



San Diego's Regional Planning Agency

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RESOLUTION

NO. 2003-26

**A RESOLUTION OF THE SAN DIEGO ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (SANDAG)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS CERTIFYING THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
PREPARED FOR THE 2030 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MOBILITY 2030), AND
ADOPTING ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY ACT; A STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS; AND
A MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan ("Project") proposes and encompasses the planning foundation for transportation improvements throughout the San Diego region over a nearly 30-year period in the future; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") (Public Res. Code, §21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs. §15000 et seq.), SANDAG is the lead agency for the Project, as the statutorily created public agency; and

WHEREAS, SANDAG prepared an Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") (SCH# 2002071059) and provided full disclosure of the potential environmental effects of the Project as defined; and

WHEREAS, SANDAG issued a Notice of Preparation ("NOP") of a Draft EIR on July 12, 2002 and circulated the NOP for a period of 30 days pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines §§15082(a), 15103 and 15375; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines §15206 and §15082, SANDAG publicly noticed and held a public scoping meeting on July 23, 2002 at 10:00 a.m. for the purpose of soliciting comments from the public and potential responsible agencies, including details about the scope and content of the environmental information related to the responsible agency's area of statutory responsibility as well as the significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures that the responsible agency would have analyzed in the Draft EIR; and

WHEREAS, approximately 13 written statements were received by SANDAG in response to the NOP, which assisted SANDAG in narrowing the issues and alternatives for analysis in the Draft EIR; and

WHEREAS, a Draft EIR was completed and released for public review on November 14, 2002 and SANDAG initiated a 45-day public comment period by filing a Notice of Completion and Notice of Availability with the State Office of Planning and Research; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Public Resources Code §20192, SANDAG also provided a Notice of Availability to all organizations and individuals who had previously requested such notice and published a Notice of Availability for the Draft EIR on or about November 14, 2002 in a newspaper of general circulation. In addition, SANDAG placed copies of the Draft EIR at the offices of SANDAG and on its Web site; and

WHEREAS, during the 45-day comment period, SANDAG consulted with and requested comments from responsible and trustee agencies, other regulatory agencies, and others pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines §15086; and

WHEREAS, during the official public review period for the Draft EIR, SANDAG received approximately 19 written comments, which are included in the Final EIR; and

WHEREAS, all potential significant adverse environmental impacts were sufficiently analyzed in the Draft EIR; and

WHEREAS, SANDAG prepared the Final EIR consisting of the Draft EIR, comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR, a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR, the responses of the lead agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process, and any other information, and pursuant to Public Resources Code §21092.5, SANDAG provided draft responses to comments to all commenting agencies; and

WHEREAS, all the requirements of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines have been satisfied by SANDAG in the EIR, which is sufficiently detailed so that all of the potentially significant environmental effects of the Project have been adequately evaluated; and

WHEREAS, the EIR sufficiently analyzes both the feasible mitigation measures necessary to avoid or substantially lessen the Project's potential environmental impacts and a range of feasible alternatives capable of eliminating or reducing these effects in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, all of the findings and conclusions made by SANDAG pursuant to this Resolution are based upon the oral and written evidence presented to it as a whole not based solely on the information provided in this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, environmental impacts identified in the Final EIR, which SANDAG finds are less than significant and do not require mitigation, are described in Section I of Attachment 1A hereto; and

WHEREAS, environmental impacts identified in the Final EIR as potentially significant but which SANDAG finds can be mitigated to a level of less than significant, through the imposition of feasible mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR and set forth herein, are described in Section II of Attachment 1A hereto; and

WHEREAS, environmental impacts identified in the Final EIR as potentially significant but which SANDAG finds cannot be fully mitigated to a level of less than significant, despite the imposition of all feasible mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR and set forth herein, are described in Section III of Attachment 1A hereto; and

WHEREAS, irreversible environmental changes associated with the Project and growth-inducing impacts identified in the Final EIR and set forth herein are described in Sections IV and V, respectively, of Attachment 1A hereto; and

WHEREAS, alternatives to the project that might eliminate or reduce significant environmental impacts are described in Section VI of Attachment 1A hereto; and

WHEREAS, all other legal prerequisites to the adoption of this Resolution have occurred; and

WHEREAS, prior to taking action on the Project, the SANDAG Board of Directors has heard, been presented with, reviewed and considered all of the information and data in the administrative record, including the Final EIR, and all oral and written evidence presented to it during all meetings and hearings; NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED BY the SANDAG Board of Directors that the foregoing recitals are true and correct and incorporated by this reference; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SANDAG Board of Directors certifies that the Final EIR (SCH# 2002071059) has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resource Code §21000 et seq), that the Final EIR was reviewed and considered by the SANDAG Board, and that the Final EIR represents the independent judgment and analysis of SANDAG; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SANDAG Board of Directors finds as follows:

1. At a regular session assembled on March 28, 2003, the SANDAG Board of Directors determined that based on all of the evidence presented, including, but not limited to, the Final EIR, written and oral testimony given at meetings and hearings, and submission of testimony from the public, organizations, and regulatory agencies, the following environmental impacts associated with the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan are: (1) less than significant and do not require mitigation; or (2) potentially significant and some of these impacts will be avoided or reduced to a level of insignificance through the identified mitigation measures; or (3) significant and cannot be fully mitigated to a level of less than significant.
2. For each significant environmental effect identified in the EIR, SANDAG has made a written Finding reaching one or more of three permissible conclusions. The first such Finding is that "[c]hanges or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR" [CEQA Guidelines, §15091 (a)(1)]. The second permissible Finding is that "[s]uch changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the Finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency" [CEQA Guidelines, §15091 (a)(2)]. The third potential Finding is that "[s]pecific economic, legal, social, technological, or

other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR" [CEQA Guidelines, §15091 (a)(3)].

3. No comments made in the public hearings conducted by SANDAG, or any additional information submitted to SANDAG, have produced significant new information requiring recirculation or additional environmental review under State CEQA Guidelines §15088.5.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SANDAG Board of Directors makes Findings as required in CEQA Guidelines §15091 and attached hereto as Attachment 1A and incorporated fully by this reference; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SANDAG Board of Directors adopts the Statement of Overriding Considerations as required by CEQA Guidelines §15091 and attached hereto as Attachment 1B and incorporated fully by this reference; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SANDAG Board of Directors adopts the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Final EIR, Appendix E) as required by CEQA Guidelines §15097 and attached hereto as Attachment 1C and incorporated fully by this reference.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 28th day of March, 2003.


CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST: 
SECRETARY

MEMBER AGENCIES: Cities of Carlsbad, Chula Vista, Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, Encinitas, Escondido, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Oceanside, Poway, San Diego, San Marcos, Santee, Solana Beach, Vista, and County of San Diego.
ADVISORY MEMBERS: California Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Transit Development Board, North San Diego County Transit Development Board, Imperial County, U.S. Department of Defense, S.D. Unified Port District, S.D. County Water Authority, and Baja California/Mexico.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

SECTION I

FINDINGS REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Board of Directors hereby finds that the following environmental impacts of the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) are less than significant. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), no mitigation measures are required for impacts that are less than significant (Cal. Code Regs. Title 14, §15126.4(a)(3)).

A. Land Use

Land Use Patterns

Land use patterns along key transportation corridors currently reflect the presence of existing facilities. Typically, along much of these existing key corridors, there is not a substantial quantity of adjacent undisturbed/vacant land, and projects would be compatible with existing or planned adjacent land uses when accommodated within the existing rights-of-way. No significant incompatibilities with land use patterns are expected.

