



SOUTH BAY CITIES
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

South Bay Cities Council of Governments Strategic Plan

Adopted March 27, 2014

Management
Partners



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Goals, Success Measures and Strategies.....	5
Goal A: Environment, Transportation and Economic Development.....	5
Goal B: Regional Advocacy.....	8
Goal C: Member Networking and Communications	9
Goal D: Organizational Stability	11
Implementing and Updating the Strategic Plan	14
Attachment A – Implementation Action Plan	15
Attachment B - Project Approach and Key Themes from Outreach.....	22
Strategic Planning Framework	22
Outreach and Member Participation.....	23
<i>Focus Groups</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Strategic Planning Questionnaire</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Strategic Planning Workshop.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Key Themes from Outreach</i>	<i>25</i>

Executive Summary

The South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) is a joint powers authority comprised of sixteen cities and the County of Los Angeles. It embarked upon a strategic planning process in the third quarter of 2013 and completed it in early 2014. The process included three focus groups, an online questionnaire to members, and a strategic planning workshop. The strategic plan that resulted contains goals and strategies that were identified as important to achieving the organization's mission and vision.



This executive summary outlines the core elements of the strategic plan, including SBCCOG's mission, vision, guiding principles, and goals.

Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles

As part of the strategic planning process, the mission, vision and guiding principles were reviewed and refined. The revised statements are presented below.

Our Mission

The mission is the purpose of the organization, the reason for its existence.

Provide a leadership forum for South Bay local governments to act collaboratively and advocate for regional issues with a focus on improving transportation and the environment, and strengthening economic development.

Our Vision

The vision is a statement of the desired future state as a result of the organization’s work.

The South Bay region is environmentally sustainable, with reduced congestion and a healthy economy, due to the local government collaborations and advocacy facilitated and supported by SBCCOG.

Our Guiding Principles

The guiding principles state the manner in which the mission and vision are carried out and guide the conduct of the organization.

- The SBCCOG shall:*
- Promote cooperation among member agencies in the discussion of issues of mutual interest.*
 - Act collaboratively on programs or activities that can be better accomplished collectively than by any one jurisdiction.*
 - Acknowledge each jurisdiction’s independence while advocating for the South Bay with one voice.*
 - Support member proposals that further the mission, vision and goals of SBCCOG.*
 - Identify challenges and opportunities that transcend jurisdictional boundaries.*
 - Seek solutions to issues of common concern without duplicating or harming other agencies’ efforts.*
 - Represent the interests of the South Bay with other governing bodies and organizations.*
 - Seek resources from county, regional, state and federal agencies that will benefit the South Bay.*

Goals, Success Measures and Strategies

Four goals were identified through this process. These goals are multi-year in nature, and will be accomplished through a series of strategies. Each goal has measures of success which state how members and staff will gauge the outcomes of the goals. The following pages contain a list of the success measures and strategies for each goal.

Goal A: Environment, Transportation and Economic Development.

Facilitate, implement and/or educate members and others about environmental, transportation and economic development programs that benefit the South Bay.

Goal B: Regional Advocacy. Advocate for the interests of the South Bay.

Goal C: Member Networking and Communications. Sustain and strengthen Board and member commitment to SBCCOG and its initiatives.

Goal D: Organizational Stability. Be a high performing organization with a clear path to long-term financial health, staffing continuity and sustained board commitment.

Definition of Sustainability

The term “sustainability” is used in our vision statement and in several of the strategies contained in this strategic plan. The most common definition is “to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainability has to do with living within limits; understanding the interconnections of economy, society and environment; and, fostering equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

Implementation of the Plan

An implementation action plan has been created which contains timelines, lead responsibilities and whether resources are available to carry out each strategy (see Attachment A). Where resources are not currently available, a discussion about options for obtaining resources will be needed. That can be done during regular budgetary discussions or at specifically designated times, depending on the strategy under discussion.

Project Approach

A description of the project approach is provided in Attachment B. It also contains a summary of the key themes arising from outreach to SBCCOG members, the Steering Committee, city managers and SBCCOG staff and contractors. The themes are provided in two categories: strengths/accomplishments and challenges facing the organization.

Goals, Success Measures and Strategies

The goals, success measures and strategies created by SBCCOG for its strategic plan are provided below.

- *Goals* are multi-year in nature.
- *Success measures* state how members and staff will ascertain progress on the goals.
- *Strategies* are the means to achieve the goals.

