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Anatomy of a Ballot Measure

*Analysis of Transit and Active Transportation Elements in the
Development of SANDAG's Proposed 2016 Ballot Measure*

May, 11 2016

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I. Introduction:

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is developing a county-wide ballot measure to fund a variety of expenditures related to transportation, infrastructure, and habitat. To prepare for that ballot measure, SANDAG staff recently released a series of five separate funding scenarios.

The purpose of this memorandum is not for Circulate San Diego to speak in favor or against any ballot funding scenario. Instead, this memorandum is intended to provide some brief analysis on the process by which SANDAG developed the elements of a county-wide ballot measure that relate to public transit and active transportation. While SANDAG’s ballot measure plans contemplate funding for non-transit programs as well, they are not the focus of this document.

This analysis was generated initially for internal purposes by Circulate San Diego staff and volunteers. By publishing this information, it is our hope this analysis will help inform decisionmakers, advocates, the public, and the press. We aim to help develop a more broad understanding of SANDAG’s processes, priorities, and constraints.

Moreover, if a ballot measure is not placed before voters in 2016, or if voters vote down such a measure, this document can help inform future ballot measure and regional planning efforts.

II. Summary:

This document discusses separately each of the five SANDAG ballot alternatives, analyzing their various contents as follows:

1. “Alternative A” and “Alternative B” represented two competing visions from the SANDAG staff.
2. The initial “Hybrid” plan maintained transit funding levels similar to Alternative B, but made significant modifications to how the funding would be allocated.
3. SANDAG issued a “Refined Hybrid,” cutting back on transit operations funding by reducing enhancements to local bus services.
4. In the “Final Draft Expenditure Plan,” SANDAG chose to bolster existing rail service in North County instead of constructing new rapid bus routes there, and presented a proposal to prioritize certain corridors.

III. Electronic Appendix:

Released with this document is an electronic appendix, which compares each of the various ballot expenditure plans side by side.¹ Circulate San Diego also calculated the expected service dates for the various transit projects in each expenditure plan, based on the data SANDAG released. That data can be

¹ The electronic appendix is available at Circulate San Diego’s website at <http://www.circulatesd.org/anatomyofaballotmeasure>.

useful to gauge SANDAG's expectations for outcomes from new funding. Additionally, if a new ballot measure is drafted, this document can be used to generate cost estimates for funding future projects.

IV. Analysis of Expenditure Plans:

1. "Alternatives A" and "Alternative B" represented two competing visions from the SANDAG staff.

SANDAG initially released two plans together on February 12, 2016, representing different visions of a potential ballot measure.²

a. Alternative A provides less transit funding than even the 2015 Regional Plan.

The Regional Plan SANDAG adopted in October 2015 assumes a variety of revenues, including local, state, and federal.³ SANDAG is permitted by federal transportation planning rules to also assume future local tax revenues when crafting their plan, even before voters have ratified those taxes.

For the 2015 Regional Plan, "the assumption is that a quarter-cent of the sales tax would fund transit projects."⁴ Both of SANDAG's ballot funding scenarios would present a half-cent sales tax to voters, twice the amount in the 2015 Regional Plan.

The Alternative A funding scenario included only \$5.5 billion for transit⁵ which accounts for only 30.5 percent of the measure's total revenue. Alternative B dedicates \$9.1 billion to transit, which equals 50.1 percent, or just slightly more than the one-quarter cent sales tax.

If a ballot measure were adopted consistent with Alternative A, even less funding in the San Diego region would be dedicated to transit than was called for in the 2015 Regional Plan. Alternative B would dedicate at least as much funding to transit as the 2015 Regional Plan. In fact, it would fund somewhat more than the Regional Plan, by dedicating a quarter-cent sales tax for 40 years, not just 30.

b. Alternative B delays transit project completion as compared to Alternative A, even though it dedicates more overall funds to transit.

Between the first two funding plans presented by SANDAG, Alternative B provides more overall transit funding (\$9.1 billion) as compared to Alternative A (\$5.5 billion).⁶ However, that data-point disguises some of the negative transit outcomes that would flow from adopting Alternative B.