Planned Land Uses

The 2030 RTP is developed on the premise that future growth would be shifted away from the low density unincorporated areas of the county and intensified within the already developed cities within the region. Three key jurisdictions, County of San Diego, City of San Diego, and City of Chula Vista, are currently revising their general plans to incorporate smart growth elements. The 2030 RTP was developed with input from each of the local jurisdictions and represents trends in smart growth planning in the region. The 2030 RTP will have to continually be evaluated against land use changes that occur in local jurisdictions and respond to those changes accordingly. No significant inconsistencies with local land use plans are anticipated.

B. Social Environment

The goals, policies, and actions of the 2030 RTP center around incentives for encouraging alternative commuter travel choices, such as a better managed, more efficient use of the existing road network and a greatly enhanced transit system. The 2030 RTP would provide for a more efficient transportation network that allows for better movement of people between major work, housing, and education activity centers. The enhanced transportation system would be a socioeconomic benefit.

C. Visual Resources

Construction of projects could result in short-term view blockage. Even with typical best management practices, short-term visual impacts are often unavoidable; however, these impacts are temporary and would last only throughout the duration of the construction activities. Short-term construction impacts are considered less than significant.

D. Traffic/Circulation

Regional Transportation System

While future conditions would inevitably include increased population and vehicle travel, implementation of the 2030 RTP would result in a less congested roadway system and a more accessible transit system than the No Project condition. At the program level, the 2030 RTP is considered to be beneficial in terms of its impact on the regional transportation system. No significant traffic/circulation impacts would result.

Cumulative Traffic

The purpose of the proposed 2030 RTP is to optimize the performance of the roadway and public transit systems as the region continues to grow and develop. Implementation of the Project is expected to result in a less congested roadway network, increased public transportation opportunities, and expanded regional bikeway corridors. At the program level, the project is considered to be beneficial to the regional transportation system and would not add to cumulative adverse traffic impacts across the San Diego region.

E. Air Quality

Air Pollution

Actions and policies of the 2030 RTP would benefit the region's air quality by helping to relieve traffic congestion and by encouraging the use of more efficient transportation methods. The future smart growth land use pattern assumed under the 2030 RTP would support mixed-use, denser development, supporting alternative modes of transportation, such as public transit, walking, or bicycling. The 2030 RTP would contribute positively to the purpose of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for the attainment of the regional air quality standards. No significant adverse impacts to regional air quality would result from implementation of the 2030 RTP.

Cumulative Air Quality

The 2030 RTP outlines projects that would act to reduce vehicular emissions, such as highway expansions, traffic signal improvements, transit expansion and increased operations, vanpools, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, park-and-ride opportunities, and regional bike/pedestrian paths. Proposed improvements to the region's transportation network would be consistent with the SIP. Although other past, present, and future projects would contribute to significant cumulative air quality impacts, and the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB) would remain in nonconformity for some emissions, the 2030 RTP would act to minimize, not increase, air quality emissions. The smog-forming pollutants (tons/day) would be less with the Project than with the No Project condition. The 2030 RTP therefore, would not be considered a contributor to significant cumulative air quality impacts in the SDAB.

F. Energy

Energy Consumption

The estimated future increase in population, along with the related increase in vehicle travel, would result in an increase in energy consumption. However, the 2030 RTP would improve traffic flows and provide greater transit choices. These factors would work to offset the future increase in energy consumption, but there would still be a future fuel consumption increase of 1.7 percent over the No Project condition. This projected 1.7 percent increase is less than the 5 percent significance threshold and would not result in a significant energy consumption impact.

Energy Efficiency

Proposed transit improvements in the 2030 RTP would encourage optimized use of public transportation through new routes and increased operations. Public transportation provides a more energy efficient mode of travel than a single-passenger vehicle. Reduction in traffic congestion through 2030 RTP projects also would allow for more energy efficient vehicular travel. The 2030 RTP would result in positive benefits toward increasing energy efficiency.

Cumulative Energy

The purpose of the 2030 RTP is to develop a regional transportation network that would operate efficiently and encourage the use of transit as the San Diego region continues to grow. Though some new project development outlined in the 2030 RTP would increase energy consumption, the 2030 RTP outlines projects that would create new or improved highways that reduce traffic congestion, facilitate smoother traffic flows, and provide routes that are more direct. Proposed transit improvements in the 2030 RTP also encourage optimized use of public transportation, which provides a more energy efficient mode of travel than single-passenger vehicles, thereby reducing the region's transportation energy consumption rate. For these reasons, the 2030 RTP would not increase cumulative energy impacts.

G. Environmental Justice

The 2030 RTP would provide an equitable level of service for both minority and low-income populations. No disproportionate adverse impacts related to equity of service would occur to the low-income and minority populations identified for the San Diego region. Therefore, no significant environmental justice impact would occur with implementation of the 2030 RTP.

SECTION II

FINDINGS REGARDING SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS MITIGATED TO A LEVEL LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

The SANDAG Board of Directors hereby finds that mitigation measures have been identified in the Draft EIR that will avoid or substantially lessen the following potentially significant environmental impacts to a less than significant level. The potentially significant impacts and the mitigation measures that will reduce them to a less than significant level are as follows.

A. Land Use

Resource Lands

Significant Impacts

Where new facilities would be constructed outside of the currently urbanized core, undisturbed/vacant land could be utilized for transportation purposes. Those lands may have historically been, or are currently being used for agriculture, and/or some may be planned for Multiple Habitat Conservation Program (MHCP) or Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) open space preserves. The possible conversion of these resource lands may be potentially significant in selected areas.

Mitigation

The following mitigation measures are found in Section 4.1.5 of the EIR:

- LU-1 For projects in agricultural areas, project implementation agencies shall contact the California Department of Conservation and the San Diego Agricultural Commissioner's office to identify the location of prime farmlands and lands that support crops considered valuable to the local or regional economy. Impacts to such lands shall be evaluated in project-specific environmental documents. The analysis shall use the land use evaluation and site assessment (LESA) analysis method (CEQA Guidelines §21095), as appropriate. The project implementation agencies or local jurisdiction shall be responsible for ensuring adherence to the mitigation measures prior to construction. Mitigation measures may include conservation easements or payment in lieu of fees.
- LU-2 Project implementation agencies shall identify open space areas that could be preserved and shall include mitigation measures (such as dedication or payment in lieu of fees) for the loss of open space.

Finding

For the potentially significant impact to agricultural open space lands, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measures LU-1 and LU-2 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 4.1.6 of the EIR, mitigation measures are anticipated to reduce the quantity and severity of the loss to resource lands, including open space and agricultural resources, to below a level of significance at this planning level stage of analysis.

Cumulative Land Use Effects

Significant Impacts

Cumulatively significant impacts could result from projects associated with the implementation of the 2030 RTP plus other development and roadway projects. Significant impacts would occur if these projects were not in conformance with the adopted land use plan or zoning requirements.

Mitigation

The 2030 RTP would include implementation of sensitive design measures, including provision of buffers between incompatible land uses, changes to the adopted plan and zone, or implementation

of other mitigation measures identified for specific project actions on a case-by-case basis as described in Section 5.1 of the EIR and listed above.

Finding

For the cumulatively significant land use impacts that could potentially occur, the Finding is made that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects. Project-specific mitigation measures, such as buffers between incompatible land uses, changes to the adopted plan and zone, or implementation of other such measures would mitigate potential land use impacts to less than significant. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., the California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

B. Social Environment

Displacement

Significant Impacts

Certain transportation improvements, such as highway widening, new highway construction, and increased right-of-way for transit improvements, may potentially displace existing residences or businesses in some areas. Transportation improvements that require displacement of residences or businesses would represent a significant adverse impact.

