



# ITOC

Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee

## 2024 Annual Report

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## ITOC Members\*

**JONATHAN FRANKEL**  
**Chair**, Real Estate/Land Economics  
*Term ends May 2024*

**VACANT**  
**Vice Chair**, Construction Project  
Management  
*Term ends May 2025*

**LORRAINE AHLQUIST**  
Biology/Environmental Science  
*Term ends May 2027*

**MARYAM BABAKI**  
Municipal/Public Finance  
*Term ends May 2027*

**LES HOPPER**  
Engineer/Transportation  
*Term ends May 2024*

**SUNNIE HOUSE**  
CEO, Private Sector  
*Term ends May 2025*

**FRANCISCO RIVERA**  
Civil/Traffic Engineer  
*Term ends May 2026*

**TRACY DRAGER**  
San Diego County Auditor  
*(non-voting member)*

*\*According to the ITOC Bylaws, members of the ITOC are required to attend at least 50% of the regular ITOC meetings, not including special meetings or subcommittee meetings, in one calendar year. All ITOC members have met the established standard for attendance for calendar year 2023. In addition, all members participate in subcommittee established to focus on ITOC activities such as triennial performance audits, annual fiscal and compliance audits, and state of the commute reports, among others.*



## Letter from the Chair

This past year (2023), as the TransNet program celebrated its 35th anniversary, the Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee (ITOC) continued its mission to ensure accountability and transparency. Since 1988, the TransNet program, the San Diego region's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements, has generated \$4.4 billion. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) has leveraged this money to raise billions more in federal, state, and local tax dollars to bring numerous projects to fruition – enhancing daily life for millions of residents throughout the San Diego region. TransNet funds have been used to support transit, highway, freight, bikeway, and walkway programs, an environmental conservation program, transit fare subsidies, and grants for smart growth, active transportation, and transportation services for seniors and persons with disabilities in the San Diego region.

The ITOC was created to act as the steward of tax dollars raised by TransNet. This Annual Report is part of our responsibility to report to the public how well the program is doing.

A key measure of TransNet's progress is an independent audit, conducted every three years. This Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) typically results in recommendations for improvement of the overall performance of the program to ensure that all voter mandates are carried out as required by the TransNet Extension Ordinance. The latest is the 2024 TPA, and its recommendations are featured in this Annual Report.

Chief among them are recommendations related to improving transparency and accountability with respect to tracking and reporting on projects identified in the TransNet Extension and Ordinance Plan. The 2024 TPA spent a significant amount of effort examining how SANDAG tracks and manages progress on projects, and reports that progress. SANDAG is a forward-looking organization focused on the future; its 2025 Regional Plan, now in development, embodies an updated vision for the next 30 years. But being accountable for past commitments, and transparent about them, is critical. That's where the 2024 TPA says SANDAG can do a better job.

As SANDAG strives to improve its reporting on past commitments, it is important for the public to understand that as SANDAG secures additional financing for public infrastructure projects, it must follow the requirements of the government agencies that are providing that funding. This means that projects envisioned by the TransNet program more than three decades ago won't always look the same as they were originally envisioned. The section on the 2024 TPA, which begins on page 3, discusses this.

As you read this Annual Report, you will also find our annual reports of fiscal and compliance audit results, as well as our annual presentation of TransNet funding highlights. Finally, you will find a review of specific projects, grant programs, and other accomplishments funded in part with TransNet dollars.

We at the ITOC will always be here to ensure that public tax dollars are being spent wisely, and that SANDAG is fully accountable and transparent on how those dollars are spent.

Best Regards,  
Jonathan Frankel, ITOC Chair



# ITOC Goals for FY 2024

The ITOC and SANDAG are pursuing goals to improve communication, transparency, and accountability for the general public and TransNet's many other stakeholders. Below is a review of four goals adopted by the ITOC and progress to date on each of them. To track more recent updates, please go online at [SANDAG.org/itoc](https://www.sandag.org/itoc).

## ITOC Goals for FY 2024

#1

Invite transit agencies, municipalities, and other recipients of TransNet funds to attend and highlight their TransNet program successes and/or challenges in delivering TransNet-funded projects at ITOC meetings. The goal is for at least one presentation per quarter in FY 2024.

### Progress

The cities of National City, Encinitas, and San Diego, as well as SANDAG staff, have made presentations to the ITOC on local transportation projects funded with TransNet proceeds. Other agencies, including Caltrans, have also been invited to present to the ITOC.

#2

Enhance effectiveness and impact of ITOC in achieving its mission to ensure voter mandates are carried out and develop recommendations for improvements to the financial integrity and performance of the program.

### Progress

The ITOC Subcommittee to Consider TransNet Ordinance Amendments continued to discuss potential revisions to amendment language related to ITOC membership and the selection process. Draft amendments are expected to be presented to the SANDAG Board of Directors in Fall 2024.