² San Diego Association of Governments, Board of Directors Agenda (February 12, 2016), pp 1-5, 172-181, available at http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_4265_20262.pdf.

³ San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan (October 2015), available at http://www.sdfoward.com/pdfs/RP_final/The%20Plan%20-%20combined.pdf.

⁴ San Diego Association of Governments, *supra* note 3, page 116.

⁵ San Diego Association of Governments, *supra* note 2 at page 4.

⁶ *Id.*

As a part of the ballot funding scenarios, SANDAG released information about transit operations expenditures that each plan would fund.⁷ Each option lists a variety of overlapping projects, with more total transit projects listed on Alternative B. Each scenario also calculates the amount of annual operating subsidy needed for each transit line, and a total amount of subsidy needed over the life of the 40-year measure.

By dividing the amount of total subsidy, by the amount of projected annual subsidy needs, Circulate San Diego calculated the duration of active years each new transit line is projected by SANDAG to be in service.⁸

This analysis finds that SANDAG's proposal for Alternative B includes a delay for every transit project, as compared to Alternative A. These delays run between two and six years.

- c. Alternative B delays the new "Purple Line" trolley three times as much as it delays the proposed "skyways."

Both of SANDAG's initial ballot funding alternatives include funding for two new "skyway" projects, which are a proposed transit system of gondolas. Circulate San Diego is open to the concept of SANDAG funding skyway projects, which have been shown to be cost-effective and efficient forms of transit in some cities. However, the two ballot funding measures appear to prioritize skyways over other transit projects.

Like all other transit projects in Alternative B, the skyways are delayed as compared to Alternative A. However, the \$350 million skyways are provided preferential treatment, as compared to other transit projects. The skyway timelines are delayed only two years under Alternative B. They suffer less delay than any other transit project, which are all delayed by three or more years. By comparison, the \$4.4 billion "Purple Line - 562," a proposed new trolley line running from San Ysidro to the jobs center in Kearny Mesa, is delayed six years or three times as long as the skyways.

Note that the Purple Line is also funded in both Alternatives A and B as far north as Kearny Mesa, but the 2015 Regional Plan contemplates the line running farther north, to Sorrento Valley. The 2015 Regional Plan also includes a new trolley line following the route of today's Rapid 215 bus and frequency enhancements to the Green Line by 2050, but these are not funded by the ballot initiative.

Prioritizing the skyway projects above the Purple Line is notable for a variety of reasons. The Purple Line is considered the top-rated planned transit project according to SANDAG's own scoring rubric in the 2015 Regional Plan.⁹ The Purple Line will serve many diverse communities and jurisdictions, including South San Diego, Chula Vista, National City, and Kearny Mesa. The skyway projects are entirely within the City of San Diego, are north of the 8 freeway, and would serve predominantly affluent communities.

⁷ *Id.* Alternative A is listed on page 174 and Alternative B is listed on page 179.

⁸ The electronic appendix associated with this memorandum includes the calculated active years of service for each of SANDAG's various expenditure plans.

⁹ San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan (October 2015), Appendix M, page 13, available at http://www.sdfoward.com/pdfs/RP_final/AppendixM-TransportationProjectEvaluationCriteriaandRankings.pdf.

- d. Alternatives A and B left many questions as to what extent either ballot alternative would actually advance transit projects.

A key part of the success of any ballot measure SANDAG proposes is the impact it will have on the phasing of transit projects. One of the major criticisms of SANDAG's funding strategies thus far has been that substantial numbers of transit projects are delayed far into the future. New revenue presents SANDAG with a variety of tools to effectively advance transit construction, especially by creating more bonding capacity.¹⁰ However, Alternatives A and B left large questions as to whether SANDAG was actually proposing any substantial transit advancement.

As described above, both Alternatives A and B include information that can be used to determine expected years of service for transit lines. Alternative A also includes an expected start date for the tax revenue generation in 2017.¹¹ Assuming then that the measure runs for 40 years beginning from 2017, Circulate San Diego calculated the dates when SANDAG expects transit projects are to be placed into service. That information is attached in the electronic appendix that accompanies this memorandum.

