



**TECHNICAL UPDATE TO THE SMART GROWTH  
CONCEPT MAP**

File Number 3000200

**Introduction**

In response to SANDAG adoption of the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and in anticipation of a call for projects for the *TransNet* Smart Growth Incentive Program (SGIP), SANDAG and the local jurisdictions have been working together to review and complete a technical update to the Smart Growth Concept Map (Attachment 1) and corresponding Site Descriptions (Attachment 2). In addition, in response to the Settlement Agreement on the 2030 RTP Environmental Impact Report, the Concept Map, and the site descriptions reflect additional information on timing and phasing of transit projects in the 2030 RTP.

**Recommendation**

The Regional Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Directors accept the updated Smart Growth Concept Map for use in the *TransNet* SGIP and for ongoing planning purposes.

This report summarizes the changes to the Concept Map, provides the most recently-updated versions of the regional and subregional maps, and contains the updated Site Descriptions. It also provides information on an issue pertaining to the Quarry Creek site in the City of Carlsbad.

**Discussion**

In 2004, the Board adopted the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), which provides an overall vision and policy framework for better connecting transportation and land use within the region, and promotes smart growth and sustainability as key principles. One of the RCP early actions was the development of a "Smart Growth Concept Map" illustrating the location of existing, planned, and potential smart growth areas for use in updating the RTP and determining eligibility for smart growth-related incentives. The Board of Directors accepted the original Smart Growth Concept Map in June 2006 for planning purposes for the 2030 RTP. SANDAG and the local jurisdictions worked collaboratively to prepare the initial map.

The Smart Growth Concept Map played an important role in the preparation of the 2030 RTP. The map identifies two types of designations for smart growth areas: "Existing/Planned," or "Potential." These designations are based on whether the areas meet certain housing, employment, and transportation targets identified in the RCP. These targets, along with updated 2030 transit service descriptions, are shown in Attachment 2.

The technical update of the Smart Growth Concept Map is important because the updated map will be used as a basis for determining local jurisdictions' eligibility to compete for smart growth incentives from the upcoming *TransNet* SGIP. While the criteria for the SGIP are still being developed, it is likely that "Existing/Planned" smart growth areas may qualify to compete for both capital infrastructure and planning grants, while "Potential" smart growth areas may be limited to competing for planning grants only.

## Summary of Changes to the Smart Growth Concept Map and Site Descriptions

The technical update of the Smart Growth Concept map has resulted in four general types of changes: (1) changes in status (from “Potential” to “Existing/Planned” and vice-versa); (2) changes in smart growth opportunity area boundaries; (3) refinements to transit service information; and (4) general edits.

### ***Changes in Status***

*a. Areas that have changed from “Potential” to “Existing/Planned” due to the addition of planned transit service in the 2030 RTP*

The new transit networks included in the Reasonably Expected Revenue scenario of the 2030 RTP have been added to the Smart Growth Concept Map. Previously, several smart growth areas had been designated as “Potential” based on their lack of existing or planned transit service, even though they met the land use targets identified in the RCP. During the preparation of the 2030 RTP, SANDAG used the map to prioritize the placement of regional transit and high-frequency local transit in these areas. Due to the addition of planned transit to these areas, the designation of the following “Potential” areas has changed to “Existing/Planned:”

- San Diego – Mira Mesa (SD-MM-6): Camino Santa Fe and Carroll Canyon Road
- San Diego – Ocean Beach Commercial Core (SD-OB-1): Between Niagara Avenue and Santa Monica Avenue
- San Diego – Peninsula (SD-PA-1): Rosecrans Street from Talbot Street to Laning Road/ Russell Street
- San Diego – Peninsula (SD-PA-2): Voltaire Street from Chatsworth Boulevard. to Catalina Boulevard
- San Diego – Serra Mesa (SD-SM-1): Gramercy Drive, Ruffin Road, Village Glen Drive, and Glencolum Drive

*b. Areas that have changed from “Potential” to “Existing/Planned” due to local land use changes*

SANDAG has been working with local jurisdictions to incorporate recent updates to local land use plans. The City of San Marcos recently adopted the San Marcos Creek Specific Plan, significantly increasing residential and employment intensity capacities within this smart growth area. As a result, San Marcos Creek Specific Planning Area (SM-4) now qualifies as an Existing/Planned Mixed Use Transit Corridor.

