REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
Meeting of July 1, 2005

The Regional Planning Committee (RPC) meeting was called to order at 12:07 p.m. by Committee Chair Lori Holt Pfeiler (North County Inland). The attendance sheet for the meeting is attached.

Chair Holt Pfeiler thanked and welcomed all for attending today’s meeting.

1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

   Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2005 meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBERS COMMENTS

   None.

CONSENT

3. OVERVIEW OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS REPORTING TO THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE (INFORMATION)

   SANDAG’s Executive Committee has completed its annual review of committees and working groups to determine the need to maintain the committees/working groups and to approve any revisions in functions or membership. Some of these groups are designated to report to the Regional Planning Committee. This report provides a status report of those groups, with an emphasis on the Shoreline Preservation Working Group and the Regional Housing Working Group.

   Action: Councilmember Jones (City of Lemon Grove) moved and Councilmember Peters (City of San Diego) seconded the motion to approve the Consent item.

   Chair Holt Pfeiler noted that the Regional Planning Committee voted at its last meeting to add several new members, representing the Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) Working Group. She asked that all new members introduce themselves.
The new EMP members and alternates introduced themselves. They included: Susan Wynn, US Fish and Wildlife Service; Michael Mulligan, from the California Department of Fish & Game; Al Wright, representing the Wildlife Conservation Board; and Mark Durham and Jeannette Baker, from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. All members indicated that they were looking forward to participating on the Committee.

Chair Holt Pfeiler stated that the agenda has been structured to allow for the EMP items to be listed first. She mentioned that the RPC was mindful of the new members and their time and wanted to be respectful of them for coming from other areas of the state to be here today.

ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION PROGRAM (EMP) REPORTS

4. APPROVING A CHARTER AND APPOINTING A CHAIR FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION PROGRAM WORKING GROUP (APPROVE)

Staff indicated that the TransNet Ordinance includes funding for an Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP), and sets forth principles for the implementation of that program. On May 27, 2005, the SANDAG Board of Directors designated the RPC as the policy committee responsible for implementing certain provisions of the EMP, and provided direction regarding the establishment of an EMP Working Group to advise the RPC and Board of Directors on this program. It is recommended that the Regional Planning Committee approve a charter for the EMP Working Group, and appoint Coronado Councilmember Carrie Downey as the Chair of the Working Group.

Staff indicated that the Working Group will work on the Regional Habitat Conservation Fund and the various components of the mitigation program.

Staff stated that the Charter outlines the purpose and responsibilities of the Working Group and designates organizations that would be included on it such as the Nature Conservancy, Conservation Resource Network, U.S. Geological Survey, Endangered Habitats League, and Building Industry Association. In addition, staff representatives from the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, and the four subregions (North County Coastal, North County Inland, East County and South County) will also be part of the Working Group. Staff also stated that Councilmember Carrie Downey has agreed and is excited to be the Chair of this Working Group, if appointed. Once the organizations designated for membership select individuals to participate on the Working Group, SANDAG staff will schedule the group’s first meeting.

Staff added that two letters were received from other organizations (Coastal Conservancy and Alliance for Habitat Conservation) requesting membership on the EMP Working Group. Staff requested that the Committee refer this issue to legal counsel for review.

Public Comment

Craig Benedetto, representing the Alliance for Habitat Conservation (AHC), stated that the AHC has been involved in multiple species habitat issues over the last decade and a half. The AHC has been heavily involved in the creation of the EMP as
well as the extension of TransNet. He believes that the AHC could provide technical expertise to SANDAG in its efforts and requested to be included on the EMP Working Group.

Councilmember Peters commented that this is a great project and approach. He made the motion to approve the staff recommendation and also to include the addition of the Alliance for Habitat Conservation to the EMP Working Group membership.

Deputy Mayor Davis seconded the motion.

Councilmember McCoy pointed out that there are two other groups that are missing from the list of organizations that are proposed to be part of this Working Group. Those two groups are the San Diego Community Foundation and the San Diego International Community Foundation. Both organizations have environmental components as well as funding that can be used toward future projects. She requested that staff consider both organizations for inclusion of membership.

