

SBCAG STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy and Program Environmental Impact Report

MEETING DATE: August 19, 2021

AGENDA ITEM: 5

STAFF CONTACT: Michael Becker

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Hold public hearing on the Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP-SCS) and the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR);
- B. Adopt CEQA findings and a resolution certifying the Final Program Environmental Impact Report for Connected 2050 (PEIR); and
- C. Adopt a resolution adopting Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy for Santa Barbara County.

DISCUSSION:

Connected 2050 and the PEIR are the result of extensive collaboration with JTAC and a lengthy public process. The Board discussed the plan and provided policy direction at key points during its development. Prior Board actions related to the process include: 1) approval of the Public Participation Plan (September 2019), scenario development review (March and April 2020), preferred scenario selection (November 2020), and awarding the environmental consultant contract (July 2020). Connected 2050 has been drafted around the Board's selected preferred scenario and continues the strategies and policy direction of the current (2017) and prior (2013) RTP-SCSs. JTAC actively guided the development process and the public provided input throughout the public process. The draft plan has also been crafted in consultation with responsible agencies to meet all state and federal requirements.

Connected 2050 is a regional transportation plan and includes a sustainable communities strategy meeting the requirements of SB 375 (2008). The PEIR is a separate document and responds to the programmatic California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements.

Regional Transportation Plan

A regional transportation plan (RTP) is a long-range transportation plan that is required to consider a minimum 20-year planning horizon. The RTP is required to forecast available revenues over the life of the plan that will be used to invest in the region's transportation network. It includes an action plan, which specifies how the region will invest in its transportation network out to the planning horizon. In accordance with federal law, SBCAG assessed the plan against a range of performance measures tied to the plan goals to optimize system performance. The RTP is required to be updated every four years.

Sustainable Communities Strategy

Senate Bill 375 requires MPOs to include a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) (or Alternative Planning Strategy if greenhouse gas (GHG) targets cannot be met) in their RTPs. Connected 2050 will be SBCAG's third RTP to include an SCS. The SCS must accommodate projected future growth and housing need and demonstrate how, in concert with the transportation network, the region will meet GHG reduction targets assigned by the Air Resources Board, currently -10% and -17% per capita for target years 2020 and 2035. Connected 2050's SCS continues a transit-oriented and infill development land use strategy, which focuses most growth in already developed areas where transit meets certain thresholds and also seeks to correct the region's jobs-housing imbalance. It also includes an enhanced transit strategy that allocates future growth in transit revenues to transit enhancements consistent with the land use aspect.

Program Environmental Impact Report

SBCAG, with the assistance of Rincon Consultants, has prepared a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) to satisfy the state's CEQA requirements. The PEIR focuses on cumulative environmental impacts and individual projects included in Connected 2050 will be subject to project-level CEQA analysis, as required.

Public Comment

SBCAG conducted public comment periods for Connected 2050 and the PEIR, ending July 28 and July 12, respectively. Following the closing of the comment periods staff reviewed all comments, revised the documents as necessary, and prepared written responses. There were no significant revisions to either document as a result of comments received. All comments, as well as staff responses, are available in their respective documents, Appendix J for Connected 2050 (Attachment D) and Section 2.0 of the attached PEIR addendum (Attachment I).

