

## SBCAG STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Connected 2050 Scenario Selection

**MEETING DATE:** September 19, 2020

**AGENDA ITEM:** 7

**STAFF CONTACT:** Michael Becker, Andrew Orfila

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve Scenario 1 as the Sustainable Community Strategy for the Connected 2050 Plan.

**SUMMARY:**

Beginning in January 2020, SBCAG staff met with all SBCAG member jurisdictions' planning staff to discuss the Connected 2050 RTP-SCS land use planning assumptions and received input. This staff report presents the results of the preliminary travel demand model runs completed for the RTP-SCS per the direction of the local jurisdictions and the Joint Technical Advisory Committee (JTAC) direction received on the recommended scenarios, including:

- Future Baseline-Business as Usual (BAU)
- Scenario 1: Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)-Infill Development with Enhanced Transit Strategy
- Scenario 2: North County-Weighted Jobs, South County-Weighted Housing
- Scenario 3: Enhanced Alternative Transportation Strategy

Staff has completed its public outreach phase and has summarized some of the key findings in this staff report. Staff has also worked to identify key planning assumptions that can reduce regional VMT to more closely align with the region's regional GHG target. At its meeting this month, JTAC recommended that the Board select the Scenario 1 TOD/Infill + Enhanced Transit Strategy, which is a continuation of the strategy from previous SCS cycles.

**DISCUSSION:**

SB 375 requires that each metropolitan planning organization (MPO) adopt a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) or Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) as one of the elements in its Regional Transportation Plan. In August 2013, the SBCAG Board adopted the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan-Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP-SCS). The RTP-SCS was updated again and was then adopted by the Board in August 2017 (Fast Forward 2040). The Connected 2050 Plan is due to be complete in August 2021. SBCAG staff, in close collaboration with the JTAC and the public, has updated the land use and transportation scenarios in the adopted Fast Forward 2040 Plan and has completed modeling and air quality analysis for the Connected 2050 Plan.

**Scenarios Analyzed**

Travel and air quality modeling results have been completed for a range of draft alternative scenarios being studied for inclusion in the Connected 2050 RTP-SCS. These scenarios were selected in consultation with JTAC and generally track the scenarios in the adopted Fast Forward 2040 RTP-SCS. However, some scenarios were excluded, based on their inability to meet the regional greenhouse gas emissions targets. JTAC also requested the addition of a new scenario,

*Member Agencies*

Buellton ■ Carpinteria ■ Goleta ■ Guadalupe ■ Lompoc ■ Santa Barbara ■ Santa Maria ■ Solvang ■ Santa Barbara County

Scenario 3, that maximized the utilization of alternative transportation modes and funding. Scenarios modeled and analyzed in this staff report include:

#### Future Baseline-Business as Usual (BAU)

The future baseline-business as usual (BAU) scenario is based on existing, adopted General Plan land uses. This alternative also assumes that current sub-regional growth trends will continue, consistent with the 2019 Regional Growth Forecast.

#### Scenario 1: TOD/Infill + Enhanced Transit Strategy

This scenario selectively increases residential and commercial land use capacity within existing transit corridors. Land use change assumptions are made based on location of existing transit routes and service in consultation with SBCAG member jurisdictions. Assumed changes in land use capacity reflect local planning discussions about possible future land use and General Plan and Community Plan updates. This scenario also addresses jobs/housing balance issues by emphasizing job growth in the North County and housing growth in the South County.

#### Scenario 2: North County-Weighted Jobs, South County-Weighted Housing

This scenario begins with existing, adopted land uses, but applies weights to make specific growth distribution assumptions emphasizing job growth in the North County and housing growth in the South County, within existing available land use capacity. It does not continue past trends, but also does not focus on infill along transit corridors. Infill occurs only as supported by local plans.

#### Scenario 3: Enhanced Alternative Transportation Strategy

This scenario applies the BAU demographics countywide but assumes a more robust implementation of alternative transportation projects. By 2035, all local transit operators (MTD, SMAT, COLT, and SYVT) will double transit frequencies during peak hours and offer free fares; auto operating costs are doubled to increase mode share to alternative transportation (bike, walk, and transit); and all illustrative alternative transportation projects listed are implemented.

#### **Scenario and Modeling Assumptions**

Each of the scenarios assume programmed and planned transportation projects will be constructed or implemented as scheduled. Scenario 1 has an enhanced transit strategy which is a policy and not a project, and therefore the enhanced transit is not assumed to be implemented nor is it included in any modeling analysis. The programmed and planned project lists reviewed by JTAC are contained in Attachment A (web posting only). These project lists define the changes to the transportation network for modeling future years (2020, 2035, and 2050).

All scenarios rely on the previous cycle UPlan land use model output allocation default variables to allocate predicted growth with supplemental manual adjustments. They incorporate input from received from JTAC and SBCAG member agencies to date. Outreach efforts with local planning staff indicated that no underlying land use changes would be necessary for this current RTP-SCS cycle. The distribution of net new households and employment are summarized in Attachment B.

Initial travel and air quality modeling results completed showed that none of the above scenarios would meet the CARB regional greenhouse gas emission targets. Staff identified “off-model” strategies that could be analyzed in order to capture additional VMT and GHG emissions reductions. The off-model strategies included; telecommuting / remote-work (OM1), public

charging for electric vehicles (OM2), and vanpools (OM3). Calculations for each of the off-model strategies are shown in Attachment C.

