

Connect SoCal and COVID-19 Recovery Survey Summary

July 2, 2020

Overview: A public survey was conducted by SCAG to better understand the concerns and perspectives of stakeholders related to Connect SoCal in light of COVID-19. The survey was open from June 3, 2020 to June 25, 2020. The below report summarizes the feedback received.

In total, 230 people responded to the survey. The majority of participants identified themselves as residents (43%), local government stakeholders (25%) and non-profit organization stakeholders (15%) but also included elected officials, private stakeholders and transit agency stakeholders.

Travel to work changed for survey participants. Before the pandemic 6% of respondents worked from home and as of the survey, 60% now work from home.

Survey Participant Location	
County	Percentage of Responses
Imperial	1%
Los Angeles	47%
Orange	23%
Riverside	6%
San Bernardino	13%
Ventura	9%

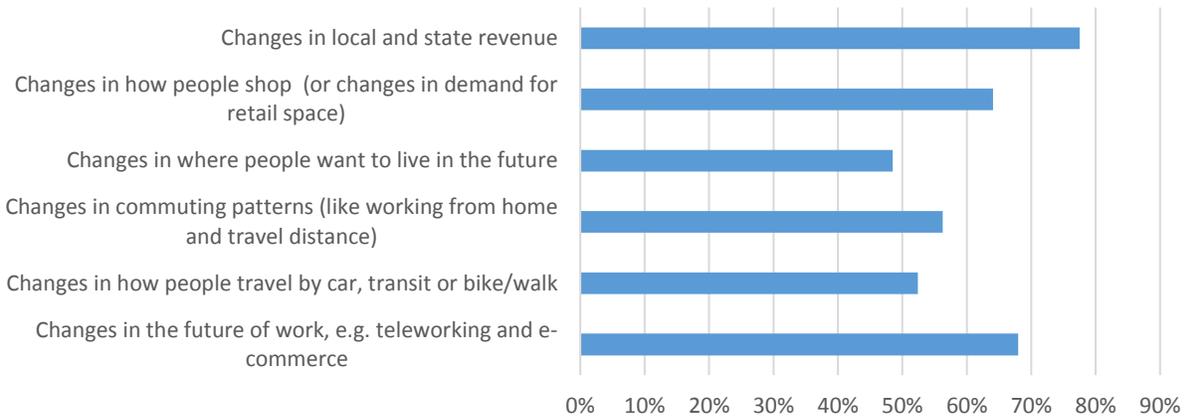
The top immediate impacts of COVID-19 to respondent’s communities were increased vehicle speeds on local roads (51%) and lack of income to pay rent/mortgage (45%). Other top concerns included reduced transit service and lack of safe walking or biking opportunities. Some commenters also highlighted pre-existing issues exacerbated with COVID-19 like homelessness and health concerns, impacts on economy, lack of accessible and affordable essential services and items, new precedent of working from home results in other issues like widening the digital divide, safety concerns for essential workers and overall communities, and mental health challenges associated with elevated levels of financial stress.

Respondents’ longer-term concerns about the impact of COVID-19 were lack of government funding for services and programs (69%) and persistent unaddressed inequities (61%). Other top concerns included changes in retail and food access, and vacant storefronts. Some commenters also highlighted economic concerns like tax increases, inflation, funding cuts to essential services and inappropriate use of funding, impacts and disruptions on public transportation and other public services, widening of educational gaps, health care access, and continued housing shortage, overcrowding and homelessness.

In regards to the significance of Connect SoCal’s goals, 88% of respondents rated the significance of Connect SoCal’s goals as the same or more significant in light of COVID-19. The goal with the most increased significance was Healthy and Equitable Communities.

