



Southern California Association of Governments  
Remote Participation Only  
September 3, 2020

**To:** Joint Policy Committees (CEHD, EEC and TC)  
Regional Council (RC)

**From:** Sarah Jepson, Planning Director,  
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**Subject:** Connect SoCal - Aligning Implementation with Pandemic  
Response

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S  
APPROVAL

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Receive and File

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This item supports the following Strategic Plan Goal 1: Produce innovative solutions that improve the quality of life for Southern Californians.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

*At the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting the Regional Council adopted Resolution No. 20-621-1 certifying the Connect SoCal Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and approving Connect SoCal for federal conformity purposes only. The Resolution postponed for up to 120 days the date by which the Regional Council would be asked to consider approval of Connect SoCal in its entirety and outlined a series of activities to be undertaken by staff focused on researching how the COVID-19 pandemic could impact Connect SoCal –in both the short term and long term. At the July 2, 2020 Regional Council meeting, staff presented its findings, based on public feedback and analysis, that the best way to address the pandemic’s impacts was to proceed with plan adoption, prepare an emerging issues white paper to identify impacted areas to be monitored and addressed in future Connect SoCal updates, and develop an implementation strategy—as outlined in this report—that considers immediate needs and recovery.*

*The following report identifies a set of overarching pandemic recovery priorities derived from the pandemic outreach and engagement process and board discussions to guide SCAG’s work to implement the plan. The report further describes opportunities for these priorities to be addressed through the enhancement of SCAG’s existing local technical assistance programs. In addition, examples of regional studies and programs that have been augmented or accelerated to address pandemic recovery priorities through the implementation of the Core Vision and Key Connections of Connect SoCal are presented. Staff anticipates these plan implementation activities will continue to expand and evolve as new partnership opportunities arise and the short- and long-term impacts of the pandemic continue to unfold.*

**OUR MISSION**

To foster innovative regional solutions that improve the lives of Southern Californians through inclusive collaboration, visionary planning, regional advocacy, information sharing, and promoting best practices.

**OUR VISION**

Southern California’s Catalyst for a Brighter Future

**OUR CORE VALUES**

Be Open | Lead by Example | Make an Impact | Be Courageous

**BACKGROUND:**

Every four years SCAG prepares a long-range Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS, Connect SoCal), which charts a course for closely integrating land use and transportation to increase mobility options and achieve a more sustainable growth pattern. Implementation of Connect SoCal depends on partnerships with our local jurisdictions and County Transportation Commissions (CTCs). The land use strategies in Connect SoCal are based on a growth vision that was developed through extensive consultation with local communities, which proposes multiple different types of Priority Growth Areas, as well as identifying regional growth constraints. SCAG provides resources to help local jurisdictions align local plans and programs with the regional growth vision through a series of technical assistance and funding programs. According to data in Connect SoCal, at least 58 jurisdictions have updated one or more elements of their General Plan since 2012. Information from the local input survey indicates that 80 percent of respondents have adopted General Plans that include Connect SoCal strategies. To advance the plan's transportation policies and support project delivery by partner agencies, SCAG pursues regional studies and programs to refine planning concepts and prepares the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), as mandated by the federal and state statutes, to provide a basic foundation for implementation of the capital projects (transportation improvements) identified in Connect SoCal.

The COVID-19 pandemic and public health crisis has impacted every aspect of the economy since February/March period and continues to profoundly impact the ways we live, work, and learn. These impacts, and their disproportionate burden on low-income people and communities of color, have revealed gaps and opportunities to achieve a more resilient region, and will undoubtedly influence planning for years to come.

The public outreach and engagement pursued per Resolution No. 20-621-1, and described below, has confirmed the long-term goals, guiding principles and major planning strategies identified in Connect SoCal have retained, and in most cases, become for more relevant in light of the pandemic. However, in the short-term, SCAG can play an even stronger role in addressing both the near and long-term impacts of the pandemic through actions to implement the plan, including local technical assistance programs, regional studies and programs and transportation funding administration, partnerships and advocacy. The following implementation strategy for Connect SoCal outlines opportunities to leverage these existing activities, strengthen partnerships and accelerate programs that serve the immediate needs of communities while also advancing the plan vision and strategies for a more sustainable and resilient region.