Mitigation

The following mitigation measure is found in Section 4.2.5 of the EIR:

Social-1 Significant adverse impacts resulting from displacement of residents or businesses shall be mitigated with specific relocation measures as dictated by local, state, or federal requirements. Such measures include assistance in finding a new location, assistance with moving, or compensation for losses. Where it has been determined that displacement is necessary and displaced individuals are eligible, a relocation assistance program consistent with the State Uniform Location Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act provides compensation and assistance in finding new residences for displaced individuals.

Finding

For the significant impacts resulting from displacement of residences or businesses, the Finding is made that changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measure Social-1 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 4.2.6 of the EIR, specific relocation procedures would reduce impacts from relocation, and displacement impacts would be reduced to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

Cumulative Social Environment

Significant Impacts

Cumulative development of the 2030 RTP plus other projects would not result in substantial, unanticipated increases in population beyond those currently projected. However, new construction and/or right-of-way acquisition associated with the combined projects could result in cumulative displacement impacts to residences and/or businesses.

Mitigation

No mitigation is provided at this program level; however, project-specific measures such as relocation assistance programs would mitigate any cumulative impacts associated with displacement. This mitigation is outlined above as Social-1 and can be found in Section 4.2.5 of the EIR.

Finding

For the significant cumulative impacts resulting from the displacement of residences or businesses, the Finding is made that changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measure Social-1 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 5.1 of the EIR, specific relocation procedures would reduce impacts from relocation and displacement impacts would be reduced to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

C. Noise

Increased Noise Levels

Significant Impacts

Proposed transit, arterial, highway, and freeway improvements have the potential to significantly impact the local noise environment if sensitive receptors are located nearby. The 2030 RTP would result in faster-moving traffic and increased operation of buses and trains; however, this would generate more noise than slow-moving single-passenger cars. The development of mixed land uses around transit corridors, specifically associated with rail activity, could expose more people to the higher levels of noise generated by high-volume transit corridors.

Mitigation

The following mitigation measures are found in Section 4.6.5 of the EIR:

State and local jurisdictions have established noise standards and guidelines depending upon the types of land uses. The detailed noise effects of new and improved transportation facilities recommended in the 2030 RTP would be addressed in required project-specific acoustical studies and incorporated into environmental documents and required permits. The following measures shall be required of all such projects:

- Noi-1 Alignments of transportation corridors shall consider noise sensitive areas and reduce noise levels by maximizing distance to sensitive receptors (human or wildlife), and using depressed rights-of-way, berms, or sound barrier walls to reduce noise where feasible.

- Noi-2 Land use measures such as zoning designations shall be employed for future development on land adjacent to transportation facilities.
- Noi-3 Where other methods are impractical, operational constraints shall be imposed to the greatest extent feasible (e.g., limits on vehicle speed, regulation of train horns).
- Noi-4 Site-specific and project-specific environmental assessment shall be needed for individual transit projects when they are proposed. Noise impacts may be avoided by careful siting of facilities and the use of noise-reducing berms, walls, or other barriers.

Finding

For the potentially significant impacts resulting from increased noise near areas of sensitive receivers, the finding is made that changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measures Noi-1 through Noi-4 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 4.6.6 of the EIR, implementation of the above measures on project-specific projects would mitigate noise impacts to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

Cumulative Noise

Significant Impacts

Highway and transit improvements would contribute to increased noise levels within the transportation corridor used by each of the modes and an incremental increase to noise levels within the region. Furthermore, decreasing highway congestion, which is a goal of the 2030 RTP, would allow vehicular traffic on freeways and major arterials to move faster. Because noise levels have been found to increase with the speed of passing traffic, programs that reduce the number of vehicles using a corridor, or allow for higher speed, could increase the noise produced by traffic and exceed significance thresholds.

Mitigation

Cumulative significant exterior noise impacts to existing and future sensitive receptors could be reduced or avoided by the mitigation measures listed in the above noise section and are found in Section 4.6.5 of the EIR.

Finding

For the potentially significant cumulative noise impacts resulting from increased noise near areas of sensitive receivers, the Finding is made that changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measures Noi-1, Noi-2, Noi-3, and Noi-4 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 5.1 in the EIR, application of the above measures would mitigate cumulative noise impacts to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

D. Geology/Paleontology

Geologic Stability

Significant Impacts

The entire San Diego region is susceptible to impacts from seismic activity and portions of the region are located in geologic formations susceptible to slope failure. New transportation facilities would be exposed to both direct and indirect effects of earthquakes and slope failure. This would be a potentially significant impact.

Mitigation

It should be noted that all projects shall adhere to the State of California design standards and all typical design, grading, and construction practices to avoid or reduce geologic hazards. The following mitigation measure is found in Section 4.8.5 of the EIR:

Geo-1 Regulatory agencies with oversight on transit and transportation projects have developed engineering design specifications for freeway/highway/rail and other transit projects to consider and compensate for site-level geologic and seismic conditions. All site designs shall be reviewed and approved by the appropriate agency, such as the Federal Highway Administration, Caltrans, Federal Transit Administration, etc.

Finding

For the potentially significant impacts resulting from exposure to unstable geological conditions, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measure Geo-1 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 4.8.6 of the EIR, this mitigation measure is anticipated to reduce impacts due to seismic exposure and slope failure to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

Cumulative Geology

Significant Impacts

The entire San Diego region is susceptible to impacts from seismic activity. Portions of the 2030 RTP transportation network and many other cumulative projects would be constructed through geologic formations susceptible to slope failure. Projects proposed in the 2030 RTP would increase potential hazards from geological instability.

Mitigation

Earthquake-resistant designs employed on new structures minimize the impact to public safety from seismic events. Project-specific geotechnical investigations would be necessary to design measures to avoid slope failure. As such, all projects, both proposed in the 2030 RTP and throughout the region, are required to meet certain safety design features that reduce potential geological impacts. Freeway/highway/rail and other transit projects also would incorporate mitigation as outlined in the geology section above as found in Section 4.8.5 of the EIR.

Finding

For the potentially significant cumulative geologic impacts, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in the 2030 RTP geologic mitigation measures have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 5.1 of the EIR, this mitigation measure is anticipated to reduce cumulative impacts due to seismic exposure and slope failure to below a level of significance.

Paleontological Resources

Significant Impacts

Implementation of the 2030 RTP would result in transportation facilities being constructed within geological formations with moderate to high paleontological resource potential. The potential for impacts to paleontological resources is considered significant.

Mitigation

The following mitigation measure is found in Section 4.8.5 of the EIR:

Paleo-1 In general, when a transportation construction project involves known fossil-bearing rocks, qualified researchers are stationed on-site to observe during grading and recover scientifically valuable specimens. A certified paleontologist shall be retained by the project implementing agency prior to construction to establish procedures for surveillance and the pre-construction salvage of exposed resources if fossil-bearing rocks have the potential to be impacted. The monitor shall provide pre-construction coordination with contractors, oversee original cutting in previously undisturbed areas of sensitive formations, halt or redirect construction activities as appropriate to allow recovery of newly discovered fossil remains, and oversee fossil salvage operations and reporting.

Finding

For the potentially significant impacts resulting from construction of transportation facilities within geologic formations with a moderate to high potential for paleontological resources, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measure Paleo-1 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 4.8.6 of the EIR, the monitoring required as mitigation would ensure that paleontological impacts are reduced to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

Cumulative Paleontological Resources

Significant Impacts

The implementation of the 2030 RTP and other regional projects would result in disturbance of geologic formations with moderate to high paleontological resource potential through the San Diego area. At the program level, cumulative impacts to paleontological resources are considered potentially significant.

