



AGENDA ITEM 19
REPORT

Southern California Association of Governments
Remote Participation Only
April 1, 2021

To: Community Economic & Human Development Committee (CEHD)
Energy & Environment Committee (EEC)
Transportation Committee (TC)
Regional Council (RC)
From: Sarah Dominguez, Senior Regional Planner
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Subject: 2024 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
Framework

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
APPROVAL

RECOMMENDED ACTION FOR EEC, CEHD, TC:

Information Only – No Action Required

RECOMMENDED ACTION FOR RC:

Receive and File

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This item supports the following Strategic Plan Goal 1: Produce innovative solutions that improve the quality of life for Southern Californians.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Every four years, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) must prepare and adopt a Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). SCAG's Regional Council adopted the current-2020 RTP/SCS, or Connect SoCal, in two separate actions in April and September of 2020. The next RTP/SCS will be prepared for adoption by the Regional Council by April 2024. The purpose of this report is to outline the process for developing the next RTP/SCS, highlight major milestones, and outline SCAG's stakeholder outreach approach.

BACKGROUND:

Every four years, SCAG must prepare and adopt a RTP/SCS. SCAG's Regional Council adopted the current 2020 RTP/SCS, Connect SoCal, in two separate actions in April and September of 2020. The next RTP/SCS will be prepared for consideration by the Regional Council for adoption by April 2024. The purpose of this report is to outline the process for developing the next RTP/SCS, highlight major milestones, and outline SCAG's stakeholder outreach approach.

What is the RTP/SCS?

The RTP/SCS is a long-range regional plan that builds upon land use and transportation strategies established over several planning cycles to increase mobility options and achieve a more sustainable regional development pattern. The RTP/SCS charts a path towards a more mobile, sustainable and prosperous region by strengthening regional connections between transportation networks, land use planning, and between the people whose collaboration can improve the quality of life for Southern Californians. Development of the RTP/SCS requires several years of data collection, rigorous technical analysis, robust policy discussions, and substantial stakeholder engagement.

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura, SCAG must follow specific state and federal requirements in the development of the RTP/SCS. Meeting the following requirements is necessary to ensure receipt of transportation funding from both state and federal sources:

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) – SCAG is required by federal law to prepare and update a long-range RTP (23 U.S.C. §134 et seq.). The RTP must include, among other things: the identification of transportation facilities such as major roadways, transit, intermodal facilities and connectors that function as an integrated metropolitan system over at least a 20-year forecast period; a financial plan demonstrating how the RTP can be implemented with “reasonably available” resources and additional financial approaches; strategies to improve existing facilities, relieve vehicular congestion, and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods; and environmental mitigation activities. (23 U.S.C. §134 (i)(2)).

Transportation Conformity Requirements – Pursuant to the federal Clean Air Act, SCAG’s RTP/SCS is required to meet all federal transportation conformity requirements, including regional emissions analysis, financial constraint, timely implementation of Transportation Control Measures, and interagency consultation and public involvement (42 U.S.C. §7401 et seq.).

System Performance Monitoring – Transportation system performance planning and monitoring became federal mandates with the passage of ‘Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century’ (MAP-21) in 2012, and the ‘FAST Act’ in 2015. SCAG has been a pioneer in the development and use of performance metrics to evaluate progress toward achieving regional goals before MAP-21/FAST Act became law. Starting with the 1998 RTP, SCAG has been using quantitative performance measures to evaluate how the RTP is performing in terms of achieving the plan’s regional goals.

Environmental Justice Analysis – As an MPO that receives federal funding, SCAG is required to conduct an Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis for the RTP/SCS. The plan is required to

consider the consequences of transportation projects on low-income and minority communities, and avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental impacts on low-income and minority populations. Consideration of EJ in the transportation planning process stems from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which establishes the need for transportation agencies to disclose to the general public the benefits and burdens of proposed projects on minority populations, later expanded through federal executive branch order to also include protections based on income.

Sustainable Communities Strategy – California Senate Bill 375, codified in 2008 in Government Code §65080 (b)(2)(B), requires that the RTP includes a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) which can meet greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Currently, the targets for the SCAG region are eight percent below 2005 per capita GHG emissions levels by 2020, and 19 percent below 2005 per capita emissions levels by 2035.

