

July 24, 2025

Evaluation Criteria for Next Gen Rapid Routes

Overview

In October 2023, the SANDAG Board of Directors approved \$26.6 million for the planning and design of six new Rapid routes. Staff will share the draft evaluation criteria that will be used to rank alternatives for each route.

Key Considerations

The Regional Plan includes a comprehensive network of Rapid buses that connect people to job centers, education, and other destinations via transit that is competitive with automobile travel. Six of these Rapid routes are currently being advanced:

- *Rapid 277* will connect the community of Ramona to the Sabre Springs Transit Center.
- *Rapid 483* is being planned as part of the I-15/SR 78 Managed Lane Connector Project and will connect Temecula in Riverside County to CSU San Marcos and Palomar College.
- *Rapid 640* is a precursor to the proposed Blue Line rail corridor improvements and will connect San Ysidro Transit Center to downtown San Diego.
- *Rapid 688* is a precursor to the planned Purple Line rail corridor and will connect San Ysidro Transit Center to Kearny Mesa and University City.
- *Rapid 880* route is being planned as part of the SR 52 Improvements Project and will connect east county to Kearny Mesa, University City, and UC San Diego.
- *Rapid 625* will connect Chula Vista, National City, and Southeast San Diego to San Diego State University.

Staff completed the first round of public outreach in early 2025 and are drafting evaluation criteria. This process started with the goals and objectives from prior Rapid planning efforts. From there, staff revised the goals to reflect new feedback from partner agencies and incorporate outcomes from the Vision Zero Action Plan. The evaluation criteria are based the following five goals:

- Provide reliable, high-quality transit service
- Maximize ridership potential
- Enhance road user safety along Rapid routes
- Gain support from the public and key stakeholders through partnerships
- Implement cost-effective and financially feasible Rapid service

Action: Discussion

Staff will present the goals and objectives of the six Rapid routes currently being planned, along with input received from stakeholder planning staff. The Social Equity Working Group is asked to discuss and provide feedback.

Fiscal Impact:

The SANDAG Board of Directors approved \$26.6 million for the planning and design of these Rapid routes.

Schedule/Scope Impact:

Initial planning and design work will take place between November 2024 and January 2027.

Twelve objectives and related performance measures detailed in Attachment 1 will enable staff and partner agencies to rank how well the alternatives for each route achieve the five goals. The draft evaluation criteria were discussed at two Agency Coordination Team¹ meetings made up of 22 partner agencies and educational institutions. Comments from the group included:

- Recommendation to focus on transit-dependent populations
- Recommendation to consider including safety improvements in communities
- Acknowledgement that parallel routes within a corridor can accommodate transit and other travel modes and should be studied
- Discussion of how stop amenities and fare collection policies can improve operations
- Emphasis on reliability, maximizing ridership potential, and cost-effectiveness

The Social Equity Working Group is asked to discuss the draft goals, objectives, and performance measures and provide feedback.

Next Steps

The project team will document feedback received from the Social Equity Working Group to refine the evaluation criteria. Over the next two years, staff will collaborate with partner agencies and stakeholders through Alternative Routes Analysis, Design and Engineering (up to 15% conceptual design), and Costing and Phasing. Updates will be provided to the Mobility Working Group and other relevant SANDAG working groups and committees.

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Attachment: 1. Draft Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures Table

¹ The Agency Coordination Team consists of staff representatives from SANDAG, MTS, NCTD, Caltrans Districts 8 and 11, local jurisdictions, colleges and universities, Riverside County Transportation Commission, and Riverside Transit Agency