## SANDAG Goals for ITOC

#1

Consider how the TransNet program is supporting the 2021 Regional Plan priorities and policies.

### Progress

A Subcommittee of the Mobility Working Group was formed in FY 2023 to discuss amendments to the TransNet Extension Ordinance. During FY 2024, the Subcommittee continued meeting to discuss amendments to several other topics, including Dig Smart, Smart Growth Incentive Program, and Accommodation of Bicyclists and Pedestrians. Other topics will be discussed in the future, continuing the effort to better align the TransNet program with the Regional Plan. SANDAG staff also presented an update to the ITOC on the status of TransNet Ordinance amendments.

#2

Work closely with ITOC to develop and implement streamlining measures to enhance communication practices that continue increasing transparency and accountability, and simplify information provided to make it more digestible for ITOC members and the public.

### Progress

SANDAG staff has been working with the ITOC to improve communication practices and efficiency of the ITOC and its subcommittee meetings. As a result, the number of ITOC subcommittees was reduced, and reporting in meetings was made more streamlined and time-efficient. The meetings and meeting records are now more accessible and digestible for the public. This is an ongoing process, and the streamlining efforts will be continuously maintained.

# FY 2024 TransNet Triennial Performance Audit

In accordance with the TransNet Extension Ordinance, one of the responsibilities of the ITOC is to conduct performance audits of SANDAG and other agencies involved in the implementation of TransNet-funded projects and programs. These audits, conducted every three years, review project delivery, cost control, schedule adherence, and related activities. The sixth Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) was conducted in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 by the ITOC with assistance from an independent auditor, in accordance with the requirements of the TransNet Extension Ordinance. Below is an edited Executive Summary from the FY 2024 TransNet TPA. To view the full performance audit, please visit [FY 2024 TransNet Triennial Performance Audit](#).

## Executive Summary

As part of its responsibility under the TransNet Ordinance, the ITOC contracted with Sjoberg Evashenk Consulting, Inc. to conduct the FY 2024 TransNet TPA. This audit examined activities of SANDAG and other agencies to implement the TransNet Extension Ordinance (TransNet)-funded projects and programs between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2023. The audit focused on the progress of major corridor projects relative to TransNet Ordinance plans, legislation impacting future major corridor project delivery, funding for TransNet projects, Smart Growth grants funded by TransNet, and the status of implementing prior audit recommendations.

SANDAG reported completing approximately one-third of the major corridor projects outlined in the TransNet Ordinance. However, the agency has not clearly stated whether these projects fully align with the commitments of the Ordinance, particularly concerning their location and scope. The FY 2018 TPA also identified this issue, specifically that SANDAG does not comprehensively track the degree to which completed projects align with Ordinance commitments at a granular level. SANDAG needs to more clearly show how projects meet commitments outlined in the Ordinance, and when they don't, clearly explain why different project options were delivered.

Transportation needs as well as local, state, and federal legislation can change over time. These shifts influence the legal environment of planning agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), such as SANDAG. This explains why SANDAG is currently focusing on multimodal solutions to reduce GHG emissions.

This new focus is reflected in SANDAG's 2021 Regional Plan, resulting in some TransNet Ordinance projects no longer being consistent with the Plan. SANDAG provided the Auditor with a high-level overview of the boundaries and scope of Ordinance projects not included in the Regional Plan. However, SANDAG has not yet amended the Ordinance to

align it with the latest Regional Plan. The agency also has not sufficiently described how remaining TransNet projects will be impacted if they are inconsistent with SANDAG's latest Regional Plan.

The agency faces the additional challenge of insufficient funding to cover the cost of planned TransNet major corridor projects, and the planned increased frequencies at new transit facilities. This will lead to a funding gap over the next few years. SANDAG is working to bolster revenues and link project needs to available funding, but it does not yet have a formal plan to address the shortfall. This could impact the delivery of projects.

The auditor also found that SANDAG is not acting strongly enough to implement prior audit recommendations. More than 40 percent remain outstanding. SANDAG has reported that staff turnover, changing responsibilities, and interruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have all contributed to delays in implementing past audit recommendations. The agency remains committed to working with the ITOC and Board to address audit recommendations, despite operating in a constrained funding environment with limited staff resources.

## SANDAG Response

SANDAG is committed to implementing processes that improve the TransNet program's overall performance and ensure all voter mandates are carried out as required by the TransNet Extension Ordinance (Ordinance).

SANDAG agrees with the audit recommendations and is committed to working with the ITOC, Board, and partner agencies to address the issues and continue implementing best practices for the TransNet Program. Our priority is to remain accountable, transparent, and efficient.

As a result, SANDAG has refocused resources to monitor and report on the status of the TransNet program and to respond to current and prior audit recommendations. Specifically, SANDAG will provide a full-time position to lead the work effort and provide regular updates to the ITOC and Board in response to audit recommendations.