In the SANDAG 2015 Regional Plan, scheduled transit projects are phased in development periods that can stretch up to 15 years in length. Projects are slated to come online either by 2020, by 2035, or by 2050. The Regional Plan does not require more specific service dates.

With a few exceptions, the projects in Alternatives A and B would remain in the phasing period already contemplated by the Regional Plan. However, four are advanced, and four are delayed.

Projects Advanced:

- Two Rapid bus lines serving North County (the Rapid 440 and 473) would be advanced from the 2050 period to the 2035 period.
- The two skyway projects would be built in the 2035 period. While they are not in the Regional Plan, we assume the Pacific Beach skyway would replace the planned Pacific Beach trolley line scheduled for the 2050 period.

¹⁰ Circulate San Diego, Blog Post: Quality of Life: How a Quality of Life measure can advance transit and active transportation projects (November 3, 2015), available at http://www.circulatesd.org/how_a_quality_of_life_measure_can_advance_transit_and_active_transportation_projects.

¹¹ SANDAG could potentially design a measure that was adopted in 2016, but for which revenue does not begin until a later date. The TransNet extension was adopted by voters in 2004, but revenue did not begin to be collected until 2008. San Diego Association of Governments, TransNet Ordinance and Expenditure Plan (2004), page 3, available at http://www.sandag.org/uploads/projectid/projectid_341_8806.pdf.

Projects Delayed:

- The Purple Line would begin service through Alternatives A and B either in 2036 or 2042 respectively. These dates are later than the 2035 service date contemplated by the Regional Plan.
- Frequency enhancements for the Orange and Blue trolley lines are not funded in Alternative A, suggesting that they may not occur at all if SANDAG adopts Alternative A's limited transit funding scenario.
- Increased bus frequency enhancements are scheduled in the Regional Plan to occur in the 2020 and 2035 periods. They are not included in Alternative A, suggesting that, like the Orange and Blue line improvements, they may not occur at all if SANDAG adopts Alternative A's limited transit funding scenario.
- The Rapid 910 from Coronado to Downtown is delayed from the 2035 period until as late as 2043 in Alternative B.

Substantial Open Questions Remain Regarding Phasing:

- Some of the projects in Alternatives A and B list service dates in relatively early periods of the 2035 construction phase. It is possible that they represent service start-date advancements beyond SANDAG's current plans, possibly by more than a decade.

However, SANDAG cannot demonstrate such an advancement with only the publicly available information provided in the ballot alternatives and the 2015 Regional Plan. Additional information, such as the specific number of years projects were being advanced, would be required for the public and for SANDAG Board Members to make that judgment.

Increased bus frequency is scheduled in the 2015 Regional Plan to begin in two phases, by 2020 and by 2035. Alternative B lists only one frequency improvement, listing it to begin in 2025. If both frequency enhancements begin in 2025, then it would represent a delay of some, and possibly an improvement of others. More information would be required to determine the real impact of this proposal.

2. The initial "Hybrid" plan maintained transit funding levels similar to Alternative B, but made significant modifications to how the funding would be allocated.

SANDAG released an initial Hybrid plan on March 10, 2016, shortly after releasing the first two alternatives.¹² The Hybrid contains a number of differences from either of the two prior alternatives.

¹² San Diego Association of Governments, Hybrid Alternative (March 10, 2016), available at http://sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_4266_20386.pdf.

a. Gondola funding was redefined as “first/last mile transit connections.”

SANDAG removed the Sorrento Valley and Pacific Beach skyways, but added a new line item for unspecified first and last mile upgrades.

Proposed capital and operating funds for the "first/last mile" project in the Hybrid plan match the sum of the figures for the two skyway projects in Alternatives A and B. The operation start date is the same as that for the Pacific Beach skyway in Alternative B. This signals that SANDAG is likely to allow, but not require skyways to be built with this funding.

The proposed skyway projects are substantially longer than one mile, and are really more like new transit lines.

This is the only project in any of the proposals released up to this point for which the "net need" line item exceeds the proposed funding allocation, indicating that there are additional projects (potentially more skyways) that SANDAG would like to include but cannot fund using this ballot measure.

b. Funding for rapid buses reduced, but line item for “advanced transit services” added.

