

CONNECT SOCAL 2024

The 2024–2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
of the Southern California Association of Governments

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & CONSULTATION

SCAG Connect SoCal 2024 Community Partner Program: Feedback Summary Memo

APPENDIX 1 OF 5

ADOPTED APRIL 4, 2024



Public Participation & Consultation

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APPENDIX 1 OF 5

INTRODUCTION	1
KEY TAKEAWAYS	2
SUMMARY FEEDBACK BY GOAL	3
COMMUNITY PARTNER PROFILES	10

SCAG Connect SoCal 2024

Community Partner Program

Feedback Summary Memo

I. INTRODUCTION

As part of the Connect SoCal 2024 development process, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) implemented its second round of the Connect SoCal Community Partners Program to engage diverse communities across Southern California. The Community Partnership Program outreach focused on the core Connect SoCal topic areas – mobility, communities, economy, environment, and equity and resilience – with the intent of capturing key priorities from populations that have historically been underrepresented in formal planning processes.

On behalf of SCAG, Estolano Advisors initiated the Community Partners Program in early February 2023 through an open solicitation process that was shared with SCAG's non-profit and community-based organization contact lists. Drawing from previous grassroots outreach processes and best practices cited in the [2022 Public Participation Plan](#), SCAG and Estolano Advisors contracted with 16 community-based organizations (Community Partners) with a demonstrated history of engaging target populations and geographies across the six-county region. Target populations included: (1) children and youth, (2) individuals with access and functional needs, (3) low-income communities of color, (4) older adults or retired persons, (5) populations with limited English proficiency, and (6) women and female-headed households. Geographically, Community Partners represented constituents from Torrance to Imperial and Ventura to Southern Orange County. While the mission and work of each organization is varied, they shared a common commitment to creating a more equitable, resilient, accessible, and affordable Southern California. A short summary of the mission and outreach activities conducted by each organization is provided in Section IV of this report.

In alignment with SCAG's [Racial Equity Early Action Plan](#), the Connect SoCal Community Partnership Program is a continuation of SCAG's commitment to fostering partnerships with community-based organizations, receiving direct feedback from historically underrepresented populations, and moving towards community ownership of planning processes. This partnership model acknowledges the contributions of grassroots organizations that regularly engage residents who are often subject to negative outcomes from existing land use patterns and transportation policies. This report outlines key priorities and local challenges raised by these communities for SCAG's consideration as the Connect SoCal 2024 goals and strategies are developed.

II. KEY TAKEAWAYS

Community Partners conducted a variety of engagement activities to increase participation and solicit feedback from residents on Connect SoCal topics. From mid-April to late May 2023, Community Partners held twenty-two (22) Connect SoCal presentations at existing meetings or events and organized eleven (11) stand-alone Connect SoCal convenings using multilingual presentation materials and feedback collection templates co-developed by SCAG, Peacock Sinning, and Estolano Advisors. Community Partners also conducted in-person and digital outreach to drive attendance to SCAG's existing Open House workshops and encourage survey participation. In total, Community Partners from across the region collected more than 500 surveys.

Community Partners collected feedback through presentations and convenings that responded to the draft Connect SoCal goal priorities provided by SCAG and the consultant team at the start of the engagement process and listed in Section III of this report. Overall, community members agreed with the general direction and intent proposed in each Connect SoCal topic but offered more nuanced viewpoints, priorities, and concerns based on their experiences. **Many communities raised transportation safety and accessibility, housing quality and affordability, environmental health, and high-quality job creation and small business retention as key priorities for Connect SoCal 2024.**

Key takeaways that emerged from the community engagement process are summarized below:

1. **Limited transportation options and the housing affordability crisis are affecting quality of life issues across the region, particularly in historically disinvested areas.** For every Connect SoCal topic, community members voiced concerns about transit safety, accessibility, low-quality housing stock, and high housing costs. Feedback from neighborhoods served by LA Metro agreed that more affordable housing should be built adjacent to transit stations, while communities outside LA advocated for more frequent and diverse transit services (fixed bus route, paratransit, bike share, etc.). Many felt that these investments could help reduce the unhoused population and increase access to quality jobs and other destinations without increasing car dependency. The strategies proposed in Connect SoCal should address existing disparities across mobility and housing issues and present concrete solutions that prioritize vulnerable communities.
2. **Improvements in infrastructure and amenities should be coupled with direct benefits and protections for residents and small businesses at risk of displacement.** Citing increasing costs and ongoing environmental harms, several communities called for holistic investment strategies that cut across Connect SoCal topics. Example co-benefits community members shared were low-to-no cost transit fares for key populations, rent control measures, and support for small businesses, including street vendors. Others advocated for prioritizing climate infrastructure improvements, such as electric vehicle charging stations and building electrification, and subsequent high-quality job opportunities in historically disinvested communities.

Connect SoCal should recognize the challenges and opportunities for advancing its goals and promote anti-displacement strategies that prevent further harm to vulnerable populations.

