



Public Involvement Plan

**A Guide for Public & Stakeholder Engagement
for the 2025 Regional Plan**

January 2023



SANDAG.org



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Introduction

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is leading a broad-based community effort to develop the 2025 Regional Plan. Last adopted in December 2021, the Regional Plan combines the big-picture vision for how our region will grow over the next 20+ years with an implementation program to help make that vision a reality.

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) supports the development of the 2025 Regional Plan by providing a suite of involvement strategies and techniques for individuals, organizations, partner agencies, and other stakeholders to provide meaningful input on the long-term regional planning process. It was created with input obtained from previous Regional Plans, including feedback from the SANDAG Board of Directors, Policy Advisory Committees, working groups, tribal governments, surveys, a wide variety of communications experts, and our regional stakeholders and partners, including a network of community-based organizations (CBOs).

The PIP was drafted using guidelines provided by the agency's overall Public Participation Plan, which provides the foundation for public outreach approaches developed to support individual projects and programs. In addition, the PIP addresses state outreach requirements as identified in California Senate Bill 375 (Steinberg, 2008) and from the 2017 RTP Guidelines for MPOs prepared by the California Transportation Commission. The PIP describes efforts that SANDAG will take to secure input on priorities for transportation projects, programs, and services; transportation networks; infrastructure recommendations; funding alternatives; policies and programs; performance measures; achievement of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets; and other related issues.

This PIP is intended to be a living document. Due to the fluid nature of public participation, this plan may be updated at major milestones and adjusted in response to issues and circumstances that arise throughout the planning process.

Regional Plan Background

Every four years, SANDAG is required by federal law to update its Regional Plan, which serves as a long-term blueprint for meeting the San Diego region's mobility needs.

The 5 Big Moves, introduced in the 2021 Regional Plan, laid a lot of the groundwork for the 2025 Regional Plan. That said, the proliferation of non-work trips, teleworking, home deliveries, and emerging transportation technologies continue to change the travel landscape; state requirements continue to become more ambitious; and significant feedback continues to be received from the public—all factors that will help to contribute to a fresh look at how best to implement these transformational strategies in the San Diego region.

The 2025 Regional Plan will continue to emphasize emerging technologies to help deliver our vision for a more robust and integrated transportation network. Improvements in smart system platforms such as smart intersections, border crossings and tolls, smart corridors, and mobility will be updated and refined to help provide a more integrated and efficient regional transportation network. There also will be a focus on near term improvements that can be made to deliver benefits to the region now as we continue to move forward on the long-term transformational vision.

Involvement Matters

This document ensures that you have a voice in shaping how people and goods move throughout the San Diego region. Public participation is bidirectional, meaning that it involves both the agency and YOU! This two-way communication is critical to the planning process. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for our region, our job is to inform the public about transportation issues, solutions, tradeoffs, and constraints—and offer opportunities to engage throughout the process. Your feedback is critical because it helps assure that projects address community needs and concerns. It also helps us understand how to inform you more effectively.

We believe effective public involvement and participation is a dynamic and ongoing process that is essential to meeting the transportation and land use needs of people who work, live, and travel in our region. Exemplary public participation begins early in the planning process and continues throughout each of the planning stages, helping to avoid, minimize, and mitigate project impacts while providing real-world solutions.

Public feedback can also be helpful at breaking down barriers—whether we’re talking about breaking down the barriers to using public transit to get around town; breaking down jurisdictional barriers to address larger issues; or breaking down historical barriers that previously left disadvantaged, underserved, and minority populations out of the conversation. For these reasons, SANDAG places great emphasis on garnering input from people in the region who are not easily engaged due to age, ability, language, lack of financial resources, lack of access to technology, or other reasons.



Goals

The primary objective of this PIP is to engage a broad and diverse cross-section of the San Diego region in the development and implementation of the 2025 Regional Plan. Ultimately, we need to equip the region's communities with meaningful tools, resources, and information so that the public feels empowered to engage in the decision-making process. Obtaining input from all our communities is essential for creating a plan that reflects the varied needs and interests of the San Diego region.

