

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

## MAY 2012

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### **2012 Regional Conference & General Assembly**

On April 4, 2012, the agency took an important step in setting the long-term course for important transportation projects in this vast region when the Regional Council adopted the 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), which integrates land use planning with transportation planning using strategies aimed at improving air quality while enhancing the mobility and economic sustainability in the region. With the RC adoption, the Plan was transmitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation and the California Air Resources Board for their approval.

After nearly two years of unprecedented public outreach, direct engagement and opportunities for public comment on the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS, ideas on how to implement the Plan's vision took center stage as more than 800 elected officials, business and community leaders, and transportation, land use and environmental planning experts gathered April 4 and 5 for SCAG's 47th annual Regional Conference and General Assembly at the Bonaventure Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles. Highlights of the event included recognition of Santa Monica City Council Member Pam O'Connor's service as SCAG President in 2011-2012 and the introduction of SCAG's 2012-2013 President, Simi Valley Council Member Glen Becerra; the Sponsor/Exhibitor Reception; the Awards Dinner featuring the Compass Blueprint Awards; the Year in Review video; Leadership Awards; and outstanding panel discussions on transportation, the RTP and the region's sustainability.

News and media outlets covering the two-day conference included the Associated Press, California Planning & Development Report, The China Press, The Los Angeles Times, Mother Jones, The Press-Enterprise, The San Diego Union-Tribune, Ventura County Star, Wall Street Journal, CBS Los Angeles (CBS-2) CBS San Diego (KFMB CBS-8), KNX 1070 NewsRadio and a number of trade publications and blogs. See photos, presentations and videos from the conference at: [www.scag.ca.gov/ga2012](http://www.scag.ca.gov/ga2012).

### **Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Revision Requests**

On April 15, 2012, the RHNA Appeals Board reviewed the draft RHNA Allocation revision requests of 14 jurisdictions: Calabasas, La Puente, Long Beach, Pico Rivera, San Dimas, Santa Monica, Sierra Madre, Placentia, Calimesa, Norco, Fillmore, Ojai, Oxnard, and Ventura County. Jurisdictions were provided an opportunity to present their request at the meeting before the Board made a determination. The RHNA Appeals Board partially granted the revision requests of La Puente and the County of Ventura but did not approve the requests from the other 12 jurisdictions. The granted revision requests will not be reallocated to other jurisdictions and will be subtracted from the regional draft RHNA Allocation released on February 2, 2012. Jurisdictions wishing to file an appeal must submit an application and supporting documents to SCAG no later than May 29, 2012. The hearing for appeals will be held in mid-July and trade and transfer agreements between jurisdictions will be accepted until August 17, 2012. After review and recommendation from the RHNA Appeals Board and the Community, Economic & Human Development Committee in August and September, the Regional Council will adopt the final RHNA Allocation Plan on October 4, 2012.

### **Expo Metro Line Construction Authority CEQA Challenge**

The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority (Expo Authority) was successful in its defense of a CEQA-related appeal brought on by challengers to the Expo Phase 2 project. In the case of *Neighbors for Smart Rail v. Expo Authority*, Case No. B232655, the State Court of Appeals, Second Appellate District, ruled in favor of the Expo Authority on all CEQA issues raised in the lawsuit. SCAG had filed an amicus brief along with our transportation agencies in support of the Expo Authority's position this past fall. This decision signifies that the Expo Phase 2 project may move forward.

### **Goods Movement Border Crossing Study**

In March, SCAG presented the initial findings of the Goods Movement Border Crossing Study to stakeholders at a border-crossing workshop in Imperial County. Attendees included Cheryl Viegas-Walker (SCAG Regional Council / Council Member, City of El Centro City), John Rennison (Imperial County Supervisor), Daniel Romero (Mayor, City of Calexico), Maritza Hurtado (Mayor Pro Tem, City of Calexico), Bill Hodge (Council Member, City of Calexico), and Mark Baza (Executive Director Imperial County Transportation Commission). International border crossings between the U.S. and Mexico are critical components of the freight transportation system in Southern California. Mexico is the third-largest trading partner of the U.S. behind Canada and China, responsible for \$367.5 billion in trade volume in 2008, accounting for 11% of total U.S. foreign trade.

