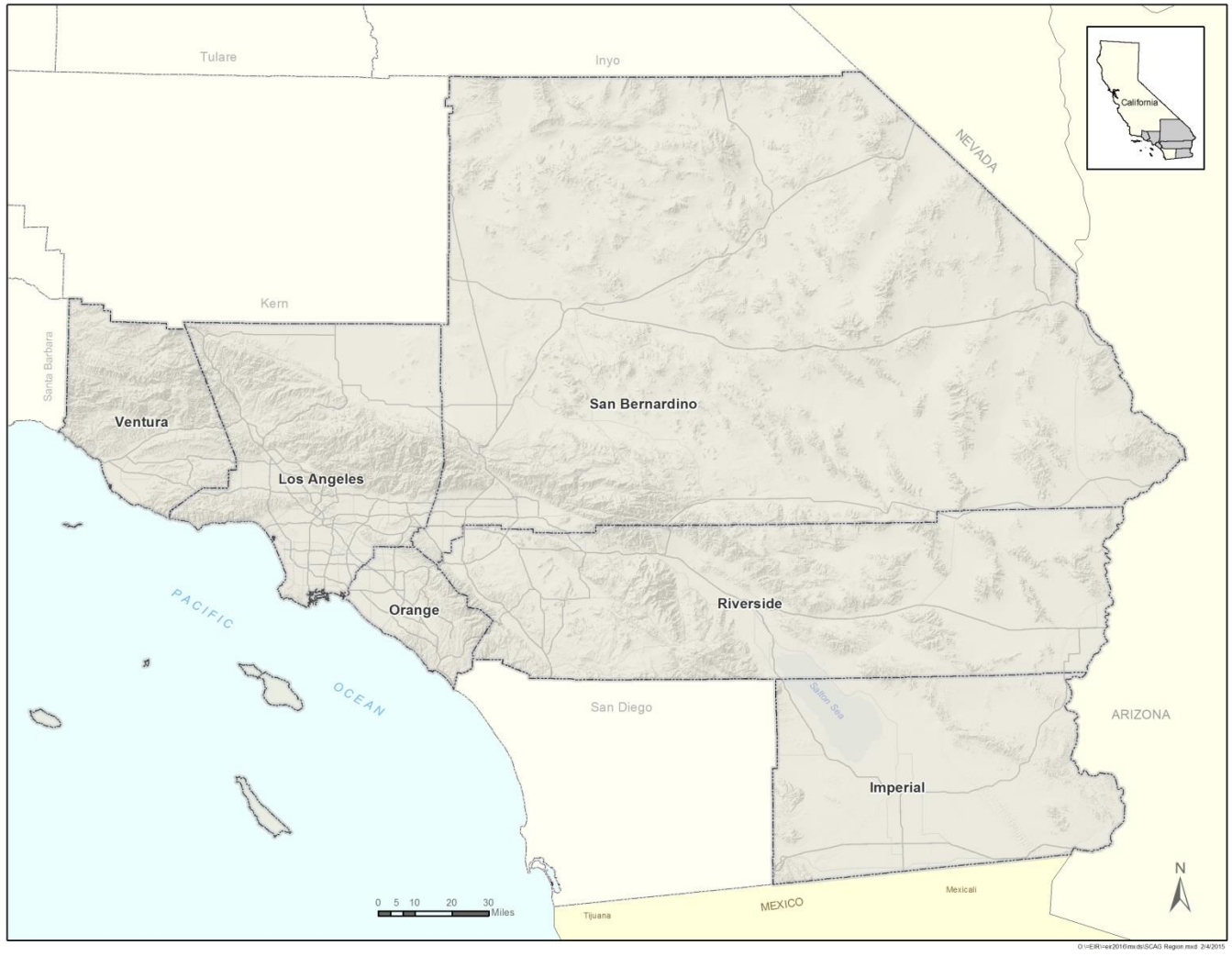