3. While community members appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback on Connect SoCal, many want concrete strategies with performance metrics incorporated into the plan along with more frequent engagement with SCAG.

Several residents raised the importance of ongoing touchpoints and requested updates on Connect SoCal's implementation. Many shared mechanisms for future engagement, such as short check-in surveys, neighborhood visits from SCAG officials, and the formation of a community roundtable, to name a few. To encourage transparency and trust with communities, some residents recommended community performance metrics that track Connect SoCal's progress, such as health conditions and conservation efforts. SCAG should explore options for maintaining communication with Community Partners and residents beyond the final plan adoption.

III. SUMMARY FEEDBACK BY GOAL TOPIC

A. Mobility – Build and maintain a robust transportation network.

Draft Goal priorities:

- 1) Create more connections across travel modes;
- 2) Increase reliable, accessible, affordable, and quality travel options;
- 3) Increase opportunities to walk, bike, or take transit.

Community Priorities:

Communities across the SCAG region emphasized safety concerns for bicyclists and pedestrians and called for infrastructure that promotes alternative modes of transportation rather than vehicles.

- **Pedestrian Safety:** Community members highlighted the dangers of abandoned scooters and speeding scooters on sidewalks, the necessity of well-paved and well-maintained streets (especially for wheelchair users), the need for brighter lights near bus stops, and the need for more crossing guards.
 - **Alternative modes of transportation:** Community members suggested strategies for promoting car alternatives, including funding a mix of transit options—such as buses, trains, streetcars, pedi-cabs, and paratransit—and better first- and last-mile options. Participants also want to see prioritization for bus- and bike-only lanes over car lanes and more transit stations. Community members added that transit and other modes should connect residents to more destinations through longer bus routes, for example. Community Partners in Orange County, in particular, want better connections between central Orange County and other counties in the region through more rail infrastructure.¹
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¹ Santa Ana Active Streets

²Orange County Environmental Justice Education Fund

- **Parking and affordable electric vehicle charging:** Some participants raised the need for more neighborhood parking and more places to affordably charge electric vehicles, especially for low-income communities.
- **More reliable transit:** Community members expressed that more frequent, better-maintained, faster, and more reliable transit is needed since many residents rely on transit. One Community Partner also noted that increased reliability would incentivize greater public utilization of transit services. Another Community Partner that serves the disabled community shared that paratransit services are not reliable and needs vast improvements.
- **Accessible and affordable transportation:** Community members emphasized the importance of accessible and affordable transit for all members of the public, with some participants also advocating for discounted or free transit ridership to seniors, children, and low-income individuals.
- **Changes to land use to support reduced vehicle miles traveled:** One group of participants recommended changing planning and zoning regulations to allow people to live closer to where they work, reducing the need for travel.

Participants also suggested that SCAG learn from other cities around the world that have successfully implemented sustainable transportation models.

Challenges for Implementation at Local Level:

Several challenges for implementation at the local level surfaced in discussion with community members. Participants expressed opposition to policy solutions that center cars and car-accommodating infrastructure over public transit. One group highlighted how subsidizing electric vehicles and self-driving cars incentivizes driving and fails to address the problems with cars like traffic, air pollution, and the danger they pose to other drivers, pedestrians, and bikers. Rather than use public funds to build new highways or car infrastructure, local governments could offer subsidies for electric bicycles or remodel existing highway systems to support more bus and rail. These participants recommended more events like CicLAvia, where streets are closed to car access, as opportunities to promote safe, healthy, and environmentally friendly mobility.³

Concerns with the safety and accessibility of public transit were echoed across feedback sessions, with several participants noting barriers including the cost of fares, poorly maintained escalators and elevators at Metro stations, low Metro ridership, and unsafe bus shelter locations. Challenges with Uber and Lyft dominating the rideshare industry were discussed as well as suggestions for local governments to start their own city rideshare programs. Participants discussed the dangers of shared bike lanes and how separating car traffic from other transportation modes would be safer. Other feedback revolved around a lack of trust in requirements for electric vehicle incentives which could prevent community buy-in for implementation.

³ Los Angeles Ecovillage Institute

B. Communities – Develop, connect, and sustain communities that are livable and thriving.

Draft Goal priorities:

- 1) Improve access to transit and jobs;
- 2) Integrate a regional development pattern with the transportation network;
- 3) Meet regional housing needs.

Community Priorities:

Throughout feedback sharing sessions, participants circulated ideas and priorities for livable and thriving communities.