Goal A: Environment, Transportation and Economic Development

Goal Statement: *Facilitate, implement and/or educate members and others about environmental, transportation and economic development programs that benefit the South Bay.*



Measures of Success

- Member agencies value the programs that are implemented.
- The SBCCOG obtains funding from outside agencies, completes its approved projects on schedule and within budget and discusses lessons learned from its endeavors, both successful and unsuccessful.
- Cities adopt climate action plans (CAPs) and achieve measurable results.
- The Sustainable South Bay Strategy (SSBS) relative to SB 375 is presented to every city's policymakers; implementation is tracked for cities by the SBCCOG.
- In five years, the SBCCOG is able to propose and cities adopt initiatives, projects and policies that lead to a higher percentage of the passenger fleet that is zero emission.
- The projects in the SBCCOG Measure R South Bay Highway Program Early Action Plan are completed within five years of executing funding agreements with Metro.



Strategies

1. Continue to implement programs for energy efficiency for member agencies through partnerships with utilities that provide grant funds.
2. Promote sustainable communities and serve as a resource to member cities as we move forward to 2020 in response to AB 32.
3. Seek funding to develop climate action plan strategies and work with cities to adopt and implement their climate action plans and strategies.
4. Implement regional transportation strategies of benefit to the South Bay through Measure R funding and other regional, state and federal funds, and seek new funding to support the completion and adequate maintenance of the rail and highway South Bay networks.
5. Seek new funding to support the Sustainable South Bay Land Use and Transportation strategy.
6. Facilitate and assist with implementation of city partnerships for economic development (such as bi-monthly meetings of economic development directors and annual shopping center conference exhibit).
7. Strengthen relationships with diverse communities within our member jurisdictions to enable them to better access our programs.

Goal B: Regional Advocacy

Goal Statement: *Advocate for the interests of the South Bay.*

Measures of Success

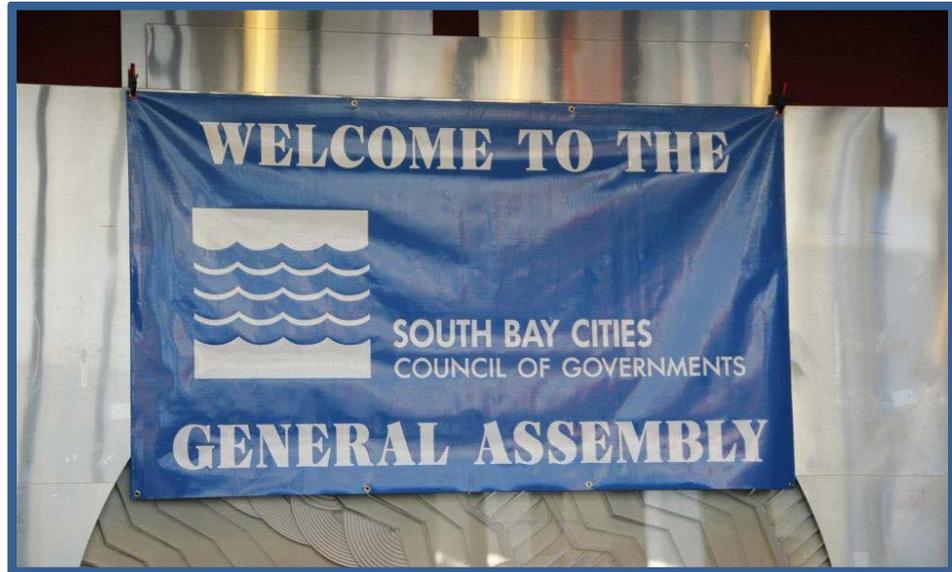
- Cities implement SBCCOG resolutions that recommend policies and strategies.
- SBCCOG resolutions and initiatives influence county, regional, state and federal policies.

Strategies

1. Continue the leadership role of SBCCOG and its members within the wider region and state.
2. Engage members in providing leadership to advocate for regional policy issues and collaborate with other regional agencies to benefit the South Bay.
3. Maintain and continue to nurture effective relationships with regional, state and federal representatives and other policy and regulatory bodies to advocate for interests of the South Bay and to protect against mandates, programs and initiatives that would have a negative effect on the sub-region.
4. Collaborate with the agencies that are in the lead on issues that are important to the sub-region (such as power reliability and water sustainability).
5. Actively pursue opportunities for infrastructure funding for member agencies.
6. Identify challenges and opportunities that transcend municipal boundaries and work with the cities for the SBCCOG to assume the leadership to address the threats and capture the opportunities.

