



*Transportation, Regional Planning, and  
Borders Committees  
Joint Meeting Agenda*

**Friday, July 17, 2020  
10 a.m. to 12 noon  
\*\*Teleconference Meeting\*\***

*Agenda Highlights*

- **What We Are Learning from COVID-19 and How It Could Impact Transportation Planning in the San Diego Region**

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

The joint meeting of the Transportation Committee, Regional Planning Committee, and Board Committee will be conducted virtually in accordance with Governor Newsom's State of Emergency declaration regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, Executive Order N-29-20, and the Guidance for Gatherings issued by the California Department of Public Health. Members will primarily participate in the meeting virtually, while practicing social distancing, from individual remote locations.

There are a few options for public participation:

- At the time of the meeting, listen to the meeting audio stream through [sandag.org](http://sandag.org)
- Submit comments via email to [clerk@sandag.org](mailto:clerk@sandag.org)
- Observe the meeting via Zoom
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US: +1 669 900 6833 or 932 953 97421# or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 929 205 6099

The Webinar ID is: 932 9539 7421

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### **Mission Statement**

*The 18 cities and county government are SANDAG serving as the forum for regional decision-making. SANDAG builds consensus; makes strategic plans; obtains and allocates resources; plans, engineers, and builds public transit; and provides information on a broad range of topics pertinent to the region's quality of life.*

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# Joint Meeting

## Transportation, Regional Planning, and Borders Committees

Friday, July 17, 2020

<b>Item No.</b>		<b>Action</b>
1.	<p><b>Public Comments/Communications/Member Comments</b></p> <p>Public comments under this agenda item will be limited to five public speakers. Members of the public shall have the opportunity to address the Transportation, Regional Planning, and Borders Committees on any issue within the jurisdiction of SANDAG that is not on this agenda. Other public comments will be heard during the items under the heading "Reports."</p>	
2.	<p><b>Executive Director's Report</b></p> <p><i>Hasan Ikhata, SANDAG</i></p> <p>An update on key programs, projects, and agency initiatives, including the agency's response to COVID-19, San Diego Forward: The 2021 Regional Plan, and the Airport Connectivity project, will be presented.</p>	Discussion
<b>Report</b>		
+3.	<p><b>What We Are Learning from COVID-19 and How It Could Impact Transportation Planning in the San Diego Region</b></p> <p><i>Antoinette Meier; Elisa Arias, and Ray Major, SANDAG</i></p> <p><i>Matt Tucker, North County Transit District</i></p> <p><i>Sharon Cooney, Metropolitan Transit System</i></p> <p>An overview of regional economic and transportation impacts of COVID-19 will be presented.</p>	Discussion/Possible Action
4.	<p><b>Continued Public Comments</b></p> <p>If the five-speaker limit for public comments was exceeded at the beginning of this agenda, other public comments will be taken at this time. Subjects of previous agenda items may not again be addressed under public comment.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Upcoming Meetings</b></p> <p>The next Transportation, Regional Planning, and Borders Committees meeting will be a joint meeting and it is scheduled for Friday, August 7, 2020, at 9 a.m.</p>	Information
6.	<p><b>Adjournment</b></p>	

+ next to an item indicates an attachment

July 17, 2020

## What We Are Learning from COVID-19 and How It Could Impact Transportation Planning in the San Diego Region

### Overview

On April 26, 2019, staff introduced the 5 Big Moves as key strategies for developing a transportation system that is equitable and safe, provides convenient and accessible travel choices, and meets state and federal requirements for social equity, climate and air quality, and the environment. Since then, staff has been developing a data-driven vision for the 2021 Regional Plan under the 5 Big Moves framework.

In March 2020, an unprecedented global pandemic forced governments to put in place stay home orders to protect the public and reduce the spread of disease. The abrupt closure of communities has had widespread impacts on the economy and public well-being. Staff from SANDAG, Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), and North County Transit District (NCTD) will share research and data on regional economic and transportation impacts of COVID-19. This presentation aims to inform policymakers on key findings for consideration as we move forward with the development of the 2021 Regional Plan.

### Action: Discussion/Possible Action

An overview of regional economic and transportation impacts of COVID-19 will be presented.

### Fiscal Impact:

N/A

### Schedule/Scope Impact:

N/A

### Key Considerations

#### ***Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19***

Impacts of COVID-19 were felt throughout the San Diego region. Tourism, general retail, and food and beverage were among the industries most affected. Taxable retail sales were down approximately 35% in May. With recent analyses by SANDAG staff, COVID-19 has revealed immense disparities across the region with low-income, Black, and Hispanic communities hit the hardest by both the health and economic impacts of the pandemic. Nearly half of Black (45%) and Hispanic (42%) residents live in ZIP codes that have higher than average COVID-19 cases and higher than average unemployment rates. Black and Hispanic workers also account for a larger portion of essential front-line workers.