What's new for this RTP/SCS?

This next 2024 RTP/SCS will incorporate important updates of fundamental data, strategies and investments based on, and to strengthen, the plan adopted by the SCAG Regional Council in 2020. For this reason, SCAG staff anticipates using the same name, "Connect SoCal," to underscore the continuation of the planning effort. The pillars of the Connect SoCal, the Core Vision and Key Connections, will continue into the next plan. The Core Vision centers on maintaining and better managing the transportation network we have for moving people and goods, while expanding mobility choices by locating housing, jobs and transit closer together and increasing investment in transit and complete streets.

The Key Connections augment the Core Vision of the plan to address trends and emerging challenges. These Key Connections lie at the intersection of land use, transportation and innovation, aiming to coalesce policy discussions and advance promising strategies for leveraging new technologies and partnerships to accelerate progress on regional planning goals.

For this cycle, SCAG staff will focus on process improvements and on data updates and refinements. During the post-adoption period for the last RTP/SCS, SCAG staff debriefed on the plan development process internally as well as with select stakeholders. Based on these reflections there were several key takeaways, including maintaining one-on-one meetings with local jurisdictions, continuing to partner with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and improving the public engagement process through earlier outreach.

However, there will likely be many changes within the region that are yet to be fully understood as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, as noted in the 'Connect SoCal - Emerging Issues and Trends for Future' Planning staff report of September 2020.¹ The pandemic profoundly impacted the ways we live, work, and learn and will undoubtedly influence our planning processes for years to come. In developing the 2024 RTP/SCS, SCAG must reexamine trends and assess these emerging issues in order to put forth a plan that addresses the region's evolving needs, challenges and opportunities.

Two overarching issues identified in the previously cited 'Emerging Issues and Trends' staff report, 'Equity' and 'Resilience,' will have enhanced presence in the next plan. Both equity and resilience will be lenses through which various aspects of the plan content will be examined. Additionally, the issue of the digital divide within the region as discussed in the staff report will be incorporated into the next RTP/SCS.

Equity: As central to SCAG's work, racial equity describes the actions, policies, and practices that eliminate bias and barriers that have historically and systemically marginalized communities of color, to ensure all people can be healthy, prosperous, and participate fully in civic life. In July 2020, SCAG passed Resolution No. 20-623-2² stating that systemic racism is a human rights and public health crisis and established an ad hoc Special Committee on Equity and Social Justice. At its May meeting, the Regional Council is anticipated to consider a Racial Equity Early Action Plan (EAP), which will include the development of a Connect SoCal racial equity framework.

Resilience: In January 2021, SCAG passed Resolution No. 21-628-1³ which states that SCAG will pursue a number of activities to address climate change, including mitigation and adaptation, to strengthen regional resilience. These include developing a regional resilience framework to help the region plan and prepare for a changing climate and other potential near- and long-term disruptions to Southern California. The resolution also stated that SCAG shall include climate adaptation and mitigation analysis and strategies in the 2024 RTP/SCS.

Digital Divide: In February 2021, SCAG passed Resolution 21-629-2⁴ directing SCAG staff to develop a Broadband Action Plan which includes incorporating broadband planning, data and research findings, and strategies, as appropriate, into existing SCAG programs and, based on SCAG's findings, utilize data as part of Scenario Planning Process for upcoming and future long-range plans.

¹ https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/rc_090320fullagn.pdf?1604639362

² https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/rcresolution206232_0.pdf?1605039926

³ <https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/rc010721resolution21-628-1.pdf?1610072923>

⁴ <https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/rc020421fullpacket.pdf?1612231563>

Who will be involved in Connect SoCal development?

Obtaining local input is integral to the development of a robust plan, including both transportation projects from County Transportation Commissions and land use data from local jurisdictions. Gathering this information helps us understand where the region will grow and how people will move around the region. Connect SoCal also relies on extensive stakeholder engagement and policy discussions with local elected leaders, who make up SCAG's Policy Committees and Regional Council.

SCAG Policy Committees: Each SCAG Policy Committee has unique purview over different aspects of plan development and makes recommendations for the Regional Council to take action. For overarching policy discussions, SCAG sometimes holds Joint Policy Committee meetings including all members from the Community, Economic, and Human Development, (CEHD), Environment and Energy Committee (EEC), and Transportation Committees (TC).