- **Engagement:** Community members overwhelmingly agreed on the importance of their involvement and opportunity to provide future input regarding Connect SoCal. In particular, youth participants asserted their desire to be involved in community improvement strategies and have access to resources and opportunities.⁴
- **Quality and affordable housing:** Access to amenities, especially quality and affordable housing during a housing crisis, was another priority that emerged among community participants. Residents shared concern with the number of people who are unhoused in the region and suggested that providing housing, specifically multi-family and dense housing, would result in safer sidewalks and transit facilities. Instead of promoting the building of new housing, participants supported **infill infrastructure** as a strategy to revitalize vacant buildings while also discouraging exurban development in conservation areas. Residents in multiple engagements called for mandating rent-controlled housing, particularly near transportation nodes, as a key affordable housing preservation strategy.
- **Amenities near housing:** Residents also expressed a preference for more parks, banks, and grocery stores near housing. One group suggested structuring development patterns in the SCAG region around small community hubs that are accessible by walking, biking, or rail.
- **Clean and safe streets:** From tidying street litter to reducing the prevalence of liquor and other substances in disinvested zip codes, residents felt their communities would benefit from safer and cleaner streets.⁵

Challenges for Implementation at Local Level:

Community Partners shared that community members wanted to see more alignment of local and regional mitigation initiatives, including connecting non-profit conservation efforts, the State's 30x30 commitment, and Connect SoCal; connecting the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy to local efforts to implement Climate Action and Adaptation Plans; and other concrete connections between implemented policies and overarching Connect SoCal goals. Community members discussed a lack of trust in SCAG and skepticism around its effectiveness, source of funds, and lack of prior community involvement. Residents would like to see SCAG representatives and local officials visit their communities and see areas of concern first-hand. To receive ongoing feedback, SCAG could have a comment

⁴ Strategic Action for a Just Economy, Central City Neighborhood Partners

⁵ Latino Health Access, Central City Neighborhood Partners

box where community members can write or submit pictures of areas of concern within their community. One group also pointed to the need for consistent survey collection to detect community issues. Another group suggested SCAG create a mobile application to connect survey participants with the specified contact points for their local jurisdiction. These communities shared a desire to be informed and be able to participate despite language barriers.

C. Environment – Create a healthy region for the people of today and tomorrow.

Draft Goal priorities:

- 1) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants;
- 2) Conserve open space and farmland;
- 3) Help the region grow sustainably.

Community Priorities:

Concerning the environment and ways to help create a healthy region, community members advocated for more green space and better access to parks and open space, including through better transit connectivity.

- **Inclusive conservation:** One group highlighted how the definition of conservation should be as broad and inclusive as possible to include restoration, resilience, and reclamation, for example.
- **Air quality, water quality, and pollution:** Residents brainstormed pathways to improving air quality and reducing air pollution, such as the preservation and enhancement of natural and working lands, infill development, transition to zero and near-zero vehicles, setting and attaining building electrification goals, mitigation of road congestion, and prohibition of new fossil fuel infrastructure. One group of participants raised health and safety concerns about a toxic landfill site near housing. A Community Partner emphasized water quality as a priority issue for low-income seniors who live in older housing stock. These residents use bottled water because they do not trust the pipes in their homes.
- **Clean streets, litter, and recycling:** Street cleanliness was a core priority for community members, who called for more frequent and vigilant litter cleanup. One Community Partner also noted that participants want to see more programs that promote the use of recycled materials.

Challenges for Implementation at Local Level:

Residents wanted to see more alignment between conservation policies, such as land protection and restoration policies and complementary work, such as the housing mandate. Strong community involvement throughout the strategizing and implementation of policies remained a key request for participants. One group suggested creating a collaborative roundtable for conservation groups.

D. Economy – Support a sustainable, efficient, and productive regional economic environment that provides opportunities for all.

Draft Goal priorities:

- 1) Support new jobs through transportation investments and increased competitiveness;
- 2) Support efficient and resilient goods movement.

Community Priorities:

Accessing jobs closer to home with better pay and benefits was a shared priority among residents.

- **Livable wages and health benefits:** Individuals emphasized the importance of livable wages in enabling people to access housing and other basic needs. Community members expressed a desire for more flexible part-time jobs in the area that would accommodate employees experiencing chronic health issues, such as long-term COVID-19.
- **Infrastructure Investments:** One group of participants believed new transportation infrastructure could provide new and better-paying jobs in their Orange County region.⁶ Other groups called for more conservation funding, high-quality and affordable housing, and economic opportunities.
- **Support for small businesses:** Greater support for small businesses, such as street vendors, came up as an important discussion point as well.

Challenges for Implementation at Local Level:

Community members criticized high taxes and costs of living as challenges which exacerbate issues that affect low-income and disinvested zip codes in the SCAG region.⁷ One group noted how corporations like Amazon create an expectation of fast delivery of goods which contributes to unjust and harmful work conditions that disproportionately burden low-income communities. This group called for more local production of goods and services.⁸ Some participants felt the focus on economic goals conflicts with the mobility and community goals; they perceived the pursuit of economic growth as the cause of the social and environmental justice challenges in the region. They suggested SCAG instead consider working toward de-growth and addressing the harm caused by past economic growth.⁹ Participants identified training and outreach to communities on where and how to apply for jobs as necessary.