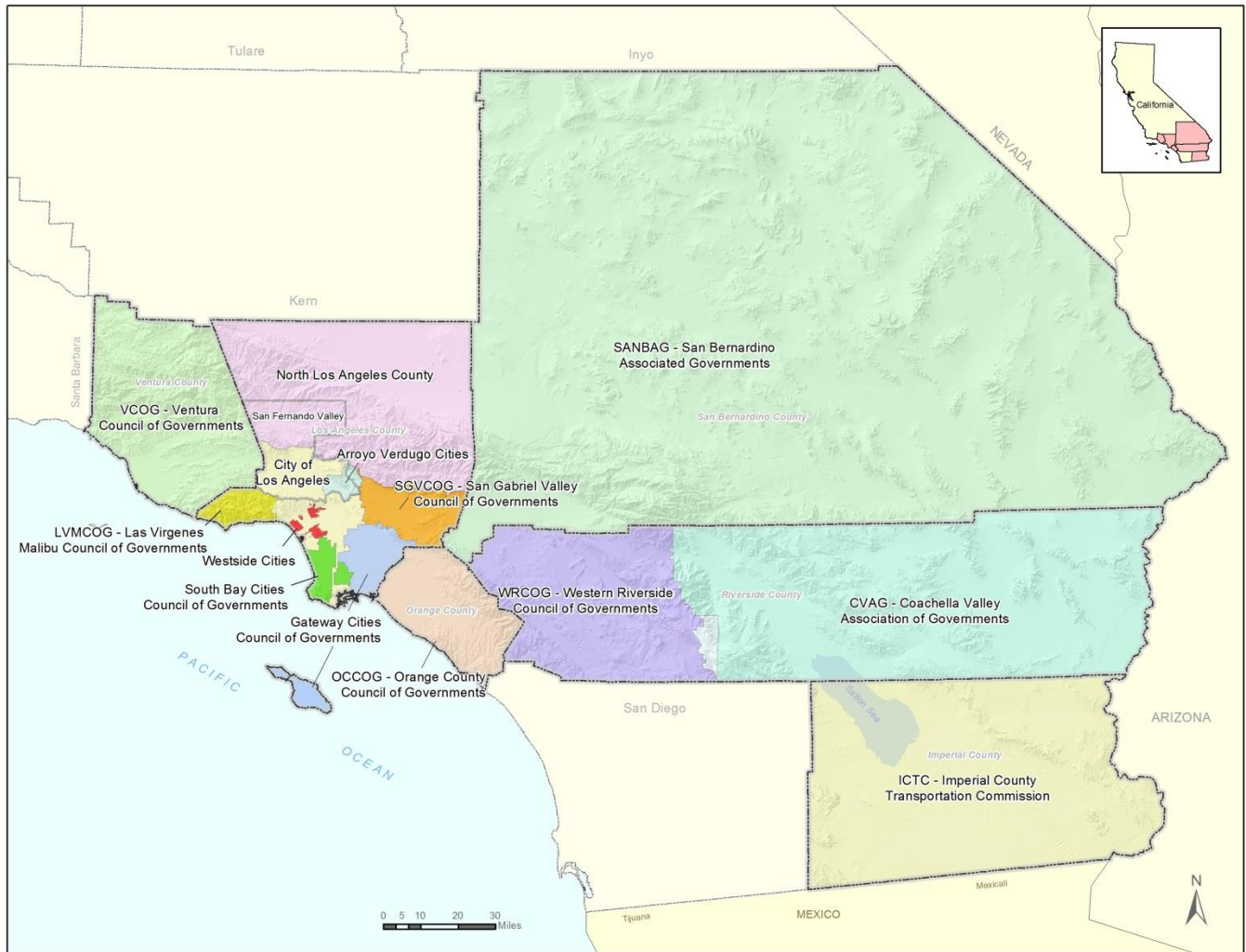


