

SPOTLIGHT

SCAG REGIONAL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



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ABOUT

The Regional Council is the governing board of the Southern California Association of Governments and consists of 86 elected officials representing 191 cities, six counties, county transportation commissions, transportation corridor agencies, tribal governments and air districts in Southern California.

AGENDA

For current and archived Regional Council meeting agendas and videos, visit: bit.ly/AgendaRC.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MEETING



Today SCAG gave a sendoff to three valued members of the staff who are retiring this month. Senior Administrative Assistants Jane Embry, Judy Owens and Cathy Alvarado are pictured here at center with, from left, Executive Director Hasan Ikhata, Second Vice President Bill Jahn, President Margaret Finlay, Immediate Past President Michele Martinez, First Vice President Alan Wapner, Past President Cheryl Viegas-Walker and Chief Operating Officer Darin Chidsey.

ACTION

RC APPROVES INITIATIVE TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT INNOVATION

The Regional Council today voted to adopt a number of policies and strategies recommended by the Open Data/ Big Data Smart and Connected SCAG Region Committee that will help support local governments in implementing smart technologies and enhanced data analytics to improve access and increase the efficiency of municipal services. Formed in June, the committee sought to assess the changing landscape of technology in regional planning and provide leadership for local governments in addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the information technology and big data revolution. In a report to the Regional Council today, the committee – made up of elected officials, tech executives and representatives from partner agencies – made many recommendations including: Increase the availability of civic data to reduce costs and increase efficiency of public services; ensure proper regional and local public data governance structures are in place to protect data systems and people; use data as a tool to engage the public and better inform local and regional policy; support the standardization of data sets within the region and create processes for coordinating data collection; conduct research and provide opportunities for cities to develop better information technology infrastructure.

To help kick-start this effort, it was also announced that SCAG was recently awarded \$2 million in funding from the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) to support a new Future Communities Grant Program. The grants will be provided to local jurisdictions to deploy smart sensors/technologies and use data analytics to improve transportation access and increase the efficiency of municipal services. More information about grant guideline development and timeline will be provided in a report to the Regional Council in February.

ACTION

RC APPROVES PROGRAMMING OF SB 1 SUSTAINABILITY GRANT FUNDING

The Executive Administration Committee and the Regional Council voted today to approve an amendment to SCAG's Overall Work Program that incorporates over \$5 million in new funding from state-awarded Sustainable Planning and Adaptation Grants, which will boost regional efforts to build climate resilience, expand transportation options, support public health and prepare the region for the upcoming 2020 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. The funding, which comes from proceeds from increases in gasoline taxes approved under Senate Bill 1, is allocated by formula to each of California's metropolitan planning organizations according to regional population. The funds programmed today will be used to fund future grants that directly support local planning projects and internal research that will help our region reach the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals.

In addition, the SCAG region was awarded more than \$6 million in competitive SB 1 grants, for a total of 15 planning projects across Southern California that include transit villages, complete streets and corridor safety strategies. SCAG itself received a \$940,000 grant – the largest competitive award in the state – to develop a Regional Climate Adaptation Framework that will help cities and counties create effective, customized strategies for achieving greenhouse emission reduction goals.

NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



SCAG ECONOMIC SUMMIT ENGAGED REGIONAL LEADERS ON HOUSING SOLUTIONS

More than 450 of Southern California's civic and business leaders convened in downtown Los Angeles on Nov. 9 to attend the Eighth Annual Southern California Economic Summit, "The Cost of Not Housing," co-hosted by SCAG and the Southern California Leadership Council. The program opened with remarks from Assemblymember Richard Bloom, Assemblymember Dante Acosta, and former Governor Pete Wilson will be available on our website shortly as well. SCAG's team of economists then detailed economic projections for the region while emphasizing the importance of ensuring access to affordable housing. Industry experts warned that high unaffordability could cause an exodus of new businesses and top talent to other regions. Speakers unanimously agreed that the key to improving affordability is to grow housing stock, rallying city representatives in attendance to start in their own communities. Housing leaders at the state, city and community level identified opportunities for coalition-building, emphasizing that local governments should be empowered to initiate solutions rather than waiting

for the state to act on their behalf. Complete media coverage of the event, plus full economic reports, event presentations, archival videos and a photo gallery are available at the Economic Summit [website](#).

