

## UPDATE ON REGIONAL COUNCIL'S 120-DAY DIRECTIVE FOR CONNECT SOCAL

On May 7, 2020, SCAG's Regional Council approved Connect SoCal, the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, for federal transportation conformity purposes while approval for all other purposes was postponed for up to 120 days. This delay was intended to allow more time for SCAG to consider the short- and long-term implications of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the plan. Additionally, in response to Regional Council direction, SCAG staff will provide additional analysis, and work with local authorities to address stakeholder's questions and concerns related to the neighborhood-level Growth Forecast utilized for modeling purposes for the Sustainable Communities Strategy. As part of this process, SCAG reached out to all jurisdictions on May 27, 2020, to outline the next steps SCAG staff are taking as we consider refinements related to the neighborhood-level Growth Forecast on the issues of entitlements and locally planned growth capacities. Local jurisdictions will have the opportunity to review the data and provide feedback to SCAG by June 9, 2020. SCAG will continue to conduct further targeted outreach with jurisdictions and other stakeholders over the 120-day period. For updates on Connect SoCal, please visit [connectsocial.org](https://connectsocial.org).

## DEMOGRAPHIC WORKSHOP WEBINARS EXPLORE COVID-19 IMPACT

SCAG and the University of Southern California's Sol Price School of Public Policy will be hosting the 31st Annual Demographic Workshop over two sessions – one on Thursday, June 11, 2020, and the other on Thursday, June 18, 2020 -- virtually via videoconference. The theme of this year's program, "Accelerating Planning to Catch Up to 21st Century Demographics," is focused on responding to demographic changes across the region and the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Part 1: The Changing Demographic Outlook and Housing Trends** will provide an update on the latest in demographic trends including migration, fertility and aging, and their implications on regional planning as we begin a new decade.
- **Part 2: Impact of COVID-19 on Housing and Economy** will include a panel on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as an update on the progress and challenges of Census 2020.

Both of the Demographic Workshop sessions will feature a panel of experts and applied roundtable discussions. The cost of this year's workshop is free to all individuals that [register on the event webpage](#). For additional details about the event, please contact John Cho at [choj@scag.ca.gov](mailto:choj@scag.ca.gov).

## AGENCY LEADERS, STAFF CONTINUE BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN WASHINGTON AND SACRAMENTO DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A week before the May 19, 2020 meeting of the Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee (LCMC), Executive Director Kome Ajise, along with President Bill Jahn, LCMC Chair Jan Harnik, and Regional Councilmember Dennis Michael conducted a virtual meeting with Congressman Pete Aguilar (D-Redlands), Vice Chair of the House Appropriations Committee. The purpose of the meeting was to advocate for direct federal assistance for all cities and counties in the SCAG region for help with unexpected COVID-19-related expenses and to backfill tax revenue losses. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was passed by Congress and signed by the President in late March 2020, provided \$125 billion of direct relief for all states and cities and counties with a population greater than 500,000. While five of the six counties in the SCAG region received assistance under this Act, only one of the 191 cities in the SCAG region received needed assistance. The Congressman expressed his support in concept for providing assistance to all cities and counties regardless of population and specifically mentioned his traveling back to Washington, DC to vote for the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act, which would provide \$350 billion for states and all cities and counties over two budget cycles. The HEROES Act was passed by the House of Representatives in mid-May and now awaits a vote in the Senate.

The LCMC also had the pleasure of welcoming California State Senator Holly Mitchell (D-Los Angeles) at its May 19, 2020 meeting. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, she gave a detailed overview of the May Revise and the state's budget process. Governor Newsom's revised spending proposal was released on May 14, 2020 and revealed a \$54.3 billion budget deficit. Moreover, the budget process will be cut short because the health crisis limits the ability of legislators to meet, while the economic impact of the pandemic has created unprecedented changes in revenue resources and spending needs. Staff will continue to monitor the budget process and any legislation affecting the region.

## WHITE PAPER ASSESSES POTENTIAL REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COVID-19

On May 14, 2020, SCAG released a white paper that provides an initial assessment of potential employment and taxable sales implications of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region as of the end of April 2020. The white paper, "Potential Economic Impacts of COVID-19 in the SCAG Region," assumes a low-point in the regional economy occurring around June 1, 2020, with a resumption of some economic activity thereafter, but a long, slow recovery extending through the end of 2021. Additionally, numerous assumptions are made about the decline and potential recovery trajectory in individual industry sectors. As the pandemic unfolds and additional data become available, these assumptions, modeling strategies and outputs can be revised. The white paper is [available on the SCAG website](#).

