

## **REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy specifies the transit service planning and transit development project planning responsibilities of SANDAG (the consolidated agency) and the transit agencies (Metropolitan Transit System and North San Diego County Transit Development Board), and outlines a framework for transit service planning and roles and responsibilities for project development planning. Figure 1.1 includes a flow chart, based on the framework that documents the processes for transit service planning and implementation, for new services and adjustments to existing services. Figure 1.2 identifies the lead and support (active participant) agency responsibilities for both long and short-range transit service planning and development project planning.

This policy will allow the transit system to quickly and efficiently respond to changes in travel demand and operating/fiscal environment, while ensuring that the system is adjusted and developed consistent with longer range regional transportation and land use goals as incorporated into the Regional Plan (the combined Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) and the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy [RTP/SCS]), the *TransNet* Ordinance, the Coordinated Plan (the Regional Short-Range Transit Plan & Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan), or any other regional planning or legislative documents concerning regional projects (collectively referred to in this Policy as “Regional Planning Documents”). As a result, transit service changes that relate directly to implementation of regional policies, goals, and objectives (service changes with regional significance) are generally those that:

- Serve regional travel demand corridors that cross transit agency jurisdictional boundaries;
  - Significantly affect passenger trip making (as defined by the guidelines contained in the Coordinated Plan; for example, would be found to potentially have a detrimental impact on geographic connections, timed transfers, and the frequency/service span consistency of such services);
  - Require additional regional operating funds above the overall transit agency-adopted budget and projected budget capacity; and
  - Affect the policies, projects, services, and facilities included in Regional Planning Documents.
1. **Agency Responsibilities** – SANDAG and transit agency responsibilities are described below and further specified in Figure 1.2. There is an inherent overlap of some of the responsibilities between SANDAG and the transit agencies in conducting transit service planning and development project planning, as exhibited in Figure 1.2. In addition, SANDAG responsibilities pursuant to the Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients (Circular 4702.1B) and Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients (Circular 4703.1) should be coordinated with the related Title VI responsibilities of the transit agencies. Therefore, all planning responsibilities shall be conducted with coordination and consultation between SANDAG and the transit agencies. SANDAG responsibilities are described in Sections 1.1 and 1.2. Transit agency responsibilities are described in Section 1.3.

- 1.1 **SANDAG Planning Responsibilities** – carried out in collaboration with the transit agencies:
- 1.1.1 Prepare long-range transit plans and corridor studies consistent with Regional Planning Documents.
  - 1.1.2 Prepare, no less often than every four years, the five-year Coordinated Plan that: (1) establishes the goals and objectives for short-range transit services and human services transportation; (2) defines the existing transit and human services transportation system; (3) sets the framework for a transit operations performance monitoring program as required by the Transportation Development Act and a monitoring program for human services transportation as defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); (4) identifies transit and human service gaps and deficiencies; (5) evaluates existing transit and human services transportation services and programs; (6) establishes parameters for short-range (0-5 years) new and revised service development, as well as regionally significant and all other service adjustments; (7) defines a methodology for evaluating proposals for new and revised service; (8) identifies and prioritizes regional and subarea transit planning studies; and (9) evaluates and prioritizes new and revised services for implementation, including the adoption of an annual Regional Service Implementation Plan.
  - 1.1.3 Conduct regional and subarea planning studies as prioritized in the Regional Planning Documents.
  - 1.1.4 Develop proposals and service plans for new services or for service adjustments with regional significance, with active participation from the transit agencies, in response to changes in regional travel demand, to address regional service gaps and deficiencies, and to implement plans and programs identified in Regional Planning Documents.
  - 1.1.5 Plan, locate, and design transit infrastructure and facilities (stations, priority treatments, supporting facilities, etc.) for regionally significant transit projects and services identified in Regional Planning Documents with active participation from the transit agencies.
  - 1.1.6 Develop proposals for new and revised services to be included in the Regional Service Implementation Plan.
  - 1.1.7 Ensure that all new and revised services and service adjustments of regional significance are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Coordinated Plan.
  - 1.1.8 Coordinate with transit agencies to provide community outreach and conduct market research.
  - 1.1.9 Conduct regional performance monitoring to provide input into the Coordinated Plan and other short-range transit studies. The regional performance monitoring will be based on the type of service and type of service area.
  - 1.1.10 Provide technical assistance to transit operators for local route planning.