Figure 2: SCAG Subregions



SCAG Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to the federal designation as a MPO, SCAG is designated under California state law as the Multicounty Designated Transportation Planning Agency and Council of Governments (COG) for the six-county region. Founded in 1965, SCAG is a Joint Powers Authority, established as a voluntary association of local governments and agencies.

SCAG serves as the regional forum for cooperative decision making by local government elected officials and its primary responsibilities in fulfillment of federal and state requirements include the development of the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS); the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP); the annual Overall Work Program; and transportation-related portions of local air quality management plans. SCAG's other major functions include determining the regional transportation plans and programs are in conformity with state air quality plans; periodic preparation of a Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA); and intergovernmental review of regionally significant projects.

Regional Cooperation and Subregions

SCAG places great importance on local input in the regional planning process. SCAG seeks feedback from local elected officials and their staff through 15 subregional organizations that have been recognized by the Regional Council as partners in the regional policy planning process (Figure 2). The subregional organizations represent various parts of the SCAG region that have identified themselves as having common interests and concerns. The subregions vary according to geographical size, number of local member jurisdictions, staffing, decision-making structure, and legal status.

SCAG provides opportunities to participate in regional planning through collaboration and participation in regional programs and dialogs. Responsible for regional policy direction and review, standing committees at SCAG include the Executive/Administration Committee, the Regional Council, the Transportation Committee, the Community, Economic & Human Development Committee, the Energy & Environmental Committee, and Legislative/Communication & Membership Committee. In addition to the standing committees, there are various subcommittees, technical advisory committees, working groups, and task forces that report to the standing committees, while other groups are established on an ad hoc basis to assist with specific projects or address specific regional policy. The Regional Council is SCAG's governing body. It consists of 86 elected officials, representing cities, counties, county transportation commissions, transportation corridor agencies, tribal governments, and air districts in the region. The Regional Council has general authority to conduct the affairs of SCAG and directs the actions of the agency throughout the year. Additionally, the Regional Council implements the policy direction provided at the annual General Assembly of the membership, acts upon policy recommendations from SCAG's standing policy committees and external agencies, and appoints standing or ad-hoc subcommittees to study specific programs or issues.

Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

SCAG is required to adopt and update a long-range regional transportation plan every four (4) years, in accordance with federal and state transportation planning laws. The regional transportation plan (RTP) is used to guide the development of the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) as well as other transportation programming documents and plans. The RTP outlines the region's goals and policies for meeting current and future mobility needs, providing a foundation for transportation decisions by local, regional and state officials that are ultimately aimed at achieving a coordinated and balanced transportation system. The RTP identifies the region's transportation needs and issues, sets forth actions, programs, and a plan of projects to address the needs consistent with adopted regional policies and goals, and documents the financial resources needed to implement the RTP.

Transportation investments in the SCAG region that receive state and federal funds or require federal approvals must be consistent with the RTP and must be included in SCAG's FTIP when funded. The FTIP covers six years and is updated biennially on an even-year cycle. It represents the immediate, near-term commitments of the RTP. SCAG does not implement individual projects in the RTP, as these projects will be implemented by local and state jurisdictions, and other agencies.

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), enacted into law on July 6, 2012, sets forth a performance-based approach requiring the State and MPOs to set performance targets and track their progress in achieving those targets relative to past system performance. While the federal rules governing performance targets are not yet enacted, it is SCAG's intent to utilize a performance-based approach in preparing the 2016 RTP/SCS.

Further, MAP-21 continues to require, as under prior planning law, that "a long-range transportation plan shall include a discussion of the types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out

these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan.” 23 U.S.C. § 134(i)(2)(B). Consultation and public outreach activities are a part of the 2016 RTP/SCS and PEIR development processes, and will be undertaken to the maximum extent practicable and feasible. SCAG is coordinating efforts to comply with MAP-21 planning requirements with efforts undertaken through the CEQA process. As such, particular emphasis in the RTP/SCS will be placed on these planning requirements, including those that prescribe coordinated planning and consideration of environmental resources. In addition, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Presidential Order 12898, the 2016 RTP/SCS includes an environmental justice analysis. The 2016 RTP/SCS will analyze how the benefits and burdens of transportation investments are distributed among minority and low-income populations in the SCAG region. Outreach efforts are underway to reach environmental justice communities during development of the 2016 RTP/SCS.