Capital costs for Rapid 2, Rapid 10, Rapid 28, Rapid 30, and Rapid 638 are approximately half (one-quarter for Rapid 28) of what they are in Alternatives A and B. Annual operating costs are also lower for all of these routes except for Rapid 638. Rapid 910 (Coronado to Downtown) is cut completely, and there is only one line item for Rapid 870/890 (rather than two in Alternatives A and B). This suggests a combination of fewer Bus Rapid Transit amenities and/or less frequent service.

For the first/last mile connections, Purple Line trolley, and rapid buses, the anticipated start date is the same as Alternative B (the more delayed of the two proposals). Rapid 2 is an exception, incurring an additional two year delay beyond the projected Alternative B start date.

There is a new line item in the transit operations section of the Hybrid plan specifying proposed funding to operate "advanced new transit services." According to the proposed ballot language for the measure,¹³ this funding will be used to fund operations on some of the new transit routes prior to their presently projected start dates. However, SANDAG has not yet allocated funds to determine which routes will be accelerated, or by how much.

Including this funding is the first signal from SANDAG for a clear willingness to advance transit as a part of their 2016 ballot measure. This is likely due to the advocacy from Circulate San Diego and many others for SANDAG to advance the phasing of planned transit projects. However, this funding line item does not specify which routes would be accelerated, or on what time frame.

¹³ San Diego Association of Governments, Board Meeting Agenda (May 13, 2016), page 10, available at http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_4268_20633.pdf.

c. Frequency upgrades for the trolley are prioritized over those for buses.

Compared to Alternative B, increased Blue and Orange line frequencies are moved up three years while increased local bus frequencies are moved back two years. This means that, if the hybrid plan were adopted and passed, upgraded trolley service would start in 2023, four years before upgraded local bus service.

d. New transit centers and fare collection upgrades added, Downtown COASTER extension cut.

New projects not included in any of the other proposals include intermodal transit centers at San Ysidro and the airport (the airport transit center is the station planned to serve as the California High Speed Rail terminus once that line is extended to San Diego), upgrades to the transit fare collection system and customer service amenities, "state of good repair" (likely an improved maintenance program) and quiet zones for the COASTER, and a rail grade separation at Sorrento Valley.

Upgrades to the COASTER differ somewhat from those specified in Alternative B. The proposed new Convention Center station has been removed (those at Camp Pendleton and the Del Mar Fairgrounds remain), while a double-tracking of the rail line at the San Dieguito River Bridge has been added.

The funding for fare card improvements is likely a response to the recent news coverage generated by KPBS and Circulate San Diego that the region's fare card system lacks ordinary data security and stored value functionality.¹⁴

e. Funding for active transportation increased.

Alternatives A and B both dedicate two percent of the measure to active transportation. The Hybrid plan increases funding to three percent, or \$540 million. The 2015 Regional Plan includes \$550 million in unfunded potential active transportation projects, most of which will fund programs called "safe routes to transit," which will improve pedestrian and bicycle access to existing transit stations.¹⁵ By increasing funding to \$540 million for active transportation, all but \$10 million of SANDAG's entire currently-unfunded active transportation network is likely to be completed. This change is likely a result of advocacy by Circulate San Diego and many other organizations to ensure greater attention is paid to active transportation projects by SANDAG.

3. SANDAG issued a "Refined Hybrid," cutting back on transit operations funding by reducing enhancements to local bus services.

¹⁴ Andrew Bowen, "MTS Compass Card Was Insecure From The Beginning," KPBS (April 13, 2016), available at <http://www.kpbs.org/news/2016/apr/13/compass-card-insecure-sandag-mts-data-security/>.

¹⁵ San Diego Association of Governments, *supra* note 3, Table A.5, pages 232-35.

SANDAG released a second hybrid plan on March 25, 2016, referred to as a “Refined Hybrid.”¹⁶ The Refined Hybrid allocates significantly more funding to local governments primarily at the expense of regional transit capital and operations. Funding levels for highway projects are not reduced.

a. The Refined Hybrid does provide more transit funding than the 2015 Regional Plan.

