Notice of Request for Comments – Proposed Amendments to Board Policy No. 018-Regional Transit Service Planning and Implementation

SANDAG is in the process of circulating a draft of proposed revisions to Board Policy No. 18 for review and comment by two of its Policy Advisory Committees and the public. The proposed revisions can be found below. The revisions are being proposed in order to update the policy to clarify the process SANDAG uses to conduct equity analyses for transit fare changes to be incorporated in the Regional Comprehensive Fare Ordinance. Specifically, the policy will document the threshold of significance SANDAG will use to determine if a fare change will cause low income or minority populations to bear an unequal proportion of any adverse effects that could result from the fare change. These analyses are required by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898.

The threshold of significance that is proposed for comment is 10%. This means that if after analyzing the impacts of a fare change on low income and minority communities to non-low income and non-minority populations in the affected transit service area, the statistics show that low income or minority populations will suffer 10% or higher adverse impacts than non-low income and minority populations, then SANDAG would be required to look at alternatives and mitigating factors. The 10% threshold is being proposed for the following reasons:

- The US Supreme Court has held that differences of less than 20% when conducting a disparity analysis are within the range of differences that can occur by mere chance.

- Use of a 10% threshold would be consistent with informal thresholds used by SANDAG on past fare change equity analyses.

- A peer analysis of other agencies shows that a majority of other agencies nationwide have set a threshold of significance that is higher than 10%, and that most are within the range of 5% to 20%.

- The Federal Transit Administration Title VI Circular provides only one example for agencies as guidance in selecting a threshold of significance and that example is 10%.

- The Federal Transit Administration requires agencies to report data with 10% precision at the 95% confidence level. As long as the data reported is within that threshold, the data is assumed to be valid.

SANDAG is seeking comments from the public on the draft changes to Board Policy No. 018. If you would like to provide comments, please attend the Transportation Committee meeting at SANDAG at 9:00 AM on Friday, March 15, 2013; the Executive Committee meeting at SANDAG at 9:00 AM on Friday, April 12, 2013, or the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee meeting at SANDAG on Monday, March 18, 2013 at 10 AM. You may also provide your comments using the information below by no later than 5:00 PM on Monday, April 8, 2013.

Email Comments to: info@sandag.org

Leave Voicemail Comments at: (619) 595-5358
REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

This policy specifies the transit service planning and transit development project planning responsibilities of SANDAG (the consolidated agency) and the transit agencies (Metropolitan Transit System and North San Diego County Transit Development Board), and outlines a framework for transit service planning and roles and responsibilities for project development planning. Figure 1.1 includes a flow chart, based on the framework that documents the processes for transit service planning and implementation, for new services and adjustments to existing services. Figure 1.2 identifies the lead and support (active participant) agency responsibilities for both long and short-range transit service planning and development project planning.

This policy will allow the transit system to quickly and efficiently respond to changes in travel demand and operating/fiscal environment, while ensuring that the system is adjusted and developed consistent with longer range regional transportation and land use goals as incorporated into the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), the Regional Transportation Plan and its Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP), the TransNet Ordinance, and the Regional Short Range Transit Plan (RSRTP), or any other regional planning or legislative documents concerning regional projects (collectively referred to in this Policy as “Regional Planning Documents”). As a result, transit service changes that relate directly to implementation of regional policies, goals, and objectives (service changes with regional significance) are generally those that:

- Serve regional travel demand corridors that cross transit agency jurisdictional boundaries;
- Significantly affect passenger trip making (as defined by the guidelines contained in the RSRTP; for example, would be found to potentially have a detrimental impact on geographic connections, timed transfers, and the frequency/service span consistency of such services);
- Require additional regional operating funds above the overall transit agency-adopted budget and projected budget capacity; and
- Affect the policies, projects, services and facilities included in the RTP, RCP, and TransNet Ordinance Regional Planning Documents.