To view the full SANDAG Response, please visit pages 83-95 of the [FY 24 TransNet Triennial Performance Audit report](#).



# Fiscal Year 2024 Key Audit Results



## Major Corridors

- SANDAG reported progress with delivery of major corridor projects, but information was unclear to validate specific project scopes and progress against Ordinance commitments.
- Reported progress could not be confirmed due to inconsistent project status data.



## Local Street and Road, Bike, Transit

- Local Street and Road funding reported many improvements.
- Bike projects were completed and ridership was up, although there are still many miles left to deliver.
- New transit capital projects are not yet operating at planned frequency which impacts growing ridership.



## Funding

- TransNet Ordinance program shows a funding shortfall, although revenue and expense estimates are generally reliable.
- SANDAG's investment of TransNet funds for CMCP's to be eligible for state funding opportunities prove worthwhile.
- Though shortfalls for remaining major corridor projects were recently reduced, SANDAG does not have formal plans to address the gap.
- No established or vetted methodology exists to reprioritize projects against limited funding to be more transparent with rationale used in decision making.



## Smart Growth Grants

- Smart Growth grant activities generally aligned with program goals, although SANDAG should strengthen monitoring.
- Grant activities aligned with stated purpose in grant agreements, although capital grant applications did not require clear objectives.
- Grant purposes aligned with program goals, but performance outcomes were not measured.
- SANDAG needs to strengthen Smart Growth grant monitoring.

## Prior TransNet Audit Recommendations

- SANDAG has not taken strong enough actions to implement prior audit recommendations and may not understand intent behind prior audit recommendations.
- More than 40% of prior audit recommendations remain outstanding.
- SANDAG cited struggles to implement audit recommendations due to staff turnover and reorganized responsibilities.
- No indication of Executive Management direction prioritizing or setting timelines for implementing audit recommendations.
- SANDAG's TransNet Ordinance amendment process to address outstanding recommendations is slow and has not yet occurred.

# TransNet Triennial Performance Audits Progress

(FY 2021 and FY 2018)

The ITOC provides an increased level of accountability for expenditures made under the TransNet Extension Ordinance. In addition to conducting independent annual fiscal and compliance audits, the ITOC also conducts TPAs of SANDAG and partner agencies involved in the implementation of TransNet-funded projects and programs to provide recommendations for improvement. The previous TPAs were conducted in FY 2018 and FY 2021.

## FY 2021 Implementation Status

Over the last year, SANDAG has implemented several audit recommendations. These include:

- Continuing efforts to formalize and implement a mature system of QA/QC policies and procedures.
- Identifying a regional safety planning coordinator to synchronize safety efforts of the region.
- Considering ways to encourage emergency planning and response entities to include SANDAG in discussions and local plans related to emergency capacity.
- Providing extra scrutiny on less certain Regional Bikeway Program assumed funding from less certain sources during updates to the Plan of Finance.

● **Implemented**   ● **In progress**   ○ **Upcoming**

### Major Corridor Capital Construction

*With only 16 years into the 40-Year TransNet program, SANDAG completed many projects. However, delivery of remaining future projects depends on the 2021 Regional Transportation Plan adoption.*

- Identify whether the remaining TransNet Extension Ordinance projects will be part of the 2021 Regional Transportation Plan. (Summer 2024)
- Develop crosswalks to compare planned major corridor projects outlined in the TransNet Extension Ordinance with current improvement implementation status. (Summer 2024)

### Finance

*Through a renewed focus on improving revenue forecasts and expenditure models over the past few years, SANDAG identified a funding shortfall for the TransNet Extension Ordinance Major Corridor Program that needs to be addressed.*

- Develop a formal process to address identified issues during annual Plan of Finance updates. (Spring 2025)
- Develop a risk-based approach for QA/QC testing to strengthen documentation of employed QA/QC activities and their results. (Fall 2024)
- Enhance organization of Peer Review Process supporting documents to better link plans, actions taken, and how issues were addressed. (Fall 2024)
- Describe to the Board the QA/QC sampling methodology, limitations of the data, and associated cost-benefits or risks of the approach. (Fall 2024)
- Continue efforts to formalize and implement a mature system of QA/QC policies and procedures. (Spring 2024)

### Compliance, Transparency and Accountability

*SANDAG demonstrated commitment to compliance with TransNet Extension Ordinance provisions, and focused efforts toward continued improvement but could further incorporate certain leading practices to better demonstrate its accountability to taxpayers.*

- Report on actual progress and accomplishments on project scope, cost, schedule, and outcomes periodically and on a regular basis. (Summer 2024)
- Demonstrate compliance with the TransNet Extension Ordinance by identifying, tracking, and reporting on various requirements and provisions. (Summer 2024)
- Implement shorter-term performance reporting while waiting on Transportation Performance Management Framework. (Summer 2024)
- Create summarized graphics to indicate TransNet Extension Ordinance status based on data in the quarterly reports. (Summer 2024)

### AB 805 Impacts

*Assembly Bill 805 affected the composition of the SANDAG Board and its voting structure. The weighted voting changes, however, did not significantly impact the delivery of TransNet Extension Ordinance programs and projects.*

No recommendations for this chapter.