**OVERARCHING PANDEMIC RECOVERY PRIORITIES**

As noted in the report entitled "Connect SoCal - Emerging Issues and Trends for Future Planning," this summer SCAG staff engaged in several outreach efforts to learn more from stakeholders about how their communities had been impacted by the pandemic and to learn how Connect SoCal could

best be positioned as a tool for recovery and regional resilience. Activities included engagement with regional planning working groups, direct outreach to specific stakeholders, focus groups with community-based organizations (CBOs), a public survey,<sup>1</sup> and a public virtual town-hall.<sup>2</sup> Stakeholders identified several short- and medium-term priorities, including:

- Focus on equity and addressing disparate impacts on affected communities;
- Improve deep, meaningful engagement to understand community needs;
- Provide leadership by advocating for federal and state resources;
- Develop partnerships to collaborate on economic recovery and public health;
- Support local jurisdictions by identifying resources and technical assistance for local planning;
- Continue to support work on housing production, protection and preservation;
- Develop tools to promote a more sustainable and resilient region;
- Provide resources to improve local capacity to advocate and secure resources; and
- Continue the vital work of disseminating data and research on economic, public health and other planning impacts of the pandemic.

Building off this input and survey results more broadly, staff identified five major themes or focus areas that are proposed to serve as overarching pandemic recovery priorities for consideration and incorporation into the design and implementation of SCAG's activities and work program for implementing Connect SoCal. These priorities include: Equity & Engagement, Inclusive Economic Recovery, Regional Resilience, Public Health, Transportation Safety, and Local Capacity Building. A preliminary list of activities to advance these pandemic recovery priorities as a foundation for Connect SoCal implementation are discussed below.

### Equity & Engagement

The pandemic has disproportionately impacted low-income and communities of color resulting in vastly different economic and health impacts and exposing structural inequities that limit resilience and prosperity for the region as a whole. In addition to public feedback emphasizing the importance of equity as a cornerstone of plan implementation, on July 2, 2020, SCAG's Regional Council adopted Resolution 20-623-2, affirming its commitment to meaningfully advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and declaring its intent to end racial and social disparities. The resolution called for the formation of an ad hoc Special Committee on Equity and Social Justice to further develop SCAG's response to advancing social justice throughout the agency's activities and advise the Regional Council on policies and practices. The staff report accompanying the resolution

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<sup>1</sup> Summary of survey results:

<http://www.scag.ca.gov/committees/CommitteeDocLibrary/Supplemental%20Report%20-%20Connect%20SoCal%20Update.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Summary of town-hall discussions: <https://www.connectsocial.org/Documents/SCAG-Regional-Dialogue-COVID-19-Summary-Report.pdf>

outlined work for the Special Committee, including establishing an agency-wide definition of “equity,” cataloguing the existing equity-related activities throughout SCAG; and establishing an Equity Framework containing quantitative and qualitative indicators of existing inequities and disparities that exist in the region. The work of the Special Committee and recommendations to the Regional Council, expected in March 2021, will guide the consideration and incorporation of equity into all of SCAG’s activities, including efforts to implement the plan.

In the near term, staff recognizes increased engagement with CBOs as an important measure to ensure all voices are heard and considered in regional planning processes and plan implementation. SCAG is pursuing further engagement with CBOs through grant and contracting opportunities, as well as through additional outreach to encourage participation of CBOs in SCAG’s working groups and advisory committees. In addition, data available on existing disparities as reflected the Public Health and Environmental Justice Technical Reports in Connect SoCal will serve as a resource for designing plan implementation programs and studies and for the Regional Council’s consideration in prioritizing resources across SCAG’s work program. Connect SoCal also includes an Environmental Justice (EJ) Toolbox within the EJ Technical Report that staff will promote through plan implementation activities. The toolbox includes recommended strategies and resources to address potential impacts to EJ Areas, Disadvantaged Communities, Communities of Concern, and other EJ related communities, and it presents optional policy recommendations that may be effective in addressing EJ impacts after a comprehensive review of impacts and consultation with all stakeholders.