Mitigation

As outlined above in the Paleontological Resources section, paleontological surveys would be required at the project-specific level to determine the resource value for impacted areas. Monitoring by a qualified paleontologist also would be a project-specific requirement in all those project areas where any grading would occur in formations of moderate to high resource potential and would reduce any cumulative impacts to regional paleontological resources. This mitigation can be found in Section 4.8.5 of the EIR.

Finding

For the potentially significant cumulative impacts resulting from construction of transportation facilities within geologic formations with a moderate to high potential for paleontological resources, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in the 2030 RTP paleontological resources mitigation measure have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 5.1 of the EIR, the monitoring required as mitigation would ensure that cumulative paleontological impacts are reduced to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

E. Water Quality

Erosion, Increased Runoff, and Flooding

Significant Impacts

Erosion resulting from construction of projects proposed within the 2030 RTP would potentially contribute to the sediment load in surface waters and could potentially become significant if deposited into a potable water supply, flood control channel, or wetlands. The 2030 RTP would result in new impervious surfaces that would create increased non-point source pollution. Runoff from new highways and other transportation facilities are known to carry pollutants. Projects constructed in floodplains may potentially increase flooding hazards.

Mitigation

All new and improved transportation facilities must comply with federal, state, and local policies, standards, and land use strategies that address water resource issues. These would include programs and regulations of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), FHWA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), local flood control districts, and other local jurisdictions. In general, compliance with these regulations and permit procedures would be effective in mitigating potential impacts to water resources. Caltrans projects would be required to implement best management practices outlined in their handbooks. Specific measures to address surface water, groundwater, and flooding are provided below.

The following mitigation measures can reasonably be expected to be a part of the design and construction of the 2030 RTP transportation improvements:

Surface Water

Water-1 To the extent feasible, drainage of roadway runoff shall be designed to run through grass median strips, contoured to provide adequate storage capacity and to provide

overland flow, detention, and infiltration before it reaches culverts. Detention basins and ponds, aside from controlling runoff rates, also can remove particulate pollutants through settling.

- Water-2 Proper erosion control measures shall be implemented during construction and will include measures such as jute netting, straw and chemical mulches, temporary retention ponds, or quick revegetation. Other control measures include limiting the amount of exposed area and preventing construction vehicles and/or equipment from passing through or near natural drainages.
- Water-3 Long-term sediment control shall include an erosion control and revegetation program designed to allow reestablishment of native vegetation on slopes in undeveloped areas.
- Water-4 In areas where habitat for fish and other wildlife would be threatened by transportation facility discharge, alternate drainage ways shall be sought to protect sensitive fish and wildlife populations. Heavy-duty sweepers, with disposal of collected debris in sanitary landfills, shall be used to effectively reduce annual pollutant loads. Catch basins and storm drains should be cleaned and maintained on a regular basis.

Groundwater

- Water-5 Detention basins, infiltration strips, and other features to facilitate groundwater recharge shall be incorporated into the design of new freeway and roadway facilities.
- Water-6 Projects shall be designed so that they do not increase downstream flooding risks by substantially increasing peak runoff volumes. This could be achieved by increasing the size of local flood control facilities serving the project areas, increasing bridge span, or by including detention ponds in designs for roadway medians, parking areas, or other facilities.
- Water-7 Projects shall be designed to allow lateral transmission of storm water flows across transportation corridors with no increased risk of upstream flooding. Culverts and bridges shall be designed to adequately carry drainage waters through project sites. The bottom of overpass structures shall be elevated at least 1 foot above the 100-year flood elevation at all stream and drainage channel crossings.
- Water-8 All roadbeds for new highway and rail transit facilities shall be elevated at least 1 foot above the 100-year base flood elevation.

Finding

For the potentially significant impacts resulting from increased potential for erosion, surface runoff, and flooding due to construction and operation of the 2030 RTP, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measures Water-1 through Water-8 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 4.9.6 of the EIR, implementation of specific mitigation measures would ensure that potential water quality impacts are reduced to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

F. Biological Resources

Wildlife Movement and Viability

Significant Impacts

Major roadways may potentially impede the movement of wildlife across the region and habitat fragmentation could substantially impact the long-term viability of wildlife populations in the region.

Mitigation

The following mitigation measures are found in Section 4.10.5 of the EIR:

- Bio-1 Design projects to minimize or eliminate impacts to natural habitats and known sensitive species. Large contiguous areas of habitat shall be avoided to the greatest extent feasible to reduce fragmentation of remaining habitat areas. Resource agencies shall be consulted during pre-design stage.
- Bio-2 Provide for continued movement of ground-level wildlife across rights-of-way, where there are designated wildlife corridors, through the use of appropriately sized bridges or other openings where roads or transit features would create barriers.

Findings

For the potentially significant impacts to wildlife movement and viability across the region, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measures Bio-1 and Bio-2 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 4.10.6 of the EIR, implementation of the above-listed mitigation measures would ensure that potential impacts to wildlife movement and viability are reduced to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

Native Habitat and Wildlife

Significant Impacts

Construction of new highways, road widenings, new HOV lanes, or interchanges for existing facilities may directly and/or indirectly impact native habitat and wildlife, including sensitive plant and wildlife species and wetlands. Direct impacts could result from displacement and loss of habitat. Indirect impacts could result from ongoing noise, light, glare, air pollution, and polluted runoff after the facilities are built.

Mitigation

The following mitigation measures are found in Section 4.10.5 of the EIR:

- Bio-3 Provide off-site mitigation contiguous with areas of like resources to maximize the biological value of the habitat provided as mitigation. These efforts shall be coordinated with resource agencies and regional habitat conservation and planning efforts such as the MSCP and the MHCP.

- Bio-4 Where possible, avoid impacting oak woodlands, vernal pools, estuaries, lagoons, and other regionally and locally significant biotic resources; where unavoidable, replace with equal or better quality habitat to ensure no net loss of the resource.
- Bio-5 Where possible, avoid alteration of streambeds and associated riparian vegetation; where unavoidable, replace with like quality or better habitat at a ratio required by regulatory agencies with the goal of no net loss to wetlands.
- Bio-6 Preserve open space areas identified in local, state, and federal plans to the greatest extent possible.
- Bio-7 Remove only as much vegetation and disturb only as much wildlife habitat as is absolutely necessary for grading. Revegetate with native plants where appropriate. Staging areas shall be located in previously disturbed areas.
- Bio-8 Schedule construction to avoid or minimize impacts to wildlife (e.g., avoid breeding season for sensitive species). Project specific review shall define specific mitigation measures, such as berms and sound walls, which would reduce construction and operational noise to within regulatory standards.
- Bio-9 Use appropriate water pollution control technology and best management practices to minimize or eliminate impacts to downstream aquatic systems.

Findings

For the potentially significant direct and indirect impacts to native plant and wildlife species, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measures Bio-3 through Bio-9 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 4.10.6 of the EIR, implementation of the above-listed mitigation measures would ensure that potential impacts to native plant and wildlife species are reduced to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

Cumulative Biological Resources

Significant Impacts

Implementation of regional projects, along with the projects outlined in the 2030 RTP, would contribute to the cumulative loss of sensitive habitats throughout the San Diego region. Of particular concern are the potential loss of coastal sage scrub; wetlands and associated habitat, lagoons, native and nonnative grasslands; and southern mixed chaparral. The loss of large open blocks of these habitats or resources would contribute to cumulatively significant impacts.