- 1.1.11 Develop and update, as required, with input from the transit agencies, the Coordinated Transportation Plan for San Diego County as required by legislation. SANDAG also will manage the competitive process for granting FTA funds available as a result of production of a Coordinated Transportation Plan.
  - 1.1.12 Participate in development of transit vehicle specifications for vehicles acquired for regionally significant projects and services that are funded through projects identified in Regional Planning Documents.
  - 1.1.13 Collaborate with the transit agencies on a branding framework, compatible with the transit agencies' individual branding programs, that incorporates regionally significant projects and services identified in the Regional Planning Documents. The transit agencies and SANDAG will undertake a study to develop a mutually agreed upon branding framework for the region.
- 1.2 ***SANDAG FTA Responsibilities*** – carried out in collaboration with the transit agencies:
- 1.2.1 Fare Changes. SANDAG recognizes that the revenues generated from customer fares are a critical part of the respective transit agencies achieving a balanced budget that supports the provision of the highest levels of service. To the maximum extent possible, SANDAG will conduct its analyses in a manner that is consistent with the budget goals established by the transit agencies while adhering to the requirements specified by the FTA. SANDAG will evaluate, prior to implementation in the Fare Ordinance, all fare changes, to determine whether those changes will have a disparate impact on minorities (based on race, color, or national origin) or result in a disproportionate burden on low-income persons. SANDAG will prepare Environmental Justice or Title VI reports in accordance with SANDAG disparate impact and disproportionate burden analysis methodologies, which are defined below.

- 1.2.1.1 SANDAG will determine the existence of disparate impacts to **minority** populations for all Fare Ordinance changes. Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, disparate impacts are found when there is a difference in adverse effects between minority and non-minority areas of ten percent (10%) or more. Minority populations will be deemed adversely affected when the proportion of minority persons adversely affected by the change exceeds the average proportion of minority persons in the analysis service area. If SANDAG, in consultation with the transit operators, chooses to implement a proposed fare change in the Fare Ordinance despite a finding of disparate impact on minority populations, or if SANDAG finds, in consultation with the transit operators, even after the revisions, that minority populations will continue to bear a disproportionate share of the adverse effects of a proposed fare change, SANDAG may implement the fare change only if:
- 1.2.1.1.1 There is a substantial legitimate justification<sup>1</sup> for the proposed fare change, and
  - 1.2.1.1.2 A finding is made that there are no alternatives that would have a less disparate impact on minority populations and still accomplish the legitimate goals of the fare change.
- 1.2.1.2 SANDAG will determine the existence of disproportionate burdens on **low-income** populations for all Fare Ordinance changes. Pursuant to Executive Order 12898 (Clinton 1994), disproportionate burdens are found when there is a difference in adverse effects between low-income and non-low income populations of ten percent (10%) or more. Low-income populations will be deemed adversely affected when the proportion of low-income persons (using a threshold of at or below 200 percent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines) adversely affected exceeds the average proportion of low-income persons in the analysis service area. If SANDAG chooses, in consultation with the transit operators, to implement a proposed fare change in the Fare Ordinance despite a finding of disproportionate burden on low-income ridership, or if SANDAG finds, in consultation with the transit operators, even after the revisions, that low-income riders will continue to bear a disproportionate burden due to the proposed fare change, SANDAG may implement the fare change only if the transit agency(ies) show that they will:
- 1.2.1.2.1 Take steps to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts where practicable, and
  - 1.2.1.2.2 Provide a description of alternatives available to low-income populations affected by the fare changes.

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<sup>1</sup> This standard is met if the fare change is needed to meet a goal that is legitimate, important, and integral to the agency.