The total funding to transit is reduced to 42 percent of the measure, down from 50 percent in the initial Hybrid. Nonetheless, the Refined Hybrid provides more transit funding than in SANDAG’s current 2015 Regional Plan.

The 2015 Regional Plan assumes a quarter-cent sales tax over 30 years. The Refined Hybrid assumes 42 percent of a half-cent sales tax over a 40 year period. The result is 11 percent more funds for transit in the Refined Hybrid plan, as compared with the 2015 Regional Plan.

b. Parking expansion prioritized over local bus service improvements.

The \$120 million dedicated to increased local bus frequencies in Alternative B and the initial hybrid is cut in the Refined Hybrid. Instead, \$120 million is allocated to expanding parking at transit stations.¹⁷

SANDAG did include an operations line item for "Enhanced Bus Services," but annual operating costs are only one-quarter of those for the previously included frequency improvements and upgraded service is not expected to begin until 2030, three years later than the initial hybrid and five years later than Alternative B. It is unclear exactly what the enhanced bus service would entail, and there are no capital costs dedicated to it. Upgrades to bus maintenance facilities are unchanged from Alternative B and the initial Hybrid plan.

c. Trolley: Purple Line advanced, Blue and Orange Line frequency improvements delayed.

The Purple Line Phase One projected service start date is moved up seven years from Alternative B and the initial hybrid, from 2042 to 2035. This places the project within the original timetable from the 2015 Regional Plan. Circulate San Diego had previously conducted research showing how the prior ballot alternatives from SANDAG would have delayed the Purple Line beyond the time frame contemplated in the 2015 Regional Plan. Restoring the phasing to 2035 neutralized a potential line of criticism for the proposed ballot measure.

¹⁶ San Diego Association of Governments, Refined Hybrid Alternative (March 25, 2016), available at <http://priorities.sandag.org/pdfs/refinedhybridalternative.pdf>.

¹⁷ While many believe that parking is necessary near transit stations, efforts elsewhere to replace parking with transit oriented development have proven successful. A 2007 study by the Transportation Research Board showed that replacement of station parking with transit-oriented development in the Bay Area has proven economically beneficial. Richard Wilson and Val Mendotti, Commuter Parking Versus Transit-Oriented Development (2007), available at http://eco-rapid.org/Project/studies_reports/commuter-parking-versus-transit-oriented-development.pdf.

Capital and annual operating costs for the new line remain the same, suggesting no major changes from previous proposals. However, increased frequencies for the Blue and Orange Lines are pushed back to 2034, 11 years later than the initial Hybrid and 8 years later than Alternative B. However, the Orange and Blue Lines will still be improved within the 2035 time frame contemplated in the 2015 Regional Plan.

d. First/last mile project funding cut in half; specifics still uncertain.

Capital funding allocated to first and last mile connectivity was reduced approximately 50% from the initial Hybrid plan, from \$350 million to \$180 million, and opening was pushed back three years to 2035. The new capital total matches exactly that for the Sorrento Valley Skyway from Alternatives A and B, suggesting that the Balboa/Pacific Beach skyway may have been cut.

"Net Need" is much higher than actual allocated funding—unchanged from the initial hybrid—meaning that SANDAG may hope to fund the Pacific Beach gondola, as well as other first and last mile projects, using alternate sources. Additionally, projected operating costs were pegged at a level halfway between those of the Pacific Beach and Sorrento gondolas, further confounding analysis.

e. Some rapid bus service delayed as long as a decade, numerous uncertainties remain.

Capital costs for new rapid buses remain the same as those in the initial Hybrid plan, and lower than Alternatives A and B. Projected opening dates for most BRT routes are later than those in the initial Hybrid plan, with delays ranging from three to nine years. The only exceptions are routes 550, 635, 638, and 640, which are advanced three to six years, route 90, which is only delayed one year, and route 120, the only line which is unchanged from the initial Hybrid.

