SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

Call for Nominations

SUBMISSIONS DUE DEC. 13, 2024

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Awards Summary

For more than 15 years, SCAG has highlighted excellence in sustainable planning and projects in Southern California by presenting annual Sustainability Awards. The SCAG Sustainability Awards recognize projects for outstanding contributions to the goals and policies of SCAG's Connect SoCal Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy and for achieving significant progress toward a more mobile, sustainable, and prosperous region. Each year, SCAG honors projects that best exemplify the core principles of sustainability with awards at the annual Regional Conference & General Assembly.

SCAG presents Sustainability Awards in six categories. Applicants can submit project nominations in only one category. Each year, the Sustainability Awards jury selects the most deserving project all nominations to receive the Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability Award. The winners of the SCAG Sustainability Awards will be presented at the 2025 Regional Council Conference and General Assembly at the JW Marriott Resort & Spa in Palm Desert on May 1. All winners will receive an award suitable for display.

We at SCAG would like to express our gratitude to all the organizations that have applied to the Sustainability Awards over the years. We would also like to thank the jurors from across the region for lending their expertise in a range of planning and sustainability disciplines.

Awards Timeline

General timeline for the 2025 Sustainability Awards

- 11/12/24: Call for Nominations opens
- 12/13/24: Call for Nominations closes
- 12/16/24: Jury Evaluation Begins
- 1/20/25: Jury evaluation ends
- 1/31/25: Notification of winners
- 2/1/25-4/15/25: Winners participate in a video production of awarded projects
- 4/1/25: Awardees will register for the 2025 Regional Conference and General Assembly.
- 4/24/25: Embargo lifts, and awards are announced
- 5/1/25: Sustainability Awards Luncheon held at the 2025 Regional Conference and General Assembly

Award Categories

SCAG accepts Sustainability Awards submissions in six categories. Applicants can submit their nominations under only one category. Each year, the Sustainability Awards jury selects the most deserving project from all nominations to receive the Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability Award.

Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability

The Outstanding Achievement award honors the project the jury felt best exemplifies every one of the core planning principles of mobility, livability, prosperity, and sustainability.

Active, Healthy, and Safe Communities

The Active, Healthy, and Safe Communities award honors a project that promotes public health through improved active transportation and transportation safety or reduced pollution. Submissions should demonstrate how the projects promote healthy behaviors such as biking or walking, improve community safety by reducing collision rates, or reduce exposure to environmental hazards. Projects should result in communities where residents are empowered to lead healthier lives.

Carmen Ramirez Award for Equity

The Carmen Ramirez Award for Equity honors a project that advances equity and facilitates the growth of healthy, livable, sustainable, and economically resilient communities. Submissions should demonstrate how the project addresses improving outcomes for traditionally marginalized, vulnerable, or underrepresented communities. Examples include projects that have meaningful partnerships with community-based organizations or community ambassadors, explicitly integrate equity into the planning process (e.g., through existing conditions analysis, project prioritization methodologies, etc.), or develop innovative tools or resources that advance equitable planning.

Clean Cities: Alternative Fuels and Infrastructure

The Clean Cities: Alternative Fuels and Infrastructure award honors a project that promotes low- and zero-emission transportation in the region, with a focus on clean fuel vehicles and infrastructure. Successful examples might include replacing gas or diesel fleet vehicles with cleaner alternatives, streamlining permitting for clean fuel and electric vehicle charging infrastructure, a vehicle idle reduction program, or a program to promote system-wide efficiency and reduced fuel consumption. This award is presented by the SCAG Clean Cities Coalition, a U.S. Department of Energy-certified program.

Green Region Initiative: Climate Action and Resource Conservation

The Green Region Initiative: Climate Action and Resource Conservation award honors a project that addresses climate change through greenhouse gas emission reduction or adaptation planning. This includes projects that conserve, restore, and enhance the natural environment or prepare communities for challenges related to a changing climate, such as extreme heat, drought, sea-level rise, and wildfire. Examples include habitat conservation and restoration projects, climate action plans, green infrastructure, and watershed management projects.

Housing Innovation

The Housing Innovation award honors a project that promotes and supports innovative housing practices. Submissions should demonstrate how the project addresses housing needs across income levels, uses innovative practices or policies, improves access to jobs and transit, or creates diverse, vibrant communities. Submissions for projects should show promise for implementation in the near term and how they meet housing needs.

Plan, Policy, and Programs

The Plan, Policy, and Programs award honors a plan, policy, or program integrating land use and transportation planning for sustainable outcomes. Submissions should identify how the project promotes infill, transit-oriented development, equitable access to housing and employment opportunities, or placemaking for vibrant and connected neighborhoods and centers. Submissions should demonstrate the potential for sustainable outcomes, such as reduced vehicle miles traveled, increased transit use, increased housing and jobs within regional priority development areas, and shorter distance trips in existing and planned neighborhoods.