Below is more detailed summaries of select questions:

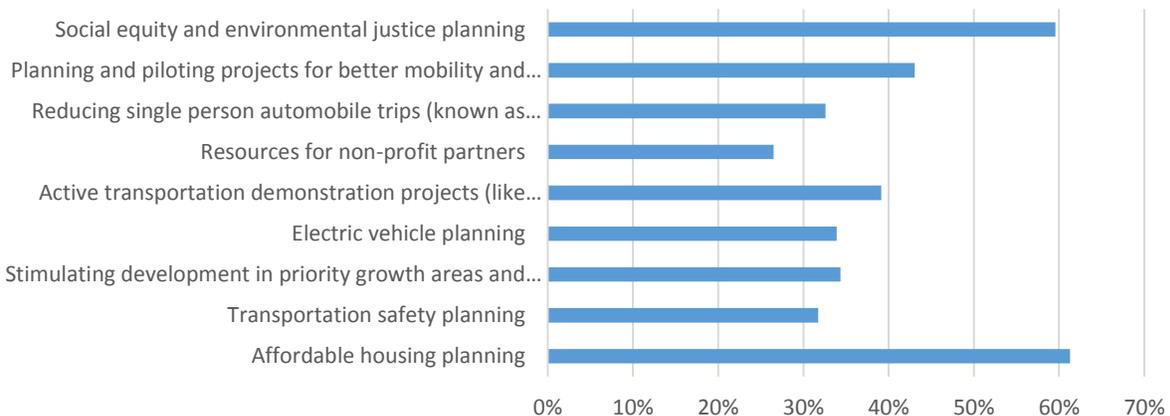
ARE THERE ANY CONCERNS YOU HAVE SPECIFIC TO LONG-RANGE PLANNING IN LIGHT OF COVID-19?



Other **concerns specific to long-range planning** included but were not limited to:

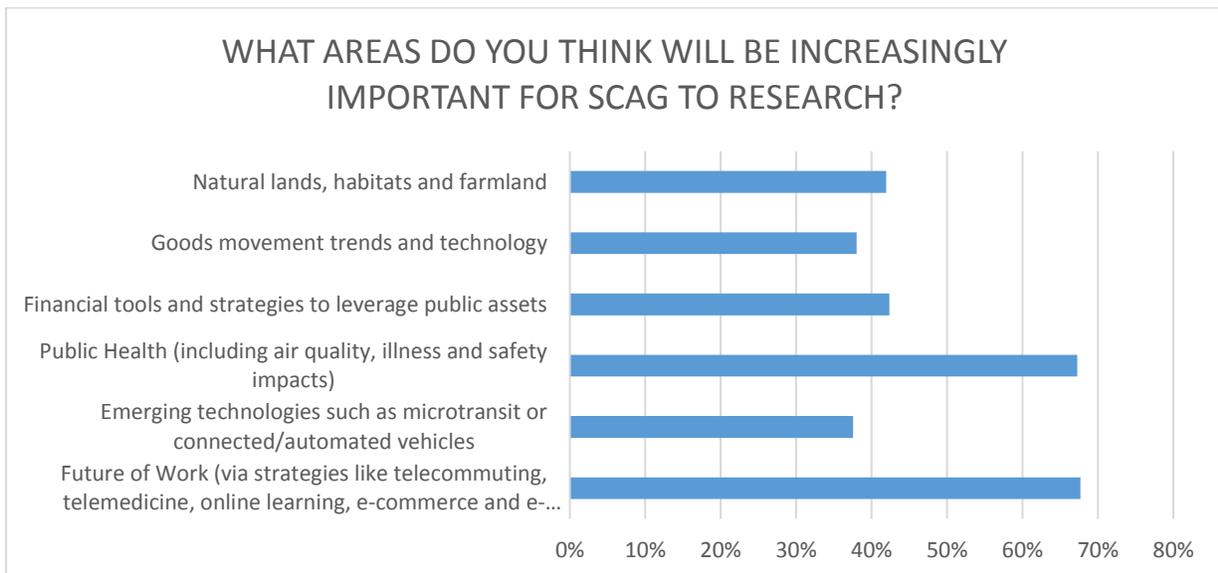
- Disinvestment in California
- Increase in commercial vacancies and economic impacts
- Changes in future community outreach and engagement
- Address future needs for safer and more affordable housing
- More funding for youth development like recreational spaces and programming
- Support more local businesses that contribute to community culture
- Improve and protect infrastructure at all levels (i.e. health/hospitals, internet and technology, education, housing)
- Recovery strategies that work

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING LOCAL PLANNING RESOURCES OR PILOT DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS SHOULD SCAG EMPHASIZE?