To achieve equity in who we reach and ensure that all interested members of the public can participate in the development and implementation of the Regional Plan, we have developed the following goals:

- **Raise awareness** of the Regional Plan as the region's blueprint for future mobility
- **Gain meaningful input** from a broad range of individuals, organizations, agencies, and local governments to inform the development and implementation of the Regional Plan
- Make proactive and **extensive efforts to involve** communities and members of the public that have been **traditionally underserved** or have not been provided with ample opportunity to participate in the public planning process
- Deploy an inclusive and grassroots involvement plan that leads to transparent, culturally responsive education on policies, projects, and programs outlined in the Regional Plan, to **build public trust** and support for the Plan.

Strategies

We will use the following strategies to help us achieve our public involvement goals for the 2025 Regional Plan.

Raise Awareness

- Provide timely and transparent public information about the Regional Plan to a broad range of regional stakeholders, including to people with limited internet access
- Make public information accessible in a variety of formats and languages; Use easy-to-understand language and highlight the community benefit of projects to connect with interested people on a personal level
- Employ a diverse group of spokespeople to communicate with the public regarding the Regional Plan, including Board members, staff, partner agencies, community-based organizations, interested stakeholders, and trusted community leaders
- Grow social media followings and email subscribers by encouraging community members and stakeholders to stay in contact and receive frequent updates about our projects and programs

Gain Meaningful Input

- Provide a variety of engagement opportunities to both inform the public and seek their input; Use technology to reach people not inclined or able to participate in person
- Use a variety of tactics to bring the conversation to the public, ranging from in-person interactions such as pop-up outreach in public places and existing well-attended community events, to virtual engagement, such as Zoom meetings, social media, and surveys
- Partner with member agencies to use existing communication channels within each jurisdiction to ensure broad coverage throughout the region

Extensive Efforts to Involve Traditionally Underserved

- In collaboration with community-based partners, develop a slate of communication channels and participation techniques to encourage input from and share information with hard-to-reach populations, such as Spanish-speakers, local indigenous people, and others
- Conduct outreach and engagement activities in places that are familiar and trusted, including but not limited to community events, neighborhood/association meetings, schools, faith-based organizations, and libraries
- Continue outreach to communities with significant Limited English Proficiency populations through available media outlets and stakeholders that serve these populations, issuing specific invitations to participate and ensuring materials are translated and interpretation is provided where needed

Build Public Trust

- Communicate the decision-making process to stakeholders in a clear way and indicate how their input will be used in the development and implementation of the Plan
- Create an effective process for receiving and using public comments (i.e., feedback loop)



Techniques

Community members have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them. We use research; grassroots outreach; digital and printed communications; media; and relationships with elected officials, member jurisdictions, partner agencies, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to inform, engage, and solicit feedback from all the region's communities.

Outreach

We will use relatable public involvement efforts to create opportunities for SANDAG to interact directly with stakeholders and the public in a variety of formats, either in-person or virtually. Interpretation services will be provided at all Board and Policy Advisory Committee meetings, and as needed for presentations, workshops, and events.

Data-driven Research

To gauge public knowledge and opinion about issues related to regional planning, focus groups, roundtable discussions, and public opinion surveys may be conducted at the outset of the public involvement program. Existing survey and Census data may be used to understand profiles and seek geographic-based input on a variety of Regional Plan topics. This research may help identify key topics and effective engagement techniques. Additional focus groups and surveys may be conducted as the planning process unfolds to determine the effectiveness of the outreach effort and identify opportunities for improvement.

Research opportunities may include:

- Focus groups
- Roundtable discussions
- Public opinion surveys

Grassroots Outreach

Notable groups we seek out when conducting grassroots outreach include: the general public, elected officials, partner agencies, member jurisdictions, major employers and their employees, youth, college students, seniors, people with disabilities, tribal communities, people with limited English proficiency, and underserved populations.