Agency Responsibilities - SANDAG and transit agency responsibilities are described below and further specified in Figure 1.2. There is an inherent overlap of some of the responsibilities between SANDAG and the transit agencies in conducting transit service planning and development project planning, as exhibited in Figure 1.2. In addition, SANDAG responsibilities pursuant to the Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients (Circular 4702.1B) and Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients (Circular 4703.1) should be coordinated with the related Title VI responsibilities of the transit agencies. Therefore, all planning responsibilities shall be conducted with coordination and consultation between SANDAG and the transit agencies. SANDAG responsibilities are described below in Sections 1.1 and 1.2. Transit agency responsibilities are described in Section 1.3.
1.1 **SANDAG Planning Responsibilities** – carried out in collaboration with the transit agencies:

1.1.1 Prepare long-range transit plans and corridor studies as part of the RTP consistent with Regional Planning Documents.

1.1.2 Prepare, no less often than every two years, the five-year RSRTP and Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan that: (1) establishes the goals and objectives for short-range transit services and human services transportation; (2) defines the existing transit and human services transportation system; (3) sets the framework for a transit operations performance monitoring program as required by the Transportation Development Act and a monitoring program for human services transportation as defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); (4) identifies transit and human service gaps and deficiencies; (5) evaluates existing transit and human services transportation services and programs; (6) establishes parameters for short-range (0-5 years) new and revised service development, as well as regionally significant and all other service adjustments; (7) defines a methodology for evaluating proposals for new and revised service; (8) identifies and prioritizes regional and subarea transit planning studies; and (9) evaluates and prioritizes new and revised services for implementation, including the adoption of an annual Regional Service Implementation Plan. SANDAG will initially maintain the existing service concepts upon which the service is based in order to preserve and improve mobility. FY 2003 budgeted revenue hours/miles will be considered as minimum levels of service for each transit agency and will assume with the addition of net service levels to be added upon completion of the SPRINT and Mission Valley East rail projects. If future funding shortfalls occur, necessitating cutbacks in service, then there will be a regionwide process of examination of service levels in order to ensure that service reductions are equitably distributed.

1.1.3 Conduct regional and subarea planning studies as prioritized in the RSRTP, RTP, and RCP Regional Planning Documents.

1.1.4 Develop proposals and service plans for new services or for service adjustments with regional significance, with active participation from the transit agencies, in response to changes in regional travel demand, to address regional service gaps and deficiencies, and to implement plans and programs identified in Regional Planning Documents RTP, RCP, RSRTP, and the TransNet Ordinance.

1.1.5 Plan, locate, and design transit infrastructure and facilities (stations, priority treatments, supporting facilities, etc.) for regionally significant transit projects and services identified in the RTP, RCP, RSRTP, and the TransNet Ordinance, Regional Planning Documents with active participation from the transit agencies.

1.1.6 Develop proposals for new and revised services to be included in the Regional Service Implementation Plan.
1.1.7 Ensure that all new and revised services and service adjustments of regional significance are consistent with the goals and objectives of the RSRTP.

1.1.8 Coordinate with transit agencies to provide community outreach and conduct market research.

1.1.9 Conduct regional performance monitoring to provide input into the RSRTP and other short-range transit studies. The regional performance monitoring will be based on the type of service and type of service area. Any net service reduction in a specific transit agency area resulting from the service evaluation process that takes that transit agency below its FY 03 service level (pursuant to Section 1.1.2) will be reprogrammed to that transit agency service area for other improvements up to the FY 03 base level of service.

1.1.10 Provide technical assistance to transit operators for local route planning.

1.1.11 Prepare Environmental Justice or Title VI reports in accordance with the most current versions of the SANDAG Title VI Analysis Methodology for Service Changes or the Title VI Analysis Methodology for Fare Changes, which shall be posted to the SANDAG Web site, as required by federal regulations covering requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and transit agencies, including all of the following circumstances:

1.1.11.1 At least once every three years or when a new federal census is available; and

1.1.11.2 Prior to the implementation by SANDAG of any new transit service constituting a Major Service Change as defined in the SANDAG Title VI Analysis Methodology for Service Changes; and

1.1.11.3 Upon the transition of a temporary, experimental, or promotional fare to a regular fare, in which case SANDAG may adopt in full or in part any Title VI analysis conducted by the transit agency when the temporary fare was originally implemented.

