SCAG Sustainability Grant Program Update

SCAG has initiated work with the successful 73 grant applicants under the Sustainability Call for Proposals. All applicants have been notified of the awards. Staff resources were assigned across the agency to work with awardees on refining scopes of work, procuring consultant assistance and managing projects in order to process the 73 grants and minimize administrative costs. SCAG is also exploring options to maximize local agency staff capacity, dependent upon their staffing resources, to ensure the program proceeds as efficiently as possible. Based on currently identified and available funding, SCAG is proceeding to obligate $5.39 million worth of projects, representing the top 44 ranked proposals. At the same time, SCAG is actively seeking additional federal, state and other funding in order to proceed with the remaining Phase 3 projects.

Cities/Agencies CEQA Exemption Map Tool re Transit Priority Areas identified under SB 743

SCAG staff is providing analysis, maps and web-based applications to assist local governments in taking advantage of the CEQA streamlining provisions offered under SB 743. This recently enacted legislation outlines streamlining procedures for transit oriented development projects. A staff report on this subject is included as part of the SCAG Policy Committee meetings scheduled on November 7. SCAG's initial map showing existing Transit Priority Areas is available at http://maps.scag.ca.gov/SB743/index.html.

Cities/Agencies Map Tool Update and New Data on Potential Sites for Renewable Energy Development

The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) recently updated its CalEnviroScreen Tool, which identifies communities experiencing the highest environmental health impacts within the state through analyzing public health and environmental measures. SCAG has analyzed the results of the updated Tool in combination with information developed by the US EPA showing potential sites for renewable energy development within the SCAG region. This information is available at http://maps.scag.ca.gov/CalEnvRegion/index.html.

Bottom-Up City/County Local Input Process for the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)

A critical component to the success of the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS will be the participation and cooperation of all 197 local government partners within the SCAG region. Ensuring that all local governments are fully informed of the planning process schedule and have clear and adequate opportunities to provide input is a key priority. In October, SCAG distributed a letter to city managers and county chief administrators, planning directors, city and county clerks (for forwarding to all city/county elected officials), subregional coordinators and executive directors that explained the process, schedule and protocol for providing input to SCAG. This month, SCAG will transmit socioeconomic projections (population, household and employment for years 2012, 2020, 2035 and 2040 at both the jurisdictional and traffic analysis zone (TAZ) levels) for local review. SCAG will also continue to accept input on the land use datasets contained in the Map Book that have been updated and will be resubmitted to local jurisdictions. We look forward to working together with all SCAG local jurisdictions and stakeholders to ensure the success of the bottom-up input and review process for the development of the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS.

Mobile Source Review Committee Funding Opportunity

The Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) was established under state law (AB 2766) to fund projects that reduce air pollution from motor vehicles within the South Coast Air District. The South Coast Air District includes all of Orange County and portions of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Current funding opportunities include the Local Government Match program (which includes bicycle infrastructure and electric vehicle charging stations as eligible project categories, among others) and the Major Event Center Transportation Program. See http://www.cleantransportationfunding.org/ for information on these and other solicitations and to join the MSRC mailing list to be automatically notified of upcoming funding opportunities.

Strategic Growth Council's Final Draft Grant Guidelines

After releasing two initial drafts of the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Guidelines comments, the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) released the Final Draft on October 25. The Final Draft provides clarifications and expands the eligible applicants for Environmental Justice Set-Aside (applicants must identify Equity as one of their program objectives). SGC is scheduled to adopt the grant guideline at its November 5 meeting and begin the solicitation process by the end of November, with grant applications due 90 days thereafter (by the end of February 2014). Grant awards are anticipated to be approved at the SGC meeting on May 19, 2014. The final draft guidelines are available at http://www.sgc.ca.gov/meetings/20131105/Agenda_Item7_Planning_Grant_Guidelines_FINAL_DRAFT.pdf.