## SCAG FEATURED IN BEST PLANNING PRACTICES REPORT

Every two years, the American Planning Association's Transportation Planning Division releases a State of Transportation Planning report, which highlights best planning practices and use cases from around the country. Seeking to diversify transportation planning past the typical car-centric efforts of prior years, this year's report places a greater emphasis on people- and health-focused transportation planning. As a recognized leader in transportation planning, a number of SCAG's planning efforts are featured in the report with articles about the *Go Human* campaign and the Kit of Parts, Mobility Go Zone and Pricing Feasibility Study, Disadvantaged Communities Active Transportation Planning Initiative, and Active Transportation Database. This year's report consists of 35 articles, which are written by more than 60 authors from 15 states as well as from outside the country.

## SCAG ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION DATABASE WINS APA-LA PLANNING AWARD

The agency's Active Transportation Database (ATDB) was selected to receive the Award of Excellence in the Innovative Use of Technology category by the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Planning Association. The award category recognizes a program or process that features an innovative use of technology. The ATDB currently has nearly 70 registered agencies (includes cities, counties, state agencies, community-based organizations and consulting firms working on behalf of jurisdictions) and more than 700 locations with available count data. The ATDB offers a wide assortment of open data on bicycle, pedestrian, wheelchair, and scooter/skateboard volumes to help inform and improve planning projects in Southern California. This wealth of active transportation data will only continue to grow through our partnership with Caltrans and will be of use to planners and researchers for years to come.

## SCAG HONORS SIX INNOVATIVE LOCAL PROJECTS WITH 2020 SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

Six exemplary and innovative planning projects were honored last month as winners of the 2020 SCAG Sustainability Awards. Honorees of this year's 13th Annual Sustainability Awards include four municipalities and two transportation agencies in the six-county SCAG region. The Sustainability Awards recognize excellence in coordinating land use and transportation to improve mobility, livability, prosperity and sustainability.

The 2020 honorees by category are:

- **Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability:** The Community Home Energy Retrofit Project -Locally Grown Power project serving the cities of Pomona and Claremont.
- **Active, Healthy and Safe Communities:** The City of Burbank for the Burbank Channel Bikeway.
- **Clean Cities – Alternative Fuels and Infrastructure:** The San Bernardino County Transportation Authority for the Zero-Emission Multiple Unit Initiative.

- **Efficient and Sustainable Land Use:** The City of Long Beach for their General Plan Land Use Element update.
- **Housing Innovation:** The City of Palmdale for the Courson Arts Colony.
- **Green Region – Resource Conservation and Climate Action:** Caltrans for the wildlife passage modifications on State Route 118 in Las Posas Valley.

More information, including details on recipients of the Sustainability Award Honorable Mentions, is available on the SCAG [Sustainability webpage](#).

## SCAG AND ESRI KICK OFF REGIONAL DATA PLATFORM PROJECT

On May 21, 2020, SCAG and Esri kicked-off the Regional Data Platform project, which will become a critical component of SCAG's regional planning tools going forward. Essentially, the Regional Data Platform will support regional and local planning for implementation of the Sustainable Communities Strategy by: 1) Enhancing SCAG's existing data system capability to meet local needs for data-driven decision-making, government transparency, collaborative regional, and community planning; 2) Expanding SCAG's data infrastructure system, enhancing regional data standardization, and performing best practices for improvements on data updates; and 3) Improving system management, maintenance, and security in order to fully implement and facilitate the region's needs of open data, big data, and new technology utilization for data sharing and data visualization in innovative planning. This will result in an integrated data platform that supports the update of local general plans, including interactive dashboards that help local jurisdictions make decisions according to sustainability metrics included in SCAG's Sustainable Communities Strategy.

## SCAG TO HOLD LISTENING SESSION IN SUPPORT OF REGIONAL EARLY ACTION PROGRAM PLANNING GRANT

SCAG will hold a listening session on June 9, 2020 with subregions to get input on the Subregional Partnership program under the Regional Early Action Program (REAP) planning grant. The sub-allocation program will provide approximately \$23 million to fund projects that will provide help to jurisdictions to plan for their 6th Cycle Housing Elements and accelerate housing production. Funding allocations will be subregionally based on the final Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation and are intended to augment activities funded by grants directly available to jurisdictions, such as SB 2 and the Local Early Action Program (LEAP). The listening sessions are intended to help subregional partners identify potential projects that SCAG can fund through partnerships rather than a pass-through basis. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Ma'Ayn Johnson at [johnson@scag.ca.gov](mailto:johnson@scag.ca.gov) or (213) 236-1975.

## GO HUMAN LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CALL FOR PROJECTS UPDATE

SCAG received 46 applications in response to the *Go Human* Local Community Engagement and Safety mini-grants call for projects, a program that aims to build street-level community resiliency and increase the safety of vulnerable street users. It is the first time the *Go Human* program is partnering with community-based organizations, non-profits, artists, students and creators. SCAG will award up to \$10,000 for selected projects with an implementation period planned to take place between May and July 2020. With support from the California Office of Traffic Safety, the mini-grants expand the concept of traffic safety. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, SCAG encouraged submissions for creative and virtual engagement activities.