Action: Councilmember Peters moved and Deputy Mayor Davis seconded the motion to approve the charter for the EMP Working Group which outlines its purpose and responsibilities, designate the proposed organizations that would be included on it, and appoint Coronado Councilmember Carrie Downey as the Chair of the Working Group. The RPC also asked that staff review the recommendations to add the following organizations to the Working Group: the Coastal Conservancy, the Alliance for Habitat Conservation, the San Diego Foundation, and the San Diego International Community Foundation. Staff will bring back recommendations for final membership to the Committee at a future meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE (RPC) REPORTS

5. SHOWCASING LOCAL SMART GROWTH PROJECTS: TRAFFIC CALMING EFFORTS IN THE BIRD ROCK COMMUNITY (INFORMATION)

Councilmember Peters introduced this item by stating that the smart growth project in the Bird Rock Community underwent an interesting planning process and resulted in a very unique project. The project began several years ago when residents in the Bird Rock community expressed complaints about La Jolla Blvd. (i.e., high traffic levels, failing businesses, and streets in disrepair). He mentioned that he met many times with the Bird Rock Community to discuss new plans for the area, and that the response was overwhelming. A new plan was developed and presented to the City Council, but it was vocally opposed at the Council meeting. In the process, he learned that he hadn’t listened to the broader community. Therefore, Councilmember Peters challenged the larger community to develop a plan reflecting what it really wanted. A walkability consultant from Florida was hired, and a Task Force was appointed to revitalize the community. He introduced several members of the community to describe the project and the process.

Pam Wagner, an attorney with two young children and a resident of the Bird Rock Community, stated that the community was supportive of the upgrades as long as it was
kept informed in the planning process. She mentioned that she feels good about the end result of the project. The Bird Rock area is between Pacific Beach and La Jolla. There are two major routes to get into La Jolla, including La Jolla Blvd., a heavily-traveled traffic route with approximately 22,000 cars per day. In addition, La Jolla Blvd. bisects the community between the beach and Bird Rock elementary school. Some of the challenges that the community faced were speeding, pedestrian safety, cut-through traffic, and parking shortages. She provided the RPC with the history of the project. A Task Force consisting of 15 people was created. The Task Force met every other week for two years and came up with two conclusions: (1) they needed an expert on walkable communities to develop a traffic management plan, and (2) community support would be needed to implement the plan. The community held a three-day event and developed a preliminary traffic management plan. It then took an additional two years to get the plan approved by the various community groups. After fine-tuning the plan and approval of the three community groups, the Task Force took the concept to the San Diego City Council for approval. A maintenance assessment district (MAD), which the community helps to fund, was created.

Siavash Pazargadi, a Senior Engineer with the City of San Diego Transportation Planning Division, assisted the community with the development and coordination of this project. Major concerns along La Jolla Blvd. included high speed, traffic volumes, and street width and safety issues (one fatality). Other concerns included cut-through traffic, school congestion, aesthetics, and financial solutions. This project is a good example of a community-driven process. The community worked together to develop a traffic management plan, which included community coordination, traffic innovations, ten roundabouts/circles; and 25 other major improvements. Mr. Pazargadi noted that roundabouts don’t have traffic signals. Crosswalks near the roundabouts measure about one to two vehicles in length and are placed behind yield signs, allowing pedestrians to cross the streets safely. As a result, roundabouts have far fewer “conflict” points than high-volume traditional intersections. Characteristics of roundabouts include safety, increased capacity, aesthetics, and no traffic signals.

Paul Metcalf, a Bird Rock resident and parent, has been involved in the project since inception. It was made clear that traffic reduction and air pollution reduction would have to be included in the project. However, the community needed to be willing to support the taxes and fees associated with maintenance and upkeep of the improvements.

Mr. Pazargadi highlighted the traffic management plan in the area. La Jolla Blvd. was the focal point of this project. Two lanes, one on each side, were removed, vertical parking spaces were added, and two buffer lanes were added for drivers entering and exiting parking spaces. La Jolla Blvd. has two major bus routes, so the community worked with the transit agency to ensure that the buses would be able to maneuver in the roundabouts.

Councilmember Peters indicated that an old hotel was turned into a mixed-use development project, which includes condominiums. He showed several areas that will include future mixed-use developments in the community. He added that the San Diego City Council did not "drive" the project but rather empowered the community to do so. Councilmember Peters thanked his staff members for their assistance on this project, and suggested that the project and its public involvement process can be a model for other communities in the region.
Mr. Pazargadi showed the Committee a traffic simulation on La Jolla Blvd.

Mr. Anderson (Stakeholders Working Group) asked how much the assessment fees cost. Mr. Metcalf responded that the assessments are different for homes, condominiums, and businesses. The highest assessment is $1,500.

Supervisor Slater-Price (County of San Diego) commented that the City of Del Mar has many of the same problems that this area has. It is difficult to get people through Del Mar without making road improvements that would significantly change the quality of life in the area. She applauded the use of traffic circles as an alternative that should be considered in more communities. This is a beautiful plan and addresses a quality of life issue relevant to everyone in the region. She concluded that residents have high expectations of what government should do, but in fact the community itself can initiate many of the improvements at a relatively low cost.

Mr. Pazargadi mentioned that he has received inquiries from the Cities of Sacramento and Encinitas, as well as Caltrans, regarding the plan.

