SCAG Spotlight

SPOTLIGHT
SCAG REGIONAL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

SCAG
INNOVATING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

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

Click here for current and archived Regional Council meeting agendas.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MEETING

Regional Council Adopts Policy Development Framework

ACTION
REGIONAL COUNCIL ADOPTS POLICY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR CONNECT SOCAL 2024

SCAG's next Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, Connect SoCal 2024, will be prepared over the next two years in anticipation of an April 2024 adoption date. Today, the Regional Council adopted the Policy Development Framework for Connect SoCal 2024 which includes the plan's preliminary vision and goals, key policy priorities, including those identified by the board since 2020, and an outline of the focus and responsibility of each Policy Committee and the following three new subcommittees.

- Next Generation Infrastructure
- Resilience & Conservation
- Racial Equity & Regional Planning

These new subcommittees will help dive deeper into key areas for Connect SoCal to make recommendations on how to address these emerging issues within Connect SoCal 2024. The subcommittees will include members from each county with participation from invited business or civic leaders and practitioners

with unique and valuable perspectives.

SCAG will now establish the subcommittees and prepare a more detailed agenda outlook for each of the Policy Committees to illustrate the progression of policy discussions leading up to plan analysis and production in summer 2023.

For more information on Connect SoCal, visit scag.ca.gov/connect-socal.

INFO
UPDATES ON REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT: STATE AUDIT & SCAG REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS

In a presentation to the Regional Council today, SCAG staff provided an update on the findings of the California State Auditor on the California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) and the process for developing SCAG's RHNA reform recommendations.

STATE AUDIT

In October 2021, the California State Joint Legislative Audit Committee approved an emergency audit to examine HCD's regional determination process for the RHNA. The request for an audit was based on an assertion that "the public has almost no information on the formula that HCD uses to calculate these initial numbers," citing confusion and mistrust among regional planning bodies and local jurisdictions, and the need for an independent and objective review of the process.

The findings conclude that HCD made several errors regarding data calculations and does not have a sufficient management review process. The audit found that lack of sufficient review and associated errors in the determination process risks eroding public confidence in HCD's ability to address the state's housing needs. Several of the audit's findings suggest that HCD understated regional determination for regions included in the audit, and possibly others. The Auditor provided several recommendations to the State Legislature, HCD and California Department of Finance to address these errors and inaccuracies in the process, including:

- Institute a process to ensure staff performs multiple reviews of data in its assessments.
- Establish a formal process to document its consideration of all factors required by state law.
- Perform a formal analysis of healthy vacancy rates and historical trends.
- Develop a formal process to review the appropriateness of councils of governments' proposed comparable regions.

SCAG RHNA REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS

During and after the 6th cycle RHNA process, a number of elected officials and stakeholders requested that SCAG pursue reforms at the State to the RHNA and Housing Element process. HCD, in collaboration with the Office of Planning and Research, is required by law to conduct a RHNA reform outreach process and make recommendations to the legislature by Dec. 31. In response, SCAG plans to develop recommendations for consideration as part of HCD's RHNA reform stakeholder input process.

In the coming months, SCAG will hold a series of meetings with stakeholders to

collect input on topics for RHNA reform, including the Housing Working Group on July 19 and the Technical Working Group on July 21. SCAG will also hold two special meetings of the Community, Economic and Human Development Committee to conduct a public input session on RHNA reform as well as get input from committee members. Based on these input sessions, staff will develop recommendations on RHNA reform and present them to both the Community, Economic and Human Development Committee and Regional Council.

For more information on SCAG's RHNA program, visit scag.ca.gov/rhna.

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT HARNIK

Today marked the first meeting of the Regional Council with newly elected SCAG President Jan Harnik. President Harnik has outlined her priorities to include accelerating housing development and addressing broadband connectivity to meet the goals of Connect SoCal 2024 as a part of SCAG's long-range vision that aligns future housing and mobility needs with economic and environmental goals. With new housing funding sources from the state, including Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) 2.0, President Harnik is confident that SCAG will play a leading role in supporting housing development and mobility options in the region and align funding with other adjacent and immediate needs, such as utilities and broadband infrastructure.