- 1.2.2 Reporting. SANDAG will prepare Title VI reports in accordance with this policy, which shall be posted to the SANDAG website, as required by FTA for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and transit agencies.
- 1.2.3 Service Changes. SANDAG will notify the transit agencies of any service changes that may be required as a result of New Start, Small Start, or other new transit capital projects that will be constructed by SANDAG in adequate time to allow the transit agency(ies) to conduct a service change equity analysis at least six months prior to the beginning of revenue operations. SANDAG will provide information and cooperate with the transit agency(ies) on any service change equity analyses that are needed as a result of such construction.
- 1.3 ***Transit Agency Responsibilities*** – carried out in collaboration with SANDAG:
  - 1.3.1 Develop service and schedule adjustments to ensure system optimization and to respond to immediate operational issues (e.g., detours, overcrowding, on-time performance, and minor out-of-direction routing changes).
  - 1.3.2 Conduct local transit studies and analyses within the transit agency's service area in response to changes in local travel demand, to address service gaps and deficiencies, to develop service reductions/efficiencies, to address operating budget deficits, and to address goals and implement plans developed in the Coordinated Plan.
  - 1.3.3 Develop proposals for new and revised services to be included in the Regional Service Implementation Plan.
  - 1.3.4 Develop proposals to reallocate unproductive resources to implement unfunded services identified as high priority in the Regional Service Implementation Plan or consistent with the Coordinated Plan.
  - 1.3.5 Develop a public input process and hold required public hearings for service changes. The transit agencies should ensure that the public input process for public hearings on service changes would be conducted in a manner to facilitate public input from the affected area.
  - 1.3.6 Develop marketing and branding programs for the transit services within its jurisdiction and collaborate with SANDAG on a compatible branding framework that incorporates regionally significant projects and services identified in Regional Planning Documents. The transit agencies and SANDAG will undertake a study to develop a mutually agreed upon branding framework for the region.
  - 1.3.7 Provide community outreach and conduct market research, in coordination with SANDAG.
  - 1.3.8 Develop operating plans for special event transit service and service contingencies.
  - 1.3.9 Monitor existing operations and services to provide input into service analyses and short-range transit studies.
  - 1.3.10 Conduct bus stop location planning.

- 1.3.11 Implement service, including scheduling, run-cutting, operations, contract services, service management, and labor contract administration.
- 1.3.12 Provide input on long- and short-range transit plans, and regional performance monitoring.
- 1.3.13 If a service addition or change will last longer than twelve months and qualifies as a major service change, or if a New Starts, Small Starts, or other new fixed guideway capital project is proposed, conduct a service change equity analysis consistent with the FTA Circulars if required by FTA for transit agencies, and provide the reports to SANDAG and FTA.
- 1.3.14 Actively participate in the development of service plans for service adjustments with regional significance, in response to changes in regional travel demand, to address regional service gaps and deficiencies and to implement plans and programs identified in Regional Planning Documents.
- 1.3.15 Actively participate in the planning, location and design of transit infrastructure and facilities (stations, priority treatments, supporting facilities, etc.) for regionally significant transit projects and services identified in Regional Planning Documents.
- 1.3.16 Develop transit vehicle specifications, with active participation from SANDAG, for vehicles for all service types, including local bus, shuttles, bus rapid transit, rail, and others.
- 1.3.17 Conduct a fare equity analysis for promotional or temporary fare changes when required by FTA and provide the analysis to SANDAG in the event the fare change must be incorporated into the Fare Ordinance.

2. **Transit Service Planning Framework** – This framework allows the transit system to quickly and efficiently respond to changes in travel demand and operating/fiscal environment, while ensuring that the system is adjusted and developed consistent with longer range regional transportation and land use goals.

#### ***Step 1: Guidance***

A Coordinated Plan, consistent with SANDAG's RTP and RCP, will be drafted every four years by SANDAG, with active participation from the transit agencies. The Coordinated Plan will establish goals and objectives and provide guidance for service planning and will balance the needs of optimizing the transit system in response to operational and financial constraints, with the mid- and long-range system development goals established in the long-range plans.

#### ***Step 2: Develop Service Adjustments***

Throughout the year, transit agency and SANDAG staff develop proposals, in accordance with the Coordinated Plan, to adjust existing services and develop new services. These service adjustments help to optimize existing services, reflect changes to the operating and fiscal environment, respond to customer comments and requests, and begin to implement and support services envisioned in the long-range plans. Service adjustments can be a result of such things as schedule analysis, trip and route level evaluation, and subregional and regional transit studies. Service adjustments with regional significance should be developed as collaborative efforts between SANDAG and transit agency staff.

