

EARLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE APPROACHING FOR SCAG'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Join SCAG in celebrating its legacy and 50 years of collaboration and service to the region's member cities and counties at the 2015 Regional Conference and General Assembly, May 7-8, at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa. The event will commemorate SCAG's 50th anniversary with a gala celebration dinner and evening post-reception that will take us from past to present, bringing together former Regional Council members, partners, stakeholders, friends and colleagues. As part of our annual highlights, SCAG will recognize cities for innovative planning and local development projects that best improve the mobility, livability, prosperity and sustainability of our region at the annual Sustainability Awards. The conference will also feature networking opportunities, sponsor exhibits and breakout panels on automated vehicle technology, innovative approaches to improving transit access and increasing ridership, and more. To view the draft program agenda and to register before the early bird deadline of April 10, please visit: www.scag.ca.gov/ga2015.

CALIFORNIA SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIELD HEARING

On March 13, I testified before Chairman Jim Beall's California Senate Transportation and Housing Committee to address infrastructure and transportation system needs in Southern California. The field hearing, titled "Meeting Transportation Funding Needs of the Southern California Region: Lessons Learned from Other States" was held at Metro's headquarters. My testimony provided an overview of the regional transportation needs and priorities as identified in SCAG's 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), and highlighted the financial value to the state for expediting project delivery. According to SCAG's analysis, local streets and roads in the SCAG region have a 21 year need of \$55 billion to ensure proper maintenance and every dollar spent today, could save \$20 a decade from now. This poor road quality from lack of investment in the region's infrastructure has resulted in the SCAG region having the highest vehicle operating cost in the country, at \$832 per year due to poorly maintained roads. Additionally, drawing upon the analyses conducted for the RTP/SCS and for SCAG's recent study estimating economic benefits of project acceleration, the region could save \$125-\$195 billion a year by building projects five years faster. Other speakers included John Tavaglione, Supervisor, Riverside County, 2nd district; Kevin James, Chair, City of Los Angeles Public Works Commission; and Martin Wachs, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor Emeritus – UCLA. For news articles related to the Senate Committee hearing, please see the Los Angeles Daily News (<http://bit.ly/1DoYcp9>), Santa Monica Mirror (<http://bit.ly/1CugR0N>) and Inland News Today (<http://bit.ly/1CJLalA>).

SCAG PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL MAYORS' CHALLENGE KICK-OFF SUMMIT

SCAG staff and local elected officials attended the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safer People, Safer Streets Mayors' Challenge Summit that included representatives from over 65 cities, including eight cities within the SCAG region. The summit provided an opportunity for local elected officials and staff to learn how to improve biking and walking in their cities, to network with representatives from similarly sized cities, and to represent the SCAG region to a national audience. Santa Monica Mayor Kevin McKeown participated in the panel discussion, "Building the Political Will and Public Support." Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells (Culver City) and Hon. Michele Martinez (Santa Ana) also attended, as did representatives from the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County Health Department. SCAG is encouraging and providing support to local agencies interested in signing up for the year-long challenge. For info, contact Stephen Patchan, senior regional planner, at patchan@scag.ca.gov, or visit <http://www.dot.gov/content/join-challenge>.

LOW NUMBER OF REGIONAL APPLICANTS ACCEPTED TO COMPETE FOR AHSC GRANTS

SCAG has been closely monitoring new state funding sources derived from cap-and-trade revenue, in particular the development of the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grant. Last month, we reported that the Strategic Growth Council, who administers the grant fund, received 147 concept applications including a range of transit-oriented development and integrated connectivity project proposals from throughout the region. On March 18, SCAG learned that only 12 out of the 54 concept proposals invited to submit full applications are from the SCAG region. With the SCAG region having some of the worst air quality challenges in the state, containing over 67% of the disadvantaged communities in the state and being home to over half of the state's population, only selecting 12 projects—representing just 18% of the total number of statewide projects invited—does not represent the intent of the legislature. The authorizing legislation, SB 862 of 2014 identifies the first two goals of the AHSC program as funding of projects that reduce air pollution and improving conditions in disadvantaged communities. SCAG President Carl Morehouse sent a letter to Mr. Ken Alex, Chairman of the Strategic Growth Council, recommending additional projects be considered. I will provide a full update at the Regional Council meeting.

Despite the low number of applicants accepted, SCAG will continue to support the remaining 12 applicants within the region through its Cap and Trade Assistance Team as they proceed in submitting their full applications, which are due by April 20. For those who are in need of assistance, please contact Kristen Pawling, associate regional planner, at pawling@scag.ca.gov. Prior to May 18, SCAG will also submit its recommendations on the applications for final awards, based on a board-approved set of evaluation criteria.

2016 RTP/SCS DEVELOPMENT IS IN FULL SWING

SCAG is ramping up the development of its 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS) with a growing number of public engagement activities. On March 9, SCAG circulated a Notice of Preparation to interested parties that it will prepare a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the 2016 RTP/SCS pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. The notice began a 30-day public comment period, from March 9 to April 7, to seek input from interested parties on the scope and content of the Draft PEIR. On March 17 and 18, 2015, two scoping meetings were held at SCAG's Los Angeles office with videoconferencing to SCAG's regional offices and videoconferencing sites.

SCAG is preparing an environmental justice analysis as part of the 2016 RTP/SCS to address potential disproportionate impacts the plan may have upon minority and low-income populations. Building on the previous environmental justice workshop held in the Fall 2014, SCAG will be two additional workshops to provide interested stakeholders updates and receive input on the environmental justice analysis process. The first workshop will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Fairmount Park in Riverside, and the second workshop will be held on Thursday, April 23, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at SCAG's main office in Los Angeles. Video-conferencing will be available at various locations for the April 23 workshop only.