### **Performance Results**

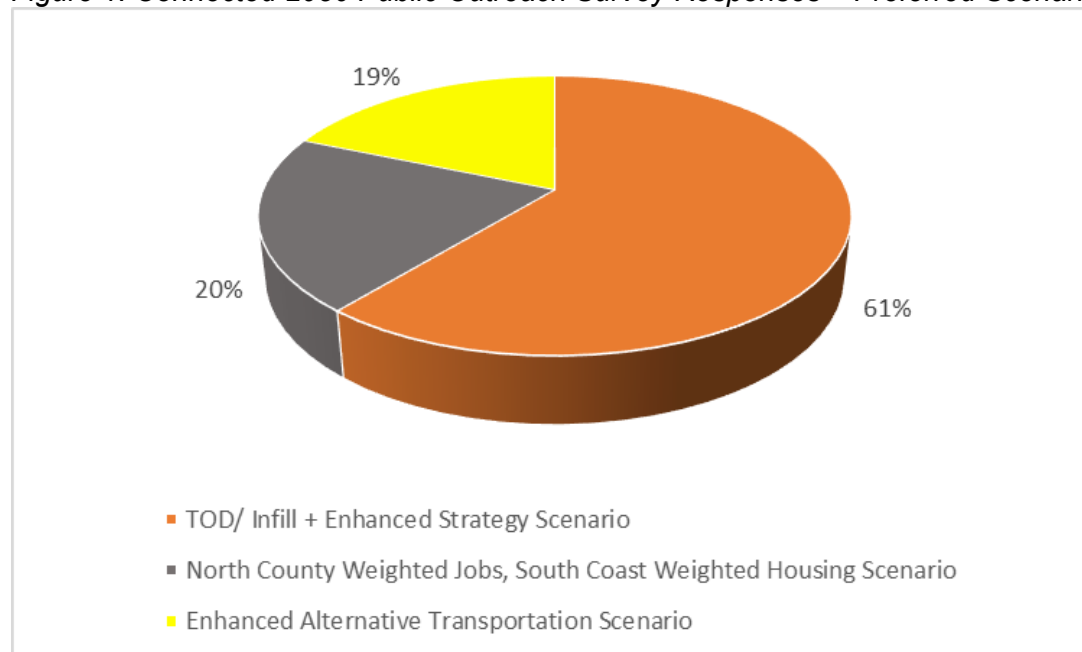
For each of the scenarios analyzed, staff has compiled results by performance measure generated through the SBCAG TransCAD regional travel demand model and EMFAC 2014 air quality model. These results are shown in detail for each scenario in Attachment D. Attachment E illustrates how Scenario 1 (the Transit-Oriented Development/Infill + Enhanced Transit Strategy Scenario) performs (VMT, VMT per Capita and CO2 emissions per Capita) to the preferred growth scenario identified in SBCAG’s adopted RTP-SCS (Fast Forward 2040, August 2017). As shown in Figure D-1, Scenario 1 achieves the regional target in Year 2035.

### **Public Process and Input**

SBCAG worked with the Community Environmental Council on public outreach for the RTP-SCS. A major hurdle was adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine situation in March (and beyond), which is when the outreach process commenced. CEC and its community ambassadors were able to modify their approach and engage with stakeholders through an online process and establish a series of listening sessions remotely via teleconference. One of the key outreach goals was to establish a more accessible outreach platform for all residents in the region. This included internal language-access training for SBCAG and local jurisdiction staff (One Room, Many Voices seminar, December 2019) as well as preparing RTP-SCS materials and a webpage in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). SBCAG held two virtual public workshops to provide information and solicit feedback on the RTP-SCS on Thursday, September 24. Attachment F includes a summary report of the public input received on the RTP-SCS.

A survey was prepared and made available on the Connected 2050 webpages that asked a series of questions regarding how residents in the region felt about land use growth, transportation options and which regional growth scenario they preferred to be included in the SCS. Figure 1 below shows the preferences selected by the public by percentage.

*Figure 1: Connected 2050 Public Outreach Survey Responses – Preferred Scenario*



*Note: 61 survey responses received*

### **Staff and JTAC Preferred Scenario Recommendation**

The SBCAG Board must ultimately select a preferred scenario from among the viable scenario options meeting minimum SB 375 requirements for incorporation into the Connected 2050 RTP-SCS or, alternatively, an Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) showing how it could meet the SB 375 greenhouse gas targets.

The Board's direction concerning the preferred scenario will enable staff to begin drafting Connected 2050 and will identify the proposed project to allow the consultant to begin the environmental analysis. The other modeled scenarios will be evaluated as CEQA alternatives to the proposed project. Next year, staff will return with the draft EIR and again when the final EIR is complete and the RTP-SCS is ready for adoption.

Upon completing the analysis and considering each of the scenarios, staff and JTAC recommend that Scenario 1 be selected as the preferred scenario for the following reasons:

- Scenario 1 is the current adopted sustainable communities strategy.
- Scenario 1 is the best performing scenario that is eligible to be selected in achieving SBCAG's SB 375 GHG reduction target in 2035.

### **COMMITTEE REVIEW:**

During its November meeting, JTAC voted to recommend the Board select Scenario 1 (TOD/Infill + Enhanced Transit Strategy) as the preferred scenario for staff to incorporate into the draft Connected 2050 RTP-SCS and evaluate in the SEIR.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Transportation Project Lists – Programmed, Planned and Illustrative (web posting only)
- B. Scenario Allocation Results by Jurisdiction and Market Area
- C. Summary of Connected 2050 Off-Model Strategies
- D. Preliminary Modeling Results - Performance Measures and Indicators by Scenario
- E. Greenhouse Gas Emissions per Capita Analysis Comparison with Adopted RTP-SCS / CARB Target
- F. Summary Report – Connected 2050 Public Input (web posting only)