Outside of elected leadership, SCAG staff also engages with stakeholders through several formal working groups and direct communications.

Stakeholder Groups: SCAG hosts many different topical working groups and technical advisory committees as well as engaging in direct communication with stakeholders throughout the development of different products of Connect SoCal. See the [stakeholder outline] attachment for more detail.

Local Input: SCAG relies on the input from County Transportation Commissions to develop the Connect SoCal project list, in coordination with partner transportation agencies including Caltrans and transit operators, and on local jurisdictions to update and verify growth forecast land use data.

Public Outreach: SCAG engages with the public in a variety of ways during the development of Connect SoCal. Before initiating public outreach efforts, SCAG will update and adopt a Public Participation Plan (PPP), anticipated in early 2022. The PPP will establish goals for ensuring a wide range of perspectives are heard and will be developed compliant with Title 23, CFR 450.316(a) and state planning law. Per Government Code §65080 (b)(2)(F), SCAG will hold at least 16 public workshops and at least three public hearings.

What's next for this RTP/SCS?

As illustrated in the [Major Milestones] attachment, several plan items will come before the SCAG Regional Council this year. Later this summer, SCAG staff will present several early RTP/SCS

development items including the SCS Subregional Delegation Guidelines, Growth Forecast Framework, and Performance Measures and Monitoring Framework. Not reflected in the major milestones overview are the many individual projects, research, and report items that SCAG staff will bring to the Regional Council which will then be incorporated into the draft plan. As a general overview, the work to develop the next Connect SoCal will proceed in four phases:

Foundations and Frameworks (Now – Early 2022): Initiate plan development process and establish plan goals.

Data Collection and Policy Development (Early 2022 – Early 2023): Collect input from local jurisdictions and transportation agencies, conduct research, identify emerging regional trends, and propose discuss plan policies and strategies with stakeholders.

Outreach and Analysis (Early 2023 – Mid 2023): Conduct public workshops, incorporate feedback from outreach activities and analyze data.

Draft Plan and Adoption (Late 2023 – Early 2024): Prepare draft plan for public review and final plan for consideration by the Regional Council for adoption by April 2024.

While the major development steps for the next RTP/SCS are largely known and driven by federal and state regulations, SCAG has discretion over the projects, policies, strategies and data presented in the plan. SCAG staff will work to identify and present these variables to the various SCAG Policy Committees and Regional Council. Further discussion with regional stakeholders and decision-makers will be necessary over the next three years as new information comes to light on the state of the region and in identifying the policy responses and underlying goals for the region moving forward.

FISCAL IMPACT:

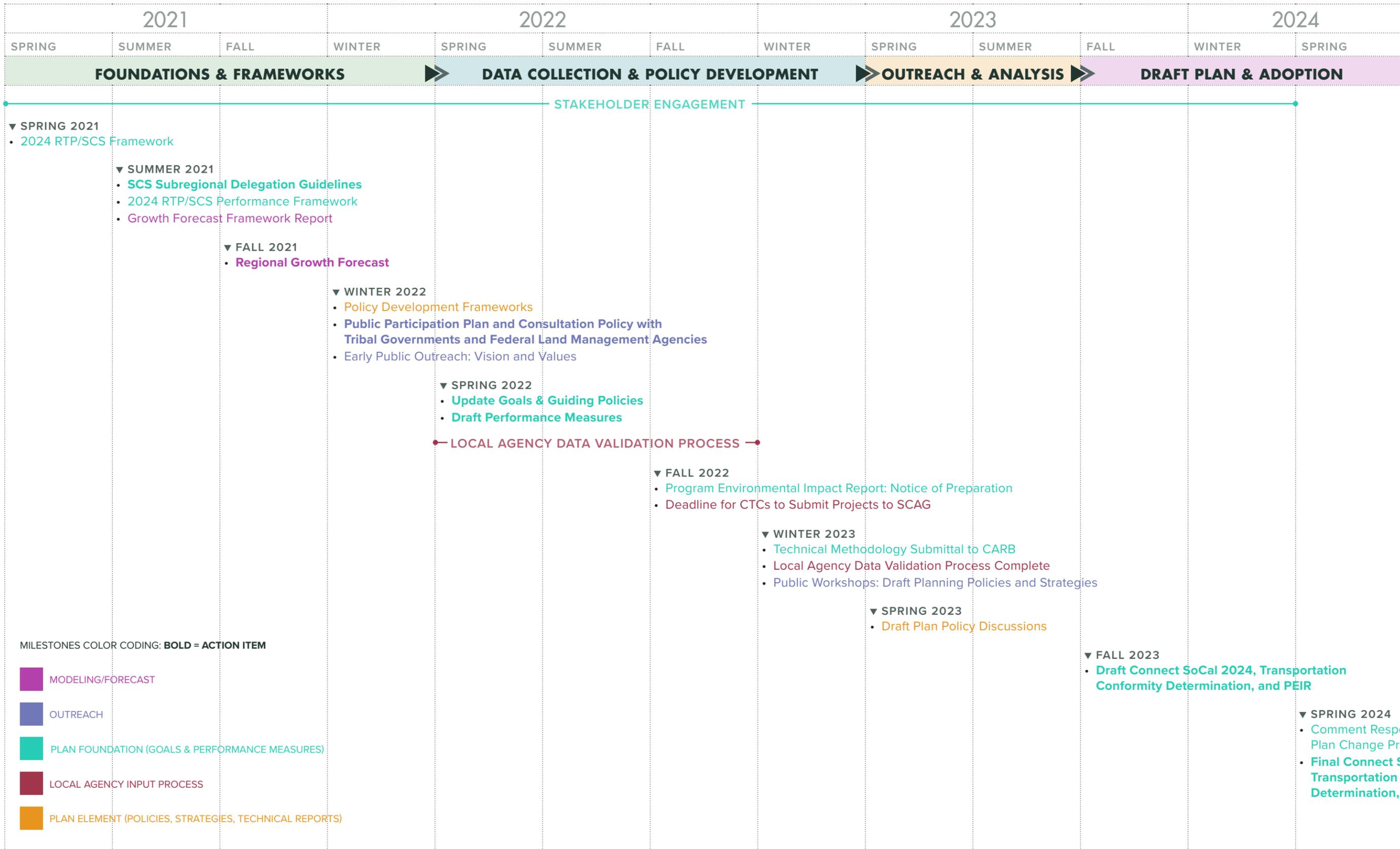
Work associated with this item is included in the FY 20-21 and proposed FY 21-22 Overall Work Program (310.4874.01: Connect SoCal Development).

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. 2024 Connect SoCal Major Milestones
2. 2024 Connect SoCal Stakeholder Overview



2024 RTP/SCS PRELIMINARY MILESTONES



MILESTONES COLOR CODING: **BOLD** = ACTION ITEM

- MODELING/FORECAST
- OUTREACH
- PLAN FOUNDATION (GOALS & PERFORMANCE MEASURES)
- LOCAL AGENCY INPUT PROCESS
- PLAN ELEMENT (POLICIES, STRATEGIES, TECHNICAL REPORTS)



2024 RTP/SCS STAKEHOLDER OUTLOOK

SCAG staff relies on many different stakeholder meetings to get input for and review of materials related to the development of the 2024 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) before bringing them to SCAG Committees or Regional Council. The below summary is not inclusive of SCAG's broader public stakeholder outreach activities such as workshops or Community Based Organization partnerships, which will be further outlined in an updated Public Participation Plan. These stakeholder meetings fall along a spectrum of focus from technical to policy focused agenda items with some groups covering items from both categories.



TECHNICAL FOCUS		TECHNICAL/POLICY FOCUS	POLICY FOCUS
MODELING TASK FORCE	PEER REVIEW OF MODEL	REGIONAL PLANNING WORKING GROUPS	CTC PLANNING DIRECTORS MEETING
AVIATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	SOCAL FREIGHT COLLABORATIVE	GLOBAL LAND USE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL	SUBREGIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS MEETING
TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP	PROJECT SPECIFIC STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH (E.G. DEDICATED BUS LANES STUDY)	CONSULTATION WITH STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES	
REGIONAL GROWTH TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (NEW)	SOCAL ROUNDTABLE (TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMMING)		
REGIONAL TRANSIT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE			

Regular meetings
 Direct, ad-hoc or limited duration stakeholder involvement