

National City seeks representation in SANDAG 2050 plan

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NATIONAL CITY — An overview of the county's 2050 plan for growth and development sparked questions from National City council members on how the city can have more of a say in the process.

Phil Trom, senior regional planner at the San Diego Association of Governments, outlined "San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan" on July 2. It was one of several presentations given throughout the county since May to receive public input.

The plan's design merges the county's Regional Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2004, and the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, adopted in 2011.

"We're doing something we never did before ... We're weaving those together for the first time," Trom said. "What that means is we can really look at a lot of areas that we haven't addressed in a decade."

The Regional Transportation Plan seeks to enhance quality of life, promote sustainability and offer additional mobility options for people and supplies, while the Sustainable Communities Strategy focuses on efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to state-mandated levels.

In order to reach underrepresented areas for feedback, SANDAG developed a partnership program with regional collaboratives in vulnerable areas, typically low income minorities who otherwise might not become involved in the process.

Councilwoman Mona Rios asked about receiving input from National City nonprofits such as the Environmental Health Coalition to participate.

Following a three-month process, Trom said no groups came forward from National City.

SANDAG representatives then held a workshop for residents to receive additional feedback from residents.

"One of the reasons we came out this last Saturday was to try and fill what we see as holes in that information exchange and gathering public feedback," Trom said. "We acknowledge that there is a gap and we really want to hear from you as far as how we can engage your community."

Councilwoman Alejandra Sotelo-Solis asked what SANDAG would do to reach out to residents in the future.

“As we have some significant elements to get public feedback on we’ll do another outreach series,” Trom said. “We’re open to ideas and will try to work with council to find more solutions.”

SANDAG estimates that by 2050, an additional 1.25 million residents will live in the region, half a million jobs will be created and 400,000 new homes will be built in environmentally sustainable communities more conducive to walking and bicycling, with greater access to public transit.

The plan estimates an investment of about \$214 billion in local, state and federal transportation funds in the next 38 years.

While the majority of the funds will go toward transit, 34 percent is designated for highway improvements (largely for the addition of high occupancy vehicle lanes to existing freeway corridors) and 21 percent to local roads and streets.

“The main crux of the transportation part of this plan is developing a transit highway system that includes all the projects that are in our revenue constraint,” Trom said. “We see a relationship between what we build in terms of transportation, how it impacts land use and then in turn impacts travel behavior, health ... overall cost to the person or society of public health and equity.”

Transportation projects include transit, rail and bus services and express or managed lanes.

“One thing that’s exciting for National City is you have several significant transit investments coming,” Trom said. “You have several Bus Rapid Transit projects that will be coming up the 805 corridor.”

A north-south trolley corridor along the Interstate 805 corridor would connect central San Diego with cities in the South Bay area such as National City, Chula Vista and San Ysidro.

“The flip side to this is the highway network,” Trom said. “In terms of National City there’s the Interstate 5 improvements as well as the 805 improvements occurring over the next 38 years.”

By 2018, the National City Marine Terminal is expected to see improvements to Bay Marina Drive and Civic Center Freeway Access.

National City residents will have another opportunity to give input at the city’s next planning commission meeting on Monday, July 15

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