COMMITTEE REVIEW

Connected 2050 and the PEIR were developed with ongoing input and review by the Joint Technical Advisory Committee (JTAC). JTAC reviewed the complete draft Connected 2050 plan at its June, July, and August meetings and recommended Board adoption of the plan and certification of the PEIR on August 5. Prior to the JTAC meeting, staff received an e-mail from the County of Santa Barbara Planning & Development staff expressing concerns regarding the PEIR analysis of the potential for sea-level rise and effects on projects in the coastal zone (see Attachment C). In response, JTAC requested that staff work to alleviate the County's concerns prior to approval of the Plan and certification of the EIR. SBCAG staff and County staff convened a call on Friday August 6 to discuss concerns regarding the environmental analysis. Staff agreed to meet with County planning staff at the beginning of the next RTP/EIR process to discuss how these items can be better addressed in the next RTP/EIR.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Resolution 21-28 to certify the PEIR for Connected 2050
- B. Resolution 21-27 to adopt Connected 2050
- C. County P & D E-mail: August 5, 2021
- D. Connected 2050 (**web posting only**)
- E. Connected 2050 Appendices (**web posting only**)
- F. CEQA Findings (**web posting only**)
- G. Program Environmental Impact Report for Connected 2050 (**web posting only**)
- H. Program Environmental Impact Report for Connected 2050 Appendices (**web posting only**)
- I. Responses to EIR Comments, Amendments to EIR, and Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (**web posting only**)

ATTACHMENT A

A RESOLUTION OF THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

CERTIFICATION OF THE FINAL)
PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL)
IMPACT REPORT FOR CONNECTED 2050)

RESOLUTION NO. 21-28

WHEREAS Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations, part 450, and Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, part 613, require the development of a metropolitan transportation plan by metropolitan planning organizations; and

WHEREAS the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) has been designated by the Governor as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Santa Barbara County in accordance with Title 23 of the United States Code (USC) section 134 and Title 23 CFR section 450.104; and

WHEREAS Section 65080 of the California Government Code requires the preparation and adoption of a regional transportation plan by regional transportation planning agencies; and

WHEREAS SBCAG is the designated regional transportation planning agency for Santa Barbara County recognized under California Government Code section 29532; and

WHEREAS Section 65080 of the California Government Code requires that the regional transportation plan include a sustainable communities strategy for each metropolitan planning organization; and

WHEREAS SBCAG, through the conduct of a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process, has prepared Connected 2050, a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) & Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for Santa Barbara County (Connected 2050) to update the Fast Forward 2040 RTP & SCS adopted by SBCAG in August 2017; and

WHEREAS Connected 2050 is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act; and

WHEREAS SBCAG selected and retained the firm of Rincon Consultants to prepare the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Connected 2050; and

WHEREAS SBCAG filed a Notice of Preparation that was received by the State Clearinghouse on December 14, 2020, commencing a 30-day review period; and

WHEREAS Connected 2050 is financially constrained and funds are needed to implement the RTP; and

WHEREAS electronic copies of the Draft Connected 2050 and Draft EIR were made available and members of the public were given a reasonable opportunity to review the draft documents and provide input and comment on the documents; and

WHEREAS on May 27, 2021, SBCAG filed a Notice of Completion with the State Clearinghouse, commencing a 45-day public review period, and the availability of the reports were duly noticed; and

WHEREAS on June 17, 2021, SBCAG held a public comment meeting on the Draft EIR and Draft Connected 2050; and

WHEREAS the Final EIR incorporates the public comments submitted on the Draft EIR and provides written responses to all public comments; and

WHEREAS SBCAG provided public agencies with responses to their comments on July 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS on July 30, 2021, SBCAG published a comprehensive list of all changes to the Draft EIR; and

WHEREAS SBCAG has reviewed Title 14 (California Code of Regulations), Chapter 3, (Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act), Section 15090 describing actions a lead agency shall take upon certification of the Final EIR.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments does resolve as follows:

1. That the foregoing recitations are true and correct.
2. That the Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategy Final Environmental Impact Report, dated August 2021 and on file with SBCAG, is hereby certified based on the following findings:
 - A. The Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA in that a Draft EIR was prepared and circulated for public review and comment, that proper notification was given to other public agencies and the citizens of Santa Barbara County of the availability of the document, and that the appropriate notice of hearing of the discussion and certification of the Final EIR has been given.
 - B. The Final EIR was presented to SBCAG and SBCAG has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR. The Draft EIR and Final EIR were presented to SBCAG upon its availability to provide time for adequate review. SBCAG then reviewed the contents of the documents prior to the certification and considered the information contained therein at its regular public meeting prior to rendering decisions on the project.
 - C. The Final EIR reflects SBCAG's independent judgement and analysis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments does hereby certify the Final EIR for the Santa Barbara County Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategy.