#### ***Public Transit and Traffic Impacts of COVID-19***

COVID-19 drastically changed travel behavior. Public transit ridership dropped sharply reaching its lowest level in April with a 70% reduction in ridership compared to the same period in 2019. Ridership started to recover as stay home orders eased, by the end of May, ridership across all regional bus and rail services was up by 12% from April.

Many low-income and minority commuters continued to depend on public transit as their primary mode of transportation. Twenty percent of those taking public transit to work do not have access to a personal vehicle, they also experience longer commute times. The median travel time to work via transit is 51 minutes, which is roughly double the commute time of those driving to work.

Of the 3,783 residents in the region that responded to a regional travel survey conducted in June 2020, 42% took transit prior to COVID-19 and reported that they will return to transit in the future. Another 18% did not use transit before the pandemic but stated they would be likely to use transit in the future<sup>1</sup>.

Freeway traffic levels also fell as a result of the stay home orders. Traffic volumes and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) were at their lowest in April with 50% fewer vehicles on the road than during that same period in 2019. As restrictions started easing, traffic rebounded. By early July, traffic volumes were down by just 18% and VMT down by 22% from the same period in 2019. While personal travel decreased, 78% of residents participating in the regional travel survey indicated that online shopping and home delivery increased.

The reduction in driving led to a marked reduction in emissions from cars and trucks between mid-March and mid-April. According to the California Air Resources Board this translated to improved air quality (reduced ozone or smog, and to a lesser extent particulates). With the reopening of the economy, air pollution has returned to within the levels observed over the last five years.

### ***Telework Trends***

Telework and distance learning are reasons for the reduction in travel. Of the residents that responded to the regional travel survey and reported teleworking during the health crisis, 48% expect to continue teleworking at some level in the future.

A survey of 137 employers in the San Diego region was also conducted from March 30, 2020, through June 19, 2020. Just over half of the surveyed employers offered telework (55%), of these employers, 26% stated that they will continue offering telework. When asked what percent of their workforce would be eligible to telework, 7% said their entire workforce. Of those companies who said they would offer telecommuting in the future only 9% said they would offer it full-time.

While telework has the potential to relieve some peak period congestion, roughly 61% of all occupations in the San Diego region are not conducive to working from home. In the region, 64% of occupations are considered essential jobs, and of those essential jobs fewer than 42% are conducive to working from home. Low-income and minority workers are less likely to have the option to work from home. Higher paying jobs in industries like financial and professional services, are most likely to telework.

Telework, distance learning, and virtual healthcare services rely on broadband connectivity and home internet access. COVID-19 shed light on the digital divide in our region with 23% of low-income households not benefitting from a broadband subscription and 20 to 40% of students in many local districts lacking home internet access. Closing the digital divide will be an important aspect of transportation planning to ensure that everyone in the region benefits from improvements to transportation technology and app enabled transportation services.

### ***Active Transportation Trends***

Biking and walking increased as a result of the stay home order. Bicycling trips increased on all eight corridors where SANDAG collects bike volume data. Bicycle volumes were at their highest in May with 91% more bikes being counted on these corridors in 2020 than 2019. The regional travel survey also showed an increase in walking and biking; 50% reported walking more and 14% biking more for both recreation, travel to work, and shopping and errands. Of those who walked and biked more during the health crisis, more than four out of five stated they will continue walking (82%) and biking (85%) in the future. To support jurisdictions with providing safe space for walking and biking during the health crisis, SANDAG provided funding and support for 11 jurisdictions to implement Shared Street pilots.

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<sup>1</sup> The Regional Travel Survey was sent to nearly 17,000 households that participated in the 2017 San Diego Regional Transportation Survey and agreed to be contacted again. This was not a random sample and the responses shared may not generalize to the population overall. However, the data provides a glimpse into travel choices being made by residents in the region which is important insight as we move forward with our planning for the 2021 Regional Plan.

**Next Steps**

Staff will continue to monitor and report on the social, economic, and transportation impacts associated with COVID-19. These findings are informing the 2021 Regional Plan vision which seeks to meet regulatory requirements and create equal access to jobs, education, healthcare, and other community resources. The 2021 Regional Plan vision is expected to be presented to the Transportation, Regional Planning, and Borders Committees on August 7, 2020, and to the Board of Directors on August 14, 2020.

***Ray Traynor, Chief of Planning and Innovation***

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