Other suggestions for **local planning resources or pilot demonstration projects that SCAG should emphasize** included but were not limited to:

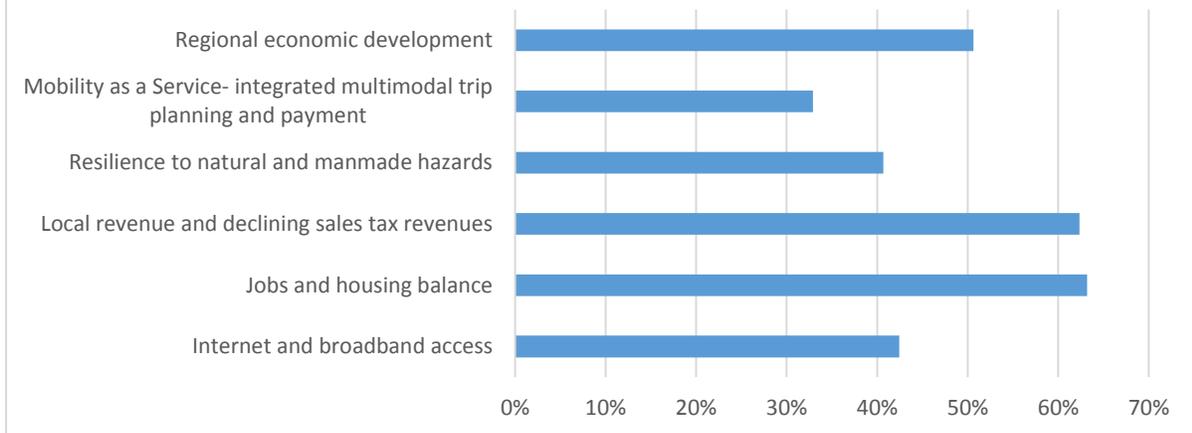
- TDM strategies/pilot programs that show benefits of teleworking
- GHG reduction (i.e. heat island mitigation and climate change)
- Adaptation, Disaster Recovery, and Resiliency Planning
- Analyze changes in housing and transportation choices due to COVID-19
- Telecommuting and broadband planning
- Educate the general public on public safety
- Expand public transit to reach new growth areas



Other suggestions for what **will be increasingly important for SCAG to research** included but were not limited to:

- Regional cooperation and policy consistency
- Social equity, equity and planning
- Climate adaptation
- Redeveloping underperforming commercial zones including malls
- Trends in employment access and equity
- Strategies to address persistent racial disparities in public services and quality of life
- Future of education
- Disaster planning and resilience, emergency response and recovery
- Affordable Housing and solutions to homelessness

WHAT REGIONAL CHALLENGES DO YOU THINK WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR SCAG TO COLLABORATE ON?



Other suggestions for **regional challenges that will be important for SCAG to collaborate on** included but were not limited to:

- GHG reduction; heat island mitigation and climate change
- Construction of adequate roadways
- Preservation of agricultural lands, open space and conservation of natural resources.
- Misuse of policing on transit to address social problems, such as homelessness
- Homelessness
- Jobs-housing mismatch, and related impact of teleworking and of goods movement
- Negative impacts of Prop 13 on economic development
- Food security, localization of food production and food waste composting

In regards to how SCAG typically engages with stakeholders, survey respondents would most like SCAG to engage with more Zoom calls and webinars.

Other suggestions included but were not limited to:

- Provide resources in top 5 languages in the area
- Return to in-person meetings but continue use of Zoom for other events
- Direct mail, phone banking/polling to reach those without access to internet
- Surveys
- Phone town halls or radio town halls, in Spanish
- Include, work and support local chamber of Commerce and their efforts for regionalization
- Facebook livestream, taking questions from comments

Finally, the survey concluded with an opportunity to share feedback that wasn't addressed in the questions above. Comments included but were not limited to:

- Social justice should be emphasized
- Consider SCAG's representation of the community it serves, both in leadership and in hiring practices

- Community members can't participate when outreach events are held during the day and in English only
- Support and include the business community to become a stronger partner
- Recovering from the COVID-19 economic crisis, restoring prosperity and addressing homelessness should be SCAG's sole focus over the next two years
- Homelessness, rise of housing insecurity, housing options should be a top priority
- Promote more telecommuting
- We still need more and improved transportation options
- We need a better jobs/housing balance, especially in Inland Empire where there's plenty of land to build houses and employment centers
- We must localize the food supply and engage at the community level in restoring ecosystems on private lands
- It will be important to explore how urbanization trends will change as a result of the pandemic
- Please update your definitions and frameworks for resilience, public health and climate change
- Connect SoCal needs revisions because of decreases in commuting and financial assumptions



Connect SoCal: Status Update

July 2, 2020

www.scag.ca.gov



Goals



Connect SoCal is a...