E. Equity and Resilience

Draft Goal priorities:

- 1) Ensure safe streets and walkable neighborhoods close to transit;
- 2) Locate jobs near housing;
- 3) Improve access to goods and services;

⁶ Orange County Environmental Justice Education Fund

⁷ Latino Health Access

⁸ Orange County Environmental Justice Education Fund

⁹ Los Angeles Ecovillage Institute

- 4) More affordable housing and better housing affordability;
- 5) Dependable transportation system;
- 6) Improved mobility and travel modes to reduce emissions.

Community Priorities:

Community Partners reported persistent concerns among residents about equity and resilience in their communities. Groups highlighted the need for long-term accommodations for vulnerable populations, such as elderly people, displaced and unhoused people, people of different gender identities, people with disabilities, and low-income people of color.

- **Priority populations:** Residents provided crucial perspectives on how to make goals like transportation-centered housing, electric vehicles, building electrification, high-quality jobs, complete streets, and public transportation more equitable and accessible for these priority populations. Regarding the needs of the elderly, one group surfaced a suggestion that seniors should be included directly in the description of Connect SoCal 2024 rather than under the umbrella of all ages.
- **Literacy- and digitally-inclusive accommodations:** To enhance equitable access to safer roads and healthy transportation options, groups offered suggestions including offering information on community services in various languages at bus stops; translating transportation apps and content into all languages spoken by local communities with accommodations for various literacy levels; and providing more convenient and effective digital interactions to allow less technologically literate people to access information. A Community Partner indicated that it took twice as long to help seniors complete the Connect SoCal 2024 survey due to technological and literacy barriers.
- **Community involvement:** Regional planning should incentivize resilience and sustainability and incorporate meaningful community involvement throughout decision-making processes.

Challenges for Implementation at Local Level:

Community members identified how public transit is extremely segregated and almost exclusively used by low-income people of color. Residents pointed out the difficulty in encouraging the use of public transit by people from different racial, social, and economic backgrounds. Considering how housing and transportation have historically disproportionately harmed minority communities and ethnic enclaves, new infrastructure should remain affordable and effective for low-income residents.

Communities would like to understand and stay informed about the timeline for implementation of SCAG projects, particularly around affordable housing, and better job opportunities. In terms of long-term regional resilience, one group of participants reflected how the pandemic epitomized the deadly consequences and risks faced by minority elderly communities, especially those with limited English. To this point, capturing long-term health metrics is fundamental. The lack of health equity metrics, particularly for Asian populations who are often

categorized together, contributes to policy that overlooks significant health equity discrepancies.¹⁰

¹⁰ Save Our Seniors Network

IV. COMMUNITY PARTNER PROFILES

Bike Ventura County (BikeVC) | Bike Ventura County's mission is to grow a safe, healthy community through equitable bicycle education, empowerment, and advocacy. BikeVC currently provides youth and adult bike skill and safety education to over 1,500 students annually and has two nonprofit shops providing low-cost bike repair solutions from donated bicycles and parts.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- April 16, 2023 – Conducted surveys at the Annual Earth Day EcoFest at Ventura Charter School, Ventura
- April 29, 2023 – Conducted surveys at the Día De Los Niños Celebration, Oxnard

California Walks | California Walks works to create safe, just, and inclusive streets and public spaces. California Walks partners with state agencies, organizations and communities to establish and strengthen policies and practices that support pedestrian safety and healthy, walkable communities. California Walks works to expand and strengthen a network of community organizations working for pedestrian safety and community walkability through equity, engagement, education, advocacy and collaboration.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events

Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ) | CCAEJ is a progressive, base-building, non-profit organization bringing communities together to find opportunities for cooperation, agreement and problem solving in improving their social and natural environment. Using the lens of environmental health to achieve social change, we work within communities to develop and sustain democratically based, participatory decision-making that promotes involvement of a diverse segment of the community in ways that empower the community. With its beginnings in 1978 and success in achieving institutional change, CCAEJ has become a highly respected voice for disproportionate communities of color in the Inland Empire region.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events

Central City Neighborhood Partners (CCNP) | CCNP is a collaborative non-profit organization that primarily serves BIPOC community members by fostering partnerships in support of positive community change. By ensuring equal access to essential services, CCNP uplifts BIPOC families with direct links to rent assistance, food, and educational support for intergenerational households. CCNP is a trusted resource hub centrally located in the Westlake

neighborhood of the City Los Angeles that fortifies resilient support in assisting the community to enrich their everyday lives.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- April 15, 2023 – Conducted surveys at CCNP's Earth Day Event, Los Angeles
- April 19, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to CCNP Youth Council, Los Angeles
- April 22, 2023 – Conducted surveys at Family Fun Day, Los Angeles
- May 11, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation during CCNP Nutrition Course, Los Angeles
- May 16, 2023 – Connect SoCal Plan Meeting, Los Angeles
- May 19, 2023 – Connect SoCal Plan Meeting, Los Angeles