*c. Areas that have changed from “Existing/Planned” to “Potential” due to transit service changes*

The minimum level of transit service for Town Centers is regional transit service, or five-minute shuttle distance from regional stations. MOBILITY 2030, the previous RTP, included regional transit service over the San Diego-Coronado Bridge connecting 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets in Coronado to downtown San Diego and Sorrento Mesa. This regional service was connected to the downtown Coronado “Town Center” by a local transit connection within five minutes, allowing the Town Center to qualify as Existing/Planned. However, the regional transit service connecting Coronado to San Diego is not included in the updated 2030 RTP,

because the bulk of the ridership demand is concentrated between downtown San Diego and Sorrento Mesa. The removal of this regional transit service connecting to Coronado has resulted in the re-designation of the Coronado Town Center (CO-1) from Existing/Planned to Potential.

*d. Areas that have changed from “Existing/Planned” to “Potential” due to land use plans*

On the original Smart Growth Concept Map, most of the “Rural Villages” in the County of San Diego were shown as “Existing/Planned” smart growth opportunity areas. This designation was based on an assumption made at that time that the County Board of Supervisors was nearing adoption of General Plan 2020 (GP2020), and that the rural core areas in the draft County General Plan Update contained densities supportive of smart growth principles as identified in the RCP. Based on delays to the adoption of the County General Plan Update, SANDAG re-evaluated the status of the Rural Village core areas based on residential and employment capacities included in the County’s existing general plan. This resulted in the re-designation of two Rural Villages from Existing/Planned to Potential: Ramona (CN-5) and Alpine (CN-8). The status of these areas will be re-evaluated when the County Board of Supervisors approves the updated General Plan and/or when the Smart Growth Concept Map is next updated.

***Changes in Boundaries***

SANDAG has been working with Regional Planning Technical Working Group (TWG) members to identify any additions, deletions, and/or boundary changes to smart growth areas in their jurisdictions. None of the jurisdictions requested the addition of new areas or the deletion of existing areas on the map. However, several jurisdictions requested boundary changes, as listed below. These requests did not result in changes of status from Existing/Planned to Potential, or vice versa.

- Carlsbad Village COASTER Station (CB-3): Expanded to include the Barrio area immediately south
- Downtown Escondido (ES-1): Expanded boundaries of Downtown Specific Plan to the west, north, and east
- Downtown Lemon Grove (LG-3): Expanded boundaries westward
- Downtown National City (NC-1): Expanded boundaries westward
- National City (NC-2): Replaced previous potential Filipino Village Community Center with a new potential Mixed Use Transit Corridor along Plaza Boulevard from D Avenue to Euclid Avenue
- National City (NC-3): Extended Highland Avenue Mixed Use Transit Corridor to include Highland Avenue and the Sweetwater Road Transit Corridor
- Poway (PW-1): Expanded boundaries of Town Center area in various directions to better reflect local planning efforts
- San Marcos (SM-3): University Mixed Use Area: Expanded boundaries to include the University Village area
- Santee (ST-2): Moved this potential Community Center eastward

- Vista (VS-5): Replaced VS-5 potential Community Center at North Santa Fe Avenue and Bobier Avenue with a potential Mixed Use Transit Corridor along North Santa Fe Avenue from Orange Street to Weston Street

### ***Refinements to Transit Service Information***

#### *a. Addition of new transit services to the Map and to the Site Descriptions*

In response to the recent update of the 2030 RTP and the 2030 RTP Settlement Agreement to distinguish between funded and unfunded transit services, SANDAG staff has added the new transit service networks identified in the Reasonably Expected Revenue scenario of the 2030 RTP to the regional and subregional smart growth maps. Due to input resulting from the Settlement Agreement, the map legends now differentiate between two categories: (1) existing transit and programmed transit (transit funded in the short-term through the Regional Transportation Improvement Program), and (2) planned transit (transit which assumes funding in the longer term but does not yet have secured funding). To help make these distinctions more clearly, staff has added a column to the Site Descriptions providing information on the type of transit services (Rail, Bus Rapid Transit [BRT], Rapid Bus, and Local High-Frequency Bus), the status of those services (existing, programmed, or planned), and the phasing of the services in each smart growth area.