1.1.12 Develop and update, as required, with input from the transit agencies, the Coordinated Transportation Plan for San Diego County as required by SAFETEA-LU legislation. SANDAG also will manage the competitive process for granting FTA funds available as a result of production of a Coordinated Transportation Plan.

1.1.13 Participate in development of transit vehicle specifications for vehicles acquired for regionally significant projects and services that are funded through projects identified in the RTP and the TransNet Ordinance Regional Planning Documents.

1.1.14 Collaborate with the transit agencies on a branding framework, compatible with the transit agencies’ individual branding programs, that incorporates regionally significant projects and services identified in the RTP,
1.2 **SANDAG FTA Responsibilities** - carried out in collaboration with the transit agencies:

1.2.1 **Fare Changes.** SANDAG recognizes that the revenues generated from customer fares are a critical part of the respective transit agencies achieving a balanced budget that supports the provision of the highest levels of services. To the maximum extent possible, SANDAG will conduct its analyses in a manner that is consistent with the budget goals established by the transit agencies while adhering to the requirements specified by the FTA. SANDAG will evaluate, prior to implementation in the Fare Ordinance, all fare changes, to determine whether those changes will have a disparate impact on minorities (based on race, color, or national origin) or result in a disproportionate burden on low-income persons. SANDAG will prepare Environmental Justice or Title VI reports in accordance with SANDAG disparate impact and disproportionate burden analysis methodologies, which are defined below.

1.2.1.1 SANDAG will determine the existence of disparate impacts to minority populations for all Fare Ordinance changes. Disparate impacts are found when there is a difference in adverse effects between minority and non-minority areas of ten percent (10%) or more. Minority populations will be deemed adversely effected when the proportion of minority persons adversely affected by the change exceeds the average proportion of minority persons in the analysis service area. If SANDAG, in consultation with the transit operators, chooses to implement a proposed fare change in the Fare Ordinance despite a finding of disparate impact on minority populations, or if SANDAG finds in consultation with the transit operators, even after the revisions, that minority populations will continue to bear a disproportionate share of the adverse effects of a proposed fare change, SANDAG may implement the fare change only if:

1.2.1.1.1 There is a substantial legitimate justification for the proposed fare change, and

1.2.1.1.2 A finding is made that there are no alternatives that would have a less disparate impact on minority populations and still accomplish the legitimate goals of the fare change.

1.2.1.2 SANDAG will determine the existence of disproportionate burdens on low-income populations for all Fare Ordinance changes. Disproportionate burdens are found when there is a difference in adverse effects between low-income and non-low income populations of ten percent (10%) or more. Low-income populations will be deemed adversely effected when the proportion of low-
income persons (using a threshold of at or below 150 percent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines) adversely effected exceeds the average proportion of low-income persons in the analysis service area. If SANDAG chooses, in consultation with the transit operators, to implement a proposed fare change in the Fare Ordinance despite a finding of disproportionate burden on low income ridership, or if SANDAG finds in consultation with the transit operators, even after the revisions, that low income riders will continue to bear a disproportionate burden due to the proposed fare change, SANDAG may implement the fare change only if the transit agency(ies) show that they will:

1.2.1.1 1.2.1.2.1 Take steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts where practicable, and
1.2.1.2.2 Provide a description of alternatives available to low-income populations affected by the fare changes

1.2.2 Reporting. SANDAG will prepare Title VI reports in accordance with this policy, which shall be posted to the SANDAG Web site, as required by FTA for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and transit agencies.

1.2.3 Service Changes. SANDAG will notify the transit agencies of any service changes that may be required as a result of New Start, Small Start, or other new transit capital projects that will be constructed by SANDAG in adequate time to allow the transit agency(ies) to conduct a service change equity analysis at least six months prior to the beginning of revenue operations. SANDAG will provide information and cooperate with the transit agency(ies) on any service change equity analyses that are needed as a result of such construction.