#### Inclusive Economic Recovery

A preliminary analysis of economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SCAG region<sup>3</sup> was provided to the Regional Council and Stakeholders in May as data was still being collected. Some of the recommendations from the report include:

- Reviewing data in order to provide a clearer picture of evolve economic conditions;
- Researching changes in tax revenues, that municipalities, counties and CTCs will face;
- Analyzing the different impacts across jurisdictions, specifically on low resource areas; and
- Monitoring the nature and extent of federal policy intervention.

Staff will continue to collect third quarter economic indicators and statistics to update the “Potential Economic Impacts of COVID-19 in the SCAG Region” Report in November and present the results at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual SCAG Economic Summit in December. SCAG will work with member cities and counties, public and private sector leaders, labor leaders, and a team of independent economic advisors to develop the Southern California Economic Recovery & Job Creation Strategy. The strategy will be centered around opportunities to leverage the implementation of the land-use

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<sup>3</sup> The complete report is available at [http://www.scag.ca.gov/Documents/scag-COVID-19-White-Paper\\_FINAL\\_2020-0514.pdf](http://www.scag.ca.gov/Documents/scag-COVID-19-White-Paper_FINAL_2020-0514.pdf)

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vision and transportation projects in Connect SoCal to help businesses, public agencies, and communities improve their economic viability with immediate and long-term recommendations. As it did after the 2008 recession SCAG will focus on economic recovery, and how the region can come together to secure funding for job creating transportation and housing.

### Regional Resilience

The challenges our region will face in meeting ambitious near- and long-term regional goals are increasingly difficult to predict, as the COVID-19 pandemic has proven. As part of plan implementation and to prepare for future plan updates, Connect SoCal called for the creation of a Regional Resilience Framework. The framework will include a collaborative exploratory scenario planning process to explore pressing issues and potential disruptions to Southern California, such as pandemics, earthquakes, extreme weather, and economic shocks. SCAG's ongoing Climate Adaptation Framework project will identify pathways for developing future regional and local plans, and investments that support resilience given our region's heightened vulnerability to extreme heat, wildfires, drought and rising sea levels. SCAG is also developing a "SoCal Greenprint" that will be designed to serve as a strategic web-based conservation tool to provide the best available scientific data and visualizations to help stakeholders make better-informed land use and transportation infrastructure decisions that recognize the multiple benefits of conserving natural and working lands. These planning resources will inform SCAG's programs as well as serve as a resource for local jurisdictions and transportation agencies as they pursue activities to implement the growth vision and transportation strategies in Connect SoCal.

### Public Health

SCAG is active in state, regional, and local conversations on how to embed public health into land use and transportation planning. Specifically, at the statewide level, SCAG staff currently serves on California's APA Planners 4 Health Steering Committee, which aims to increase local capacity for creating stronger, healthier communities, and promote greater coordination between planners and public health professionals at the state, regional, and local levels. The pandemic has re-enforced and expanded the lens with which public health needs to be considered and addressed in the planning process to prevent the spread of disease and ensure communities are starting at a healthier baseline (i.e., built environment is not contributing to chronic disease disparities). Although healthcare is often the first thing people think of when it comes to health, it only drives about 10-20 percent of health outcomes.<sup>4</sup> Connect SoCal, includes a Public Health Technical Report which is grounded in the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), a public health framework which is centered on the circumstances in which we live, work, play and age. We know that the SDOH contribute to disparate health outcomes from one census tract to the next, and that the incidence of asthma, diabetes, and other chronic diseases in communities of color is greater than those for the region as a whole. We now see elevated numbers of cases and deaths in communities of color

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<sup>4</sup> Tara O'Neill Hayes and Rosie Delk, "Understanding the Social Determinants of Health," American Action Forum, September 2018.