Briefing with California High Speed Rail Authority

On October 15, Regional Council members Glen Becerra, Steven Hofbauer and Tom LaBonge joined me in a briefing with California High Speed Rail Authority Board Member Katherine Perez-Estolano and CEO Jeff Morales. Supervisor Michael Antonovich's staff also attended the briefing. We discussed the progress the Authority has made on the High Speed Train in the Central Valley and the current status of the Southern California project segments. We also discussed the need for a coordinated and efficient process for distributing Prop. 1A High Speed Rail funds and future Cap-and-Trade funds to facilitate implementation of the MOU projects identified as part of the blended approach. Other discussion points included the potential development of a multi-use corridor to bring High Speed Rail and other needed infrastructure, such as utilities, across the Tehachapi Mountains and consideration of a tunnel alternative to connect the Antelope Valley directly to the San Fernando Valley. The Authority's Southern California Regional Director, Michelle Boehm, will present an update of the High Speed Rail project to the Transportation Committee on November 7.

RHNA and Housing Element Subcommittee

The RHNA and Housing Element Reform Subcommittee convened by the Regional Council held its first meeting on October 23. At the meeting, the Subcommittee Charter was approved for consideration by the CEHD Committee and possible topics for discussion at future meetings were considered. Topics currently included for discussion at future meetings were included in the October 23 meeting agenda (Item #4, Attachment 2) and can be accessed at http://rtpscs.scag.ca.gov/Documents/rhna/subcommittee/subRHNA102313fullagn.pdf).

These topics were those previously raised by stakeholders or identified by SCAG staff. If you have topics related to RHNA or Housing Element reform not already listed in the agenda attachment or included but requiring clarification, please send them to johnson@scag.ca.gov, by November 15.

5th Cycle Housing Element Adoption Deadline

The 5th cycle RHNA was adopted by the Regional Council in October 2012. The adoption deadline for the corresponding 5th cycle housing elements by jurisdictions was last month on October 15. The housing element must plan for projected household growth, or RHNA allocation, through a sites and zoning analysis for the October 2013-2021 planning period. I strongly encourage jurisdictions that have not adopted their respective housing elements by the October 15 due date to contact HCD. Jurisdictions that do not adopt their housing element within 120 days of the October 15 deadline must revert to a four-year housing element.

ARB Fact Sheet on SCAG's RTP/SCS

ARB has prepared a fact sheet about the SCAG 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The fact sheet includes information about the SCAG region, key greenhouse gas reduction strategies in the 2012 RTP/SCS, SCAG's bottoms-up approach to developing the SCS and highlights of RTP/SCS performance relative to key metrics as well as other regional co-benefits. The fact sheet is posted on the ARB website at: http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/sb375/sb375.htm.

SCAG Website Update

As part of the Regional Council's Adopted Strategic Plan, SCAG has updated the agency website, www.scag.ca.gov. The new site will launch on November 7. The website is a key window of communication to all SCAG stakeholders on SCAG's ongoing and past activities. The website is also a component of SCAG's ongoing efforts to provide valuable services to member jurisdictions and enhance communication with member agencies, partners, stakeholders and the general public. Staff obtained input and feedback from website visitors to ensure that the updated design includes needed functionality and improved design features.

Major new features include:

- A fresh, open design that better showcases SCAG services and programs
- Enhanced interactive maps and data
- Improved search capability to help you find what you need, faster

My thanks to all staff who participated in this important effort.

Strategic Highway Research Program Phase 2 (SHRP 2) grant for highway reliability testing

In late 2012, SCAG, System Metrics Group, Inc., CLR Analytics Inc., and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) jointly applied for and were awarded a Transportation Research Board (TRB) Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) 2 grant to find ways to demonstrate how operational strategies improve the critical performance metric of "travel time reliability." The project award includes $70,000 that has been allocated for SCAG to support this effort through technical assistance and coordination with local stakeholders in order to ultimately determine whether the new tools can be useful to SCAG and its local transportation planning partners in their planning efforts. We have begun this work and have begun to identify improvements and the ability of the tools to be useful for planning purposes in this region. Work on this effort is expected to be used for the 2016 Plan update.