### ***Step 3: Evaluation and Approval***

Prior to approval for implementation, all service adjustments should be:

- Consistent with the Coordinated Plan;
- Presented for public hearing in the impacted service area if required by SANDAG, the appropriate transit agency, or by FTA policies and regulations; and
- Fully funded either through a reallocation of resources or as part of the budget process.

Service adjustments with regional significance should be endorsed by the appropriate transit agency and determined to be consistent with regional policies, goals and objectives by SANDAG prior to public hearing and implementation, while local and minor service adjustments may be approved for implementation by the transit agencies after advising SANDAG of the proposed changes.

### ***Step 4: Implementation***

As a general practice, service changes should be implemented during a regularly scheduled service change date (scheduled for winter, spring, and summer). Implementation of major service changes should be preceded by community outreach, a marketing campaign, and public notices, as appropriate. Service implementation is the responsibility of the transit agencies.

### ***Step 5: Monitoring***

Performance monitoring will be conducted on an ongoing basis to evaluate new and existing services and service adjustments. SANDAG will monitor the transit system performance on a systemwide and transit agency level on an annual and quarterly basis. Transit agencies will monitor their operations performance on an annual, quarterly, and monthly basis, as appropriate. Performance measures will evaluate productivity, cost-effectiveness, and quality of service. Performance results will be used as a basis for developing the Coordinated Plan, and other planning studies and analysis.

Attachments: Figure 1.1 – Regional Transit Service Planning and Implementation Process  
Figure 1.2 – Roles and Responsibilities for Service Planning Activities