Outreach opportunities may include:

- Presentations and Speakers Bureau
 - Staff Presentations to SANDAG Board, Policy Advisory Committees, and Working Groups
 - Staff Presentations to City Councils, County Board of Supervisors, and Planning Commissions
 - Speakers Bureau Presentations delivered by Board Members, Staff, Partner Agencies, CBOs, and Trusted Community Leaders
- Public Hearings
- Open Houses
- Public Meetings
- Workshops

- SANDAG Vision Lab
- Community Listening Sessions
- Participation in Community Events
- SANDAG-led Regional Events, like the Community Fair
- Interviews, Briefings, and Discussion Sessions on Rotating Topics
- Subregional Stakeholder Groups and Listening Sessions

By law, we will hold at least two public hearings and at least three open houses.

Public Information

Digital Information and Communications

SANDAG will take advantage of a variety of web-based opportunities to provide information, solicit input, and make calls to action. We will strive to link in-person and online activities across various platforms, in addition to cross-promoting opportunities. And we will simplify language and use infographics, visualizations, and renderings, when possible, to convey our story to a variety of audiences.

Communication opportunities may include:

- SANDAG Website Project Page
- SANDAG Newsletter
- Regional Plan-specific Newsletter
- Social Media
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
 - LinkedIn
 - YouTube
- Regional Plan Videos
- Web and Text Surveys
- Virtual Outreach Opportunities (like Public Meetings and Community Listening Sessions)
- Vision Lab Sessions
- Pop-up Events on Social Media Outlets

By law, we will circulate the draft 2025 Regional Plan for public review and input for at least 55 days.

Media

SANDAG will seek coverage from print, broadcast, and online media to communicate information to a broad audience and promote opportunities for the public to get involved.

Media opportunities may include:

- Reporter Briefings
- Press Releases/Media Alerts to Local and Regional Media
- Press Conferences and Media Availability Opportunities (online and in person)
- Media Kit (online and in print)
- Editorials and Op-Eds

- Paid Media
 - Print Advertising
 - Online Advertising
 - Social Media Advertising and Boosted Posts
 - Public Service Announcements
- Use of SANDAG Board Members as Media Ambassadors
- Outreach via Trade Publications and Stakeholder Email Updates
- Participation in Podcast, Radio, and TV Conversations and Interviews

We disseminate information regarding the Regional Plan development process and public involvement opportunities to a robust media list of media outlets in San Diego County. We also disseminate information to media outlets in Orange, Riverside, and Imperial counties as well as Tijuana.

Materials

SANDAG 2025 Regional Plan materials will reflect a “friendly” and approachable tone with images and infographics that help tell our story. All materials will be written in easy-to-understand terms with limited jargon and provided in Spanish or other languages as needed.



Materials will be distributed via a range of channels, including email, website, social media, newspapers, in-person and virtual presentations, meetings, events, and community locations, like libraries, recreation centers, senior centers, and stores.

Materials may include:

- Fact Sheets
- Brochures
- Flyers
- Multimedia Presentations
- Quick Guide that outlines the Plan’s goals, objectives, planning investments, and implementation strategy
- Public Notices
- Advertisements
- Frequently Asked Questions document
- SANDAG Newsletter Articles
- Regional Plan-specific Newsletters
- Mobile Project Information Booth for use at community events

Relationships

SANDAG is committed to requesting and considering input from a range of constituents and stakeholder groups. Not only do these groups offer us valuable input during the planning process, but they are also instrumental in helping us amplify our message and support implementation of the Plan throughout the region. By partnering with stakeholders in our outreach efforts, each stakeholder can share information and opportunities through their own communication channels, helping us expand our outreach to the public exponentially.

Members of our Policy Advisory Committees, Working Groups, and the Regional Plan Social Equity Working Group serve as liaisons between their communities and the Regional Plan project team—and work collaboratively with sometimes conflicting interests to develop recommendations that are acceptable. SANDAG uses this type of collaboration to help assess alternatives and develop consensus on large or otherwise challenging projects and initiatives.

General Stakeholders

The following list includes stakeholder categories and interested parties defined through state and federal requirements related to the development of the Regional Plan.