COMPASS

NOT A ROADMAP



VISION

NOT A GUARANTEE



PLATFORM

FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Connect SoCal Planning Process



2017 - 2019

Update Data with Jurisdictions & CTCs
(through 2045, the new horizon year)

Engagements with Regional Council, Policy Committees, and Regional Stakeholders

Summer
2019

Transportation Financial Analysis

Issues Exploration

Update Planning Assumptions

Land Use/Transportation Scenarios Development

Fall
2019

Compile/Analyze Draft Connect SoCal

Develop Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)

Winter
2019-2020

Released Draft Connect SoCal & PEIR

Public Outreach & Comment Period

May
2020

Approve Draft Connect SoCal & PEIR
For Federal Conformity Purposes Only

May 7 Regional Council Directive



- Consider Connect SoCal regarding *short & long-term impacts of COVID-19*
- Locally approved *entitlements revisions* to the Connect SoCal neighborhood-level Growth Forecast
- Analysis of Connect SoCal's neighborhood-level Growth Forecast with *local general plans*
- Provide a *progress report within 60 days* – SCS, modeling, analysis

Post May 2020 Outreach on Connect SoCal



Pandemic Next Steps



Completed:

- COVID-19 Vulnerability Indicators Dashboard
- May Economic Impacts of COVID-19 White Paper

Upcoming:

- Connect SoCal Adoption
- Implementation Plan for Connect SoCal
- Emerging Issues in the Region

Growth Forecast - Outreach & Local Engagement



Growth Forecast Actions:

- Technical Working Group Meetings
- 3rd Round of Review/Refinements By Local Jurisdictions
 - Outreach to all jurisdictions in May & June
 - Targeted outreach to clarify/confirm data
- Connect SoCal data provided to local jurisdictions and available upon request
 - Maps generated to compare growth assumptions
- Outreach to Entitlement Working Group

SCAG 2016 General Plan Land Use



Growth Forecast - Quality Control Analysis



Entitlements:

- 6 Jurisdictions identified where entitlements in SCAG's neighborhood-level Growth Forecast may not be fully captured
- Targeted outreach to identify any issues

1 of the 6 requested revisions to the neighborhood-level Growth Forecast

General Plan Capacity:

- Conservative Connect SoCal methodology utilizes available data.
- Does not consider all factors— such as density bonuses, local ordinances for accessory dwelling units, or zoning

Analysis confirmed 95% of Transportation Analysis Zones, which account for 97% of the total households reflected in the plan, do not exceed general plan maximums

Growth Forecast – Technical Modifications



Local Review & Revisions

- 12 Jurisdictions Submitted Feedback
- 6 Recommended Revisions due to Entitlements or General Plan Capacities
- 6 Recommended NO changes



1-on-1 Meetings
197 Jurisdictions
in 2017 and 2018



Fall 2019 Peer Review
with Jurisdictions



Spring 2020 Review & Targeted
Outreach with Jurisdictions

Growth Forecast - Supplemental Policy Analysis

- Within constraints of General Plans, how has SCAG reflected potential impact of Regional Planning Policies for modeling purposes?