1.3 Transit Agency Responsibilities - carried out in collaboration with SANDAG:

1.2.1 1.3.1 Develop service and schedule adjustments to ensure system optimization and to respond to immediate operational issues (e.g., detours, overcrowding, on-time performance, and minor out-of-direction routing changes).

1.2.2 1.3.2 Conduct local transit studies and analyses within the transit agency's service area in response to changes in local travel demand, to address service gaps and deficiencies, to develop service reductions/efficiencies, to address operating budget deficits, and to address goals and implement plans developed in the RSRTP.

1.2.3 1.3.3 Develop proposals for new and revised services to be included in the Regional Service Implementation Plan.

1.2.4 1.3.4 Develop proposals to reallocate unproductive resources to implement unfunded services identified as high priority in the Regional Service Implementation Plan or consistent with the RSRTP.
1.2.5 1.3.5 Develop a public input process and hold required public hearings for service changes. The transit agencies should ensure that the public input process for public hearings on service changes would be conducted in a manner to facilitate public input from the affected area.

1.2.6 1.3.6 Develop marketing and branding programs for the transit services within its jurisdiction and collaborate with SANDAG on a compatible branding framework that incorporates regionally significant projects and services identified in Regional Planning Documents, the RTP, RCP, RSRTP, and the TransNet Ordinance. The transit agencies and SANDAG will undertake a study to develop a mutually agreed upon branding framework for the region.

1.2.7 1.3.7 Provide community outreach and conduct market research, in coordination with SANDAG.

1.2.8 1.3.8 Develop operating plans for special event transit service and service contingencies.

1.2.9 1.3.9 Monitor existing operations and services to provide input into service analyses and short-range transit studies.

1.2.10 1.3.10 Conduct bus stop location planning.

1.2.11 1.3.11 Implement service, including scheduling, run-cutting, operations, contract services, service management, and labor contract administration.

1.2.12 1.3.12 Provide input on long- and short-range transit plans, and regional performance monitoring.

1.2.13 1.3.13 Prepare interim Environmental Justice or Title VI reports for transit agency-implemented system changes that affect over 25 percent of the transit service hours as if a service addition or change will last longer than twelve months and qualifies as a major service change, or if a New Starts, Small Starts, or other new fixed guideway capital project is proposed, conduct a service change equity analysis consistent with the FTA Circulars if required by FTA federal regulations for transit agencies, and provide the reports to SANDAG and the federal government FTA.

1.2.14 1.3.14 Actively participate in the development of service plans for service adjustments with regional significance, in response to changes in regional travel demand, to address regional service gaps and deficiencies and to implement plans and programs identified in RTP, RCP, RSRTP, and the TransNet Ordinance Regional Planning Documents.

1.2.15 1.3.15 Actively participate in the planning, location and design of transit infrastructure and facilities (stations, priority treatments, supporting facilities, etc.) for regionally significant transit projects and services identified in the RTP, RCP, RSRTP, and the TransNet Ordinance Regional Planning Documents.
1.2.16 Develop transit vehicle specifications, with active participation from SANDAG, for vehicles for all service types, including local bus, shuttles, bus rapid transit, rail, and others.

1.3.17 Conduct a fare equity analysis for promotional or temporary fare changes when required by FTA and provide the analysis to SANDAG in the event the fare change must be incorporated into the Fare Ordinance.

2. **Transit Service Planning Framework** - This framework allows the transit system to quickly and efficiently respond to changes in travel demand and operating/fiscal environment, while ensuring that the system is adjusted and developed consistent with longer range regional transportation and land use goals.

**Step 1: Guidance**

A RSRTP, consistent with SANDAG’s RTP and RCP, will be drafted annually by SANDAG, with active participation from the transit agencies. The RSRTP will establish goals and objectives and provide guidance for service planning during the upcoming year and will balance the immediate needs of optimizing the transit system in response to operational and financial constraints, with the mid- and long-range system development goals established in the long-range plans.

