

CONNECT SOCIAL PLAN UPDATE

Through a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process with its stakeholders, SCAG developed the Draft Connect SoCal plan – the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, which meets state and federal requirements and lays out a collective vision for improving the region's mobility, economy, and sustainability. SCAG released the Draft Connect SoCal plan for over the required 60-day public comment period, which began on Nov. 14, 2019 and ended on Jan. 24. SCAG received 107 separate communications on the draft plan and 52 comment letters on the plan's Draft Program Environmental Impact Report.

All elements of the Draft Connect SoCal plan received supportive comments with the majority of comments seeking further clarification. This month's Regional Council agenda includes a staff report summarizing comments into 16 major categories: Active Transportation; Aviation and Airport Ground Access; Emerging Technology; Environmental Justice; Goods Movement; Natural & Farm Lands Conservation; Passenger Rail; Project List; Public Health; Public Participation & Consultation; Relationships Between Connect SoCal and the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA); Sustainable Communities Strategy; Transit; Transportation Conformity Analysis; Transportation Finance; and Other. Staff is still in the process of making revisions to the Draft Connect SoCal plan and will present a proposed Final Connect SoCal plan at the April 2 Joint Meeting of the SCAG Policy Committees. For updates on Connect SoCal, please visit connectsocial.org.

SCAG DELEGATION TAKES POLICY PRIORITIES TO SACRAMENTO

A delegation of SCAG Regional Council members and executive staff traveled to Sacramento Feb. 18 and 19 for the annual SCAG Sacramento Summit. The delegation was joined by leaders from the Southern California Leadership Council, California Association of Councils of Government, and National Community Renaissance.

The delegation, which included President Bill Jahn, First Vice President Rex Richardson, Second Vice President Clint Lorimore, and Regional Council members Margaret Clark, Margaret Finlay, Jan Harnik, Steve Hofbauer, Ray Marquez, Larry McCallon, Fred Minagar, Judy Mitchell, David Pollock, Carmen Ramirez, Jess Talamantes, and Cheryl Viegas-Walker, held a series of 35 sit-downs meetings with a bipartisan group of state lawmakers to provide updates on hot topics like Connect SoCal and the RHNA allocation plan. The trip also focused on highlighting three priority legislative issues: 1) Increase the capacity for local governments to develop affordable housing through economic development tools like tax increment financing; 2) Modernize the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to limit abuses that stop responsible community improvement projects; and 3) Reinstate the practice that allows local governments that reach an agreement to "trade" or "transfer" portions or all of their RHNA allocation.

The Summit kicked off with a dinner program where Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva (D-Fullerton) gave welcome remarks followed by a substantive policy discussion with Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-Glendale) and Assemblymember Chad Mayes (NPP-Yucca Valley). The delegation was also present for Governor Gavin Newsom's State of the State Address, which focused exclusively on the housing affordability and homelessness crisis. Additional highlights of the Summit included a breakfast program with special guest speaker David S. Kim, who was appointed Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) in July 2019.

REGISTER FOR SCAG'S 55TH ANNUAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Mark your calendars! SCAG's premier annual event is fast approaching. The 55th Regional Conference and General Assembly will convene May 6-8 at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, CA. Over 900 of Southern California's most influential leaders and innovators are expected to attend, including local elected officials, CEOs, business and civic leaders, transportation and environmental stakeholders, local government staff and others. In addition to providing unbeatable networking opportunities, the conference will send attendees home with fresh insights and new resources to help them better address future challenges in their own communities. The event is free for elected officials and city managers in the region, and a special early bird registration rate will be available until March 29. For additional information, please contact Linda Jones at jonesl@scag.ca.gov or (213) 236-1912 or visit www.scag.ca.gov/GA2020 to register. For information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Houston Laney at laney@scag.ca.gov or (213) 236-1906.

SAVE THE DATE: 31ST ANNUAL DEMOGRAPHIC WORKSHOP

SCAG and the University of Southern California (USC) Sol Price School of Public Policy will jointly host the 31st Annual Demographic Workshop at USC's Trojan Grand Ballroom on Thursday, June 11, from 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. The workshop will provide an update on the latest in demographic trends including migration, fertility, and aging and their implications on our regional planning as we begin a new decade. In addition, as the decennial Census 2020 is currently in the field, we will also hear updates on progress and challenges. Online registration will be available soon. For more information, please contact John Cho at choj@scag.ca.gov.

VOLCKER ALLIANCE EXPANDS GOVERNMENT-TO-UNIVERSITY INITIATIVE TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

On Feb. 18, SCAG hosted the launch of the Steering Committee for a Los Angeles County Pilot for the [Volcker Alliances' Government to University \(G2U\) Initiative](#). G2U is an innovative approach to address critical governance challenges by building structured regional networks of governments and universities. The initiative aims to catalyze a robust local marketplace that can sustainably connect governments' hiring and research needs with local university capacity.

The steering committee will focus on connecting local, state, and federal government leaders in a region with key faculty and administrators from surrounding colleges and universities. They will identify and pursue opportunities to better strengthen the pipeline of talent from local universities into government and explore approaches to systematizing research exchanges focused on solving pressing government problems. With support from the Volcker Alliance, the effort will provide a regional platform to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones among government practitioners and university leaders.