SCAG is also required to prepare a RTP pursuant to Section 65080 of the California Government Code. The State requirements largely mirror the federal requirements and require each transportation planning agency in urban areas to adopt and submit an updated RTP to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) every four (4) years. To ensure a degree of statewide consistency in the development of RTPs, the CTC under Government Code Section 14522 prepared RTP Guidelines. The adopted guidelines include a requirement for program level performance measures, which include objective criteria that reflect the goals and objectives of the RTP. In addition, the initial years of the plan must be consistent with the FTIP.

State planning law further requires, pursuant to the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (“SB 375”) that the RTP include a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) component to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicles (automobiles and light-duty trucks). SB 375 is part of California's overall strategy to reach GHG emissions reduction goals required by Assembly Bill (AB) 32, by promoting integrated transportation planning with the goal of creating more sustainable communities.

Pursuant to SB 375, SCAG’s SCS is required to meet reduction targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 8 percent per capita by 2020 and 13 percent per capita by 2035 compared to 2005, as set by the California Air Resources Board (ARB). According to Section 65080(b)(2)(B) of the California Government Code, the SCS must:

- Identify existing land use;
- Identify areas to accommodate long-term population growth;
- Identify areas to accommodate an eight-year projection of regional housing needs;
- Identify transportation needs and the planned transportation network,
- Consider resource areas and farmland;
- Consider state housing goals and objectives;
- Set forth a forecasted growth and development pattern; and
- Comply with federal law for developing an RTP.

The SCS outlines SCAG’s plan for attaining the GHG emissions reductions targets set forth by ARB, by integrating the transportation network and related strategies with a forecasted land use pattern that responds to projected growth, housing needs and changing demographics, and transportation demands.

In addition, SCAG is required to submit to ARB the SCS developed as part of the RTP for the purpose of determining whether the GHG emissions reduction targets have been met. Furthermore, SB 375 specifically states that the SCS developed as part of the RTP cannot dictate local General Plan policies. Rather, SB 375 is intended to provide a regional policy foundation that local government may build upon if they so choose and generally includes the quantitative growth projections from each city and county in the region going forward.

Qualifying projects that meet criteria established by SB 375, and are consistent with the SCS are eligible for streamlined environmental review under CEQA.¹

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The RTP/SCS is a long-range transportation plan that provides a vision for regional transportation investments over a 20-year period. In accordance with applicable federal and state laws, SCAG updates the RTP/SCS every four (4) years to reflect changes to the transportation network, the most recent planning assumptions, economic trends, and population and jobs growth forecasts.²

The RTP/SCS is developed and implemented through a collaborative, continuous and coordinated process that involves key stakeholders such as the six County Transportation Commissions (CTCs), Caltrans, transit operators, airport and port authorities, air districts and other agencies including local jurisdictions in our region. The 2016 RTP/SCS will be the culmination of a multi-year effort, which was initiated since the adoption of the 2012 RTP/SCS. For more information on the 2012 RTP/SCS, please visit SCAG's website, at <http://rtpscs.scag.ca.gov/2012RTPSCS>. The 2016 RTP/SCS will largely embody the goals, objectives, and transportation improvements that have been considered in the adopted 2012 RTP/SCS, last amended in September 2014 (Amendment No. 2 to the 2012 RTP/SCS). For more information on the Amendment No. 2 to the 2012 RTP/SCS and the projects that were documented in the Project List of the 2012 RTP/SCS Amendment No. 2, please visit SCAG's website, at <http://rtpscs.scag.ca.gov/Pages/Amendment-2.aspx>.