NEW MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

President Harnik welcome new Regional Council Members and announced appointments to SCAG's Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee:

REGIONAL COUNCIL

- Claudia Bill-de la Peña, Thousand Oaks, District 46
- Margaret Clark, Rosemead, District 32
- Denise Diaz, South Gate, District 25
- Keith Eich, La Cañada Flintridge, District 36
- Jess Talamantes, Burbank, District 42

LEGISLATIVE/COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

- Peggy Huang, Transportation Corridor Agencies, Chair
- Jose Luis Solache, Lynwood, District 26, Vice-Chair
- Cindy Allen, Long Beach, District 30
- Claudia Bill-de la Peña, Thousand Oaks, District 46
- Lorrie Brown, Ventura, District 47
- Margaret Finlay, Duarte, District 35
- Alex Fisch, Culver City, District 41
- Curt Hagman, San Bernardino County
- Jan Harnik, Riverside County Transportation Commission
- Patricia Lock Dawson, Riverside, District 68

Clint Lorimore, Eastvale, District 4
- Ray Marquez, Chino Hills, District 10
- Michael Posey, Huntington Beach, District 64
- Deborah Robertson, Rialto, District 8
- David J. Shapiro, Calabasas, District 44
- Cheryl Viegas-Walker, El Centro, District 1
- Donald Wagner, Orange County
- Alan Wapner, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

SCAG LEADERSHIP SHARES REGION'S HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

President Harnik and members of the Regional Council had the pleasure of hosting a recent meeting with Senate Transportation Committee Chair Lena Gonzalez (D-Long Beach) to discuss our region's housing and transportation budget priorities, such as the Regional Council's support for an augmentation to the Infill Infrastructure Grant program and using budget surplus dollars to fully fund the Active Transportation Program. Chair Gonzalez shared information on a number of her priorities as well, such as Senate Bill 1104, which would establish the Office of Freight within the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to serve as the coordinating entity to steer the growth, competitiveness and sustainability for freight and ports across the state.

NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REAP 2.0 DRAFT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK OUTREACH

Through April and May, SCAG's Regional Early Action Planning Grants of 2021 (REAP 2.0) Draft Program Development Framework was widely shared with the public through email blasts, newsletters and two virtual information sessions, as well as on the SCAG website. The public comment period was open from April 19 to May 19. Six public comment letters were received during the comment period from the City of Los Angeles, Coachella Valley Association of Governments, and the Gateway Cities, South Bay Cities, San Gabriel Valley and Ventura councils of governments. Based on the comments received, SCAG generated a summary of themes and hosted an information session to share feedback. SCAG presented the final Program Development Framework to the Executive/Administration Committee in June and will seek adoption by the Regional Council in July.

For more information about the REAP 2.0 program, visit scag.ca.gov/reap2021.

CONNECT SOCAL LOCAL DATA EXCHANGE UPDATE/ REGIONAL DATA PLATFORM

SCAG introduced the Local Data Exchange (LDX) process to serve as an extensive data exchange process with local jurisdictions to support Connect SoCal 2024 development. SCAG will engage in the LDX process to gather the most updated information available from local jurisdictions covering land use and growth to help understand how the region is developing and the extent to which

we are meeting our climate goals. Over the course of 2022, SCAG's Local Information Services Team (LIST) plans to meet one-on-one (for 90 minutes) with all 197 local jurisdictions to discuss maps in their local context, provide background on the development of Connect SoCal 2024 and provide training on available tools in Regional Data Platform (RDP) to local jurisdictions. Detailed information about the LDX process can be found in a letter that was sent via email to all Planning Directors in the region on May 23. For Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino County jurisdictions, these meetings will be initiated by the subregional councils of government. For Imperial, Los Angeles and Ventura County jurisdictions, please select a meeting time at your earliest convenience.

The RDP is a revolutionary system for collaborative data sharing and planning designed to facilitate better planning at all levels – from cities and counties of all sizes up to the region as a whole. The platform includes publicly available resources and tools, which can be accessible to both the public and local jurisdictions. Cities and counties in the SCAG region can also take advantage of complementary GIS licenses. To date, more than 130 jurisdictions have received these licenses to support their local planning activities.

If you would like to explore the RDP or take part in the LDX process, contact the Local Information Services Team at list@scag.ca.gov or visit the Regional Hub at hub.scag.ca.gov.

The full Executive Director's Report and past reports will be available on the SCAG website.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

JUNE

16th Equity Working Group

21st Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee

23rd Safe & Active Streets Working Group

28th Transportation Conformity Working Group

29th Regional Transit Technical Advisory Committee

30th Executive/Administration Committee Retreat

JULY

1st Executive/Administration Committee Retreat

6th Executive/Administration Committee

7th Regional Council & Policy Committees

19th Housing Working Group

19th Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee

21st Technical Working Group

26th Transportation Conformity Working Group

27th Modeling Task Force

CONNECT WITH US

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