In December 2010, SCAG, in partnership with the Imperial County Transportation Commission (ICTC) and Caltrans, began work on the Goods Movement Border Crossing Study. The effort aimed to assess freight mobility at regional border crossings and develop freight planning strategies to address long term trade and transportation infrastructure needs in Imperial

County. The study explored bi-national trade trends and international logistics strategies through significant transportation data collection and travel delay analysis. Results of the effort were intended to provide guidance to decision makers regarding appropriate transportation policies and potential infrastructure development needs at international border crossings in the SCAG region. SCAG anticipates completion of the Goods Movement Border Crossing Study in June 2012.

### **Pacific Electric Right-of-Way (PE ROW)/West Santa Ana Branch Corridor Alternatives Analysis**

SCAG has completed the technical evaluation of the final set of alternatives, which includes No Build, Transportation Systems Management (TSM), Bus Rapid Transit, Street Car, Light Rail, and Low Speed Maglev. SCAG has also evaluated multiple alignment options for connecting from the PE ROW north to Downtown Los Angeles/Union Station and south to the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center. The evaluation results are being presented to the study's Technical Advisory Committee and Steering Committee and to the public in a final round of community "open house" meetings from May 15 to May 24.

The study will conclude in June, when the Steering Committee will identify recommendations for a preferred alternative or alternatives. These recommendations will be brought forward to SCAG's Transportation Committee and Regional Council, and then forwarded to Metro and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) for their consideration. As the owners of the right-of-way, Metro and OCTA have the option to proceed into the environmental and engineering phases of project development. For more information on the community meetings and the evaluation results, please visit [www.pacificelectriccorridor.com](http://www.pacificelectriccorridor.com).

### **Electric Vehicle Planning**

On April 11, 2012, the California Energy Commission unanimously approved a grant for \$200,000 to help SCAG develop two sub-regional plans under a regional Plug-In Electric Vehicle (PEV) Readiness Plan to determine where best to add PEV charging stations. The two participating sub-regions include the Western Riverside Council of Governments and the South Bay Cities Council of Governments. By the end of 2014, as many as 400,000 PEVs and Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs) are forecasted to be on the region's roadways. The planning effort will study travel and commute patterns to determine where charging stations are needed to meet this anticipated demand. This cooperative effort includes the South Coast Air Quality Management District, Southern California Edison, and many subregions, counties, and cities as well as other public and private stakeholders. SCAG has contracted with the UCLA Luskin Center to develop the plan.

### **Program Environmental Impact Report**

Subsequent to the Regional Council's action to certify a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, staff provided Notices of Determination to the county clerks for each of the six counties, as well as to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. As reported to the Energy and Environment Committee, the posting of these notices triggers a 30-day statute of limitations for any challenges to the PEIR. The statute will expire on May 8, 2012. Staff will notify the Regional Council and policy committees of any developments.

### **Research Papers Accepted**

Three SCAG papers were accepted for the 4th Transportation Research Board Conference on Innovations in Travel Modeling (ITM). Two of the presentations focus on SCAG's Activity-Based Model Project and the other focuses on travel behavior research of Hispanic immigrants in southern California.

Additionally, three papers were accepted for the Esri International Users Conference to be held in San Diego the week of July 23. The subjects of these papers relate to the application of a parcel-based sustainability tool to measure greenhouse gas emissions and SCAG's GIS Services Program to support the usage of GIS and data sharing among SCAG and our member agencies.

### **GIS Services Program**

SCAG recently completed the installation of geographic information system (GIS) software and hardware. Subsequently, staff provided GIS training to 14 jurisdictions: Apple Valley, Brawley, Buena Park, Calexico, Calipatria, El Monte, Holtville, ICTC, La Mirada, Los Alamitos, Menifee, Needles, Perris, and Westmorland. The overall goal of the program is to increase the use of GIS in local and regional planning activities, data sharing, and data standardization. Soon, SCAG staff will focus on providing enhanced services to our member agencies including intermediate and advanced training, data conversion, and data sharing, and networking opportunities.

### **Upcoming Demographic Workshop**

SCAG would like to invite our member agencies and other stakeholders to register for the 24th Annual USC/SCAG Demographic Workshop scheduled for May 21, 2012 at the Davidson Conference Center located on the USC campus. Registration information is available at [www.scag.ca.gov/demographics](http://www.scag.ca.gov/demographics).