## Safety

*With safety as a stated TransNet Extension Ordinance goal, SANDAG conducted regional safety planning efforts, and bicycle and pedestrian safety improved in San Diego County over the past few years.*

- Consider identifying a regional safety planning coordinator to synchronize safety efforts of the region. (Summer 2023)
- Prepare a regional safety plan to address regional trends, road conditions, and driving behaviors. (Fall 2024)
- Consider ways to encourage emergency planning and response entities to include SANDAG in discussions and local plans related to emergency capacity. (Summer 2023)

## Bike Early Action Program

*The Bike Early Action Program (EAP) experienced significant delays that will likely impact its 2024 completion target and may require changes to future Regional Bikeway Program projects.*

- Estimate the quantifiable impact of permit delays on the overall Regional Bikeway Program. (Ongoing)
- Work with the Board to rectify critical Bike EAP project permit issues. (Ongoing)
- Revise quarterly status reports to compare progress against initial Bike EAP plans for costs, schedules, and miles expected. (Ongoing)
- Develop a crosswalk that compares planned Bike EAP projects outlined in the Regional Bikeway Program with project segment status. (Ongoing)
- Modify TransNet Dashboard data or Board reports to compare actual project data with baseline budgets and schedule. (Winter 2025)
- Track and analyze more granular project milestones within Bike EAP project phases. (Ongoing)
- Provide extra scrutiny on less certain Regional Bikeway Program funding during updates to the Plan of Finance. (Fall 2023)
- Ensure that the TransNet Dashboard Bike Early Action Program schedule and budget fields include explanatory notes on why particular data may not be applicable to a project stage. (Summer 2022)

## ITOC

*With recent trends in transportation planning broadening the spectrum of topics and related challenges beyond freeway expansion or adding transit routes, additional member expertise areas could further strengthen ITOC's efforts in advising SANDAG and providing taxpayer oversight of the TransNet Extension Ordinance.*

- Incorporate conflict-of-interest policy clarifications from ITOC new member onboarding resources into recruitment materials. (Winter 2022)
- N/A Modify the TransNet Extension Ordinance language to be consistent with the service limits for all members. (ITOC and Board decided not to move forward with this recommendation)
- Consider expanding the ITOC qualifications to include knowledge of emerging topics SANDAG represents before the committee. (Fall 2024)
- Explore options and feasibility of moving ITOC candidate screening and selection process outside of the SANDAG Board to maximize transparency and minimize any bias. (Fall 2024)

## FY 2018 TPA Progress on Critical Audit Recommendation

Certain critical audit recommendations from the **FY 2018 TransNet TPA** are also in progress, as follows:

### Performance Framework

*Key elements of a performance framework were not established at the start of the Ordinance to measure output and performance against the goals of TransNet. Even though certain performance data was available through a variety of sources, it was not consistently summarized and reported regionally at the SANDAG level.*

- Establish a comprehensive performance framework by: Setting targets to measure TransNet performance against TransNet Extension Ordinance goals, in line with federally mandated deadlines or at a faster pace. At a minimum, some narrative could accompany performance reporting to help others understand whether data and results were favorable or unfavorable. (Spring 2025)
- Establish a comprehensive performance framework by: Capturing performance outcome data related to safety metrics, pavement condition, and bridge condition for highways, local roadways, and bicycle and pedestrian modes. (Spring 2024)