Supervisor Slater-Price stated that the County has been looking to find solutions for traffic congestion for years. She noted that Supervisor Horn has funded a study to try to resolve some of these issues in the unincorporated areas.

Mr. Pazargadi noted that roundabouts work well for communities that feel that stop signs and stop lights are intrusions to the community.

Supervisor Slater-Price asked how to address the perception that traffic improvements often result in additional traffic. Ms. Wagner noted that they used SANDAG’s forecast and have not experienced problems with increases in traffic to date. They are happy with the model that they have.

Supervisor Slater-Price asked if traffic spilling over into the neighborhoods is an issue. Mr. Pazargadi replied that that was a significant community concern and that many traffic calming features on the side streets were integrated into the plan to address that concern.

Ms. Wagner added that the Task Force spent over a year looking at different tools that would work for the neighborhoods. In the end, all of the issues were addressed, and the Task Force was able to achieve consensus from the community.

Mr. Metcalf stated that the community required that the Task Force move forward with the plan and continue its work into the implementation phase. The Task Force will maintain what has already been done and keep options open for the future.

Councilmember McCoy commented that community coherence and buy-in is the golden rule. It is important to bring people along and invest in the project.
Councilmember Peters stated that he was fortunate to have worked with such a progressive group in his district. He added that there are likely many older communities in urban areas in the region in need of similar improvements; his community just happened to be in La Jolla.

Councilmember McCoy mentioned that roundabouts have been used for years in Europe.

Chair Holt Pfeiler thanked all for sharing their experience today.

**Action:** The Regional Planning Committee accepted this item for information.

6. **DRAFT SMART GROWTH CONCEPT MAP AND INITIAL IDEAS FOR PUBLIC WORKSHOPS (DISCUSSION/COMMENT)**

Chair Holt Pfeiler stated that a lot of work has been done on the Draft Smart Growth Concept Map up to this point, but there is still more work to do.

Staff noted that today’s presentation will focus on two parts of the Smart Growth Concept Map – the maps developed to date and the public outreach workshops. The Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) contains goals aimed at improving transportation and land use coordination. A key recommendation is to identify smart growth areas and opportunities throughout the region and place a high priority on directing transportation facility improvements and other infrastructure resources toward those areas. One of the early actions is the development of a Smart Growth Concept Map. The Urban Form chapter of the RCP defines seven smart growth place types which range from “metropolitan center” to “rural community.” Smart growth takes place in different ways in different places in the region. Smart growth categories include existing and planned smart growth areas as well as potential smart growth areas. Two key uses of the concept map include its use in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update and the long-term smart growth incentive program. Staff discussed the general approach on how the map was developed, emphasizing the connection between regional transit corridors and place types. Staff walked the Committee through the four steps taken to create the Smart Growth Map, and the preliminary results for each subregion. The next version of the map will include the additional place types from the City of San Diego.

Staff asked the Committee two questions: (1) are we moving in the right direction, and; (2) does the Smart Growth Concept Map help accomplish the goals of land use and transportation integration?

Councilmember Jones pointed out that the Smart Growth Concept Map showed a lack of Town Centers as opposed to Community Centers. He asked if there a difference. Staff responded in the affirmative. The key differences include additional civic and cultural uses, a subregional draw, and higher employment intensities in the Town Centers.

Councilmember Jones questioned whether the definitions are correct. For example, if there are cities that have Town Centers within their boundaries but don't have Town Centers identified on the Concept Map, do the definitions need to be reconsidered? Staff stated they worked with local jurisdiction staffs, other stakeholders, and the policy committees to
develop the definitions during the development of the RCP. However, based on the latest process of identifying the smart growth areas, several questions have come up, and there may be a need to go back and refine the RCP Smart Growth matrix.

Councilmember Jones stated that those locations need to be identified and those areas need to be serviced. Staff replied that this issue will be taken back to the planning directors for additional discussion. Staff noted that both existing and planned areas include transit service.

Councilmember Jones mentioned that he could see places on the Smart Growth Concept Map where additional areas need to be identified.

Councilmember Peters asked what will happen next and what directives will come out of the Smart Growth Concept Map. Will the RPC be making recommendations to jurisdictions or mandating that they make changes? Staff stated that the Committee will not make mandates but that when the RTP is updated, SANDAG will consider giving higher funding priority to corridors that have smart growth. The purpose of the Smart Growth Concept Map is to try to enhance the connection between land use and transportation.

Councilmember Druker commented that overall, the Concept Map represents what the Committee has been doing and where it's going. He expressed concern that the map does not show all of the major job centers in the region. These major employment areas will need transportation services that connect them to the smart growth areas where people live. These employment areas need to be identified on the map even though they may not be smart growth areas. Staff responded that this issue also was raised at the working group level, and that staff would evaluate how to link the areas on the Smart Growth Concept Map to major employment centers in the region.