Project Requirements

The SCAG Sustainability Awards are open to governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies, community-based organizations, nonprofits, universities, and more. Applicants are encouraged to submit a joint entry for projects that span multiple agencies, sectors, and geographies. **Submittals include projects completed or adopted between Jan. 1, 2021, and Dec. 31, 2024.**

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	0-7 Points	8-14 Points	15-22 Points	23-30 Points	Max Points
Benefits traditionally marginalized, vulnerable, or underrepresented communities*	*Does not benefit or consider traditionally marginalized, vulnerable, and/or underrepresented communities.*	*Demonstrates some benefits and/or consideration of traditionally marginalized, vulnerable, and/or underrepresented communities.*	*Demonstrates better than average benefits and/or consideration of traditionally marginalized, vulnerable, and/or underrepresented communities than might be expected for this type of project or plan.*	*Demonstrates significant and substantive benefits and/or consideration of traditionally marginalized, vulnerable, and/or underrepresented communities.*	**30**

	0-5 Points	6-10 Points	11-15 Points	16-20 Points	Max Points
Partnership and Engagement	*Does not demonstrate partnering nor collaboration across traditional boundaries.*	*Demonstrates some partnerships and collaboration across administrative, jurisdictional, geographic sectors (e.g., public, private, CBOs, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)), and/or other divisions.*	*Demonstrates better than average partnering and collaboration across administrative, jurisdictional, geographic sectors (e.g., public, private, CBOs, NGOs), and/or other divisions than might be expected for this type of project or plan.*	*Demonstrates significant and substantive partnering and collaboration across administrative, jurisdictional, geographic sectors (e.g., public, private, CBOs, NGOs), and/or other divisions.*	**20**

	0-7 Points	8-14 Points	15-22 Points	23-30 Points	Max Points
Quantification of benefits and alignment with Connect SoCal	*The benefits of the plan, project, or program are not quantified, do not meet expectations for a plan or project of this type, are not in alignment with Connect SoCal, or are negligible.*	*Demonstrates some reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle miles traveled, air pollution, share of single occupancy vehicle trips, or other performance measure to improve sustainability and the lives of Southern Californians with minimal alignment with Connect SoCal.*	*Demonstrates a better-than-average reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle miles traveled, air pollution, share of single-occupancy vehicle trips, or other performance measures outlined in Connect SoCal to improve sustainability and the lives of Southern Californians.*	*Demonstrates a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle miles traveled, air pollution, share of single-occupancy vehicle trips, or other performance measures outlined in Connect SoCal to improve sustainability and the lives of Southern Californians*	**30**

	0-2 Points	3-5 Points	6-8 Points	9-10 Points	Max Points
Going the extra mile	*Shows little to no innovation. The plan or project is part of what is required or expected as a usual course of business.*	*Generally follows established guidelines or practices but demonstrates some innovation or extra effort.*	*Exceeds expectations or standard practice as a whole or in some elements. The project or plan could be a model for similar communities.*	*This project, program, or plan goes well beyond what is required or done as a usual course of business. The project, program, or plan innovates beyond standard practice. Serves as a model for the region.*	**10**

	0-2 Points	3-5 Points	6-8 Points	9-10 Points	Max Points
Geographic diversity and representation	*Limited or does not clearly align with category and cannot be clearly applied in similarly built contexts.*	*Suitably implements the category and can be applied in similarly built contexts.*	*Strongly implements the category and can be applied in similarly built contexts.*	*Exceptionally implements the category and can be applied in similarly built contexts.*	**10**
				Total Score	**100**

Populations served can include, but are not limited to, low-income households, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, minority communities, or areas as defined by Connect SoCal's Equity Analysis as Priority Equity Communities, Senate Bill 535 Disadvantaged Communities, Environmental Justice Areas, or Communities of Concern.

Application Instructions

Applications must be submitted by Friday, Dec. 13, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.

The application can be found on the SCAG website.

Application Components

Complete applications will include the following:

PART 1: NOMINEE/PROJECT INFORMATION

- Title of Project
- Project Adoption, Construction, or Completion Date
- City/Agency/Jurisdiction
- Project Website (If Applicable)
- Primary Contact

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF NOMINATION

- Brief summary description and key takeaways of the nominated project, program, or plan (1,000 words max).

PART 3: EVALUATION CRITERIA RESPONSE

- Description of how the project meets the award category criteria and its overall contribution to quality of life for the community. Be sure to address the criteria in the rubric (1,000 words max)

PART 4: KEY STATISTICS

- To the extent possible or applicable, list key statistics about the project, such as number of units, miles of bike lanes, tons of reduced greenhouse gas emissions, number of people involved in public participation, etc. (1,000 words max).

PART 5: UPLOADS

- A total of eight photos or supporting graphics in JPG format. The maximum size for each upload is 1 megabyte. Please include a brief one-sentence description for each image in the field below the file upload. (Winning projects will be asked to provide higher resolution images and may be used to make a video to be presented at the Awards Program and SCAG's Regional Conference and General Assembly, in print materials on SCAG's website, and in case studies.)
- Letters of support (Optional): Submit no more than two letters of support from organizations and individuals involved in the project indicating why the project is worthy of an award. Letters of support must be on the supporting agency's letterhead and in PDF format.
- Any additional links that may help the jury panel better understand the project. These can be promotional videos, project websites, etc. Please separate with line breaks.

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