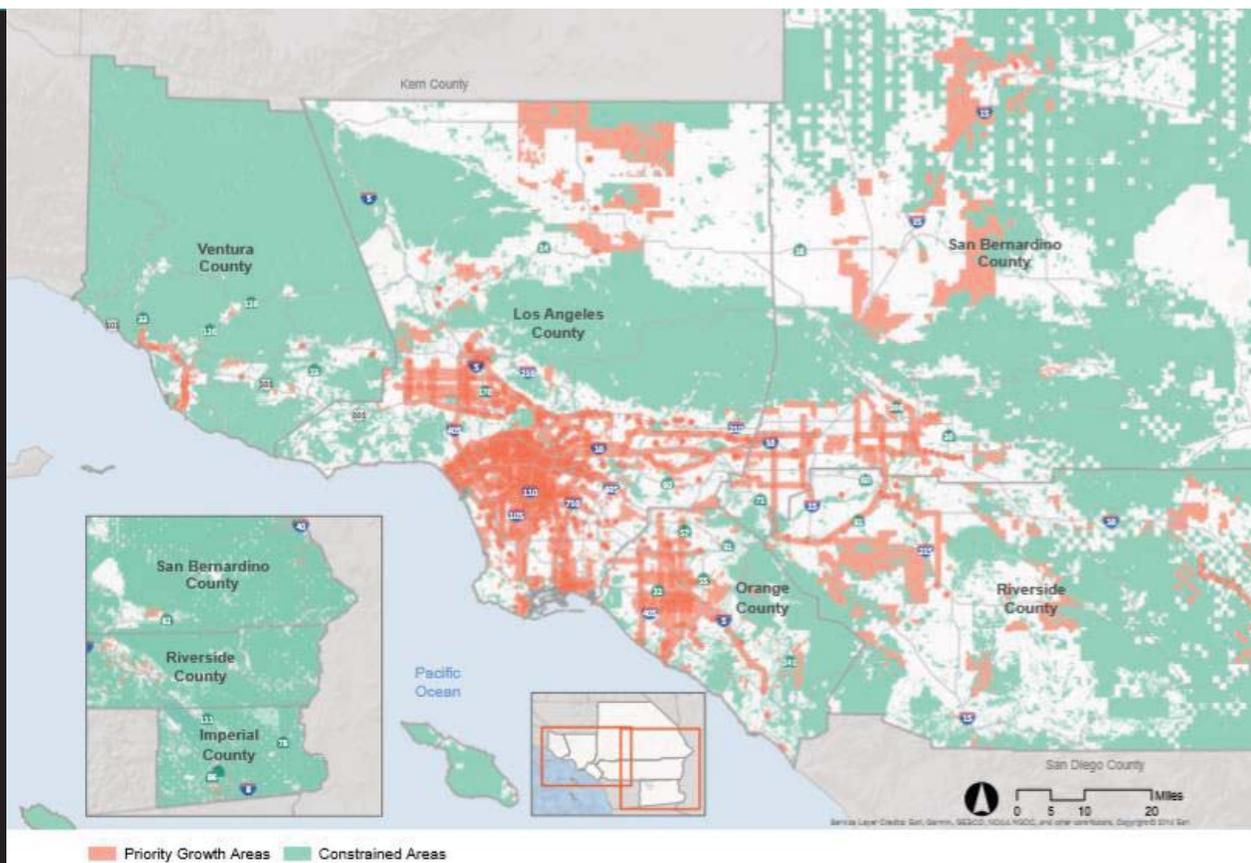
- No Jurisdiction Level Changes
- “Local Input” TAZ-level data vs. Connect SoCal TAZ-level data

Sustainable Communities Strategies

- Emphasize land use patterns that facilitate multimodal access to work, schools, and other destinations;
- Focus on jobs-housing balance to reduce commute times and distances and expand job opportunities near transit and along center-focused main streets;
- Plan for growth near transit investments and support implementation of first/last mile strategies;
- Promote the redevelopment of underperforming retail developments and other outmoded nonresidential uses;
- Prioritize infill and redevelopment of underutilized land to accommodate new growth, increase amenities and connectivity in existing neighborhoods; and
- Encourage design and transportation options that reduce the reliance on and number of solo car trips (this could include mixed uses or locating and orienting close to existing destinations).

Connect SoCal

Priority Growth Areas & Constrained Areas



Comparison of “Local Input” and Connect SoCal Growth Forecasts



Table 1 – Household and Employment Growth Anticipated to Occur Between 2016 and 2045 in the SCAG Region

Connect SoCal Policy Areas	Growth Anticipated to Occur Between 2016 and 2045	(A) “Local Input” (October 2018)	(B) Final Plan (May 2020)	Difference (B) - (A)
Regional Total	Households	1,621,000	1,621,000	-
	Employment	1,660,000	1,660,000	-
Priority Growth Areas ¹	Households	54%	64%	10%
	Employment	58%	74%	16%
Absolute Constrained Areas ²	Households	13%	10%	-3%
	Employment	14%	9%	-4%
Variable Constrained Areas ³	Households	50%	47%	-3%
	Employment	45%	43%	-2%

