

SCAG May 2022 report to SBCCOG Board  
on Environment and Energy Committee  
Submitted by Britt Huff,

In May 2022 all of the SCAG policy committees met together with the Regional Council at the Annual Conference and General Assembly in Palm Desert, for the first time in three years, due to the pandemic. Thursday's panel sessions addressed some of the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the region including creating more equitable broadband access; tapping into the different ways to plan, fund and build affordable housing; leveraging federal and state funding to fuel a new era of growth; and, transitioning to zero emissions by improving on vehicle production, infrastructure updates, workforce development and equitable access.

Local projects were highlighted at the 2022 SCAG Sustainability Awards Luncheon, honoring [seven projects in the region](#) that promote and improve mobility, livability, prosperity and sustainability. They included:

A public-private partnership to advance battery-electric freight movement led the list of seven innovative projects across the region which were announced as winners of the 2022 Sustainability Awards by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG).

The Volvo LIGHTS (Low Impact Green Heavy Transport) project took home top honors – Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability – during ceremonies. Volvo LIGHTS brought together the South Coast Air Quality Management District, Volvo and 12 other public and private entities to develop a blueprint to introduce zero-tailpipe emission battery-electric trucks and equipment into the market. During the project, which ran from 2019 to 2022, the partners demonstrated a range of innovations that over a 10-year period would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 30,200 metric tons.

Other award winners include municipalities, agencies, businesses and nonprofit organizations – all recognized for excellence in coordinating land use, technology and transportation to improve mobility, livability, prosperity and sustainability. The seven winning projects and seven honorable mentions are spread across the six-county region represented by SCAG, the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization.

The 2022 honorees by category are:

**Active, Healthy and Safe Communities: The City of Riverside, for its Riverside PACT Project**

The Riverside PACT provides a safe, interconnected set of transportation options that promotes healthy, active mobility options for all ages and abilities. Special care was given throughout PACT's development to prioritize outcomes in underrepresented communities. This comprehensive plan outlines four core elements of PACT: Pedestrian Target Safeguarding Plan, an Active Transportation Plan, a Complete Streets Ordinance, and a Trails Master Plan.

Honorable mentions:

- The City of Glendora, for its Glendora People Movement Project

- City of Oxnard, for its Oxnard Urban and Community forestry Program

**Clean Cities – Alternative Fuels and Infrastructure: Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink), for its Metrolink Trains Run on Fossil-Free Fuels Project**

With its 538 miles of track and 62 stations, the nation's third-largest commuter rail network plays an essential role in Southern California's transportation system.

Transitioning Metrolink to all modes of renewable energy sources to reduce emissions will help the SCAG region reach clean air goals and provide a cleaner way to travel for customers and those who keep the trains running. By using renewable diesel fuel, Metrolink trains reduce harmful pollutants while decreasing carbon dioxide by up to 80%.

- Los Angeles Department of Transportation, for its Zero-Emission Delivery Zone (ZEDZ) Pilot Project

**Efficient and Sustainable Land Use: City of Rancho Cucamonga, for its PlanRC General Plan Update**

Each chapter of the city's General Plan Update is rooted in core values identified by the community as most important and aspirational – health, stewardship and equity – with an expectation that the future can be harnessed to improve on the past. With a focus on reducing greenhouse gases to nearly 50% of 2018 levels by 2040, the city planned infill development to align with public transportation to support new development. Additional mobility choices in the form of new bike paths compliments miles of natural trails created for recreation.

Honorable mention:

- City of Long Beach, for its Southeast Area Specific Plan

**Equity: Port of Long Beach, for its Community Grants program**

The Port of Long Beach is an economic driver for Southern California, a gateway to international markets and a crucial part of the global supply chain. However, freight traffic has negatively impacted the surrounding community with poor air and water quality, traffic and transportation pollution, and noise. To mitigate these impacts on families and schools, the Port has implemented the Community Grants Program, which focuses on creating healthy, sustainable and economically resilient communities.

Honorable mention:

- Advance OC, for its Orange County Equity Map

**Housing Innovation: City of El Centro, for its Lotus Living Tiny Home project**

Building dorms for local college students was not feasible due to costs and land-use issues, but the city was able to secure funding from the state to create 26 tiny homes, each 170 square feet on a small infill property. By using available land owned by the city, and strategically relocating a transit stop to the project site, a community of students has been created that provides not just housing but access to other resources to support them and their educational pursuits. The neighborhood is within walking distance of grocery stores and other amenities.

Honorable mention:

- Community Development Partners, for Casa Querencia

**Green Region Initiative: Orange County Transportation Authority, in partnership with the City of San Juan Capistrano, for the City Parcel/2C Ranch Habitat Restoration Project**

This project transformed an area plagued by illegal dumping, graffiti and non-native weeds into an ecosystem supporting native plants and wildlife. Threatened wildlife such as the coastal California gnatcatcher and the Bell's Vireo have been found in the new habitat. The new area also provides greater protection against wildfires, by removing weeds and debris that once filled the area. Local businesses, nurseries, contractors and residents were employed to work on habitat restoration. As part of the Orange County Conservation Corps, 50 young adults were also brought in to assist.

Honorable mention:

- Los Angeles Community Choice Energy Authority Joint Powers Authority, for its Clean Power Alliance