in our region due to COVID-19, in part, resulting from deficiencies in the built environment, including overcrowded housing. SCAG intends to continue to support jurisdictions as they take steps to advance public health and health equity through land-use and transportation planning, including by providing access to resources such as SCAG's COVID-19 Vulnerability Indicators Dashboard,<sup>5</sup> a tool that local jurisdictions can use to identify areas of need. SCAG will also continue its work on testing the local level analysis of the California Public Health Assessment Model (C-PHAM), which we currently use to evaluate the health-related impacts of Connect SoCal. SCAG will also assemble and share best practices for improving travel safety, including through measures to limit disease exposure, to inform transportation planning. In addition to providing access to useful research and tools and best practices, SCAG intends to continue to fund the work of up to 15 Public Health & Policy Fellows throughout the region to help support local jurisdictions and organizations as they take on public health-related issues and policy changes resulting in healthier built environments. We anticipate that several Fellows in this year's class will be supporting work on health equity-related efforts. The research and learnings from these activities continue to further SCAG's "health in all policies" approach including informing Connect SoCal implementation activities.

#### Transportation Safety

Since the start of the pandemic, transportation safety has become an even higher priority for many communities, where traffic reduction resulted in increases in unsafe speeds. Moreover, many communities have reconsidered how public space is allocated and several have prioritized opening up streets to pedestrians and bicyclists in order to make it easier to physically distance from others while traveling to essential businesses and work, and engaging in recreation.<sup>6</sup> SCAG will continue to support the development of local safety plans and the identification of High Injury Networks (HINs) through the Sustainable Communities Program (SCP). We will also continue to further refine the regional HIN and work with others through the Strategic Highway Safety Plan Steering Committee on the development of statewide guidance. In the spring/summer 2020, we will hold a series of subregional safety peer exchanges that will explore local safety issues, along with the policy and implementation tools for addressing them.

#### Local Capacity Building

The budget impacts of the pandemic on local jurisdictions and transportation partners vary significantly across the SCAG region with many agencies struggling in the near-term to fund plans, projects and staff to implement Connect SoCal and foster economic recovery. Providing planning resources to implement Connect SoCal, identifying grants to support regional studies, and deploying technical assistance to augment local resources will be essential to supporting local partners in addressing transportation and housing needs identified in Connect SoCal and positioning local agencies and partners to successfully compete for local, state and federal funds. SCAG will also

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<sup>5</sup> Follow the link to access "Vulnerability Indicators:" <https://arcg.is/Gfrzr>

<sup>6</sup><https://e360.yale.edu/features/the-pandemic-has-taken-cars-off-urban-streets.-will-it-last>

explore opportunities to streamline processes and increase access to SCAG's local assistance programs and resources recognizing the increased constraints on staff capacity across many public agencies.

### **LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES**

In addition to the stand-alone efforts described above to advance the overarching pandemic recovery priorities, SCAG's Local Technical Assistance Resources provide another immediate opportunity to address recovery in concert with activities to support Connect SoCal implementation. Since 2005, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has provided resources and direct technical assistance to local jurisdictions to complete important local planning efforts and enable implementation of Connect SoCal. The following are some, but not all, of the ways in which SCAG funds technical assistance for local planning and engagement and some examples for integrating pandemic recovery priorities into program design.

#### Sustainable Communities Program

The 2020/21 Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) will provide local jurisdictions with multiple opportunities to seek funding and resources to meet the needs of their communities, address recovery and resiliency strategies considering COVID-19, and support regional goals. SCAG will release multiple Calls for Application throughout the year to select projects within different program areas and funding categories. The total amount of funding available to support the SCP is expected to be nearly \$15 million, a 50% increase in funds available following the adoption of the 2016 RTP/SCS. The first calls will focus on active transportation, safety and supporting housing production and preservation. They will be released in September and October/November respectively. Subsequent supplemental calls will be announced focused on Smart Cities & New Mobility and Green Region & Resilience. The SCP aims to prioritize resources where there is a demonstrated need. Opportunities to incorporate the overarching priorities for pandemic recovery will be considered as program guidelines are developed and resources are allocated to support local planning. While the SCP provides technical assistance to local jurisdictions, a growing number of projects have aimed to enhance meaningful engagement by local communities through partnerships with CBOs. Staff is continuing to explore means to encourage and facilitate greater participation by CBOs in SCP projects to advance equity goals.