(Signatures on following page.)

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of August 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

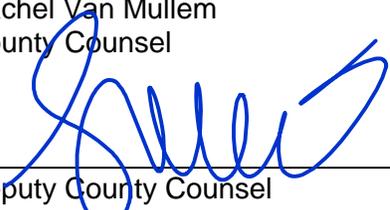
ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

Marjie Kirn
Executive Director
Santa Barbara County
Association of Governments

Holly Sierra, Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Rachel Van Mullem
County Counsel



Deputy County Counsel

ATTACHMENT B

A RESOLUTION OF THE SANTA BARBARA

COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

ADOPTION OF CONNECTED 2050)
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND)
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY)
FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY)

RESOLUTION NO. 21-27

WHEREAS Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations, part 450, and Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, part 613, require the development of a metropolitan transportation plan by metropolitan planning organizations; and

WHEREAS the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) has been designated by the Governor as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Santa Barbara County in accordance with Title 23 of the United States Code (USC) section 134 and Title 23 CFR section 450.104; and

WHEREAS Section 65080 of the California Government Code requires the preparation and adoption of a regional transportation plan by regional transportation planning agencies; and

WHEREAS SBCAG is the designated regional transportation planning agency for Santa Barbara County recognized under California Government Code section 29532; and

WHEREAS Section 65080 of the California Government Code requires that the regional transportation plan include a sustainable communities strategy for each metropolitan planning organization; and

WHEREAS pursuant to 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303, SBCAG as an MPO prepares and adopts a long range regional transportation plan for the region;

WHEREAS SBCAG, through the conduct of a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process, has prepared Connected 2050, a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) & Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for Santa Barbara County (Connected 2050) to update the Fast Forward 2040 RTP & SCS adopted by SBCAG in August 2017; and

WHEREAS Connected 2050 has been prepared in conformance with all applicable federal and State requirements; and

WHEREAS Connected 2050 has been prepared in cooperation with federal, State and local government agencies, including local governments in Santa Barbara County, transit operators, Caltrans, the Air Pollution Control District, and the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians; and

WHEREAS Connected 2050 is financially constrained and funds are needed to implement the RTP; and

WHEREAS Connected 2050 is not required to demonstrate transportation conformity with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) because Santa Barbara County is designated as an attainment/unclassified area for the federal 8-hour ozone standard; and

WHEREAS Connected 2050 is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) was prepared for Connected 2050; and

WHEREAS electronic copies of the Draft Connected 2050 and Draft PEIR were made available and members of the public were given a reasonable opportunity to review the draft documents and provide input and comment on the documents; and

WHEREAS pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15163, SBCAG considered the PEIR for Connected 2050; and

WHEREAS the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program was also made available for public review and comment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the SBCAG Board of Directors finds that Connected 2050 was developed in accordance with public involvement procedures specified by federal law as expressed locally in the SBCAG Public Participation Plan adopted by SBCAG on August 20, 2015; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SBCAG Board of Directors finds that Connected 2050 was developed in accordance with public involvement procedures specified by State law as expressed locally in the Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategy Public Participation Plan adopted by SBCAG on September 19, 2019; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board reviewed the responses to comments received from the public and interested agencies on both Connected 2050 and the PEIR and adopts those responses to comments as findings of this Board; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CEQA Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program are hereby adopted in Resolution 21-28; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Connected 2050 addresses requirements prescribed in State and federal law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Connected 2050 complies with the 2017 Regional Transportation Guidelines adopted by the California Transportation Commission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Connected 2050 is the applicable transportation plan for SBCAG under State and federal law and supersedes all preceding RTP-SCSs and RTP-SCS amendments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SBCAG Board of Directors does hereby adopt the Connected 2050 RTP-SCS.

(Signatures on following page.)