# Fiscal and Compliance Audit Results

Requirement	Audit Results
As required by SANDAG Board Policy No. 031, <b>each recipient agency is required to account for TransNet activities in a separate fund</b> , or if an alternative approach is used, it must be approved by SANDAG.	<b>Revenues for each recipient agency were recorded, and expenditures reported by all recipient agencies were allowable in accordance with the TransNet Ordinance</b> , TransNet Extension Ordinance, and SANDAG Board Policy No. 031.
In accordance with Section 8 of the TransNet Extension Ordinance, each recipient agency receiving revenues pursuant to Section 4(D) shall annually <b>maintain, at a minimum, the same level of local discretionary funds expended for street and road purposes on average over the last three fiscal years (FY) completed prior to the operative date of the TransNet Extension Ordinance.</b>	<b>All local street and road recipient agencies met their Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement</b> for the year ended June 30, 2023, ensuring that TransNet revenues were used to augment and not supplant local revenues.
In accordance with the 30% Rule, a recipient agency that maintains a <b>balance of more than 30 percent of its annual apportionment (after debt service payments) must use the remaining balance to fund projects.</b> SANDAG will defer payment until the recipient agency's Director of Finance, or equivalent, submits a certification that the unused balance has fallen below the 30 percent threshold, and will remain below the threshold until such time that a new threshold is determined.	<b>All reporting agencies were in compliance</b> with Board Policy No. 031, Rule #17, Section IV, requiring TransNet recipient agencies to maintain a fund balance that does not exceed 30 percent of its annual apportionment.
As specified in Section 2(C)(1) of the TransNet Extension Ordinance, at least <b>70% of the revenues provided for local street and road purposes should be used for congestion relief</b> , and the cities <b>may not spend more than 30% for Maintenance purposes.</b>	SANDAG appropriately allocated TransNet revenues – at least 70 percent for congestion relief purposes and up to 30 percent for maintenance purposes – in accordance with the Ordinance. <b>All recipient agencies were in compliance</b> with this requirement.
In accordance with Section 9(A) of the TransNet Extension Ordinance and Expenditure Plan, each local agency in the San Diego region shall <b>contribute a minimum of \$2,000</b> , subject to an annual adjustment based upon an index, in exactions from the private sector, <b>for each newly constructed residential housing unit in that jurisdiction to the RTCIP.</b> However, each jurisdiction may use their own fee schedule, as long as the fees are at a minimum the adjusted amount as approved by the SANDAG Board of Directors annually. The RTCIP revenue is to be used to construct improvements to the Regional Arterial System.	Revenues collected by each jurisdiction under the Regional Transportation Congestion Improvement Program were <b>compliant with the TransNet Extension Ordinance</b> and Board Policy No. 31, <b>except for the cities of Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, and La Mesa, and the County of San Diego.</b> <b>CORRECTIVE ACTION:</b> <b>The cities of Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, and La Mesa, and the County of San Diego are in the process of collecting the shortfall.</b>
In accordance with the TransNet Extension Ordinance, each jurisdiction shall have up to but <b>no more than seven fiscal years to expend Funding Program revenues</b> on the Regional Arterial Systems projects (RTCIP funding), unless a planned need for such fees can be demonstrated and a justification for the delay can be provided that is acceptable to the ITOC. <b>Funds not committed or expended within ten years of collection shall be refunded</b> to the current record owner of the development project on a prorated basis.	RTCIP funding collected during FY 2016 was committed or expended within seven years of collection for each city and the County of San Diego, <b>except for the city of Solana Beach in the amount of \$754.</b> <b>CORRECTIVE ACTION:</b> <b>The city of Solana Beach approved Resolution 2023-122 to commit to spending the \$754 of RTCIP funds in FY 2024 and 2025</b> and to revise the city's Capital Improvement Program budget to greater utilize RTCIP funding.
In accordance with the TransNet Extension Ordinance, in order for transit operators to maintain eligibility for receipt of funds, the operator must <b>limit the increase in its total operating cost per revenue vehicle hour for bus or revenue vehicle mile for rail services</b> from one fiscal year to the next, to no more than the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for San Diego County over the same period.	<b>Both the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and North County Transit District (NCTD) did not meet their operator eligibility requirements for rail and bus services.</b> <b>CORRECTIVE ACTION:</b> In accordance with Ordinance provisions, the <b>SANDAG Board, acting as the San Diego County Regional Transportation Commission, approved a 3-year average calculation and certain cost exclusions in calculating the requirements for MTS and NCTD</b> , bringing both transit operators in compliance for the bus and rail services. MTS and NCTD will strive to meet the eligibility requirement next year.



# TransNet Funding Highlights

## Dollars, Compared with Other Sources

The 2023 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) is a multi-billion-dollar program of projects planned by SANDAG and jurisdictions throughout the county between FY 2023 and FY 2027. The RTIP relies on several sources of funding, which include TransNet funds and contributions from the federal government, the State of California, and other local sources. The ITOC reviews projects proposed for funding with TransNet funds as part of its review of the RTIP. Local sales tax dollars raised by TransNet represent a relatively stable source of funding. However, when compared with the total number of dollars contributed by federal, state, and other funding sources, TransNet represents about 21 percent of about \$7.7 billion projected between FY 2023 and FY 2027.