Mitigation

The conservation of open space and restoration or enhancement of disturbed habitat provided by implementation of the MSCP, MHCP, and other plan guidelines and mitigation required of proposed projects would serve to lessen these potential cumulative biological impacts to a level below significance. Sensitive resource areas would be managed, restored, and/or revegetated for long-term persistence through implementation of the applicable habitat conservation plan. Implementation of the MSCP and other plans in conjunction with the mitigation measures listed

above and found in Section 4.10.5 of the EIR would lessen cumulatively significant impacts to sensitive habitats (except native grasslands) to below a level of significance.

Finding

For the potentially significant cumulative impacts to sensitive habitats, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measures Bio-3 through Bio-9 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 5.1 of the EIR, implementation of the above-listed mitigation measures would ensure that potentially significant cumulative impacts to sensitive habitats are reduced to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

G. Cultural Resources

Prehistoric and Historic Resources

Significant Impacts

Major new transportation projects identified in the 2030 RTP, including highway widening and transit facilities, could impact significant prehistoric or historic properties. Rail alignments, bikeways, border crossings, and transit stations also could impact archaeological sites. Intensification of land uses along established transit corridors in older portion of the cities could result in significant historical impacts where structures of architectural or historical significance may be located.

Mitigation

The following mitigation measures are found in Section 4.11.5 of the EIR:

- Cult-1 Where feasible, the project shall implement design measures to avoid archaeological or historical resource areas or areas identified as having significant heritage values to living peoples.
- Cult-2 Preservation of important cultural or scientific sites by capping with fill, asphalt, or some other material to preserve their contextual setting shall be considered.
- Cult-3 Areas of cultural or scientific resources shall be monitored during the grading phase.
- Cult-4 Archaeological and historical resources shall be salvaged through data sample recovery programs.
- Cult-5 All specimens collected shall be archived at an appropriate institution.

Findings

For the potentially significant impacts to prehistoric and historic cultural resources, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measures Cult-1 through Cult-5 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 4.11.6 of the EIR, implementation of the above-listed mitigation measures would ensure that potential impacts to cultural resources are reduced to below

a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

Cumulative Cultural Resources

Significant Impacts

Any loss of historic or prehistoric resources from the combined proposed Project and past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, including the 2030 RTP, would contribute to cumulatively significant impacts to cultural resources, depending on location.

Mitigation

Cumulative impacts could be reduced to below a level of significance or avoided by mitigation measures located in Section 4.11.5 of the EIR, along with any mitigation outlined during project-specific analysis.

Finding

For the potentially significant cumulative impacts to prehistoric and historic cultural resources, the Finding is made that the changes or alterations as set forth in mitigation measures Cult-1 through Cult-5 have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or significantly lessen significant environmental effects. As stated in Section 5.1 of the EIR, implementation of the above-listed mitigation measures would ensure that potential cumulative impacts to cultural resources are reduced to below a level of significance. The change or alteration is within the responsibility of other public agencies (e.g., Caltrans or other jurisdictions) and not the agency making Findings (SANDAG). Such changes can be adopted by those jurisdictions.

SECTION III

FINDINGS REGARDING SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS NOT FULLY MITIGATED TO A LEVEL LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

A. Land Use

Cumulative Land Use

Significant Impacts

Implementation of the 2030 RTP would contribute cumulatively to an incremental increase in the loss of regional open space and agricultural areas. The 2030 RTP is based on an anticipated smart growth future land use pattern; however, certain projects included in the RTP would be located in areas of existing open space and more rural uses. The conversion of this land and loss of regional open space and agricultural lands would be considered cumulatively significant.

Mitigation

To avoid or reduce cumulative loss to agriculture and open space lands, numerous projects of various types (transportation, residential, and commercial) would need to remain unbuilt or

reduced substantially in size. This would allow open space and agricultural operations to remain undisturbed; however, those projects are necessary to accommodate planned employment, services, and residential demand, and to provide roads to link these nodes. Many projects, particularly in the eastern part of Chula Vista, such as East Lake and Otay Ranch, have entitlements and have already made Findings and adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations regarding significant and unmitigable impacts to agriculture. There is no feasible mitigation that would reduce the loss of regional open space and agricultural lands and satisfy the purpose and need of the project.

Finding

For the significant cumulative impacts resulting from loss of regional open space and agricultural lands due to projects proposed in the 2030 RTP, the Finding is made that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures. The cumulative loss of open space and agricultural lands would remain significant and unavoidable in the long term.

B. Visual Resources

Long-Term Visual Alterations

Significant Impacts

Potentially significant visual impacts could occur if proposed alignments or facilities require large cut and fill slopes or noise barriers; block views from adjacent areas; or intrude into important vistas along roadways, and/or change the scale, character, and quality of designated or eligible scenic highway corridors. Proposed rail improvements, such as double-tracking in the coastal corridor, could result in significant impacts.

Mitigation

The following mitigation measure is found in Section 4.3.5 of the EIR and would be expected to reduce visual impacts for most projects, but not fully mitigate for all projects at particularly sensitive locations.

Vis-1 Project sponsors shall commit to mitigation measures at the time of certification of their environmental document. Mitigation measures may include:

- Design projects to minimize contrasts in scale and massing between the project and surrounding natural forms and developments. Avoid, if possible, large cuts and fills when the visual environment (natural or urban) would be substantially disrupted. Site or design projects to minimize their intrusion into important viewsheds and use contour grading to better match surrounding terrain.
- Use natural landscaping to minimize contrasts between the project and surrounding areas. Wherever possible, develop interchanges and transit lines at the grade of the surrounding land to limit view blockage. Contour the edges of major cut and fill slopes to provide a more natural looking finished profile.
- Design landscaping along highway corridors to add significant natural elements and visual interest to soften the hard-edged, linear travel experience that would otherwise occur.

- Replace and renew landscaping to the greatest extent possible along corridors with road widenings, interchange projects, and related improvements. Plan landscaping in new corridors to respect existing natural and man-made features and to complement the dominant landscaping of surrounding areas.
- Construct soundwalls of materials whose color and texture complements the surrounding landscape and development. Use color, texture, and alternating facades to “break up” large facades and provide visual interest.
- Where there is room, landscape the soundwalls with plants that screen the soundwall, preferably with either native vegetation or landscaping that complements the dominant landscaping of surrounding areas.

Finding

For the significant impacts resulting from visual alterations due to projects proposed in the 2030 RTP, the Finding is made that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the 2030 RTP that avoid or substantially lessen some of the significant environmental effects as identified in the final EIR. Further, such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the Finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency. In some visually sensitive areas like the coastal corridor, specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR. Visual impacts in some areas would remain significant and unavoidable in the long term.

Cumulative Visual Resources

Significant Impacts

Adverse visual quality impacts due to 2030 RTP projects plus other regional projects along new or widened highway corridors would result from the creation of large, manufactured roadway slopes, noise barriers, and the loss of landscaping. Planned or proposed highways that pass through undeveloped areas would result in a significant change in the visual character of the local area. Improvements for rail, such as double-tracking, would result in cumulative visual impacts, especially within the coastal corridor near significant visual features such as lagoons, recreational areas, regional parks, scenic vistas, etc. Even in existing urban settings, rail segments that are elevated would have a high potential for visual impact. Development of the 2030 RTP is considered to have a significant cumulative and unmitigable impact on visual resources, because measures to fully mitigate the impact do not exist and avoidance would mean not completing key elements of the transportation network that would then reduce the effectiveness of the remaining elements.