Summary of Feedback Received

- Youth were excited about the plan and asked for: (1) strategies to make streets safer, (2) increased bus frequency, (3) improved safety at bus stops and shelters, (4) and solar panels on residential and community spaces. Community members echoed these calls, especially for safer streets and increased bus frequency.
- CCNP members and youth were concerned about how to address the homelessness crisis, highlighting the need to work in community to address it. In tandem, members raised the need for more affordable housing, but some cautioned that home construction does not always address homelessness.
- Community members were interested in understanding when the Connect SoCal plan will be implemented and how it would impact them. Specifically, members wanted to understand who would benefit from new affordable housing, since many of the participants are on affordable housing waitlists.
- Street cleanliness and safety were also major concerns across the engagements. Some community members suggested issuing tickets for littering, more frequent trash pickup, and more street lighting. Others suggested more security in areas like parks.
- Community members also want to dedicate more attention to public spaces. Specifically, they called for designated spaces for street vendors since they often take up room on sidewalks. Community members also want more park space that is safe and clean and where their children can spend time.
- Community members were interested in learning more about the concept of creating jobs near where people live.
- Community members want SCAG to visit their community to see and understand their areas of concern. They also requested a comment box to share issues with SCAG.

Day One | Day One is a community-based nonprofit organization with a 35-year history of providing effective, high quality and culturally-sensitive public health education, intervention, and

policy development in the San Gabriel Valley. Our mission is to build vibrant, healthy cities by advancing public health, empowering youth, and igniting change. Our vision is to create a healthy, connected, vibrant world. Our team has learned the importance of listening, learning, and leading. Youth have always been at the heart of our program and are instrumental in guiding the direction of our efforts.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- May 10, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation at Day One Youth Advocate Meeting, Pasadena
- May 22, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation at Foothill League of Women Voters, Pasadena 100, and Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition Meeting, Pasadena (Virtual)

Summary of Feedback Received

- Students shared that transportation should be a larger community focus, especially transit given that many people can't afford a car and instead take the bus. They want to see transit improvements such as more Metro stations, longer bus routes, and more bike lanes.
- Community members and youth also raised concerns about ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the plan. Students also want more green space, especially near roads and highways.
- Community members were interested in whether the Inflation Reduction Act would be mentioned in the Connect SoCal plan.

Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHPB) | Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks' mission is "to promote, protect, and enhance the harbors, beaches, parks, trails, open spaces, natural preserves, and historic sites in Orange County."

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- May 2, 2023 – Connect SoCal Workshop, Orange County (Virtual)
- May 9, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to Power in Nature Southland Regional Group (Virtual)
- May 15, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to Power in Nature Southland Regional Group (Virtual)

Summary of Feedback Received

- Participants shared that aligning Connect SoCal with other conservation planning efforts, including 30x30 would help bolster the goals of each. They also suggested that aligning SCAG's other work, such as the housing mandate, with

conservation efforts would help support community-driven work and help SCAG and its partners meet their goals.

- Participants emphasized the importance of community involvement, including conservation groups, in Connect SoCal development to ensure that conservation and environmental policies are adequately addressed. Some participants would like to learn about future Connect SoCal feedback opportunities. However, others were curious about how the conservation community would benefit from being involved with Connect SoCal.
- Participants also emphasized that conservation and the environment should be incorporated throughout the plan. They added that the conservation definition should be broad (e.g. “not just land protection, but also restoration, resilience, and reclamation”). One group noted that conservation needs to be called out separate from land use.
- Participants were interested in learning about advance mitigation to fund conservation efforts.

Latino Health Access (LHA) | LHA is a non-profit public health organization founded in 1993 with the mission to partner with communities to bring health, equity and sustainable change through education, services, consciousness-raising, and civic participation. The Community Health Worker/Promotor model is the driving force for the organization to reach and engage working-class Latinx communities and other communities of color in Orange County. LHA facilitates core programming in the areas of chronic disease prevention and management, children and youth engagement, mental health and emotional wellness, civic and community engagement and active transportation.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- April 22, 2023 – Conducted surveys at Sana Ana Fit Run, Santa Ana
- May 1, 2023 – Conducted surveys at Santa Ana High School, Santa Ana
- May 19, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to LHA Youth, Santa Ana
- May 22, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to LHA Staff, Santa Ana (Virtual)
- May 24, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to LHA Membership, Santa Ana

Summary of Feedback Received

- All groups agreed that there is a housing crisis and a need for more affordable, quality housing. Youth cited concerns about their ability to access quality housing in the future and about access to affordable healthcare. Staff added that more housing assistance programs are needed to support residents with securing housing and that there should be less liquor and other substances in disinvested zip codes.
- Across all groups, participants raised concerns about street safety and facilities. Youth called for improvements to bike and pedestrian infrastructure; members called for more bus and rail routes and higher frequency; and staff emphasized

- the need for better transportation access for residents who use wheelchairs. Members also called for more transit accessibility, including free fares.
- Members emphasized that low-income households are the most impacted by the region's challenges. Staff added that increased taxes and cost of living exacerbate the issues that these households face.
 - Members and staff also raised economic concerns, such as ensuring that small businesses have the access they need to thrive. Staff also noted that increased wages would improve residents' access to quality housing.
 - Each group also noted environmental concerns related to air pollution and congestion, street cleanliness, and materials recycling.
 - Recommendations for Connect SoCal included (1) more consistent survey collection as a means of identifying community issues, and (2) more micro-level analysis of impacts since the four goal areas impact each community differently.