#### SCAG Housing Program Development and Implementation

Based on AB 101 passed in 2019, SCAG will receive approximately \$47 million from the Regional Early Action Program (REAP) administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The overarching objectives of the REAP Program include planning to accelerate housing production throughout the SCAG region, increasing housing supply to meet the sixth cycle regional housing needs assessment (RHNA), and supporting the regional priorities as reflected in Connect SoCal. To meet those objectives, SCAG is developing and implementing a Regional Housing Program through various approaches including sub regional partnerships, local housing element assistance, Sustainability grants to local jurisdictions, policy research, outreach and

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engagement. Increasing housing production to improve housing affordability, and combat homelessness, is an important part of SCAG’s equity work, a significant opportunity to accelerate progress toward the Connect SoCal growth vision, and essential means to address many of the pandemic recovery priorities.

#### Call for Collaboration

Complementary to SCAG President’s priorities and as part of its broader Housing Program, the Regional Council set aside \$1 million out of the \$11 million allocation of the region’s early application for the REAP grant to establish the Call for Collaboration partnership program with the intent to support new partnership models and engage a wider range of stakeholders to advance the region’s housing goals. SCAG has the unique opportunity to partner with the California Community Foundation (CCF) and other non-profit entities to implement the partnership program, leveraging SCAG’s resources 1:1 with other funds, to increase the reach and impact of the program. The Call for Collaboration would fund projects that go beyond traditional planning tools and promote collaborative partnerships, particularly with CBOs, and to also elevate local conversations on racial equity and justice in housing need and economic recovery.

#### Go Human Campaign

With grant funding, SCAG’s Go Human program, a strategic initiative to implement the region’s walking, biking and safety goals, has deployed three programs focusing on equity and local engagement. Go Human developed a mini-grant program to support bicycle and pedestrian safety across the region. As a result of stakeholder feedback, staff retooled the program to expand the concept of safety to be more responsive to the reality and impacts of the pandemic on local communities. The Go Human Kit of parts is used to support planning efforts by showcasing potential and planned street design treatments that support public space, improve equity, and enhance community resiliency. The Kit program is designed to center community need, engage communities and promote public space access, especially with historically disinvested communities such as Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities. The Kit of Parts is available at no cost to jurisdictions in the SCAG region. The Go Human Resilient Streets Technical Assistance program, which includes webinars and one to one coaching with jurisdictions that support strategies to utilize street space for community resiliency, recovery and resource delivery that centers safety and equity, and responds to barriers to relying on technology as a tool for outreach (i.e. broadband access) by prioritizing low-tech/no-tech strategies.

### **REGIONAL STUDIES AND PROGRAMS**

Regional studies and programs administered by SCAG provide another critical means to implement Connect SoCal while also advancing recovery priorities identified through the pandemic outreach and engagement process and board discussions. Several examples are provided below of ways in which planning studies to advance Connect SoCal’s primary strategy areas—the Core Vision and Key Connections—align with recovery priorities. In addition, staff is developing more detailed work programs for each of the plan’s Key Connections, recognizing this critical window of opportunity to

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accelerate adoption of the plan's technology-based strategies (like Smart Cities) that have gained traction during the pandemic, while also refining the scope of plan implementation activities to address gaps (like the digital divide) that have become more apparent and urgent over the last six months and are also essential to ensuring the universal benefit of technology-based strategies.

#### System Preservation & Resilience

Our transportation system is maturing rapidly, particularly as it relates to our roadway network. We are at a juncture where it is more important to prioritize system preservation and system management over system expansion to ensure we are preserving what we have and ensuring that it is performing at the highest productivity level. Connect SoCal also places special emphasis on ensuring we have a resilient transportation system that can endure and adapt to climate changes and natural disasters brought about in greater frequencies by changing climate. Specific actions to ensure transportation system resiliency could mean more focused and greater investments in long lasting and weather resistant pavements, prioritizing retrofitting of our most vulnerable elements of our transportation infrastructure (such as bridges), strengthening auxiliary improvements such as levies, retaining walls, storm drains etc.