Mitigation

Mitigation measures such as landscaping and contour grading, as described in Vis-1 above and found in Section 4.3.5 of the EIR, would reduce the visual contrast, but the visual changes associated with all regional projects in the area would create a significant and unmitigated cumulative impact to visual quality as the region continues to grow.

Finding

For the significant cumulative impacts to visual resources resulting from the 2030 RTP and other regional projects, the Finding is made that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other

considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives. The impact to visual resources would remain significant and unavoidable in the long term.

C. Water Resource

Cumulative Water Resources

Significant Impacts

Construction projects throughout the region, including those proposed in the 2030 RTP, would result in increased erosion from exposed soil areas, which contributes to sediment-laden runoff into local drainage courses. Erosion can be destructive to the immediate area and sedimentation can clog waterways and downstream wetland and lagoon areas. Though the water quality impacts resulting from the 2030 RTP would be mitigated to below a level of significance, the incremental contributions of all regional projects to increased runoff from impervious surfaces to lagoons and other water bodies, along with pollutants carried by the runoff, would result in a cumulative significant impact, which is not completely mitigable.

Mitigation

Conformance with existing federal, state, and local regulations for grading and the protection of water quality, combined with implementation of best management practices and mitigation measures as discussed in Section 4.9 of the EIR, would lessen this impact; however cumulatively significant impacts would remain. Impact avoidance may be possible by not constructing the cumulative projects near a water course, but this would result in piecemeal development of the RTP, thereby making it less effective.

Finding

For the significant cumulative impacts to water resources resulting from the construction and operation of the 2030 RTP and other regional projects, the Finding is made that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures. The cumulative impact to water resources would remain significant and unavoidable.

D. Biological Resources

Coastal Lagoons

Significant Impacts

As proposed in the 2030 RTP, widening of Interstate 5 (I-5) and coastal rail double-tracking near coastal lagoons and bluffs from Oceanside to San Diego could result in significant biological impacts. These highly sensitive areas support sensitive habitat and species. Until the specific biological impacts are quantified and feasible mitigation is identified, this impact would remain significant.

Mitigation

Mitigation measures Bio-3, Bio-4, and Bio-5, as listed earlier, would reduce the severity of impacts to coastal lagoons but may not fully mitigate the cumulative impact to coastal resources.

Finding

For the significant impact to coastal lagoons resulting from I-5 widening and coastal rail double-tracking, the Finding is made that even with implementation of the appropriate mitigation measures, the impact would not be fully mitigated. Once the potential impact is quantified, specific mitigation may be feasible and could possibly mitigate the impact to below a level of significance. However, until this is accomplished, the impact to coastal lagoons would remain significant and unavoidable. Therefore, specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures. As discussed in Section 4.10 of the EIR, the impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

Cumulative Biological Resources

Significant Impacts

Cumulative impacts to native grasslands would remain significant since the habitat is not significantly conserved through programs such as the MSCP. Individual impacts of projects, such as coastal rail double-tracking across lagoons, could be mitigated; however, there is potential that this impact may not be reduced to below a level of significance. Loss of any riparian (wetland) habitat is considered cumulatively significant and not potentially mitigable. Indirect impacts such as ongoing air, noise, light, and water pollution to sensitive wildlife are considered significant and not fully mitigable.

Mitigation

There are no feasible mitigation measures that would mitigate potential impacts to native grasslands, loss of riparian wetlands including lagoons, or indirect effects to sensitive wildlife to below a level of significance yet continue to allow the 2030 RTP to meet its stated mobility goals. These impacts would remain cumulative significant and unmitigable.

Finding

For the significant cumulative impacts to native grasslands, riparian wetlands including lagoons, or indirect effects to sensitive wildlife due to the 2030 RTP and other regional projects, the Finding is made that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures. As discussed in Section 5.1 of the EIR, these cumulative impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

SECTION IV

FINDINGS REGARDING SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR must address any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused if the proposed project were implemented (CEQA Guidelines §15126.2). An impact would come under this category if (1) the project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources; (2) the primary and secondary impacts of the project

would generally commit future generations to similar uses; (3) the project involves uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental incidents associated with the project; and (4) the proposed consumption of resources is not justified.

Implementation of the 2030 RTP would result in permanent changes to the existing environment, which have been recognized in other sections of the EIR. The conversion of undeveloped and agricultural land to urbanized uses through construction of new facilities on undeveloped land and the surrounding land is considered a permanent, irreversible change. Biological habitat fragmentation could occur with the construction of linear transportation facilities, including both highway and fixed rail alignments. These changes would be irreversible. The 2030 RTP is based on smart growth land use policies that focus future growth near existing urban areas and could change community character and create a demand for the development of new infrastructure, services, schools, parks, and other community facilities in the affected areas. Implementation of projects proposed in the 2030 RTP would involve the consumption of energy derived from nonrenewable sources, such as fossil and nuclear fuels. Building materials could be considered permanently consumed, although these might be partially recyclable at some future date.

SECTION V

FINDINGS REGARDING GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

CEQA guidelines (§15126.2(d)) require a discussion of growth-inducing impacts of the proposed Project. A project may be considered growth inducing when it:

- Fosters economic growth, population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment;
- Removes obstacles to population growth or additional housing;
- Burdens existing community service facilities beyond current/projected capacities; or
- Encourages or facilitates other activities that could significantly affect the environment.

Growth is generally dependent on the availability of existing utilities and public services in an area. The provision of new utilities and services in an undeveloped area can induce growth in that area. Such growth may or may not be anticipated in local land use planning documents. If a project stimulates development of urban uses, it would have a significant growth-inducing effect. Growth inducement also can occur if the proposed Project makes it more feasible to increase the density of development in surrounding areas. Growth may be considered beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment, depending on its actual impacts to the environmental resources present and the secondary effects growth may have on the resources.

Overall, the 2030 RTP is designed to serve the planned growth for the region through a smart growth land use scenario. Based on the discussion above, some of the land use policies and new transportation facilities recommended in the 2030 RTP could be defined as growth inducing by increasing development density. Smart growth policies encourage higher-density residential uses, employment centers, and mixed-use development adjacent to transit centers and transit corridors.

Growth inducement through smart growth policies could be considered beneficial because it reduces potential sprawl and development of existing open areas. More intense growth could create land use impacts if the new higher-intensity development is not designed to be compatible with surrounding existing development if public facilities and infrastructure are not built to meet increased demand.

Growth-inducing impacts also would result from the provision of roadways in areas where access did not previously exist. Certain projects proposed in the 2030 RTP, such as State Route (SR) 11, would create a new roadway in an area that was not previously accessible, thus removing impediments to development. However, the 2030 RTP does not include other facilities or infrastructure, such as sewer or water lines that would be necessary for future development.

The 2030 RTP focuses on transportation policies given an assumed level of growth that will occur with or without implementation of its policies and actions. These policies work towards reducing the impact of growth on the region and providing beneficial improvements to regional transportation geared towards smart growth development patterns.

SECTION VI

FINDINGS REGARDING ALTERNATIVES

The SANDAG Board of Directors hereby declares that it has considered and rejected as infeasible the alternatives identified in the EIR and described below. CEQA requires that an EIR evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to a project, or to the location of the Project, that (1) offers substantial environmental advantages over the Project proposal and (2) may be feasibly accomplished in such a manner in which a reasonable period of time considered the economic, environmental, social, and technological factors involved. An EIR must only evaluate reasonable alternatives to a project that could feasibly attain most of the project objectives and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives (CEQA Guidelines §15126.6(a)). In all cases, the consideration of the alternative is to be judged against a rule of reason. The lead agency is not required to choose the environmentally superior alternative identified in the EIR if the alternative does not provide substantial advantages over the proposed Project, and (1) through the imposition of mitigation measures the environmental effects of a project can be reduced to an acceptable level, or (2) there are social, economic, technological, or other considerations that make the alternative infeasible.