## Focuses Resources on Improving Major Corridors and Local Street Improvements

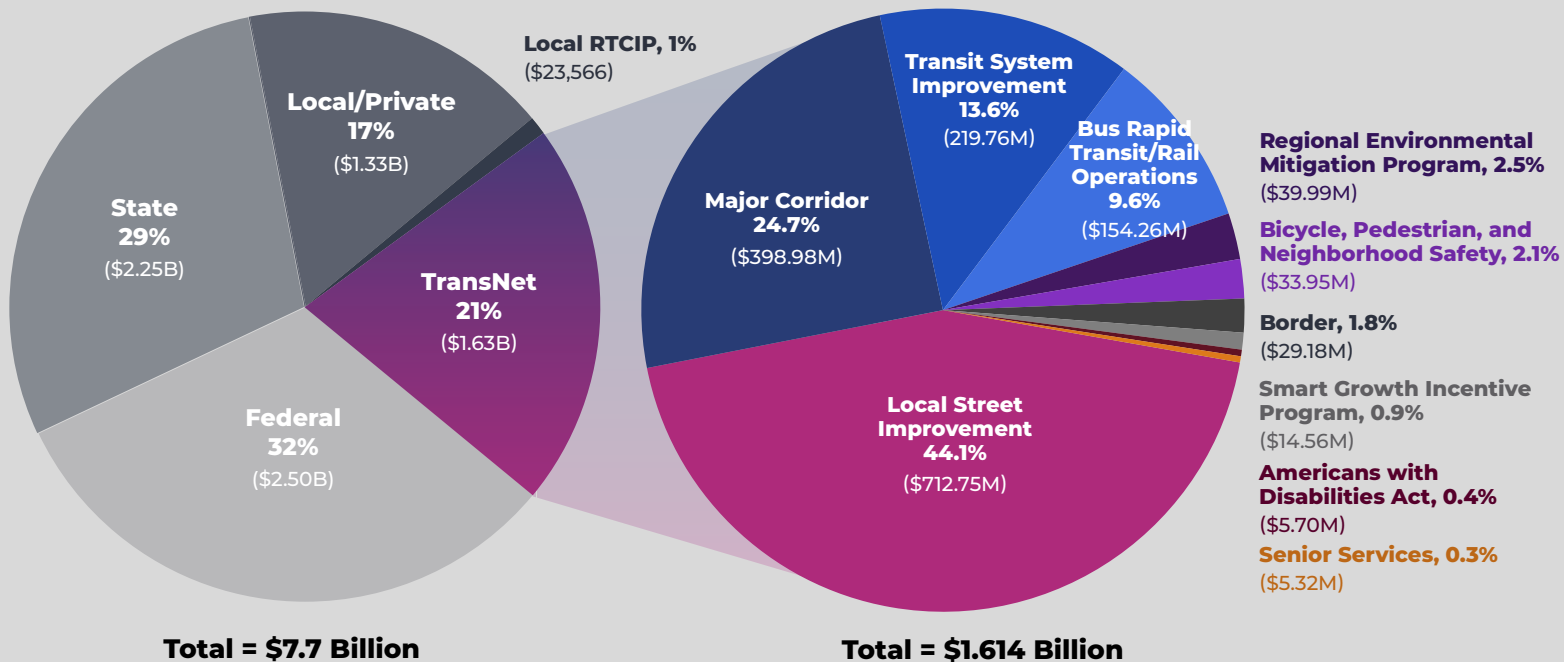
TransNet funding between FY 2023 and FY 2027 is expected to improve the quality of life for people in the region as the program focuses funding on major corridors where many people travel to and from work, and local streets and roads where people live, shop, and go to school. Between FY 2023 and FY 2027, nearly \$400 million is earmarked for improving major corridors in the region such as I-5, I-15, and SR 78, while more than \$712 million is planned for local street improvements. Meanwhile, more than \$219 million is planned for improving the regional transit system; more than \$154 million will go to operating Bus Rapid Transit and rail service; and \$33.95 million is budgeted for bicycle, pedestrian, and neighborhood safety improvements. More than \$39 million is earmarked for the region’s environmental mitigation program.



Rapid 215 on Park Boulevard

## TransNet and Other Funding

FY 2023–FY 2027



Source: 2023 Regional Transportation Improvement Program

# TransNet Projects and Transportation Program Highlights

SANDAG allocates millions of dollars annually to make the region's streets safer, give people more travel choices, better connect places throughout the region, and protect the environment. TransNet funding\* plays an important role in moving projects and initiatives forward, which brings the Regional Plan to life. Local jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and transportation partners also receive funding through the TransNet half-cent sales tax and competitive grant programs. These programs help keep SANDAG's efforts grounded in what's important to the region's communities. Ongoing revenues from the TransNet Extension Ordinance fuel the transformation of the region's transportation system.

## MAJOR PROJECTS



### Airport Transit Connection

The Airport Transit Connection will provide a reliable, direct, and convenient transit link to the San Diego International Airport for people across the region. This transportation improvement will help to reduce the increased traffic that's projected with the expansion of the airport, provide a practical travel option for residents and visitors, and contribute to the regional economy. SANDAG has shared project concepts with the Board and partner agencies, and it has secured funding for the environmental phase.



### LOSSAN

The LOSSAN Corridor (Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo) is one of the busiest intercity rail corridors in the nation, and a critical link for goods movement and the military between the San Diego region and the rest of the country. Short- and long-term projects to stabilize and relocate the railroad tracks from the Del Mar bluffs are underway. SANDAG is also advancing bridge replacement projects for the San Dieguito Bridge and the Batiquitos Lagoon Bridge.