Mr. Anderson expressed concern that public transit wouldn't be made available to the employment areas. There is a need to encourage people to take transit to work but it won't happen if transit is not available.

Councilmember Druker stated that the map should identify where major employment centers are located to provide some context. Staff stated that refining the definition of a Special Use Center may be a good place to start. SANDAG will need to distinguish how transit services are to be provided to areas designated as Special Use Centers.

Mr. Anderson questioned why Kearny Mesa and Otay Mesa are not listed on the Map. Staff responded that discussions with the City of San Diego are not complete, and that they will be having additional meetings with the City of San Diego staff to identify and refine locations of smart growth areas within the City.

Councilmember McCoy mentioned that she took a tour in Chula Vista and the greater South Bay area showing the last industrial lands available in South County and where Chula Vista is planning to build housing. There is no coordination of efforts in those areas. It is a fluid area and needs attention as the map is being formulated.
Mayor Pro Tem Hall (North County Coastal) commented that the Palomar corridor is an area where opportunity for revitalization was missed. There are projects that are going on in that area but are hard to define on the Smart Growth Concept Map.

Councilmember Peters stated that he thinks that the Committee is moving in the right direction and that the Smart Growth Concept Map will help to accomplish SANDAG’s goals of better integrating land use and transportation.

Staff provided the RPC with a preview on what is being anticipated for the workshops. The workshops will be an open house style and will be held subregionally. The format used will be similar to the format used for the RCP workshops. Staff provided the Committee with the proposed workshop dates. Staff indicated that the Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) felt that five or six workshops would not be sufficient to gain enough input on the Concept Map. In response, staff is proposing to develop a speakers bureau to get the word out to the communities. Staff asked what the role of the Committee and the SANDAG Board members should be in the public outreach process.

Vice Chair Davis noted that in looking at the proposed workshop schedule, September 8, 2005, may not be a good date for South County.

Councilmember Peters indicated that he likes the proposed format; people feel comfortable in open house forums and will not be afraid to ask questions.

Chair Holt Pfeiler stated that the Committee and Board members need to be available as resources at the workshops. People are not afraid to speak in a smaller setting.

Councilmember Peters stated that he is willing to participate in the workshops. Staff reminded the Committee that this is not a SANDAG map but rather is a regional map based on local inputs. Each jurisdiction has to take ownership and make the proposed developments happen.

Chair Holt Pfeiler commented that the critical piece of the public outreach is the speakers bureau. She asked if the Committee members should help with the speakers bureau outreach. Staff responded that it would be ideal for Committee members to be involved in the presentations. That approach worked very well in the development of the RCP.

Supervisor Slater-Price indicated that there wouldn’t be a problem for the County Supervisors to participate in the workshops for their respective jurisdictions.

As the Vice Chair of the SWG, Mr. Anderson noted that discussion by the SWG on this topic included suggestions that the workshops should be held in locations convenient to the people attending, and that information presented on the Smart Growth Concept Map at the workshops should be easier to understand than the information currently presented to the various SANDAG working groups and committees. Staff replied that there will be two different sets of maps developed; both will have the same information, but the information will be broken down into different categories. The maps will consist of pictures, illustrations, and sketches to help people visualize what is taking place and understand what is happening.
Staff added that they want to give all 18 cities and the County every opportunity to develop smart growth wherever they can in their respective jurisdictions. Staff noted that they are willing to meet with each City Council and the Board of Supervisors on an individual basis to provide an overview and help identify any additional areas.

Councilmember Jones stated that it is important to bring all players to the table regarding this issue.

Vice Chair Davis commented that the City of Chula Vista created a speakers bureau for its general plan update and so far, it has been a useful tool. She added that another way to distribute information is through homeowners’ associations.

Staff concluded that the Draft Smart Growth Map will be presented to the SANDAG Board of Directors at its July 2005 meeting. The updates will be brought back to the RPC at its September 2005 meeting, and final map will be brought back to the Committee in November 2005.

**Action:** The Regional Planning Committee accepted this item for information.

7. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

The meeting of the Regional Planning Committee, scheduled for 12 to 2 p.m. on Friday, August 5, 2005, will be cancelled. The next meeting will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on September 2, 2005, and will be a joint meeting with the Transportation Committee. Chair Holt Pfeiler polled the group about attendance for the September 2nd meeting, given that it is on a holiday weekend. Committee members generally indicated that they would be available.

Staff noted that the meeting on September 2, 2005, is an important one. The Committees will be asked to take action on the $17 million funding of projects for the Pilot Smart Growth Incentive Program.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Holt Pfeiler adjourned the meeting at 1:44 p.m.
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