The purpose of the proposed 2030 RTP is to provide plan-level improvements for such transportation elements as new and widened freeways, new transit features, expanded HOV opportunities, and regional bikeway corridors, while reflecting the existing trends for the San Diego region in terms of modified land use patterns and a greatly improved transit system through the year 2030. At the core of the 2030 RTP are seven broad policy goals, including Mobility, Accessibility, Reliability, Efficiency, Livability, Sustainability, and Equity. The most important goal is to improve Mobility by better moving people and goods and thereby reducing congestion.

The EIR considered the following five alternatives to the proposed 2030 RTP: (1) No Project, (2) Transit Emphasis Alternative, (3) Highway Emphasis Alternative (Smart Growth), (4) Highway Emphasis Alternative (Current Plans), and (5) Revenue Constrained Alternative. These five alternatives are described in more detail below and can be found in Chapter 7.0 of the EIR.

No Project Alternative

Description

The No Project Alternative, as required by CEQA, addresses the potential effects of developing only the baseline network of transportation projects (highway, transit, local roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian) that are considered committed projects. These projects are identified in the Fiscal Year 2002 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) or have otherwise committed funding. The EIR provides a table that defines the key transit and highway improvements that would occur under this alternative. The baseline network would involve some improvements, but there would be fewer new roads and those that would be widened would have fewer lanes than under other alternatives. Additionally, the No Project Alternative assumes a future land use scenario consistent with the smart growth plans that are currently in the process of being completed for large areas of the region. By 2030, the No Project Alternative would involve construction of approximately 230 freeway lane miles, 40 lane miles for carpools, and over 600 lane miles of arterials. The number of transit revenue miles would decrease from the existing condition.

Finding

The No Project Alternative would not meet the goal of Mobility, because it would result in the worst future congestion of all the five alternatives. This alternative does not work to improve equity or increase accessibility to public transit. In addition, the No Project Alternative may result in inconsistencies with smart growth planning efforts due to lesser transit options. SANDAG finds that the No Project Alternative is infeasible because it does not meet the project goals and objectives of the 2030 RTP.

Transit Emphasis Alternative

Description

Under the Transit Emphasis Alternative, funds would be spent primarily on transit capital expenses, a large part on transit operating expenses, and the remainder on transit projects in the highway system (e.g., managed lanes). Extensive transit systems would cover the central urban core, link the major freeways, and extend eastward on I-8 and SR 67. This system would be based in part on light rail trolley and fixed-rail improvements, but would rely heavily on expansion and improvement of the mobile bus system. Transit revenue miles would be over 280,000 greater than under existing conditions, and about 90,000 greater than the next highest network. The emphasis on transit could reduce the need for parking at key attractions (e.g., shopping malls), if people were to shift away from single-occupancy vehicles. The total number of freeway lane miles would increase from existing conditions by approximately 467 lane miles, which would be greater than the No Project scenario, but less than the Project. Two freeway connectors would be completed: widening I-5 north to SR 78 east and construction of SR 56 east to I-15 northbound. Carpool lanes would increase substantially as compared to either the existing conditions or the No Project Alternative. The future land use pattern is based on implementing smart growth policies.

Finding

The Transit Emphasis Alternative would likely have incrementally fewer impacts to land-based resources, such as biology and geology, and is considered the environmentally superior alternative, because it would have comparatively less new construction than the other alternatives. However, because more of the focus would be placed on improving transit systems on existing roads instead of building or expanding roads to accommodate cars, carpools, buses, and trucks, this alternative

would not fully meet the Mobility objectives. SANDAG finds that the Transit Emphasis Alternative would be infeasible because it would not fully accomplish the Mobility goals and objectives of the 2030 RTP.

Highway Emphasis Alternative (Smart Growth)

Description

The Highway Emphasis Alternative would focus funds on construction of highways, while maintaining transit-dedicated funds consistent with state and federal directives. Transit would be focused on key corridors north-south (I-5, I-15) and east-west (I-8, SR 78). The Sorrento Mesa transitway would not be constructed, nor would there be double-tracking of the Oceanside-Escondido rail. Other grade-separations also would not be completed. The total number of freeway lane miles would increase by over 1,100 from existing conditions, which would be approximately 300 lane miles greater than the next closest non-highway alternative. The number of carpool lane miles would be only 15 greater than under the No Project Alternative. Under this scenario, the land use pattern would reflect smart growth consistent with the 2030 RTP.

Finding

The Highway Emphasis Alternative (Smart Growth), along with the Highway Emphasis Alternative (Current Plans), would result in the greatest environmental impacts of the proposed alternatives. Therefore, this alternative would result in a larger number of significant unmitigable impacts compared to the other alternatives and the proposed Project. It also would not achieve as much increased access to public transit. SANDAG finds that the Highway Emphasis Alternative would be infeasible because it would not fully accomplish the Mobility goals and objectives of the 2030 RTP.

Highway Emphasis Alternative (Current Plans)

Description

Under this alternative, the transportation network would be almost identical to the Highway Emphasis Alternative (Smart Growth), but the land use pattern would be different. The land use pattern difference would result in variations in performance measurements, particularly regarding proximity to transit opportunities and employment/school, because the future growth would spread over a larger area and would be less focused on mixing residential/employment/educational uses. This alternative is included to provide a quantifiable comparison of the same network overlaid on different land use patterns (Smart Growth and Current Plans). Similarly, the other alternatives provide the opportunity to compare network variations with a constant land use assumption (Smart Growth).

Finding

Because of all the new construction that would occur under this alternative, the Highway Emphasis Alternative (Current Plans) would result in the most environmental impacts of all the proposed alternatives, followed closely by the Highway Emphasis Alternative (Smart Growth). This alternative would result in a large number of significant unmitigable impacts compared to the other alternatives and the proposed Project. SANDAG finds that the Highway Emphasis Alternative (Current Plans) would be infeasible because it would not fully accomplish the Mobility goals and objectives of the 2030 RTP.

Revenue Constrained Alternative

Description

The Revenue Constrained Alternative develops a transportation network given only known funding sources and assumes flexible funding sources, such as an extension of the half-percent *TransNet* sales tax program, would not be available. Given the reduced funds, fewer capital projects would be completed by 2030. The total freeway lane miles would increase by 583 miles from existing conditions, but only by about 313 miles more than with the No Project Alternative. This alternative would have a greater emphasis on carpool opportunities than the Highway Emphasis Alternative, but less emphasis on transit than the Transit Emphasis Alternative. The land use pattern for this alternative is assumed to be smart growth.

Finding

The Revenue Constrained Alternative would focus on improving highway travel and would not emphasize transit opportunities. Because transit improvements would be minimal, this alternative would not completely satisfy goals to improve Mobility. Therefore, SANDAG finds that the Revenue Constrained Alternative would not fully meet the Mobility goals and objectives of the 2030 RTP.

STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE 2030 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Board of Directors adopts and makes this statement of overriding considerations concerning the Project's unavoidable significant impacts to explain why the Project's benefits override and outweigh its unavoidable impacts.

SANDAG hereby declares that the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has identified and discussed significant effects that may occur as a result of the Project. With implementation of the mitigation measures discussed in the EIR, these effects can be mitigated to a level of less than significant except for irreversible significant impacts as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Attachment 1A). Significant unavoidable and unmitigable impacts would occur to visual and biological resources, and there would be cumulatively significant impacts to land use, visual resources, water resources, and biological resources.