As a blueprint for the region's growth through 2040, the 2016 RTP/SCS will outline the region's goals, policies, and strategies that improve the balance between land use and transportation systems, both current and future. It integrates the multi-modal transportation network and related strategies with an overall land use pattern that responds to projected population and employment growth, housing needs and changing demographics, and transportation demands, including transit and active transportation. It outlines improvements to the existing transportation system, as well as the strategic expansion of the transportation system. While SB 375 places a great deal of attention on meeting GHG emission reduction targets set forth by ARB, SCAG has also established other important goals that are aimed to improving the overall quality of life in the region. The 2016 RTP/SCS is currently anticipated to build from the foundation of the adopted 2012 RTP/SCS, as amended in September 2014, as the baseline scenario to be utilized to review the progress in implementing strategies identified in the 2012 RTP/SCS.

2016 RTP/SCS Vision

Based upon extensive local collaboration, the 2016 RTP/SCS will contain projects, policies and strategies with the intent of achieving a range of quality of life outcomes. The 2016 RTP/SCS is intended to identify reasonably available sources of funding over the plan period, and allocate these funds to transportation projects and programs that benefit the SCAG communities and residents. The 2016 RTP/SCS will be designed to assure that, to the greatest extent possible, the money invested would have the best chance of achieving the objectives communities and residents care about. As such, the 2016 RTP/SCS, as currently envisioned by SCAG, will

¹ CEQA streamlining provisions are also available for eligible projects meeting the criteria established by Senate Bill 226 (Simitian, 2011), CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.3 (Streamlining for Infill Projects) and for eligible projects meeting the criteria established by Senate Bill 743 (Steinberg, 2013), Public Resources Code Section 21155.4 (Exemptions).

² The SCAG region encompasses 17 federally designated non-attainment and maintenance areas for air quality standards, pursuant to the federal Clean Air Act. The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) under Section 176(c) of the Federal Clean Air Act [42 U.S.C. 7506(c)] require that for a non-attainment area, air quality conformity determinations on updated transportation plans and programs must be made every four (4) years.

continue on a meaningful path towards advancing mobility, sustainability and economic growth as set forth in the 2012 RTP/SCS.³

Mobility

A successful transportation plan will allow the future residents of the region to access daily needs, including work, school, shopping, transit, and recreation without undue burdens of cost, time, or physical danger. This includes the pressing need to preserve and maintain infrastructure at adequate levels. Residents should be able to rely on their ability to get from one place in the region to another, timely and safely. They should be able to choose from a variety of transportation modes that suit their preferences and needs, including non-automobile modes, such as walking and biking that allow for physical activity.

As currently envisioned, the 2016 RTP/SCS will continue to promote active transportation options, improve accessibility and increase proximity to recreation, public services, community amenities, transit, and other transportation facilities, and ensure safety.

Sustainability

Building off the foundation of the 2012 RTP/SCS, the 2016 RTP/SCS is intended to include strategies linking future regional transportation and land use planning with the goal of promoting sustainability. This integrated development pattern forecasted for the 2016 RTP/SCS will be used to demonstrate that the SCAG region is expected to achieve the GHG emissions reduction targets required under SB 375.

The 2016 RTP/SCS will define sustainability in the broadest way possible. It will allow future residents to enjoy equal or better quality of life than today, including the ability to lead a healthy lifestyle, enjoy clean air and water, ample opportunities for active transportation, open space, recreation, public services, community amenities, physical activities, and housing choices for all income levels. In light of the recent economic downturn and recovery, the 2016 RTP/SCS will lay a path for the region's continued economic growth and sustainability by providing strategies that create jobs and attract additional businesses to Southern California communities. Moreover, policies and programs that will be included as part of the 2016 RTP/SCS are anticipated to create direct and substantial benefits to public health by reducing pollutant emissions and expanding the opportunities for active transportation.