#### *b. Corresponding Transit Service for the "Community Center" Place Type*

The RCP calls for the "Community Center" place type to be served by regional or commuter transit service. However, during the formulation of the original Smart Growth Concept Map, it was decided that high-frequency local bus service could provide a sufficient level of transit service for this place type. Subsequently, the recently updated 2030 RTP has further refined the types of transit service that are included in the Transit Network plan to include both BRT/Rapid Bus and "high-frequency local bus service."

During the preparation of the 2030 RTP, SANDAG staff worked closely with transit planning staff from the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and the North County Transit District (NCTD) to prioritize local high-frequency transit services in the more heavily populated areas of the region. Transit routes and frequencies were increased in these populated areas, which are now represented on the Smart Growth Concept Map as "Transit Priority Areas." Staff has evaluated the applicability of these refined transit service types to the "Community Center" place type, and has recommended that "high-frequency local bus service" in these areas qualify as an appropriate minimum transit service level for Community Centers. The TWG and the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) support this approach.

### ***General Mapping Edits***

#### *a. Refinements to major employment areas*

Based on direction from the RPC, staff has incorporated the populated areas of the region's military facilities onto the map as "major employment areas." In addition, based on an updated regional employment density map, staff has added the following major employment areas: San Diego State University (SDSU), the Sabre Springs employment area, and the La Mesa Grossmont Center area. In general, the major employment areas on the map are defined as regionally-significant employment areas with average existing employment levels ranging between 50 and 500 employees per acre.

b. *Addition of "Transit Priority Area" layer*

As referenced above, a new overarching transit layer, labeled "Transit Priority Areas," has been added to the map indicating where existing/planned local high-frequency transit service appropriately serves the Community Center place type. The transit priority areas represent the NCTD and MTS efforts to prioritize local high-frequency transit services in the more heavily populated areas of the region. These areas were used in the preparation of the 2030 RTP and are now shown conceptually on the Smart Growth Concept Map.

**Additional Issues**

*Public Comments on Quarry Creek site in Carlsbad*

The Carlsbad Quarry Creek Potential Community Center (CB-2) is located directly south of State Route 78 in Carlsbad on the boundary of Carlsbad and Oceanside. In several forums, members of the public have asked that the proposed smart growth area be removed from the map due to its historic, cultural, and environmental significance. The speakers have stated that some of the area contains significant cultural, environmental, and habitat resources; that the El Salto Falls have been designated as a Native American sacred site; and that they believe that the loss of these resources through development could not be mitigated.

SANDAG staff has met with planning officials from the City of Carlsbad and various community representatives on several occasions to discuss the issues raised. Carlsbad staff has requested the retention of CB-2 on the map and has modified the site description to include the concerns raised by community members.

**Conclusion**

The technical update of the Smart Growth Concept Map has been conducted to ensure internal consistency of the transportation networks between the recently adopted 2030 RTP and the Smart Growth Concept Map, and in anticipation of a call for projects for the *TransNet* SGIP.

The RPC unanimously recommended that the Board accept this technical update. If the Board accepts this update, the revised Smart Growth Concept Map and corresponding Site Descriptions will be used to determine eligibility in the *TransNet* SGIP, and will be posted to the SANDAG Web site in an "interactive" format, as currently available online. In an effort to promote smart growth opportunities and incentives in these areas, local jurisdictions will be encouraged to provide this information on their local Web sites and through their local planning documents.

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Attachments: 1. Regional and Subregional-Scale Smart Growth Concept Map  
2. Site Descriptions

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Funds are budgeted in Work Element #3000200