Affordable Housing Advocates
Broad-Based Business Organizations
Commercial Property Interests
Congestion Management Agencies
Environmental Advocates
General Public
Home Builder Representatives
Homeowner Associations
Landowners
Neighborhood and Community Groups
Neighboring MPOs
Transportation Agencies
Transportation Service Operators
Transportation Advocates
Transportation Commissions
Public Health Departments and Non-Governmental Organizations
Public Ports
Tourism
Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Agencies
Military
Tribal Governments
Federal Land Management
Air Quality Agencies
Walking and Biking Representatives

We work hard to build relationships with stakeholders to ensure a collaborative planning process that represents everyone in our region—it really does take a village!

We maintain a list of individuals, agencies, and organizations who have indicated an interest in receiving information about the Regional Plan. This list will be updated throughout the implementation of the PIP for the 2025 Regional Plan.

SANDAG Board of Directors

The Board of Directors serves as the governing body of SANDAG and is made up of elected mayors, councilmembers, and county supervisors that are appointed from each of the region's 19 local governments. The Board of Directors serves as the forum for bringing together our local governments and public agencies to plan, program, and implement cooperative comprehensive planning across the San Diego region. The Board oversees the Regional Plan's development process, receives regular updates, and weighs-in at crucial milestones.

SANDAG Policy Advisory Committees

Our Policy Advisory Committees are made up of elected officials, residents, partner agencies, and representatives of civic and community groups. Each committee has a focused responsibility and advises the Board on major policy-level matters related to regional programs.

The Transportation Committee and Regional Planning Committee are tasked with providing coordinated oversight for recommendations on the preparation and implementation of components of the Regional Plan.

Other committees—which include the Audit Committee, Borders Committee, Executive Committee, and Public Safety Committee—receive updates or are asked to provide input on Regional Plan efforts when those efforts intersect with committee responsibilities.

CBO Network

CBOs and collaboratives, act as forums for local institutions such as schools, health clinics, ethnic groups, and others to discuss issues of common concern. Due to their convening capacities, community collaboratives are critical for helping SANDAG reach underrepresented populations who might not otherwise become involved in the process.

Collaboratives provide a culturally relevant structure for developing local protocols, crossing language barriers, and structuring meetings. When members of a collaborative begin to make connections between their local concerns and regional planning efforts, they begin to understand regional planning in a way that is relevant and meaningful to their communities—and they feed that input back into the regional planning process. To help ensure diverse and direct input into the Regional Plan, SANDAG will continue to broaden its partnership network with CBOs and collaboratives in critical communities of concern throughout the region.

Regional Plan Social Equity Working Group

One way we work with CBOs is through our Social Equity Working Group. Through competitive contracts awarded by SANDAG, CBOs will engage in the development of materials and activities, share resources, and implement outreach programs that are appropriate for the communities they serve. The focus of the Working Group will be to provide a social equity perspective on planning efforts, as well as support the Title VI Social Equity Analysis of the Regional Plan. The Working Group typically meets monthly.

Transportation and Air Quality Partners

SANDAG collaborates and exchanges information with other transportation agencies, which include Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, like the Southern California Association of Governments.

We also work with the California Air Resources Board to meet the targets they set for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the region as well as other SB 375 efforts. In cooperation with the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District, SANDAG implements mandates for air quality planning, including conducting interagency consultation for air quality conformity.

Tribal Consultation

SANDAG has a government-to-government framework with the region's tribal nations based on consultation, cooperation, and collaboration. Tribal nations have a voice in the decision-making process for regional planning, which is outlined in the SANDAG Public Participation Plan. SANDAG will continue to consult with tribal nations as it develops the 2025 Regional Plan through coordination with the Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association, SANDAG Board of Directors, Borders Committee, Transportation Committee, and Interagency Technical Working Group on Tribal Transportation Issues. A Tribal Consultation Plan for the 2025 Regional Plan will be created in consultation with tribal partners in 2023.

Coordination with Mexico

SANDAG coordinates with Mexico through the SANDAG Board of Directors, Borders Committee, Transportation Committee, and the Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities, as well as other groups conducting binational work and groups/organizations based in Mexico. We will engage these groups and conduct other outreach efforts, as needed. Some of these efforts will be conducted in Spanish and/or simultaneous interpretation services will be made available.

Collaboration with the Military

SANDAG coordinates with various branches of the military throughout the development of the Regional Plan via the SANDAG Board of Directors, Regional Planning Committee, and Regional Military Working Group. SANDAG will proactively engage these groups to address mutual planning interests, including: growth management, habitat, transportation, regional growth, housing, water, energy, and other related topics.

