

SANDAG
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA. 92101

June 16, 2011

To SANDAG from Peninsula Community Planning Board,

Please find attached a position paper and map depiction of our concerns about SANDAG's 2050 Regional Transportation Plan.

SANDAG is estimating that we will add over 17,000 people to the greater Point Loma area over the next 40 years, with almost no major improvements in transportation options.

Although most of the roads currently operate at a failing level for circulation, the Preferred Scenario chosen for the region does not include new freeway connectors between I-5 and I-8, nor any “trunk-based” transit, which guarantees ongoing investment in the transit system.

Table TA4.12—Freeway Connectors Project Ratings in the RTP Appendix (attached) identifies the I-5/I-8 South to West as the #3 needed connector in the region, and the I-5/I-8 East to North as the #6.

Although I-15/SR-56 North to West, I-5/SR-56 West to North and South to East are all lower priority on the ranking scale (#7, #9, and #10 respectively), those projects are included in the revenue constrained RTP. It is critical that we continue to invest in our older communities to improve existing infrastructure, rather than funneling available funds to newer communities that have not been waiting decades for improvements. The lack of major freeway connectors in the Point Loma area snarls our existing roadways. These roads are already significantly burdened by major public facilities including the San Diego National Airport and two Naval bases, both major employment centers, and are expected to have usage increases over the next 40 years.

Sincerely,

Suhail Khalil
Chairman, Peninsula Community Planning Board

SANDAG's proposed 2050 Regional Transportation Plan provides funding for car pool/HOV lanes, express bus lanes, light rail, bicycle trails, and walking paths, but insufficient funds to solve today's critical traffic problems. While it is laudable and necessary to plan well in advance for future movement of personnel and goods, it is not wise to ignore serious problems that exist today. SANDAG's RTP seems to provide no relief for Point Loma except continuing local bus routes. In particular we are concerned about the traffic that exceeds the capacity of Rosecrans Street. Prior to the opening of Liberty Station, Rosecrans Street was at capacity. With 349 residences and occupation of approximately half of the business and office space, traffic on Rosecrans Street often exceeds capacity. The third traffic lane added to the East side of Rosecrans makes it easier to get in and out of Liberty Station and allows buses to stop without impeding traffic, but it does little to mitigate the traffic problems on Rosecrans.

With the SANDAG Profile Warehouse forecast of a population increase of 17,252 or 30% increase by 2050 for the Peninsula, Ocean Beach and Midway areas, Liberty Station is expecting to double its business and office space and the San Diego International Airport Master Plan expects the percentage of airport traffic on North Harbor Drive to increase from 15% to 32%. With corresponding increases on Rosecrans Street from 7% to 15%, Nimitz Blvd goes from 6% to 13% and Interstate 8 from 4% to 8% and assumes the completion of the I-8/I-5 intersection, by 2030.

The solution is to bypass Rosecrans Street with the non-destination traffic by utilizing Interstate 8 and Nimitz Blvd. The solution has three parts: completion of the I-8/I-5 intersection, installation of ramps connecting I-8 to Nimitz Blvd and Sunset Cliffs Blvd bypassing the signal lights at Sunset Cliffs and W. Point Loma Blvd and upgrading Nimitz Blvd. to an East/ West corridor. This solution will also make the Midway area more business friendly and reduce traffic on Sea World Drive.

Implementation:

*The I-5 Corridor Study shows that plans for the completion of the I-5/I-8 intersection includes incorporating Pacific Coast Highway and Sea World Drive in an excessively expensive project. A much less expensive solution is available by making the two lane ramp from I-5N to I-8W a two-way ramp with the western end of the ramp originating from I-8E and access to I-5N by a ramp circling outside the Rosecrans to I-5N ramp. Tolerances for the roadway may be tight, especially on the bridge crossing I-5 but we think drivers would prefer a low speed access to I-5N as opposed to no access at all. Access can be improved by closing the right hand lane of I-5N where the I-8E to I-5N ramp, the Rosecrans to I-5N ramp and the I-8W to I-5N ramps merge with I-5N. In addition it is recommended that I-8E maintain two lanes through the I-5/I-8 intersection and the I-5S to I-8E lane be reduced to a single lane corresponding with the I-8W/I-5N single lane ramp. The intersection will be completed with a single lane ramp connecting the I-5S/Rosecrans exit to I-8W. The I-8/I-5 ramps referred to above have project ranks of 3 and 5 in the 2050 RTP Project Rank (though it appears 5 could be accomplished at one tenth the 220 million cost). The projects are not considered for TransNet funding though Projects 4,5,9,10 are considered,

*The implementation of extending the western end of I-8 to Sunset Cliffs Blvd and Nimitz Blvd consists of a ramp from I-8W to Sunset Cliffs Blvd bypassing the signal lights at I-8/Sunset Cliffs Blvd and single ramps, one in each direction, connecting I-8 to Nimitz Blvd opposite Correia Middle School. While including Pacific Coast Highway and Sea World Drive in the I-8/I-5 intersection has some merit long term, it should have a low priority compared to extending I-8 to Nimitz.

*The Rosecrans bypass can be completed by adding Nimitz Blvd to the Regional Arterial System (RAS) and upgrading Nimitz Blvd and North Harbor Drive between I-8 and San Diego Airport to form an East/West corridor across Point Loma allowing for the rapid access and egress of commuter traffic and an alternative route to and from the airport.