**Step 2: Develop Service Adjustments**

Throughout the year, transit agency and SANDAG staff develop proposals, in accordance with the RSRTP, to adjust existing services and develop new services. These service adjustments help to optimize existing services, reflect changes to the operating and fiscal environment, respond to customer comments and requests, and begin to implement and support services envisioned in the long-range plans. Service adjustments can be a result of such things as schedule analysis, trip and route level evaluation, and subregional and regional transit studies. Service adjustments with regional significance should be developed as collaborative efforts between SANDAG and transit agency staff.

**Step 3: Evaluation and Approval**

Prior to approval for implementation, all service adjustments should be:

- Consistent with the RSRTP;

- Presented for public hearing in the impacted service area if required by SANDAG, the appropriate transit agency, or by FTA policies and regulations; and

- Fully funded either through a reallocation of resources or as part of the budget process.
Service adjustments with regional significance should be endorsed by the appropriate transit agency and determined to be consistent with regional policies, goals and objectives by SANDAG prior to public hearing and implementation, while local and minor service adjustments may be approved for implementation by the transit agencies after advising SANDAG of the proposed changes.

**Step 4: Implementation**

As a general practice, service changes should be implemented during a regularly scheduled service change date (scheduled for winter, springfall, and summer). Implementation of major service changes should be preceded by community outreach, a marketing campaign, and public notices, as appropriate. Service implementation is the responsibility of the transit agencies.

**Step 5: Monitoring**

Performance monitoring will be conducted on an ongoing basis to evaluate new and existing services and service adjustments. SANDAG will monitor the transit system performance on a systemwide and transit agency level on an annual and quarterly basis. Transit agencies will monitor their operations performance on an annual, quarterly, and monthly basis, as appropriate. Performance measures will evaluate productivity, cost-effectiveness, and quality of service. Performance results will be used as a basis for developing the RSRTP, and other planning studies and analysis.

**Attachments:**
- Figure 1.1 – Regional Transit Service Planning and Implementation Process
- Figure 1.2 – Roles and Responsibilities for Service Planning Activities

Adopted June 2003
Amended September 2004
Amended March 2005
Amended August 2006
Amended December 2008
Amended February 2012
Amended_________ 2013
FIGURE 1.2
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SERVICE PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Step 1: Establish Policy Framework
- Regional Short Range Transit Plan
  - Service Planning Framework & Guidelines
    - Goals and Objectives
    - Needs and Deficiencies
    - Parameters and Performance Standards
    - Regional Consistency Checklist

SANDAG
Transit Agencies

Step 2: Develop Service Proposals & Plan
- RSRTP Adoption
  - Consistency & Priority Determination
  - Plan & Program Public Hearing

Regionally Significant Changes
Local & Minor Changes

SANDAG
Transit Agencies

Step 3: Develop Budgets
- Transit Operating Budget Development

SANDAG Approves
Transit Agency Budgets for Funding
-Budget Public Hearing

Transit Agencies

Step 4: Implement Service
- Administrative Review of Service Consistency or Finding of Overriding Considerations
  - (Refer to Transportation Committee, if necessary)

Public Hearings
- At Transit Agencies

Locally Significant

行政审查

SANDAG

Service Changes Occur Three Times a Year:
- Feb-Aug/Sep
- Nov-May/Jun
- May-Jan/Feb

Administrative Re-Review of Service Consistency or Finding of Overriding Considerations
- If public hearing results in a new service proposal
  (Refer to Transportation Committee, if necessary)

Implement Service
- Driver assignments
- Bus stop preparation
- Timetable printing

Transit Agencies
**FIGURE 1.2**
**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TRANSIT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES**

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* Includes Mid-Coast LRT/BRT, Super Loop, I-15 BRT, South Bay BRT, El Cajon Blvd BRT, Escondido Blvd. BRT, South Bay to Sorrento Mesa BRT

Revised July 2006