SANDAG hereby declares that it has made a reasonable and good faith effort to eliminate or substantially mitigate the potential impacts resulting from the Project.

SANDAG hereby declares that to the extent any mitigation measures recommended in the EIR could not be incorporated, such mitigation measures are infeasible because they would impose restrictions on the Project that would prohibit the realization of specific legal, economic, social, and other benefits that SANDAG finds outweighs the unmitigated impacts. SANDAG further finds that except for the Project, all other alternatives set forth in the EIR are infeasible because they would prohibit the realization of Project objectives and/or of specific legal, economic, social, and other benefits that SANDAG finds outweigh any environmental benefits of the alternatives.

SANDAG hereby declares that, having reduced the adverse significant environmental effects of the Project to the extent feasible by adopting the proposed mitigation measures, having considered the entire administrative record on the Project, and having weighed the benefits of the Project against its unavoidable adverse impacts after mitigation, SANDAG has determined that the following legal, economic, social, and environmental benefits of the Project outweigh the potential unavoidable adverse impacts and render those potential adverse environmental impacts acceptable based upon the following considerations:

Project Benefits

At the core of the 2030 RTP are seven broad policy goals that address the project's long-term mobility needs to better connect transportation and land use policy decisions and to create a transportation network that would serve the region through the year 2030. The 2030 RTP achieves these goals in the following manner:

- The 2030 RTP achieves increased Mobility by improving the movement of people and goods. Average travel times are one minute longer than current conditions, even with one million more people and half million more jobs in 2030. The average automobile travel speed for work trips during peak periods would be 28.3 miles per hour (mph) under the 2030 RTP

network. Commuters using the extensive Managed/HOV lane system will benefit from the higher average speeds.

- Average travel speed also would be improved for transit travel under the 2030 RTP. Transit work trips are 4 miles per hour faster than current conditions with an average speed of 13.8 mph.
- The 2030 RTP improves the Reliability of the transportation system by reducing congestion of the freeway network. The 2030 RTP would reduce the percentage of daily vehicle miles traveled at LOS E (or worse) from 20 percent under current conditions to 17 percent.
- The 2030 RTP also would benefit freeway congestion during peak periods. The 2030 RTP's peak period vehicle miles traveled at LOS E (or worse) would be 25 percent, which is 4 percent less compared to current conditions. This would improve Accessibility to major employment and other regional activity centers.
- The 2030 RTP would reduce the peak-period travel by single-occupant vehicles and encourage the use of alternative transportation modes. The proposed project provides support for alternative modes of transportation. The 2030 RTP would result in 63 percent of homes within 0.5 mile of a transit stop. The significant expansion of regional transit services would increase the transit ridership; daily transit passenger miles (5.2 million) are three times higher compared to current conditions. In addition, 45 percent of jobs will be located within 0.25 mile of a transit stop.
- The 2030 RTP would result in a higher work trip mode split during peak periods among carpool, transit, and bike/walk trips (measures of Livability). Under Mobility 2030, 27 percent of peak period work trips would be non-drive-alone trips, whereas currently, only 22 percent are non-drive-alone trips. The mode split for transit in the 2030 RTP is 11 percent.
- The 2030 RTP would better improve access to employment, shopping, and services in all parts of the region. The proposed project would bring home, work, and services together and help eliminate the need for long commuter trips. This is consistent with SANDAG's regional growth management strategy effort, REGION2020 and concepts being develop for the Regional Comprehensive Plan, and with the 2030 Preliminary Cities/County Forecast as well as the movement of local jurisdictions to a smart growth land use pattern.
- The 2030 RTP would provide a well-balanced mix of freeway and arterial improvements to reduce regional and local congestion and transit improvements to increase ridership and provide enhanced public transportation opportunities.
- Air quality emissions in 2030 are dramatically reduced compared to current conditions, reflecting improvement in fuels and emissions technologies over time. Smog forming pollutants would be reduced from 244 tons per day for current conditions to 43.4 tons/day under the 2030 RTP.

SANDAG hereby declares that the foregoing benefits provided to the public through approval and implementation of the EIR outweighs the identified significant adverse environmental impacts of the Project that cannot be mitigated. SANDAG finds that each of the Project benefits outweighs the unavoidable adverse environmental effects identified in the EIR, and therefore finds those impacts acceptable.

**FINDING ADOPTING A MITIGATION MONITORING
AND REPORTING PROGRAM
FOR THE 2030 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared for the Project and has been adopted concurrently with these Findings (Public Resources Code, §21081.6(a)(1)). The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) will use the MMRP to track compliance with Project mitigation measures. The MMRP will remain available for public review during the compliance period.

Introduction

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that public agencies adopting Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) take affirmative steps to determine that approved mitigation measures are implemented subsequent to project approval. The lead or responsible agency must adopt a reporting and monitoring program for the mitigation measures incorporated into a project or included as conditions of approval. The program must be designed to ensure compliance with the EIR during project implementation [Public Resources Code, §20181.6, subdivision (a)(1)].

This MMRP will be used by SANDAG, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), transit agencies, and other local jurisdictions to ensure compliance with mitigation measures associated with the adoption of the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). SANDAG is the lead agency under CEQA for the project.

Mitigation is required to address significant or potentially significant environmental impacts to Land Use (open space and resource lands), Social Environment (displacement), Noise, Geology, Paleontology, Water Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Visual Resources. In some cases, the residual impacts remain significant even after mitigation measures are incorporated.

No impacts or less than significant impacts would occur to Land Use (patterns and planned land uses), Social Environment, Visual Resources (short-term construction), Traffic (regional system), Energy, Mineral Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Public Services, Utilities and Service Systems, Recreation, Environmental Justice, and Air Quality; therefore, no mitigation is proposed or required.

FINDING REGARDING LOCATION AND CUSTODIAN OF RECORD

The documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings on which SANDAG's Findings of Fact are based are located at 401 B Street, Suite 800, San Diego, California 92101. The custodian of these documents is Rob Rundle, Senior Regional Planner. This information is provided in compliance with Public Resources Code §21081.6(a)(2) and 14 Cal. Code Regs. §15091(e).

For purposes of CEQA at these Findings, the Record of Proceedings for the Project consists of the following documents, at a minimum:

- The Notice of Preparation and all other public notices issued by SANDAG and in conjunction with the Project.
- The Draft and Final EIRs, including appendices and technical studies included or referenced in the Draft and Final EIRs.
- All comments submitted by agencies or members of the public during the 45-day public comment period on the Draft EIR.
- All comments and correspondence submitted to SANDAG with respect to the Project.
- The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project.
- All Findings and resolutions adopted by SANDAG decision makers in connection with the Project, and all documents cited or referred to therein.
- All reports, studies, memoranda, maps, staff reports, or other planning documents relating to the Project prepared by EDAW, Inc., consultants to SANDAG, including the subconsultants retained by EDAW, Inc.
- All documents and information submitted to SANDAG by responsible, trustee, or other public agencies, or by individuals or organizations, in connection with the Project, up through the date the SANDAG Board of Directors approved the Project.
- Minutes and/or verbatim transcripts of all information sessions, public meetings, and public hearings held by SANDAG, in connection with the Project.
- Any documentary or other evidence submitted to SANDAG at such information sessions, public meetings, and public hearings.
- Matters of common knowledge to SANDAG, including, but not limited to federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- Any documents expressly cited in these Findings, in addition to those cited above.
- Any other materials required to be in the Record of Proceedings by Public Resources Code §21167.6(e).