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of August 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

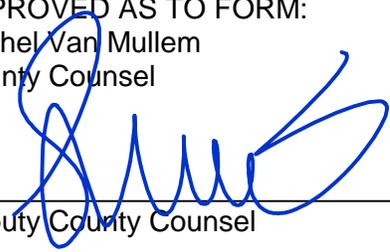
ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

Marjie Kirn
Executive Director
Santa Barbara County
Association of Governments

Holly Sierra, Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Rachel Van Mullem
County Counsel



Deputy County Counsel

ATTACHMENT C

From: [Klemann, Daniel](#)
To: [Michael Becker](#)
Cc: [Evilsizor, Selena](#); [Andrew Orfila](#); [Friedlander, Mark K.](#); [Carlson, Zoe](#); [Bell, Allen](#); [Sneddon, Chris](#); [Eric VonBerg](#); [Marjie Kinn](#); [Plowman, Lisa](#); [Jared Carvalho](#); [Terry Contreras](#); [Hartmann, Joan](#); [Lavagnino, Steve](#); [Nelson, Bob](#); [Williams, Das](#); [Hart, Gregg](#)
Subject: SBCAG Connected 2050 EIR Comments
Date: Thursday, August 5, 2021 8:35:50 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Good Morning, Mike:

Selena is out and I have a time conflict with the JTAC and TPAC meetings this morning. So, County P&D staff will not be participating in these meetings.

Regardless, even if we could attend, we likely would abstain from the JTAC vote regarding the EIR for the RTP-SCS given that we do not support the staff recommendation to certify the EIR, at this time. This is due to the following reasons:

1. The Final EIR with the revised sections is unavailable. We will consider providing additional comments when the revised sections are actually published and we can verify that it states what the RTCs claim it will state.
2. We are not requesting the level of detail (e.g., construction project-level of detail) that the preparers of the RTCs seem to assume we are requesting. Instead, we have requested a modest amount of additional detail regarding the projects identified in the RTP-SCS, and additional programmatic-level analysis, in order so that we, as responsible agencies, can tier-off this programmatic document and avoid consecutive, repetitive, and unnecessary environmental review of the projects identified in the RTP-SCS (CEQA Section 21003(a)). For example, if the EIR included the requested information, the County Public Works Department could tier-off this programmatic EIR and prepare an MND—rather than a focused EIR—for at least certain projects that the Public Works Department would implement.

We believe that our requests for additional information are reasonable and consistent with the authority granted to County departments as responsible agencies pursuant to CEQA (Sections 21002.1(d) and 21153(c)). We are making the requests for information such that we can more efficiently implement the projects identified in the RTP-SCS. Indeed, the RTP-SCS will fail to achieve its goals unless responsible agencies can avoid unnecessary environmental review and can implement projects within a reasonable amount of time and in a cost-effective manner.

3. Both Coastal Commission staff and the County requested additional information regarding the implementing projects that would be located within the Coastal Zone, particularly with regard to environmental impacts associated with sea level rise. However, the RTCs dismiss these requests and, instead, refer to the existing, inadequate impact analysis in the EIR in order to argue that it is sufficient.

The County's request for additional information regarding this issue is based on the County's understanding of the Coastal Commission's current expectations regarding this matter—which are reflected in the Coastal Commission staff's comment letter on the EIR. Without the additional information that the County and Coastal Commission staff requested, the EIR fails to provide a meaningful programmatic analysis of this issue. As stated in Item 2 (above), we are requesting an appropriate, programmatic-level of analysis be added to the EIR such that responsible agencies may use it when implementing the projects for which they are responsible.

As stated above, we will consider providing additional comments on the EIR after the revised sections are published and we have the opportunity to review them.

Best.