Additionally, funding allocated to advance transit services is reduced, from \$571.5 million to \$500 million. A new \$100 million capital cost line item for new bus vehicles could explain some of the discrepancy in capital costs compared to Alternatives A and B.

In combination with the elimination of improved local bus frequencies, the delays to the rapid routes suggest that bus service has been significantly cut back from earlier versions of the plan.

f. Few changes to COASTER improvements, fare collection system upgrades.

Proposed upgrades to the COASTER corridor are largely unchanged from the initial Hybrid plan, with the exception of a 50% increase in funding allocated to a "State of Good Repair" program. Also, SANDAG combined the initial Hybrid plan's line items for the Sorrento Valley station relocation and grade separation, but total cost remained the same.¹⁸

Upgrades to the fare collection system remain the same as in the initial Hybrid plan.

¹⁸ Note that these two projects are still listed separately in the electronic appendix accompanying this memorandum.

4. In the “Final Draft Expenditure Plan,” SANDAG chose to bolster existing rail service in North County instead of constructing new rapid bus routes there, and presented a proposal to prioritize certain corridors.

a. Overall funding shares to transit and highways unchanged.

SANDAG’s final expenditure plan was released on April 22, 2016.¹⁹ The total allotments to highway capital, transit capital/operations, local infrastructure, and other measure allocations are unchanged from the Refined Hybrid plan. There have been no new changes to the highway projects included, or to each jurisdiction's local infrastructure funds.

b. North County rapid bus corridors cut, upgrades to existing rail proposed instead.

From the Refined Hybrid, there were significant revisions to the transit projects. North County Rapid Buses 440 (Carlsbad-Escondido) and 473 (Oceanside-UTC) have been removed. The monies previously earmarked for these projects (\$185 million in capital, \$97.5 million for operations) have been redirected to upgrading the existing COASTER and SPRINTER services, adding new improvements that were not included in prior drafts of the plan. These include enhanced service and vehicle replacement programs on both rail lines (and associated feeder buses), and increased funding for maintenance projects on the COASTER tracks (the line item is titled “State of Good Repair”) including stabilizing the Del Mar Bluffs and rebuilding trestles.

In addition, all COASTER-related projects included in the Refined Hybrid, such as the extension to Camp Pendleton, a new station in Del Mar, and relocation/grade separation of Sorrento Valley Station remain.

The enhanced COASTER and SPRINTER service is scheduled to start in 2020. This is the earliest service start date for a project included in any plan alternative to date, and much earlier than the 2045 start date that had been projected for the two now-cut North County Bus Rapid Transit routes in the Refined Hybrid plan. The rest of the operations timeline is unchanged from the Refined Hybrid, with the exception of the aforementioned North County bus routes that were cut.

c. List of “Priority Corridors” identifies projects, but does not provide specifics.

In addition to financial data, the text of the Final Draft Plan specifies several “Priority Corridors” for each sector of the county (North, Central, South, and East). Priority projects are as follows:

¹⁹ San Diego Association of Governments, Board of Directors Meeting Agenda (April 22, 2016), available at http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_4279_20573.pdf.

North County:

- One transit project:
 - COASTER (double tracking and "State of Good Repair" improvements; \$616M capital)
- Also includes two highway projects:
 - SR-78 (HOV/Managed Lanes and Connectors; \$1.2B capital)
 - I-5 (HOV/Managed Lanes; \$1.6B capital)

Central County:

- Three transit projects:
 - Sorrento Valley Station (relocation/grade separation; \$247M capital)
 - Purple Line (San Ysidro to Kearny Mesa; \$4.4B capital, \$304.2M operations)
 - Orange Line (service enhancements; \$350M for both Orange and Blue Line operations)²⁰
- Also includes one highway project:
 - SR-52 (HOV/Managed Lanes; \$397M capital)

South County:

- Four transit projects:
 - Rapid 640 (San Ysidro to Downtown, Old Town, and Kearny Mesa; \$95M capital, \$30M operations)
 - Rapid 638 (Iris Trolley Station - Otay Mesa; \$10M capital, \$32.9M operations)
 - Purple Line (San Ysidro to Kearny Mesa; \$4.4B capital, \$304.2M operations)
 - Blue Line (service enhancements; \$350M for both Orange and Blue Line operations)
- Also includes one highway project:
 - (I-5 managed lanes; \$664M capital)