Beginning in May, SCAG will be hosting more than 20 Public Workshops to inform and educate stakeholders and residents about the key issues addressed in the 2016 RTP/SCS. These interactive sessions will solicit feedback from participants on the four RTP/SCS scenarios through informational kiosks and polling stations. We are excited to preview the workshop experience at the 2015 Regional Conference and General Assembly.

Detailed information on all of these efforts is available on SCAG's website. For more information on the PEIR Notice of Preparation, visit <http://rtpscs.scag.ca.gov/pages/2016-PEIR.aspx>. For more information on the environmental justice analysis, please visit www.scag.ca.gov/environmentaljustice, and to register for the environmental justice workshops visit www.scag.ca.gov/EJworkshopRSVP. RTP/SCS Public Workshop dates and locations will be available soon.

LITIGATION UPDATE: CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT GRANTS REVIEW OF SANDAG CASE

As reported last month, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) sought review by the California Supreme Court following an appellate court decision on the CEQA challenge of SANDAG's environmental impact report for its 2011 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. On March 11, the petition for review filed by SANDAG was granted by the California Supreme Court. The court limited the issue to be briefed and argued to whether the environmental impact report for a regional transportation plan must include an analysis of the plan's consistency with the 2050 greenhouse gas emission reduction goals in Executive Order No. S-3-05, in order to comply with CEQA. With the court's grant of review, the prior appellate court decision which went against SANDAG is no longer considered published. However, the Supreme Court has wide latitude and can choose to address additional issues that are part of this SANDAG case. According to SANDAG's counsel, its opening brief is due May 11. Staff will continue to apprise the Regional Council of further developments in this case.

ANNUAL WORKSHOP HELPS CITIES ASSESS TRAFFIC VOLUME AND PAVEMENT CONDITION

SCAG and Caltrans will host the annual Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) workshop, on Wednesday, April 8, at SCAG's main office in Los Angeles. HPMS is a federally mandated inventory system and planning tool, designed to assess the nation's highway system. Specific data collected from local jurisdictions include traffic volume and pavement condition information. The workshop is available by videoconference at SCAG's regional offices, and provides an opportunity for staff from local agencies to speak directly with Caltrans administrators regarding the HPMS program and its current data collection requirements. The workshop will provide a general overview of the program, its uses, data needed from local jurisdictions, and information regarding any new technologies being implemented to facilitate the data collection process. For more information, visit <http://www.scag.ca.gov/programs/Pages/HighwayMaintenance.aspx>.

NEW ATP FUNDING TO SUPPORT SMALLER AGENCIES AND DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Caltrans is sponsoring a series of workshops across the state intended to provide technical assistance to help small agencies and disadvantaged communities successfully compete for ATP funding. Twenty-five percent of all funds programmed through the ATP must benefit disadvantaged communities. Consultant team members conducting the ATP support workshops include the Local Government Commission, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, California Walks and the California Bicycle Coalition. Three workshops will be held in the SCAG region and each will cover how to develop high quality bicycle or pedestrian plans, projects or programs. For more information or to register, please visit <http://www.lgc.org/atp-support>.

CALTRANS GEARING UP FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION WORKSHOPS

Over the next few months, Caltrans will be hosting workshops intended to assist applicants on how to apply for and complete the ATP Cycle 2 Application. The application workshops will be held in each of the Caltrans districts, will review the application in detail, as well as go over California Conservation Corps partnerships, the consultant contract procurement process and the submitting of project programming requests. Grant applications are due to Caltrans by June 1. For workshop information, please visit <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/atp/workshops-training-cycle2-2.html>.

U.S. EPA SEEKS COMMENTS ON PROPOSED AIR PLAN REQUIREMENTS

On March 23, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a proposed rule to address various air plan requirements for areas designated as nonattainment for any existing fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) federal air quality standards. Currently, there are two federal PM_{2.5} nonattainment areas within the SCAG region: The South Coast Air Basin and the urbanized area of Imperial



County. As currently proposed, new air plans for the 2012 PM2.5 federal standards would be due to the U.S. EPA by October 15, 2016, with an attainment date no later than December 31, 2021. The new air plans will establish new PM2.5 transportation conformity emission budgets for their respective nonattainment areas which, once effective, will be used by SCAG for the conformity analyses for future RTP/SCS, Federal Transportation Improvement Program and their amendments (i.e., post October 2016). The EPA plans to hold one public hearing concerning the proposed rule in Washington, D.C. (date, time and location not yet available). Comments on the proposed rule must be received by the EPA on or before May 22, 2015. For the Federal Register Notice and how to comment, visit <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-03-23/pdf/2015-06138.pdf>.

SCAG GIS SERVICES HELPS ALISO VIEJO WITH GIS ROLL-OUT

This past month, SCAG welcomed the City of Aliso Viejo to the GIS Services program. Over the next several months, SCAG staff will work with Aliso Viejo to provide customized training and the implementation of a GIS roll-out in which the city will receive a laptop, ArcGIS software and geospatial data. The SCAG GIS Services Program aims to assist local jurisdictions to better leverage their resources and provide new services to residents, as well as increase efficiencies in their day-to-day work. For more information, visit <http://gisdata.scag.ca.gov/Pages/AboutGISServices.aspx>.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FOCUSES ON REGIONAL PLANNING, POLICY AND STRATEGY

In March, SCAG hosted two groups of Chinese visitors from the Guangzhou Municipal Land Resources and Housing Administrative Bureau, and the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design. Staff introduced our agency, including SCAG's core functions and our programs for the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS. Staff also shared with visitors about SCAG's strategies and approach of collaborating with key stakeholders for low carbon economy growth, environmental preservation, and sustainable and equitable development.