

## **Overview of SANDAG's Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Introduction**

SANDAG serves as the forum for regional decision-making for the 18 cities and county government within its jurisdiction. As the San Diego region's primary public planning, transportation, and research agency, it plays a critical role in regional policies about growth, transportation planning, environmental management, housing, open space, energy, public safety, and binational collaboration. As a result of Senate Bill 1703, which consolidated all of the roles and responsibilities of SANDAG with many of the transit functions of the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and the North County Transit District (NCTD), SANDAG also is responsible for transit planning, funding allocation, project development, and construction in the San Diego region.

SANDAG is governed by a Board of Directors composed of mayors, councilmembers, and county supervisors from each of the region's 19 local governments (with two representatives each from the City of San Diego and the County of San Diego). Voting is based on membership and the population of each jurisdiction. Supplementing these voting members are advisory representatives from Imperial County, Caltrans, MTS, NCTD, the U.S. Department of Defense, San Diego Unified Port District, San Diego County Water Authority, Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association, and Mexico.

Monthly Board of Directors and policy advisory committee meetings provide the public forums for making decisions on regional matters. Citizens and community representatives are involved in the planning and approval process by participating in committees, workshops, and public hearings.

### **What SANDAG does binationally?**

Planning in the San Diego region was traditionally considered as bounded by San Diego County. However, over the years, our perceived borders have expanded. SANDAG recognizes that the San Diego region has close ties to its neighboring counties, tribal reservations, and the Republic of Mexico. The region's distinct characteristics present a variety of opportunities and challenges for planning and coordination along our binational and interregional borders. How our region grows inevitably impacts those around us, just as growth around us impacts our region. This report summarizes SANDAG's activities that are focused on work related to the United States – Mexico border. It includes work that is directly under SANDAG's purview, reports produced utilizing primary data from partner agencies, and projects where SANDAG participates or contributes as a stakeholder.

### **SANDAG's Regional Environmental Work**

In addition, broader regional efforts such as the Environmental Mitigation Program and the Smart Growth Grant Incentive Program carry beneficial impacts felt across the region, in neighboring counties and south of the border. The *TransNet* Extension Ordinance and Expenditure Plan, approved countywide by voters in November 2004, includes an Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) which is a funding allocation category for the costs to mitigate habitat impacts for regional transportation projects. The EMP is a unique component of the *TransNet* Extension in that it goes beyond traditional mitigation for transportation projects by including a funding allocation for habitat acquisition, management, and monitoring activities as needed to help implement the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) and the Multiple Habitat Conservation Program (MHCP). This funding allocation is tied to mitigation

requirements and the environmental clearance approval process for projects outlined in the Regional Transportation Plan). Funding includes \$440 million over the ten years for the Biological Mitigation Fund and \$40 million for the Regional Habitat Conservation.

Although SANDAG has no land use authority, the acquisition of MSCP land influences land use from being used for agricultural or residential purposes. It also determines where residential development will not take place. This has the effect of local jurisdictions to require more infill dense developments to accommodate the lack of available land for urban expansion and sprawl.

SANDAG also promotes development in non-sensitive parts of the watershed through policies identified in the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) which calls for better coordination between land use and transportation. A key implementation step in the RCP is the preparation of a “Smart Growth Concept Map” that identifies locations within the region that can support smart growth and transportation investments. It also promotes infill development through its Smart Growth Incentive Program which funds transportation and transportation-related infrastructure improvements and planning efforts that support smart growth development. Smart Growth promotes a compact, efficient, and environmentally-sensitive urban development pattern. It focuses future growth and infill development close to jobs, services, and public facilities to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and preserve open space and natural resources.

## **Border Activities Under SANDAG’s Purview**

### SANDAG Borders Committee

On November 16, 2001, SANDAG’s Board of Directors authorized the creation of the Borders Committee as one of the Policy Advisory Committees of its newly reorganized structure. The Borders Committee membership consists of representatives and alternates from the cities of each sub-region in the San Diego region and the advisory members needed to fulfill its mission. Senate Bill 1703 (SB 1703) enacted on January 1, 2003, reaffirmed the creation of the Borders Committee, including a representative from the County of Imperial. Mexico is represented by the Consulate General of Mexico in San Diego. The Borders Committee meets at 12:30 p.m., on the fourth Friday of every month, at SANDAG. More information is available at [sandag.org](http://sandag.org).

### SANDAG Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities

The Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities (COBRO) was formally established in 1996 as a Policy Advisory Committee to the SANDAG Board of Directors. In 2002, COBRO began serving as a working group to the SANDAG Borders Committee in order to facilitate a better understanding of binational border-related issues and needs of the California-Baja California region. COBRO meets approximately six times a year at 3 p.m., at SANDAG on the first Tuesday of predetermined months. Usually, one meeting a year is held in Baja California. More information is available at [sandag.org](http://sandag.org).

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