### Otay Mesa East Port of Entry

The future port of entry that SANDAG is building with partners at Caltrans will reduce wait times, strengthen border security and safety, increase economic efficiencies, and foster innovative technology solutions, all while reducing emissions and ensuring that the Cali-Baja region has the infrastructure it needs to continue its dynamic growth. Work on site preparations and critical agreements with federal and Mexican partners continue moving the project forward.



### Blue Line Improvements

To speed up trip times and increase access for transit riders, SANDAG is studying various improvements to the Blue Line Trolley, including community-oriented development around two stops. SANDAG is also exploring options for additional rapid transit services between South County and Downtown San Diego. Upgrades to the San Ysidro Transit Center's stop on the Blue Line will improve safety and the rider experience. Near-term solutions, such as more Rapid buses, will be provided while long-term solutions are implemented.



### Purple Line

The Purple Line will be a high-speed, high-capacity transit line connecting San Ysidro to Sorrento Mesa through National City, City Heights, and Kearny Mesa. It will link some of the most populated areas of the San Diego region with major destinations for jobs, health care, education, and more. SANDAG is currently examining optimal approaches for constructing this transit line through comprehensive studies that assess various train models, route options, and other enhancements.

\*Local TransNet funding is a key component in the SANDAG budget and helps the agency leverage other local, state, and federal funds. Not all projects and programs listed in this section are funded by TransNet.





## TransNet Major Corridors

Many projects are moving forward in the environmental clearance phase, advancing them one step closer to construction. Roadway projects include improvements to SR 67 and SR 52, and final environmental clearance and design/engineering for the I-15/SR 78 Connectors and the SR 78/I-5 Express Lanes Connectors. SANDAG will also begin the design of the high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on I-5 extending to Oceanside. Transit projects include Blue Line railway signal improvements, Palomar Street rail grade separation, double-tracking projects, and six new Rapid bus projects.



## Regional Bike Network

The San Diego region has nearly 1,800 miles of existing bikeways and several more projects in the works. Providing this transportation option ensures that biking and walking are safe and convenient, and it also alleviates traffic. Currently, SANDAG is constructing three bikeways: Border to Bayshore, Bayshore Bikeway Barrio Logan, and the Pershing Bikeway. In 2024, SANDAG expects to break ground on Imperial Ave, Eastern Hillcrest, and the Inland Rail Trail Phase 3.



## Toll Operations

In January 2024, the Board of Directors approved an action plan to resolve ongoing tolling system deficiencies for the I-15 Express Lanes and the SR 125 Toll Road. The transition to a new tolling back-office system will include regular vendor and internal assessments, a quality assurance and quality control plan, and operational and customer service improvements. Internal policies will also include regular and proactive reporting to the SANDAG Board, as well as transparent communication with the public.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES



### Data, Research, and Analytics

SANDAG creates and maintains a tremendous amount of data, and it takes advantage of emerging datasets to better understand the needs of the region. The agency translates data into actionable information such as transportation models, economic forecasts, project cost-benefit analyses, web applications, and maps. Public safety data and independent evaluations offer insights into quality-of-life issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries, and the Open Data Portal (ODP) makes the data publicly and readily available.



### People, Processes, and Technology

SANDAG continues to invest in new technologies, our employees, and agency process improvements to ensure that we are efficient, effective, and ultimately a world-class agency. The agency is streamlining its processes and putting into practice what it has learned from its audits. By bringing on the proper skill sets and training our staff, SANDAG continues to be an innovative and data-driven agency.



### Safety and Vision Zero

The goal of the Regional Vision Zero Resolution is to work toward eliminating all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while making mobility options more safe, healthy, and equitable. Vision Zero rejects the idea that traffic crashes are inevitable, and it recommends proven roadway safety strategies to accommodate a variety of travel modes, promote safer speeds, and increase education around responsible travel behavior. SANDAG has launched a Traffic Safety Dashboard to gather essential data in one convenient place, and it has formed the Safety Technical Advisory Group to help shape transportation safety solutions.

*\*Local TransNet funding is a key component in the SANDAG budget and helps the agency leverage other local, state, and federal funds. Not all projects and programs listed in this section are funded by TransNet.*



## Transit Equity and the Youth Opportunity Pass

After more than a decade of advocacy by social justice community organizations, SANDAG launched its Transit Equity program in spring 2022. The Youth Opportunity Pass (YOP) pilot program, which provides free, unlimited transit rides for young people ages 18 and under, has provided more than 11 million rides countywide since its launch. Working with its community partners, the SANDAG program also includes education for youth and families about public transit options in their neighborhoods and an evaluation of its impact.



## Reconnecting Communities

Working with our partners at Caltrans, the City of San Diego, National City, and community-based organizations, SANDAG is reconnecting parts of the region that have been historically cut off from opportunity by past transportation infrastructure decisions. Projects funded by a state grant to advance transportation equity will create green spaces, public plazas, and transit-oriented development that will repurpose land for community benefit and create buffers from pollution.