Economy

A successful RTP/SCS creates opportunities for business, investment, and employment in Southern California. The 2012 RTP/SCS did so by identifying over \$524 billion of investment in a 25 year period. This includes the direct economic effect of designing, building, and maintaining projects, as well as the indirect and induced benefits of the investments. Moreover, the economic benefits of the RTP/SCS are likely far broader and greater. The investments and strategies in the draft RTP/SCS will set the conditions for economic activity in the region by improving mobility and reducing congestion and commute times, allowing businesses in the region to operate more efficiently and maintain their competitiveness. Also, by identifying areas to accommodate regional housing needs the RTP/SCS strives to provide residents with better access to affordable housing in all communities, and lower overall combined costs for housing and transportation. In more subtle ways, the RTP/SCS encourages continued investment and job creation by ensuring a more livable, efficient, desirable, and competitive region where employers want and are able to do business over the long term.

³ Southern California Association of Governments. April 2012. *2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*. Page 11. Available at: <http://rtpscsc.scag.ca.gov/Documents/2012/final/f2012RTPSCS.pdf>

2016 RTP/SCS Goals

The RTP/SCS goals demonstrate the need to balance many priorities in the most cost-effective manner. As currently being envisioned, the goals of the 2016 RTP/SCS are expected to remain substantively the same as the goals established in the 2012 RTP/SCS, adopted by SCAG's Regional Council in April 2012⁴:

- Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region
- Ensure travel safety and reliability for the people and goods in the region
- Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system
- Maximize the security of the regional transportation system through improved monitoring, recovery planning, and coordination with other security agencies
- Maximize the productivity of our transportation system
- Protect the environment, improve air quality and promote energy efficiency
- Encourage land use and growth patterns that complement our transportation investments

In addition to meeting the GHG emissions reduction targets that the ARB has set for the SCAG region pursuant to SB 375, SCAG intends to address the goals set forth in Executive Order S-3-05 (to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and to reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050).

2016 RTP/SCS Policies and Performance Measures

The 2016 RTP/SCS is currently being envisioned to include a set of guiding policies that focus future investments on the best-performing projects and strategies that seek to preserve, maintain, and optimize the performance of the existing transportation system. As set forth in the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS⁵, these policies will include the following and are intended to help track how well the region is performing in relation to a broad range of goals and objectives.

- Transportation investments shall be based on SCAG's adopted Regional Performance Indicators.
- Ensuring safety, adequate maintenance, and efficiency of operations on the existing multi-modal transportation system should be the highest RTP priorities for any incremental funding in the region.
- RTP land-use and growth strategies in the RTP will respect local input and advance smart growth initiatives.
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and non-motorized transportation will be focus areas.
- High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) gap closures that significantly increase transit and rideshare usage will be supported and encouraged.
- Monitoring progress on all aspects of the Plan, including the timely implementation of projects, programs, and strategies, will be an important and integral component of the 2016 Plan.

Consistent with the goals and performance-based transportation planning approach set forth under MAP-21, performance measures will play a critical role in the development of the 2016 RTP/SCS. Performance measures are intended to help quantify regional goals, estimate the impacts of proposed investments, and evaluate progress over time. SCAG intends to build upon and update the performance measures developed for the 2012 Plan⁶ in the 2016 RTP/SCS. This way, there is consistency when tracking and assessing the region's performance and whether the region is progressing towards meeting and exceeding federal and state requirements.

⁴ Id. at page 13.

⁵ Id. at page 15.

⁶ Id. at page 15.

The 2016 RTP/SCS is currently being envisioned to include a set of key categories of performance measures as follows:

- Location efficiency
- Mobility and accessibility
- Safety and health
- Environmental quality
- Economic well-being
- Investment effectiveness
- System sustainability

Preliminary 2016 RTP/SCS Scenario Planning Matrix

As part of the 2016 RTP/SCS planning process, SCAG is developing a suite of transportation and land use scenarios for public consideration. These scenarios focus on transportation and land use related inputs that are modified to vary across four (4) scenarios. The purpose of developing scenarios is to provide an analytical technique to layout the policy choices to be considered as the 2016 RTP/SCS is developed. The Preliminary 2016 RTP/SCS Scenario Planning Matrix outlines a number of plan elements that together build a framework for comparing potential regional scale choices on issues such as land use development patterns, transportation investments, transportation demand management/transportation system management (TDM/TSM), and technological innovations. Policy considerations currently outlined in the Preliminary Scenario Planning Matrix include land use, housing, farm and natural lands, roadway and highway network, transit, active transportation, technology/innovation, and TDM/TSM. Scenarios will be analyzed and compared using outputs from SCAG regional transportation model, Scenario Planning Model, or off-model analysis. The outputs from these modeling analyses will help illustrate variations between scenarios and policy elements at the regional scale for metrics such as public health, mobility, accessibility, and sustainability.

