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October 5, 2015

SANDAG
Board of Directors, Chair Jack Dale
Transportation Committee, Chair Todd Gloria
Regional Planning Committee, Chair Lesa Heebner
401 B St. Ste. 800
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: Final Comments for SANDAG's Draft 2015 Regional Plan (titled "San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan")

Honorable Jack Dale and SANDAG Board and Committee members:

On behalf of Circulate San Diego, whose mission is to create excellent mobility choices and vibrant, healthy neighborhoods, I am writing to provide final comments to the Draft 2015 Regional Plan.

Transit and active transportation projects are crucial to economic development, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and providing safe, affordable connections between where people live and where they work and play.

Circulate San Diego appreciates the work over the years by the SANDAG Board and staff to develop transportation choices through its Draft 2015 Regional Plan, titled "San Diego Forward." There are many aspects to the Regional Plan that have great merit.

Unfortunately, we must recommend that SANDAG Board members vote against adoption of the plan in its current form because it does not adequately advance transit and active transportation projects.

Despite these differences, Circulate San Diego believes that the SANDAG Board can and should move forward with a region-wide Quality of Life revenue measure in 2016 that includes provisions and funding to advance transit and active transportation projects.

SANDAG's Draft 2015 Regional Plan assumes a Quality of Life measure that generates a 1/4 cent sales tax over a 30 year period. Yet, SANDAG is currently contemplating a 1/2 cent sales tax over a 40 year period—more than twice the Quality of Life revenue contemplated by the Draft 2015 Regional Plan.

With additional resources, SANDAG will have substantially more funding flexibility to advance transit and active transportation projects into earlier periods of the region's transportation plan. If the Regional Plan represents what SANDAG is willing to do today, Quality of Life should represent our aspirations for tomorrow.

SANDAG should draft the Quality of Life measure to advance some or all of the transit and active transportation projects that advocates have asked to be accelerated in the Regional Plan. Those projects will provide meaningful contributions to the region's transportation plans, and are already priorities for organizations that can be helpful and active in supporting a Quality of Life measure with voters. The projects SANDAG should advance have already been [articulated by Circulate San Diego through previous correspondence](#), and are listed here below:

- Orange Line Trolley Frequency Enhancements
- Blue Line Trolley Frequency Enhancements
- Construction of the 562 Trolley line ("The Purple Line")
- Rapid 550 Construction
- Del Mar Fairgrounds Permanent Seasonal Rail Platform
- Safe Routes to Transit Retrofits at Existing Stations
- Active Transportation Retrofits at Freeway Interchanges
- Enhancing the Smart Growth Incentive Program

Competitive funding programs such as California's cap-and-trade system, the Active Transportation Program, TIGER, New Starts, and numerous others, are expected to continue to grow both in overall numbers and in the proportion of funding available to SANDAG for transportation investment. These programs favor regions that focus on smart growth principles. Visionary planning that prioritizes transit and active transportation is critical for maintaining the San Diego region's competitiveness for securing new funding.

The Regional Plan that SANDAG adopts in 2015 will be a living document, subject to amendment and update. It is a continuation, not the end of San Diego's transportation plans. A Quality of Life measure can instill SANDAG's regional plans with new energy—and new funding—to improve our region's transportation network into the future.

If SANDAG moves forward with a Quality of Life measure that includes both provisions and funding to advance transit and active transportation, Circulate San Diego will be eager and active in our support.

We look forward to continuing to work with SANDAG to promote transportation choices in the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Colin Parent". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Colin Parent
Policy Counsel, Circulate San Diego