The first site was launched successfully in Kansas City led by the Mid-America Regional Council, which will celebrate its one-year anniversary with its first regionwide Coalition Convening on April 21. The Los Angeles effort will be followed shortly by Pittsburgh, which will be led by Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy and the Metro21: Smart Cities Institute. If you are interested in learning more about the Los Angeles G2U, please contact Debbie Dillon at dillon@scag.ca.gov.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR THE 2020 SCAG SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

SCAG is now accepting applications for its scholarship program through April 3. The scholarship program offers financial support and professional development to the region's high school and community college students. Scholarships of \$4,000 will be awarded to at least seven eligible students across the six-county SCAG region. Winners will also complete a two-week internship with a local planning agency or council of governments, getting the opportunity to meet with elected officials and practicing planners to learn more about careers in public service. Community college students or high school juniors and seniors who live in the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino or Ventura are eligible to apply. Application materials and additional details are available at: www.scag.ca.gov/scholarship. If you have questions, please contact Scholarship Program Coordinator Jonathan Hughes at hughesj@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG TO HOST SERIES OF ATP CYCLE 5 GRANT WRITING WORKSHOPS

The California Transportation Commission is scheduled to release the 5th Cycle of the Active Transportation Program (ATP) at the end of March. SCAG staff in partnership with the County Transportation Commissions will be hosting grant writing workshops and one-on-one meetings with local jurisdiction's staff to assist in the ATP process. Topics covered will include ATP grant writing best practices, ATP planning, project location selection, and project scope selection. Currently scheduled workshops:

- March 16 – Coachella Valley
- March 18 – Orange County
- March 26 – Imperial County

Additional workshops will be hosted in Los Angeles County, Ventura County, and the Inland Empire in April. For additional information please contact Cory Wilkerson at wilkerson@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG'S SAFETY PLEDGE PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO JURISDICTIONS WITH NEW RESOURCES

The *Go Human* Campaign will re-launch strategic opportunities to advance safety and active transportation for jurisdictions across the region in March and April 2020. Opportunities include a Local Community Engagement and Safety Mini-Grant Call for Proposals for community-based organizations to implement safety activities; co-branded *Go Human* safety materials for cities, including printing and shipment; and an Open Streets Technical Assistance program to support jurisdictions with aligning safety demonstration efforts with Open Streets events. To access these resources, SCAG invites jurisdictions to commit to safety by signing the [Safety Pledge](#). Cities can participate in a variety of safety efforts, through the activities above, or through other strategies, including Plan development. For more information, please contact Dorothy Le Suchkova at suchkova@scag.ca.gov.

GO HUMAN SUCCESS STORIES IN RIVERSIDE AND CULVER CITY

In 2018, SCAG's *Go Human* campaign worked with the City of Riverside to host a temporary demonstration project. *Illuminate Riverside* envisioned improved lighting for pedestrians between the Downtown Metrolink Station and the Downtown Core. Recently, the City deployed the first-of-its-kind (in Caltrans District 8) colorful pedestrian underpass lighting along Mission Inn Avenue, to improve safety, access and walkability.

Also in 2018, *Go Human* worked with the City of Culver City to demonstrate a protected bike lane and safety improvements as part of the [La Ballona Elementary Safe Routes to School \(SRTS\) Project](#). The City recently approved the project for construction to make it safer and more inviting to walk and bike to school. The demonstration project allowed community members to test innovative infrastructure designs, experience what improved infrastructure feels like and was instrumental in gaining public support. The SCAG demonstration projects continue to successfully contribute to the implementation of projects on the ground. For more information, please contact Hannah Brunelle at brunelle@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG PRESENTS AT GEODESIGN SUMMIT

In February 2020, SCAG staff attended ESRI's GeoDesign Summit and presented a study, along with the University of Southern California partners on 3D Procedural Modeling in Sustainable and Active Transportation for City Sustainable Development. The study applies SCAG modeling trips data by mode to explore ridership predictions of public transit in various urban allocation scenarios (such as land use, demographic change, and urban density). Utilizing the new CityEngine and ArcGIS Urban technologies, staff were able to visualize 3D urban allocation scenarios and generate reports showing ridership predictions on the fly. ESRI's GeoDesign Summit is an annual event, which convenes thoughtful leaders, innovators, and other visionaries to see first-hand how they are leveraging advanced GIS technology to plan for our future.

OZONE AIR PLANS FOR IMPERIAL COUNTY AND VENTURA COUNTY RECEIVED FINAL APPROVAL BY U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

On Feb. 27, 2020, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued two final rules to approve the latest ozone state implementation plans for Imperial County and Ventura County, respectively, to address the federal 2008 8-hour ozone ambient air quality standards. As reported previously, SCAG staff had worked with the staff of the two air districts and the California Air Resources Board in developing these ozone plans. With these final approvals, both counties have fulfilled all air quality planning requirements with the exception of one element in Ventura County under the 2008 8-hour ozone standards. Failure to meet the required federal air quality planning requirement could lead to serious consequences that impact regional transportation plan, program, and projects in our region. In addition, effective March 30, 2020, the new ozone transportation conformity budgets in these ozone plans will apply to SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan, Federal Transportation Improvement Program, and their amendments. For additional information about the final rules, see the respective Federal Register Notices at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-02-27/pdf/2020-03251.pdf> (Imperial County) and <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-02-27/pdf/2020-03246.pdf> (Ventura County).