1. Includes High Quality Transit Areas, Transit Priority Areas, Job Centers, Livable Corridors, Neighborhood Mobility Areas, Spheres of Influence (outside of constrained areas)

2. Includes tribal lands, military, open space, conserved lands, sea level rise areas (2 feet) and farmlands in unincorporated areas

3. Includes Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), grazing lands, farmlands in incorporated jurisdictions, 500-year flood plains, CalFire Very High Severity Fire Risk (state and local), and Natural Lands and Habitat Corridors (connectivity, habitat quality, habitat type layers)

- Connect SoCal Hits the GHG Reduction Target

- Cumulatively, 3.7 Million VMT Reduction by 2035

- “Local Input” Falls Short of reaching the GHG Reduction Target

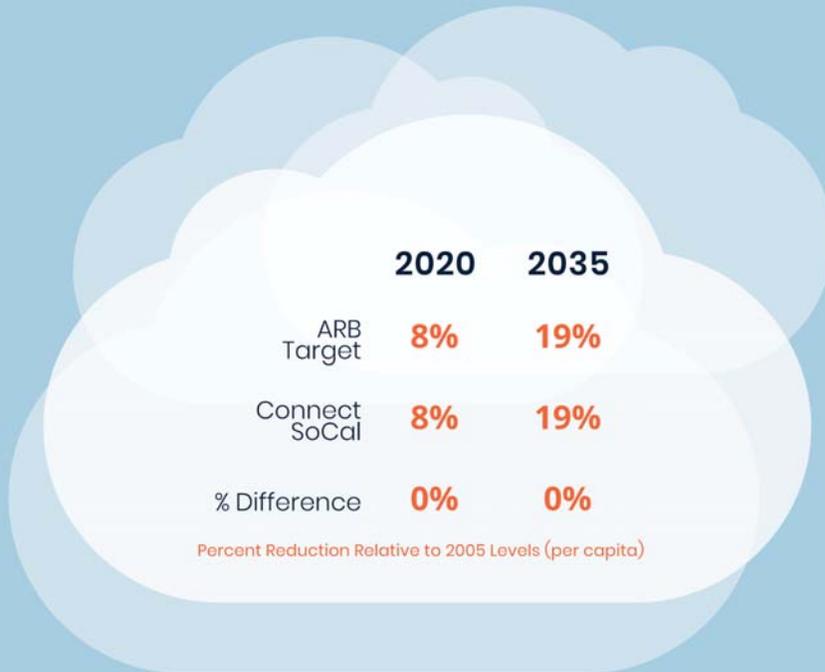
Summary of Connect SoCal



The Plan...

- Is a **transportation infrastructure investment strategy** that will impact Southern California, and beyond.
- Will invest over **\$638 billion on transportation improvement projects.**
- Will locate housing, jobs and transit closer together in **priority growth areas** while preserving natural lands and open spaces.
- Will **link the built environment and transportation system** with policies, projects and programs that strengthen and enhance each other beyond what each would accomplish in isolation.
- Will **deliver significant benefits to the region** with respect to mobility, safety, health outcomes, travel time reliability, air quality, economic productivity, environmental justice, and transportation assets.
- Will **generate approximately 432,900 jobs annually.**

Benefits of the Plan Implementation



Benefits of the Plan Implementation (continued)

Reduced Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per capita



Baseline to Plan Comparison

-5.0%

Base Year to Plan Comparison

-10.8%

Reduced Daily Minutes of Delay per capita



Baseline to Plan Comparison

-25.7%

Base Year to Plan Comparison

-20.0%

Next Steps for Connect SoCal



- Present **Final Connect SoCal** with technical corrections to Regional Council for adoption at next meeting
 - Submit Connect SoCal to **California Air Resources Board (CARB)** for 60-day review and confirmation of GHG targets
 - CARB confirms region's eligibility for nearly **\$1B in SB1 funding programmed by California Transportation Commission**. Awards starting November 2020.
 - **Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA)** moves forward for a February 2021 Adoption
- Prepare **Implementation Plan for Connect SoCal** and **Emerging Issues White Papers** for subsequent meetings of SCAG's Policy Committees and Regional Council



Questions and Feedback?