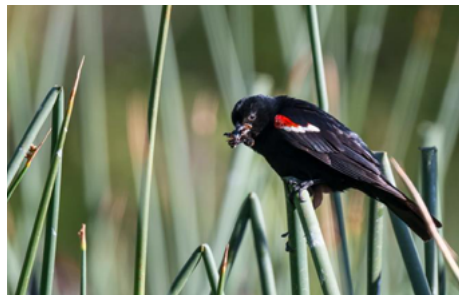
## GRANTS AND LOCAL TRANSNET FUNDING

SANDAG's Grants Division within the Financial Planning, Budgets, and Grants Department centralizes and enhances the agency's efforts toward pursuing discretionary grant funding. Since 2020, SANDAG has secured more than \$1.5 billion in federal and state funding for agency projects and programs.



### Local Streets and Roads

Since 1988, more than \$1 billion in TransNet funding has been provided to the cities and the county to help with street improvement projects. Benefits of these funds include new major roads, repaved and widened streets, pothole repairs, local bikeway and walkway improvements, median and landscaping projects, bridge repairs, drainage improvements, traffic calming and signal adjustments, and other major congestion relief and rehabilitation projects. Individual jurisdictions spend these funds according to their priorities and needs.



### TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program

SANDAG has awarded approximately \$18.8 million in TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program Land Management grants over a total of ten cycles. This competitive program awards projects to land managers to protect threatened, rare, and endangered species and their habitats while promoting regional habitat conservation planning. The Board awarded funding for 19 projects for the tenth cycle.



### TransNet Active Transportation & Smart Growth Incentive Programs

SANDAG provides jurisdictions with funds to create more walkable, bike-friendly, and transit-oriented communities. Since 2009, \$59 million in TransNet Smart Growth Incentive Program funding and more than \$29 million in Active Transportation funding contributed to projects throughout the region. These projects revitalize downtown areas and create economic growth opportunities by enhancing streetscapes, improving walking and biking facilities, beautifying public spaces, and increasing connectivity.

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## Specialized Transportation Programs

The Specialized Transportation Grant Program (STGP) expands mobility options for older adults and individuals with disabilities. STGP consists of two programs: The Senior Mini-Grant Program and Section 5310. These two programs have awarded more than \$68 million to private nonprofits and local governments. Additionally, the SANDAG Access for All Grant Program (AFA) funds projects and programs that expand on-demand wheelchair-accessible vehicle services. Using fees collected by the California Public Utilities Commission, AFA has awarded more than \$2.5 million.

### Program Highlight

ElderHelp is a non-profit organization that receives Senior Mini-Grant funding. During FY 2024, they operated Seniors A Go Go, a volunteer driver program providing door through door, door to door, and curb to curb transportation options for seniors aged 60 and older. The program ensures that seniors arrive safely to and from their appointments and errands.



## Housing Acceleration Program

The Housing Acceleration Program (HAP) uses state Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) funds to help local jurisdictions produce more housing and better integrate it into their communities. The HAP develops and adopts policies, processes, and infrastructure improvements that help jurisdictions evaluate their needs, accelerate housing production, implement strategy, and compete for funding. Since 2021, the HAP has awarded over \$14 million for projects throughout the region.

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See also the **2023 SANDAG Annual Report**.

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## How to Get Involved

According to the FY 2021 TransNet TPA, 35 percent of the 48 major corridor capital construction projects were completed and 23 percent were in progress as of June 30, 2020—a significant accomplishment 13 years into the 40-year program. Completed projects include the modernization of the Blue and Orange Trolley lines; construction of the I-15 Express Lanes; the widening of SR 76; I-15, Mid-City, and South Bay Rapid Transit projects; and others. For specific information on the status of projects under the TransNet program, readers can go to the following sources online:

- **FY 2021 TransNet TPA**  
Appendix C details the status of major corridor projects.
- The status of all TransNet Major Corridor projects can be found on the TransNet Dashboard at [transnetdashboard.sandag.org](https://transnetdashboard.sandag.org).



### **SANDAG.org/TransNet**

Contains key documents related to the TransNet Extension Ordinance.



### **Meetings**

ITOC meets regularly, usually the second Wednesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. at SANDAG offices at 401 B Street, Suite 800, San Diego, CA 92101. A list of past and upcoming agendas for all ITOC meetings can be found at [sandag.org/meetings-and-events/transnet-independent-taxpayer-oversight](https://sandag.org/meetings-and-events/transnet-independent-taxpayer-oversight)



### **Questions?**

The ITOC encourages your feedback on this report and other TransNet-related matters. Inquiries can be directed to [itoc@sandag.org](mailto:itoc@sandag.org). Individuals interested in serving on the committee, as vacancies occur, are encouraged to email [itoc@sandag.org](mailto:itoc@sandag.org) to be placed on the vacancy notification list.