Dan Klemann, Deputy Director
Planning & Development Department



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From: Andrew Orfila <AOrfila@sbcag.org>

Sent: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 11:33 AM

To: Klemann, Daniel <dklemann@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Jared Carvalho <JCarvalho@sbcag.org>

Cc: Michael Becker <mbecker@sbcag.org>; Evilsizor, Selena <sevilisizor@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Friedlander, Mark K. <mkfriedlander@cosbpw.net>; Carlson, Zoe <carlsonz@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Bell, Allen <abell@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Sneddon, Chris <csneddo@cosbpw.net>; Eric VonBerg <evonberg@rinconconsultants.com>; Marjie Kirn <MKirn@sbcag.org>

Subject: RE: SBCAG Connected 2050 EIR Comments

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Dan,

Please see responses to your questions below. I've also cc'd Eric VonBerg from Rincon Consultants, who assisted in preparing our EIR.

Andrew

SBCAG

805.961.8907 (office)

805.280.9904 (mobile)

From: Klemann, Daniel <dklemann@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>

Sent: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 11:07 AM

To: Jared Carvalho <JCarvalho@sbcag.org>

Cc: Michael Becker <MBecker@sbcag.org>; Andrew Orfila <AOrfila@sbcag.org>; Evilsizor, Selena <sevilisizor@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Friedlander, Mark K. <mkfriedlander@cosbpw.net>; Carlson, Zoe <carlsonz@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Bell, Allen <abell@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Sneddon, Chris <csneddo@cosbpw.net>

Subject: RE: SBCAG Connected 2050 EIR Comments

Hey, Jared:

Two questions regarding the responses-to-comments:

1. Does the version of the RTP-SCS that is posed on your website [here](#) include revisions to the RTP-SCS that are discussed in the responses-to-comments? If not, where can we find the version of the RTP-SCS that includes the revisions?

The RTP-SCS document posted to the August JTAC Meetings page and the Connected 2050 includes a Responses to Comments in Appendix J. Appendix J cites where the Plan has been updated to address the County's comments, where necessary.

2. Similar to Item 1, where can we find the revised sections of the PEIR that are discussed in the responses-to-comments? [Item 4, Attachment E](#) to the staff report for Thursday's meeting appears to be the May 2021 version of the PEIR (i.e., the original draft on which we commented—not an updated/revised version of it).

Our EIR consultant prepared a draft Summary of EIR changes (available in Item 4 Attachment C) that show where and how the EIR will be revised in advance of certification by the SBCAG Board.

Please let us know. I'll be attending and voting on behalf of Planning and Development (Selena's going to be out) on Thursday. We (County staff) need to review the revised docs requested above and discuss them, first, before I can vote on the recommendation to your Board of Directors regarding the PEIR. Hopefully we will have enough time to do so before Thursday's meeting.

Give me a call if you have any questions about this.

Thanks!

DK



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From: Klemann, Daniel

Sent: Friday, July 30, 2021 12:12 PM

To: 'Jared Carvalho' <JCarvalho@sbcag.org>

Cc: Michael Becker <mbecker@sbcag.org>; Andrew Orfila <AOrfila@sbcag.org>; Evilsizor, Selena <sevilsizor@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Friedlander, Mark K. <mkfriedlander@cosbpw.net>; Carlson, Zoe <carlsonz@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Bell, Allen <abell@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Plowman, Lisa <lpowman@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>

Subject: RE: SBCAG Connected 2050 EIR Comments

Thanks for the update, Jared. We are currently considering the responses to comments.

Best.



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From: Jared Carvalho <JCarvalho@sbcag.org>

Sent: Friday, July 30, 2021 11:25 AM

To: Plowman, Lisa <lpowman@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Klemann, Daniel <dklemann@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>

Cc: Michael Becker <mbecker@sbcag.org>; Andrew Orfila <AOrfila@sbcag.org>

Subject: SBCAG Connected 2050 EIR Comments

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Lisa and Dan,

Thank you for submitting comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Connected 2050, SBCAG's Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). Responses to comments can be found in chapter 2 of the *Response to EIR comments, Summary of Draft EIR Changes, and Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program* document, available at the following link: <http://www.sbcag.org/2021-rtp.html>

Please let me know if you have any questions, or experience difficulties in accessing the document.

Thank you,
Jared

Jared Carvalho

Transportation Planner II

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments

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