Long Beach Gray Panthers (LBGP) | The mission of Long Beach Gray Panthers is to provide education and advocacy at the Federal, State, County and City level on Older Adult issues related to zoning, housing, transportation, re-entry, environment, homelessness, healthcare, social security, elections, and community engagement. LBGP works with 75 other community organizations who serve as subject matter experts and CSULB through the Center for Community Engagement.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- May 3, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation at Northpointe Housing Health Fair, Long Beach
- May 6, 2023 – LBGP Senior Fest at Long Beach
- May 18, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation at Long Beach Senior Center Health Fair, Long Beach
- Conducted surveys at community events around Long Beach

Summary of Feedback Received

- Overall, participants were not familiar with SCAG and its jurisdiction, but were appreciative of the opportunity to provide input.
- Participants shared concerns about how SCAG would consider and incorporate their feedback.
- Participants were concerned about access to grocery stores and banks.
- Participants shared how clean water was a huge issue affecting seniors, particularly low-income seniors living in older housing stock with pipes "they don't trust."
- Additionally, health and safety were top priorities for participants. Participants raised concerns about a toxic landfill site near their housing.

- Participants were concerned about transit access in the area and wanted more reliable transit options.
- Participants wanted to ensure they would have access to flexible part-time jobs where they would not have to worry about losing employment due to prevalent health issues, such as long-term COVID.

Los Amigos de la Comunidad | The mission of Los Amigos de la Comunidad, Inc is: To increase the capacity of the underserved communities of the Imperial Valley and intertwined regions facing socio-economic and environmental injustices, health care access disparities and institutional discrimination. Los Amigos de la Comunidad, Inc is dedicated to building capacity of underserved communities from the ground-up with an emphasis on communities facing socio-economic and environmental injustices and challenges, lack of educational opportunities, poor infrastructure, lack of affordable and adequate housing by using culturally competent and relevant organizing and advocacy methods. Capacity building includes civic engagement, direct organizing/advocacy, creating access to resources and fostering leaders from the underserved communities to become their best advocates and take control of their issues focusing on the most underserved; people living below, at or just above the poverty level, people of color, immigrants, women, undocumented, LGBTQ, homeless, farmworkers and other marginalized/disenfranchised subgroups within our region.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- April 16, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation at Velocity, El Centro
- April 27, 2023 – Connect SoCal Workshop, Niland
- May 5, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation at 5 de Mayo Taco Festival, Brawley
- May 6, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation at Calexico Community Center, Calexico
- May 22, 2023 – Los Amigos SCAG Platica, Brawley
- Conducted surveys at community events around the valley

Summary of Feedback Received

- Overall, participants were not familiar with SCAG and its jurisdiction, but were appreciative of the opportunity to provide input.
- Participants shared concerns about the lack of job opportunities in the region and the number of low-paying jobs. They added that there needs to be more jobs with better salaries and benefits, more job training, and tailored outreach to the community about how to apply for openings.
- Participants were also concerned about the air quality in the area and the prevalence of respiratory illnesses such as asthma in the community. They want to see a plan to improve the air quality.
- Participants wanted to ensure that perspectives of people who live near the US-Mexico border are considered in the plan.

Los Angeles Ecovillage Institute | Los Angeles Ecovillage Institute's mission is to demonstrate higher quality living patterns at lower environmental impacts by maximizing beneficial connections between the ecological, economic and social systems of a neighborhood. The Ecovillage has been a resource for the Koreatown community for the past 30 years, providing affordable, ecological housing and a range of programming on neighborhood resilience topics.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- April 16, 2023 – Conducted surveys at CicLAvia, Los Angeles (Mid-City/Pico Union)
- April 17, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to Urban Soil / Tierra Urbana Co-Op, Los Angeles
- April 18, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to Rampart Village Neighborhood Council, Los Angeles
- April 21, 2023 – Reimagining a Resilient and Regenerative LA Connect SoCal Workshop, Los Angeles
- May 6, 2023 – Connect SoCal Workshop, Los Angeles

Summary of Feedback Received

- Overall, participants raised concerns with existing transportation systems and suggested that changes to zoning could better enable residents to live near their workplaces and recreational activities, which would ultimately lead to less required travel.
- Participants highlighted the need for more “reliable, frequent, and well-maintained public transit,” citing that current transit options are “unreliable, inconsistent, and poorly maintained.” One group noted concerns about low transit ridership and that cleanliness is a leading reason. Another group added that ADA accessibility at stations can be challenging since elevator maintenance is unreliable. The group suggested that Metro should have an increased maintenance budget to address these issues. Participants also shared that public transit should be free.
- Protected bike lanes and dedicated bus lanes were also topics of concern. Participants called for more bike lanes, but discouraged the use of shared bus / bike lanes due to safety concerns for bicyclists. They also suggested car-free streets, better first/last mile connections, more connected bike lane systems, a street-car system, bicycle co-ops (as pedi-cabs), city-owned ride-share, and more small businesses in Metro stations to increase safety.
- Overall, participants want to see bicycle and transit infrastructure prioritized over car infrastructure and discouraged the expansion of freeways. This includes moving away from policy solutions that incentivize electric vehicles since this still incentivizes driving, and battery production has harmful impacts.