Assessment

Community engagement is a philosophy and a process that is developed over time and through efforts that demonstrate that SANDAG cares about making a connection with our communities. This cannot be manufactured and there is no one-size-fits-all approach—each activity seeks creative and sustained relationship building. Robust community engagement often requires a variety of techniques, and engagement should be an ongoing continuous effort throughout the transportation planning process.

To that end, this PIP is a living document. Regional planning depends on a core understanding of community input, and we are committed to listening to our region's residents, taking extra care to include groups that have been historically underserved or underrepresented, so that our projects address regionwide needs and concerns.

Questions we continually ask ourselves:

- Who are we trying to reach?
- How effective were we at reaching the intended audience?
- What did they want to know from us?
- What did we want to share with them?
- Was this the best way to exchange information?

SANDAG is committed to flexibility and innovation. We assess this by evaluating engagement techniques in various situations and tracking outreach efforts and participation numbers. An important aspect we consider in our evaluation includes the quality of input received and how effective our strategies were at reaching intended audiences. We use both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the success of our public engagement program.



2025 REGIONAL PLAN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN GOALS

| | |
|---|--|
| Engagement Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify engagement opportunities; Provide opportunities on weekdays and weekends in both the day and evening; Look at ways to help individuals with children participate • Increase social media following to expand opportunities for collecting public comments and establish a feedback loop process • Continue hosting bilingual workshops and expand the availability of materials and communications in Spanish • Continue soliciting targeted feedback on special topics using a variety of involvement techniques • Continue promoting opportunities to share feedback on projects and programs via all online SANDAG channels • Collect stories from the public that we can repurpose throughout the life of a specific Regional Plan project or program |
| Web presence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House Regional Plan web information at sandag.org/RegionalPlan as opposed to a standalone website; Increase viewership • Offer a web-based tool for collecting personal stories • Continue sending a Regional Plan-specific digital newsletter or e-blasts; Increase subscribers • Continue offering project information and updates via social media • Provide online resources, project information, and continuous opportunities for interaction through SANDAG website's comment form |
| Engaging low income, minority, and senior populations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Social Equity Working Group to develop culturally relevant outreach materials and strategies to increase engagement among their respective audiences • Expand funding for CBOs to use to conduct their own outreach on behalf of SANDAG • Update CBOs and the community on how the Mobility Needs Assessments influenced our policies and programs via presentation and social media • Increase the availability of resources in languages other than English consistent with the SANDAG Language Assistance Plan |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue and strengthen current partnerships via short presentations, pop-ups, and workshops within existing partner events |
| Tribal Consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue implementing Tribal Consultation Plan with tribal governments, SCTCA, and Board, and make updates as needed • Incorporate tribal-identified projects from the Intraregional Tribal Transportation Strategy in the 2025 Regional Plan |

Connect with SANDAG

Stay informed and get involved!

Mailing Address

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SANDAG Website

sandag.org

Regional Plan Webpage

sandag.org/RegionalPlan.

SANDAG Region Newsletter

Subscribe to our monthly electronic newsletter at sandag.org/subscribe.

To find our latest issue, visit sandag.org/newsletter.

Regional Plan Newsletter

Subscribe to receive Regional Plan updates via email at sandag.org/subscribe.

Scroll down to the Regional Vision section towards the bottom and check the box “Regional Plan.”

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View Our Calendar

sandag.org/calendar

Public Information Office

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pio@sandag.org

The public information office operates on a 9/80 work schedule and is open to the public nine days every two weeks, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, with every other Monday designated as the office closure day. See our [calendar](#) for office closures.

Get on Our Contact Lists

We maintain email, text, and mailing lists so we can provide notices, information, and updates to those who request it. Reach out to our Public Information Office to be added to our contact lists. See contact details above.

Listen to SANDAG Meetings in Real Time

Most SANDAG Board and Policy Advisory Committee meetings are broadcast via a Zoom webinar. For meeting agendas and Zoom links, click the meeting name on the [calendar](#).