SB 1, passed by the voters in 2017, provides significant additional sources for preservation and protection of our transportation system. While this infusion of funding narrows the gap between our needs and available funding, significant gaps in our funding needs for system preservation remains. Therefore, supportive actions to materialize new funding sources presented in the Connect SoCal must be part of our implementation strategy. SCAG will continue to monitor the economic impacts of the pandemic and work with partners to address any changes in projected revenues.

#### Transit Backbone

The pandemic has brought back into the spotlight the role that public transportation plays in the region as a lifeline service for those who cannot afford access to an automobile, including essential and frontline workers. According to the California Transit Association (CTA), today 56 percent of transit riders are female, most transit riders are Black and Latino, 20% work in health care services and almost the same in food preparation. Transit agencies led by organizations such as CTA and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) are seeking ways to reposition their role as mobility providers in a post-pandemic world, including the use of technology such as contactless payment systems and new mobility options (such as micro-transit) where they are more cost-effective. SCAG has assembled an on-line platform for transit operators to share COVID-19 actions, including allowing each operator to update the data for their own agency in real time. SCAG will continue to seek ways to facilitate regional inter-agency coordination and information sharing as the situation evolves.

Strategies such as dedicated bus lanes and traffic signal prioritization to maximize frequency and reliability in high ridership corridors will also be critical when demand increases, to accommodate

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the reduction in vehicle capacity that is necessary to support physical distancing. To that end, the City of Los Angeles continues to support LA Metro with NextGen implementation. NextGen is Mero's plan to redesign its bus network to better meet the needs of current and future riders. The Metro Board in Jan. 2020 approved of \$1 billion in transit supportive capital infrastructure to improve speed and reliability, including dedicated bus lanes. Additionally, SCAG will embark on a regional study of dedicated lanes to further support this strategy, for consideration in the next RTP/SCS update.

#### Complete Streets

Complete Streets strategies are about reimagining the public space to accommodate all users. By incorporating considerations for walking, biking, new-mobility, transit, and curbside management we can promote increased safety, reductions in VMT, and economic resiliency. Anecdotally, during the pandemic we have seen an increase in recreational walking and biking in our neighborhoods throughout the region. Further, the bicycling industry has reported difficulty in meeting growing demand particularly for entry-level and commuter bikes. Communities in the region have expanded public space through the closing of underutilized roadways to create outdoor dining and socially distant recreation. Reimagining roadways supports the health, wellness, and safety of our communities throughout the region. Partnerships with and capacity building within CBOs will be a clear step towards the equitable implementation of complete streets policies outlined in Connect SoCal.

#### Goods Movement: Last Mile Delivery

Last mile freight has witnessed exponential growth in demand as a result of COVID-19 impacts, and this trend of acceleration is poised to continue. SCAG, through Connect SoCal, identifies opportunities for the region to deploy the most cutting-edge technologies to reduce emissions in the last-mile freight market. This is particularly critical for vulnerable communities in our region that have been disproportionately impacted by freight activities. Improving air quality is a priority for better public health. Accordingly, SCAG, in partnership with the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) will establish a Last Mile Freight Program, to allocate funding for the commercial deployment of clean vehicle technologies and broader innovative technologies in e-commerce use-cases. The focus on last-mile freight operations is particularly significant as internal truck trips (regional distribution) constitute nearly 90 percent of total truck trips in the region. Through the Last Mile Freight Program, there is a great opportunity to scale efforts more broadly to achieve long-term implementation of emissions reductions.

#### Smart Cities & Job Centers

SCAG is collaborating with the California Emerging Technology Fund, the Inland Empire Regional Broadband Consortium, and others on a Caltrans funded grant to study the feasibility and effectiveness of building broadband conduits as part of road construction projects that are already occurring, and to assess the VMT and GHG reduction benefits from these dig-once strategies. SCAG

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is also assessing ways to support and encourage improved access to and quality of broadband service in the region, including development of a model policy or ordinance that local jurisdictions can consider adopting to support broadband deployment and streamline local permitting processes. SCAG will be addressing teleworking as part of two studies to implement its recently completed Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategic Plan, including the provision of TDM trainings regionwide and the development of a regional TDM data clearinghouse to disseminate information and best practices about TDM.