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES RAISE TAX PLAN CONCERNS

SCAG and a coalition of Southern California transportation agencies issued a joint letter to congressional leadership on Nov. 29, expressing concern with how the current tax reform bills making their way through Congress may threaten Southern California's transportation system and economic health. The letter, co-signed by Imperial County Transportation Commission, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Metrolink, Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside County Transportation Commission, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, San Diego Association of Governments and Ventura County Transportation Commission, outlines several specific ways the tax plan stands to hurt Southern California, including changes to existing tax exemptions and financing tools that would increase project costs. If these provisions remain unchanged, passage of the tax legislation would deal a blow to Southern California's infrastructure plans, and could signal a setback to transportation projects nationwide. The letter and an accompanying press release are available [online](#).

AIR BOARD POSTPONES VOTE ON UPDATED CLIMATE TARGETS

In early November, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) moved to delay its planned Nov. 16-17 vote on proposed updates to state and regional climate targets. The move came a few days after SCAG's Regional Council voted to support continued dialogue with CARB on a new greenhouse gas reduction (GHG) target for Southern California. Since Senate Bill 375 was passed in 2009, CARB has set and periodically updated targets at both the state and regional level for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. CARB has been working on an update to the target for the past year and most recently put forth a proposal for an ambitious new target that SCAG, having conducted rigorous internal testing and modeling, could not see a path forward to meeting. A new regional GHG reduction target needs to allow for viable alternatives that could effectively reduce total vehicle miles travelled per person. In a region where over 76 percent of commuters drive solo to work, and in a time when unemployment is at a near-record low, to dramatically lower vehicle miles traveled will require major investments in infrastructure and public transportation. SCAG is committed to working with regional and state agencies to ensure that Southern California has the right tools and resources to achieve its target. Since mid-November, CARB has been engaging SCAG in a collaborative discussion about the new targets, and will provide an update at their next board meeting on Dec. 14.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: 2018 SCAG SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

SCAG is now accepting nominations for the 2018 SCAG Sustainability Awards. Each year, SCAG recognizes outstanding sustainable planning efforts and development projects in Southern California. Nominations are open to projects that coordinate land use and transportation actions and that improve the mobility, livability, prosperity and sustainability of our region. Eligible submittals include plans, projects and programs completed or adopted after Jan. 1, 2014 and prior to Dec. 20, 2017. Award nominations are open to all parties, including local governments, non-profits and private developers. Winners will be recognized at the 2018 Regional Conference and General Assembly at the Renaissance Esmeralda Indian Wells Resort & Spa on May 3-4. Please visit the [SCAG Sustainability site](#) for more information and to download the nomination packet. Nomination packets must be submitted no later than Jan. 18, at 2:00 p.m. If you have questions, please contact India Brookover at brookover@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG EXECUTIVES HONORED FOR REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

Both Chief Operating Officer Darin Chidsey and Executive Director Hasan Ikhata recently received recognition from leading regional organizations in the region. Darin was honored at the Southern California Leadership Network's (SCLN) Visionaries Awards gala on Nov. 30 at the Ace Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. SCLN celebrated their 30th anniversary by recognizing 30 outstanding alumni of their prestigious programs. Sharing the stage with Darin were such civic and community leaders as U.S. Representative Pete Aguilar; Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas; Maria Contreras-Sweet, former administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration; Juan Devis, chief creative officer for KCET; and Danielle Brazell, general manager for the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Darin is a dual SCLN alumnus, having completed the Leadership Southern California fellowship in 2008 and the California Connections fellowship in 2012. Hasan had the honor of receiving recognition at two events on Thursday, Dec. 7. He was presented with the Honorable Ray LaHood "Man of the Year" Award by the Orange County chapter of the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS), and was also recognized by the Building Industry Association (BIA) Baldy View Chapter with their annual President's Award.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

December

19th Legislative/Communications & Membership Committee
25th Christmas Day (SCAG Offices are Closed)

January

1st New Year's Day (SCAG Offices are Closed)
4th DARK: Regional Council & Policy Committees
15th Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (SCAG Offices are Closed)
16th Legislative/Communications & Membership Committee
23rd Transportation Conformity Working Group