Adopted June 2003

Amended September 2004

Amended March 2005

Amended August 2006

Amended December 2008

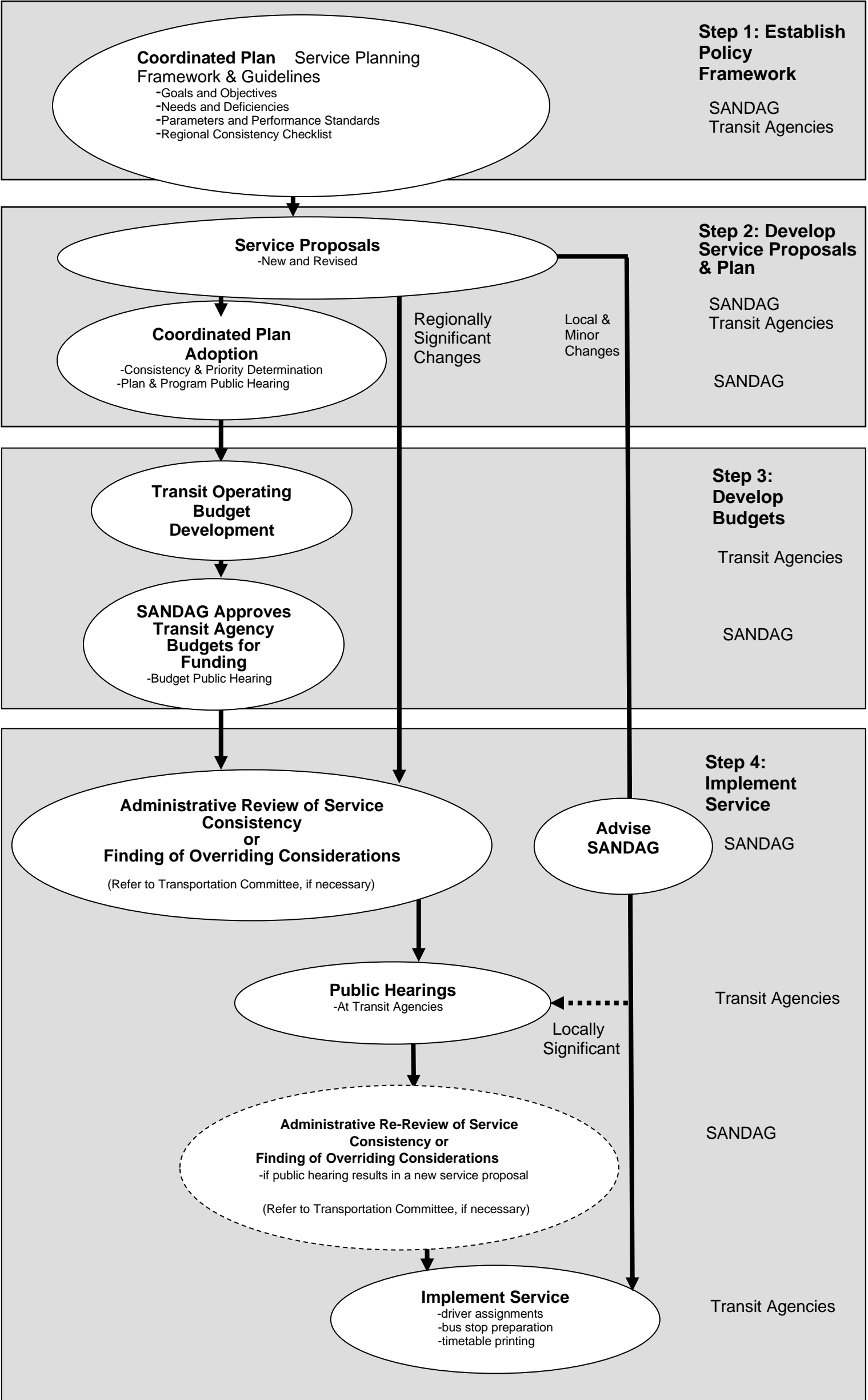
Amended February 2012

Amended May 2013

Amended January 2017

Amended November 2022

**Figure 1.1**  
**Regional Transit Service Planning and Implementation Process**





**FIGURE 1.2**  
**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TRANSIT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES**

	TRANSIT AGENCY		SANDAG		
	Operations	Marketing	Service Planning	Development Planning	Long Range Planning
<b>POLICY AND GUIDANCE</b>					
Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)					Lead
Short Range Transit Plan (SRTTP)			Lead		
<b>LONG-RANGE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT</b>					
Subarea Studies					Lead
<b>MID-RANGE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT</b>					
BRT/Rail System Development (Service Plan)*				Lead	
Transit Centers (Station Location/Facility Design)				Lead	
Regional Branding Framework		Shared			
<b>SHORT RANGE SERVICE RESTRUCTURING</b>					
Feeder Bus Studies/BRT Supporting Networks			Lead		
Subarea Studies (e.g. Downtown, NB/PB/LJ, Univ. Ave)			Shared		
Systemwide Service Optimization (e.g. COA)			Lead		
<b>COMMUNITY OUTREACH</b>					
Service Change Public Hearings			Lead		
Developer Plan Review - land use, regional plan conformity				Lead	
Developer Plan Review - community liaison			Lead		
Market Research		Shared			
Transit Liaison to Communities		Shared			
Respond to Community Service Requests			Shared		
Respond to Operational Issues	Lead				
Marketing/Branding Jurisdiction Services		Lead			
<b>PERFORMANCE MONITORING</b>					
Annual Route Monitoring			Lead		
New Service Proposal Evaluation			Shared		
Performance Improvement Program				Lead	
Quarterly Operations Evaluation			Lead		
Operational Data Collection			Lead		
Assistance to Transit Operators (ATO) Data Collection				Lead	
Monthly Operations Reporting			Lead		
National Transit Database (NTD) Reporting			Lead		
<b>ROUTE SPECIFIC ADJUSTMENTS</b>					
Bus Stop Location Planning			Lead		
Trip Level Schedule Adjustments			Lead		
Minor Route Changes			Lead		
Service Reductions - Minor			Lead		
Service Reductions - Regionally Significant				Lead	
<b>OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE</b>					
Scheduling			Lead		
Runcutting			Lead		
Driver Bids	Lead				
Ensure Implementation of Service Plans	Lead				
Service Provision	Lead				
Vehicle Specification/Procurement	Lead				

\* Includes Mid-Coast LRT/BRT and South Bay to Sorrento Mesa BRT  
Revised December 2016

<b>Lead</b>	- Primary or Lead Function
	- Active Participation and Support