#### Accelerated Electrification

Connect So Cal includes a technology advancement plan for the regional goods movement system, focusing on the long-term goal of a zero emission system where technically feasible and economically viable, while also integrating near-zero emissions technologies that serve as bridging options to continue to reduce emissions below current levels. To achieve this vision, work is still needed to economically produce these vehicles at scale and bring the costs down so that they are commercially viable. As vehicle technology advances, new infrastructure must be planned and built to support the needs of these technologies. SCAG will support the development of this infrastructure by helping to better understand what is needed, where, how to go about it, the roles of critical stakeholders, and to create a regional action plan to develop it. SCAG is intending to help envision a regional network of zero emission charging and fueling infrastructure for medium- and heavy-duty trucks.

Electrifying the light duty passenger fleet in the region is another a critical goal to reduce air pollution and GHG emissions from transportation. A major barrier to electric vehicles (EV) is the lack of sufficient public charging infrastructure to support charging, especially in disadvantaged communities. SCAG is working to promote more EV charging by conducting an EV Charging Station Study. The study will provide knowledge and resources to support deployment of EV chargers in 18 jurisdictions, most of which have considerable amounts of residents living in disadvantaged communities. An additional component of the study will be an educational campaign directed toward disadvantaged communities and multi-unit dwellings that will encourage purchase of EVs and provide information on programs that help make purchasing an EV more affordable.

#### Go Zones

A “Mobility Go Zone” Program is a geographically defined area that has a suite of mobility options for commuters, visitors, and residents to encourage reduced dependency on personal automobiles. The Mobility Go Zone concept focuses on addressing traffic hot spots with a range of tools and incubating what can work to relieve local congestion problems. Connect SoCal emphasizes the use of congestion pricing to more holistically manage demand on our roadways. Although the region has witnessed sharp declines in VMT during the early part of April as a result of stay-at-home orders, daily VMT has risen steadily since the low point. As travelers switch from transit or other shared modes to personal vehicles due to health concerns, this could mean even greater VMT

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growth and congestion on our roadways. SCAG will continue to collaborate with local jurisdictions, CBOs, business, and other key stakeholders to explore Mobility Go Zones. Current efforts have focused on working with CBOs to conduct community engagement, hosting a series of listening sessions to surface equity issues.

#### Shared Mobility & Mobility as a Service

Reluctance to use shared modes during the pandemic due to health and safety concerns, coupled with increasing automobile travel, vehicle miles traveled, and associated congestion and air quality issues, could potentially lead the region away from the mobility and sustainability goals in Connect SoCal. SCAG will continue to support shared mobility and mobility as a service (MaaS) including through a forthcoming MaaS White Paper to identify the key building blocks necessary for successful implementation in the SCAG region. SCAG will seek ways to support related local and state efforts, such as the California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP), that seek to ensure the benefits of shared mobility and MaaS that are enabled by new technology and innovation are accessible to all travelers.

#### **CONCLUSION**

As noted at the beginning of this report, implementation of Connect SoCal depends on partnerships with our local jurisdictions and County Transportation Commissions (CTCs). There are numerous policies and strategies enumerated in Connect SoCal that, if adopted and implemented, will ensure outcomes that are consistent with the goals and objectives approved by the Regional Council. However, SCAG would be remiss if strategies were not aligned with the very different circumstances our region has encountered since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the unrest prompted by social and racial injustices present across our nation. The strategies identified in this report were already planned as part of Connect SoCal, however as demonstrated above, the implementation efforts will focus on addressing community concerns regarding the disparate experiences from the pandemic, crafting an inclusive economic recovery, and reaffirming the Regional Council's commitment to addressing equity in all of SCAG's practices.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Funding for the various programs described in this report is included in the FY 2020-21 Overall Work Program.