- Participants were concerned with shared electric scooters, which users drive fast on sidewalks and park across pedestrian spaces, and wanted to know how governments would address them.
- Participants also highlighted the need for more affordable housing for people who are unhoused since many need to use transit as shelters. Affordable housing should be multi-family and dense.
- Participants were also concerned about the fact that local governments can ignore the recommendations in plans like Connect SoCal, and that these agencies should focus on implementing their existing plans. Participants added that there should be more transparency and accountability for implementation, which can be possible through coordination between government agencies and community groups.
- Participants were concerned with the Economy goal area, given that they found economic growth to be in direct conflict with the social and environmental goals.

Orange County Environmental Justice Education Fund (OCEJEF) | Founded in 2016, OCEJEF's mission is to bring the fight for environmental justice to Orange County through advocacy, community mobilization, systemic transformation, scientific investigation, and public accountability. We work a lot around sustainable land use, and a transition to a renewable and restorative economy, including safe and accessible clean energy transportation.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- April 21, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to the Santa Ana Climate Resiliency Coalition, Santa Ana
- May 25, 2023 – Connect SoCal Workshop, Orange County (Virtual)

Summary of Feedback Received

- Participants emphasized the need for Connect SoCal to connect to local efforts and plans such as climate adaptation plans and vice versa. Others added that the improvements need to remain accessible for low-income residents. They also encouraged local officials to visit their communities to see their unique challenges.
- Participants were concerned with housing affordability and accessibility and emphasized the need for rent control to ensure that new development remains accessible. Participants also agreed that housing should be located near transportation and be mixed-use. One group added that vacant buildings should be rehabilitated for housing, rather than focusing on new development, since there are more vacant homes than people who are unhoused in Southern California.
- Participants were also concerned with transportation accessibility and complete streets and suggested: (1) an app for mapping transit routes (similar to one in

- Seattle), (2) safer and more accessible sidewalks, (3) protected bike lanes, and (4) more transit fare exemptions.
- Some community members called for more vehicle electrification assistance for low-income communities. One example of this would be free electric vehicle charging stations that are solar-powered.
 - Participants want to preserve natural land to provide open space and to address air quality issues. They called for more collaboration with Indigenous communities in conversations about land and water through rematriation.
 - Participants suggested adding goals related to building electrification, given the climate footprint of buildings and the public health impacts of gas stoves. Some added that there should be more local power creation, and that there should be a ban on new fossil-fuel infrastructure.

Santa Ana Active Streets (SAAS) | SAAS is a community-based coalition with the mission of cultivating diverse community participation in creating a safe and accessible environment for active transportation in Santa Ana. Formed in 2013, our vision is to empower residents to become engaged participants in the emerging active transportation movement in Santa Ana by hosting community events, partnering with local organizations, and working directly with city officials.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- May 8, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to Willard Neighborhood Association, Santa Ana
- May 18, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to SAAS Volunteer and Programs Meeting, Santa Ana

Summary of Feedback Received

- Participants want to see safer streets, with more crossing guards and well-paved facilities. They added that it needs to be easier to incorporate crossing guards into safety strategies. Participants also raised parking as a needed strategy, but noted that this isn't a long-term solution.
- Participants raised many ideas related to better transit, including: (1) reliable, frequent, and fast transit (most popular); (2) better facilities for walking, biking, and rolling (also most popular); (3) increased number of destinations that can be reached by walking, biking, or rolling (third most popular); (4) lighting at bus stops; (5) vouchers for student bus passes; (6) increased connectivity and transit frequency, especially on rail, between Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties; and (7) bus stops as an opportunity to share information on community services (in multiple languages).
- One participant shared that zero emission vehicles incentives and infrastructure are not as high of a priority.

- One participant found the plan development to be challenging to grasp, preferring to focus attention on short-term issues such as parking access.