For more information on the Preliminary 2016 RTP/SCS Scenario Planning Matrix, please visit SCAG's website, at: <http://www.scag.ca.gov/committees/CommitteeDocLibrary/oswag021915draftscenario.pdf>.

Bottom-up Local Growth and Land Use Input Process

A critical component to developing a successful 2016 RTP/SCS is the participation and cooperation of all local government partners and stakeholders within the SCAG region. To this end, SCAG uses a bottom-up local input process by which all local governments are informed of the 2016 RTP/SCS planning process and have clear and adequate opportunities to provide input. Growth forecasts and land use updates for development of the 2016 Plan have been developed through this bottom-up local input process, including: 1) extensive, ongoing communication with SCAG partners and stakeholders on growth forecast and land use updates throughout the region; 2) implementation of a formal protocol to guide the communication between SCAG staff and local jurisdiction regarding the input and review process; 3) flexibilities in providing official input to SCAG through the use of a Data Verification and Approval Form; 4) adoption of a resolution designating a staff position at the local government level to add clarity and accountability to the process; and 5) development of an automated mapping workflow and a digitalized land use database in a geographic information system (GIS) format to facilitate the review and input process.

RTP/SCS Public Participation Plan and Process

Another key aspect of the 2016 RTP/SCS plan development is public participation. To provide early and meaningful public participation in the Plan's development and decision-making processes, SCAG has developed

and adopted a Public Participation Plan (“PPP”).⁷ The adoption of the PPP has demonstrated SCAG’s commitment in increasing awareness and involvement of interested persons in SCAG’s governmental processes and regional transportation and land use planning. SCAG is committed to providing information and timely public notice, ensuring full public access to key decisions, and supporting early and continuing public involvement in the development of the 2016 RTP/SCS. To this end, SCAG will continue to engage a wide range of stakeholder groups, elected officials, special interest groups, the general public, and other interested parties through a series of workshops and public meetings, as well as SCAG’s policy committees, task forces, and subcommittee structure during the development of the 2016 RTP/SCS and its associated CEQA review process.

SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS IN THE PEIR

The PEIR to be prepared for the 2016 RTP/SCS analyzes potential effects that the 2016 RTP/SCS may cause on the environment. Although the 2016 RTP/SCS includes individual transportation projects, the associated PEIR is programmatic in nature and does not specifically analyze potential environmental effects that any of the individual transportation projects may cause. Project-level environmental impact analyses will need to be prepared by implementing agencies on a project-by-project basis as projects proceed through the design and decision-making process. Project-specific planning and implementation undertaken by each project sponsor/implementing agency will depend on a number of issues, including: policies, programs and projects adopted at the local level; restrictions on federal, State and local transportation funds; the results of feasibility studies for particular corridors; and project-specific environmental review.

Potential scope of environmental effects that warrant analysis and consideration in the 2016 RTP/SCS Draft PEIR are as follows:

- Aesthetics and Views
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources and Open Space
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology, Soils and Mineral Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Resources
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population, Employment, and Housing
- Recreation
- Transportation, Traffic, and Safety
- Public Services and Utilities

PRELIMINARY 2016 RTP/SCS ALTERNATIVES

It is anticipated that the PEIR will evaluate at least three potential alternatives to the 2016 RTP/SCS as follows: (1) No Project; (2) Refined 2012 RTP/SCS Alternative; and (3) Intensified Transportation and Land Use Integration Alternative. These alternatives will evaluate various planning scenarios capable of achieving most of the basic objectives of the 2016 RTP/SCS. More specifically, each Alternative, except the No Project Alternative, will include a range of policies and projects including, but not limited to, variations in land use density and intensity, transit and rail systems, active transportation, highway/roadway construction and widening and transportation demand/system management.