East County:

- One transit project:
 - Orange Line (service enhancements; \$350M for both Orange and Blue Line operations)
- Three highway projects:
 - SR-67 (Widening/Evacuation Route Improvements from Maplevue to Dye Rd; \$649M capital)
 - I-8 (Improvements from Second St to Los Coches; \$36M capital)
 - SR 94/SR 125 Interchange (Missing Connectors; \$51M capital)

²⁰ Note that the \$350 million figure for Orange and Blue line frequency enhancements are from transit operations funds. The SANDAG measure does not identify any separate capital funds for these enhancements. The transit projects in the Priority Corridors program will also generate additional annual operations expenses if they are advanced. Those annual costs are available in the electronic appendix released with this report.

Service start dates in the electronic appendix to this memorandum do not reflect the “prioritized” nature of some of these projects. Instead, SANDAG proposed that the board would adopt a plan to accelerate some or all of these projects, after the voters approve a ballot measure. The line item in the Transit Operations sections of the expenditure plan lists \$500 million that can be used to pay for the operations components of any of these projects that are accelerated. SANDAG did not provide a specific commitment for exactly how quickly these projects would be expedited.

- d. The \$500 million for advancing transit is more than enough to fund accelerating every transit Priority Corridor project by at least by fifteen years.

According to the operations subsidy figures released for the SANDAG ballot measure, all of the transit projects are expected to go online around 2035, except for the COASTER and SPRINTER projects, which are expected to come online in 2020.²²

The ballot measure provides \$500 million to advance projects that are within the Priority Corridors program. This would advance projects to dates earlier than the default 2035 dates in the expenditure plan. The annual subsidy needs for all of the transit Priority Corridors, except the COASTER enhancements, total \$31.8 million.²³ The \$500 million fund would allow each of these projects to be advanced 15 years. This would put all of these projects at start dates at or before 2020.

It is likely that certain projects require more intensive planning and receipt of matching grant funds, and cannot be feasibly accelerated to 2020. The Purple Line, in particular, would require significant planning and engineering work, and likely could not break ground within three years of the ballot measure passing, meaning that it would not be accelerated as early as 2020.

Nonetheless, the ability of the \$500 to fund transit operations for all of these lines means that local funding will be no barrier to advancing these lines, once planning is complete and matching funds are identified. Because some of these improvements are likely not to occur by 2020 due to logistical constraints, there is probably enough money in the \$500 million to advance all of these lines, and to have more funding available to advance other lines not in the Priority Corridors program.

It is unclear why SANDAG has not included a larger number of transit projects in the Priority Corridors program, to make a complete use of the operations funding it already has identified to advance transit. Nor is it clear why SANDAG has not committed to more specific accelerated time frames, given the significant amount of funding it has already decided to spend.

²² Circulate San Diego, Electronic Appendix, *supra* note 1.

²³ *Id.* The final tab in the online document contains the calculations for this analysis. The COASTER projects are not factored because they already have early start dates in 2020.

V. Conclusion:

Transit supporters have an interest in seeing sufficient funding dedicated to transit and active transportation in any SANDAG ballot measure. However, the way transit funds are spent is also very important. Not only should projects be built quickly and efficiently, but the priority among projects is also crucial to any funding measure's success.

The evolution of expenditure plans show both positive and negative impacts to transit and active transportation. While the overall amount of transit funding has declined, funding for transit is in excess of what was contemplated in the 2015 Regional Plan. More than a half billion of funds is identified to fund new active transportation projects. The first phase of the Purple line is no longer proposed to be delayed beyond 2035. SANDAG also created a half-billion dollar pool of funds to advance transit, but did not commit to a specific timeframe for which projects would be advanced.

The evolution of the proposed ballot measure helps show the variety of concerns, priorities, and limitations SANDAG has related to transportation funding. With a deeper understanding of SANDAG's processes, decisionmakers, and the public, can better gauge SANDAG's efforts.