Save Our Seniors Network (SOSN) | SOSN is an all-volunteer network of individuals and organizations working to promote, protect, and advocate for culturally competent, community-led healthcare, based on compassion not profits, for Japanese-American, limited-English proficient, immigrant, and all vulnerable seniors.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- May 4, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to SOSN Members, Los Angeles (Virtual)
- May 16, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to SOSN Executive Committee, Los Angeles (Virtual)
- May 23, 2023 – Save Our Seniors Network Open House Workshop: Our Elders in 2040, Torrance
- May 25, 2023 – Our Seniors in 2050 Connect SoCal Workshop (Virtual)
- May 19, 2023 – Conducted surveys at Nijya Market, Torrance

Summary of Feedback Received

- Participants raised the need for more connections between Connect SoCal and local policies given that SCAG cannot enforce the plan's goals. This related to the need for more coordination between agencies. They added that there is skepticism around SCAG's effectiveness, transparency, sources of funds, and history of community involvement. Others noted that major infrastructure investments have historically harmed minority communities, especially due to air quality impacts.
- Participants suggested that there should be clear performance metrics from previous and future Regional Transportation Plans to measure progress. They also added that there should be more mention of ways for communities to engage with housing and transportation planning locally.
- Participants emphasized that the plan needs an intergenerational connection and a stronger emphasis on the needs of the elderly. Given that elderly require greater levels of care, participants were concerned by the lack of health equity metrics in the plan. Participants added that the plan should more clearly point out the impacts of the environment on health.
- Participants shared that the “sandwich generation,” or those who care for a parent over 65 and have a child under 18, are heavily dependent on commuting. For elders who don't have personal transportation, the location of services is also very important.
- Participants wanted to see a larger emphasis on connections to nature and strategies to address homelessness humanely.

- Participants were concerned with the slow pace of changing land use designations and emphasized the need to address airports that continue to operate in residential areas.

Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living (SCRS) | Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living's mission is to empower individuals with any disability of all ages to become independent through employment, education and community service.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- May 19, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to SCRS Consumers, Downey

Summary of Feedback Received

- Many participants raised that paratransit services are not reliable. As a result, many participants have to rely on public transportation, which feels less safe. Some added that they feel more understood on paratransit than on bus or rail transit due to their disabilities.
- Participants shared that safety and operator compassion and understanding also stand out, but participants did not elaborate on why.

Strategic Action for a Just Economy (SAJE) | SAJE builds community power and leadership for economic justice. We are driven by a vision of a society where justice and equity are the foundation of community development, where communities are stable, and where workers and tenants have the same rights, stature, and decision-making power as corporations and property owners. Our four main areas of work are around Tenant Rights and Policies, Healthy Housing, Equitable Development and Transit.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- May 18, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to SAJE Members (Virtual)

Summary of Feedback Received

- Participants were curious about how the Connect SoCal goals would be implemented.
- Participants were concerned about the high cost of housing and access to amenities in their neighborhoods now and in the future. Youth and parents agreed that more open space and other amenities are needed for youth in their communities.
- Participants added that there needs to be more accessible transportation that is also reliable, safe, and affordable. Participants specifically called for fareless transit, better safety on transit, electric transit vehicles, and longer transit routes.

Participants also shared that community members don't trust the requirements for electric vehicle incentives.

Uplift San Bernardino/Making Hope Happen Foundation | The Making Hope Happen Foundation engages people, builds partnerships, provides leadership, and delivers resources where they are needed to achieve a thriving and innovative community in which every student is a life-long learner and can be successful in meeting their hopes and aspirations. Uplift San Bernardino is a collective impact initiative, and the backbone organization is the Making Hope Happen Foundation. The mission of our collective is to build a generation of successful adults committed to growing roots in San Bernardino through neighborhood development, economic opportunities, and our greatest asset, our human capital.

Summary of Engagement Activities

- Promoted SCAG-hosted and other Connect SoCal workshops / events
- April 15, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to IE Tenants Union Meeting, San Bernardino County
- April 17, 2023 – Conducted surveys at Small Business Resource Group, San Bernardino (Virtual)
- April 22, 2023 – Conducted surveys at the City of San Bernardino's Arbor/Earth Day Revitalization, San Bernardino
- May 1, 2023 – Conducted surveys at Community Council Meeting, San Bernardino (Virtual)
- May 17, 2023 – Connect SoCal Presentation to the Neighborhood Association Council of San Bernardino, San Bernardino (Virtual)

Summary of Feedback Received

- Participants shared that they face more immediate needs than those captured in a plan with a 2050 time-horizon. The issue of greatest concern was housing security, and participants noted that concerns about this issue make it challenging to focus on other areas for improvement such as transportation. Participants agreed that affordable housing is not affordable on minimum wage. Despite these concerns, the group hopes that the plan will focus on addressing these housing issues.
- Alongside affordable housing, participants want to see solutions for people who are being displaced. They noted that while people who are unhoused are being forced out of parks, they don't have anywhere else to go.
- In addition to housing, participants called for more park access and better transportation and street safety given the number of speeding drivers. Survey participants added that traffic is increasing and roads are deteriorating, especially after the development of more distribution centers and the recent rains. Some also added that air quality and smog are major issues. Some survey participants shared that they'd like to see more shared mobility, such as ride-share and

bicycle and scooter sharing. However, some also raised the challenges with maintaining these resources.





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