SCAG has the discretion to select one alternative in its entirety or to combine elements of various alternatives to complete the PEIR for the RTP/SCS. The development of alternatives in a PEIR is focused on avoiding or reducing potentially significant impacts of the 2016 RTP/SCS. Therefore, detailed alternative descriptions are normally

⁷ Southern California Association of Governments. Public Participation Plan. Adopted April 3, 2014. http://www.scag.ca.gov/Documents/PPP2014_Adopted-FINAL.pdf

developed as impacts of a project are identified through the PEIR process.

No Project Alternative

The No Project Alternative is required by Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines and assumes that the proposed project would not be implemented. The No Project Alternative will consider continued implementation of the goals and policies of the adopted 2012 RTP/SCS, as amended in September 2014. The No Project Alternative includes those transportation projects that are included in the first year of the previously conforming RTP/SCS and/or FTIP, or those that have completed environmental review by December 2014. The growth scenario included in the No Project Alternative is based on the 2012 RTP/SCS regional population, housing and employment totals.

Refined 2012 RTP/SCS Alternative

A Refined 2012 RTP/SCS Alternative would include the most recent growth forecast data, including local input on land use, employment, population, and housing data, and new input on transportation projects from the County Transportation Commissions in the SCAG region. This Alternative will consider continued implementation of the policies, strategies and projects included in the 2012 RTP/SCS.

Intensified Transportation and Land Use Integration Alternative

An Intensified Transportation and Land Use Integration Alternative would focus on analyzing more intensified integration of transportation and land use projects and policies aimed at further reducing vehicle miles traveled and GHG and criteria pollutant emissions to improve mobility, accessibility, and sustainability. This Alternative could include more mixed-use, infill development, increased densities in urban cores, new technological innovations, and/or additional transit and active transportation strategies.

SCAG is seeking input on the alternatives through the scoping process which could result in modifications to the number, content and scope of alternatives analyzed in the PEIR. Furthermore, the PEIR will identify all alternatives that were initially considered, but rejected for reasons including infeasibility or inability for a particular alternative to meet the Project objectives or reduce environmental impacts beyond that of the Project.

SCOPING MEETINGS

SCAG will host two (2) scoping meetings during the 30-day public comment period that **begins March 9, 2015 and ends April 7, 2015** to review the various proposed Project elements and solicit information and comments in relation to this Notice and the CEQA analysis for the proposed Project. The two (2) scoping meetings, each providing the same information, will take place **on Tuesday, March 17, 2015, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., and on Wednesday, March 18, 2015, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., at SCAG Los Angeles (Main) office board room, located at 818 West 7th Street, 12th Floor, Los Angeles, California 90017.** For each of the two scoping meetings, videoconferencing is made available from the other sites, as listed below.

City of Palmdale
Planning Department
Development Services Conference Room
38250 Sierra Highway
Palmdale, CA 93550
(661) 267-5337

Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG)
73-710 Fred Waring Drive
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 346-1127
<http://www.cvag.org/>
This office is only available for the March 17, 3 p.m. meeting.


SCAG Imperial County Regional Office
1405 N. Imperial Avenue, Suite 1
Imperial, CA 92243
(760) 353-7800

SCAG Orange County Regional Office
OCTA Building
600 South Main Street, Suite 906
Orange, CA 92868
(714) 542-3687

SCAG Riverside County Regional Office
3403 10th Street, Suite 805
Riverside, CA 92501
(951) 784-1513

SCAG San Bernardino County Regional Office
1170 West 3rd Street, Suite 140
San Bernardino, CA 92410
(909) 806-3556

SCAG Ventura County Regional Office
950 County Square Drive, Suite 101
Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 642-2800

Signature: 
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