Goal C: Member Networking and Communications

Goal Statement: *Sustain and strengthen Board and member commitment to SBCCOG and its initiatives.*



Measures of Success

- Board members and city managers are active in their support of the SBCCOG's goals and resolutions.
- Cities increase collaboration and the sharing of programs and services.
- A representative of every local jurisdiction (delegate or alternate delegate) consistently attends Board meetings and communicates with other representatives of their jurisdiction concerning issues discussed.
- SBCCOG representatives to outside agencies (such as SCAG) have a high level of attendance at those meetings and report back to the SBCCOG on issues of concern to the South Bay.
- City representatives report on SBCCOG activities to their city managers and at their city council meetings.
- Cities are committed to support and attend the SBCCOG Annual General Assembly and promote the event in their jurisdictions.

Strategies

1. Establish a method for the board to determine whether SBCCOG should pursue a new area of emphasis and, if the decision is to do so, how SBCCOG will proceed. This will involve determining whether the new policy or program meets SBCCOG's vision and is consistent with board priorities as well as determining the expected outcome, how members will be engaged with the discussion, and the expected measures of success specific to the program or project.
2. Devote sufficient time at one board meeting annually to review, validate and/or revise policy direction, identify the top issues of interest to cities, and set priorities for the year as well as reporting on the success of meeting program goals.
3. City managers attend and participate in the Annual Work Program meeting of the Board where there is a discussion of the prior year's accomplishments and the plans for the coming year.
4. City Managers strengthen dialogue and communication with SBCCOG, and specifically with the Executive Director, by effectively using the time set aside for discussing SBCCOG issues at the monthly city manager meeting or some other regular meeting dedicated to SBCCOG, and by active participation of at least a majority of cities at the city manager meetings at which there is a discussion of SBCCOG issues.
5. Strengthen relationships between staff of SBCCOG and staff in member cities to increase collaboration between SBCCOG and cities.
6. Facilitate sharing of information between cities about their successful approaches to service delivery and projects, and ways of sharing services.

7. Improve communication of information in the following manner:
(a) focus the information provided to members on what is most important; (b) inform City Managers at the same time as elected officials; (c) provide enough time to allow for internal city discussions of major decisions to come before the Board; and, (d) solicit input on effective methods and formats for communicating with member agencies.
8. Regularly communicate the value and accomplishments of SBCCOG to its members and the general public. Make use of social media tools.
9. Implement formal and informal methods of obtaining feedback from member agencies, including Board members and staff from those agencies, about their satisfaction with SBCCOG programs.
10. Board members brief their city managers and city councils on SBCCOG actions, programs and opportunities.

Goal D: Organizational Stability

Goal Statement: *Be a high performing organization with a clear path to long-term financial health, staffing continuity and sustained board commitment.*

Measures of Success

- SBCCOG has resources to sustain itself.
- Members have an interest in and commitment to SBCCOG regional projects.
- Members actively participate in activities of SBCCOG.



Strategies

1. Create a structure to enable SBCCOG to have stability through leadership transitions of staff and board members. Clarify the relationship between contractors and staff.
2. Provide interesting programs that encourage elected officials to participate and an environment that supports high-achieving public sector entrepreneurialism.
3. Review the relationship between, and branding of, the Environmental Service Center (SBESC) and SBCCOG with the goal of clarifying that the SBESC is a program of SBCCOG in such a way that the reputation of both the SBCCOG and the SBESC is assured or enhanced.
4. Enhance orientation methods for new board members so that they have a clear understanding of their role and can determine how they will most effectively contribute. Include a discussion of the bylaws in the orientation.

5. Review the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee as outlined in the bylaws and clarify with Steering Committee members, if necessary, so the Committee can be most effective in providing leadership and assisting the Board in carrying out its roles. Consider changing the name to Executive Steering Committee.
6. Streamline board meetings to make them most productive for members and staff. Create agendas that sustain interest and stay on schedule but with sufficient time to discuss, debate, disagree and develop consensus when required.
7. Create a long-range financial plan to assure the future viability of SBCCOG.



Implementing and Updating the Strategic Plan

An Implementation Action Plan (see Attachment A) has been created to assist in understanding the timeline, responsibilities and resource availability to carry out each strategy. In some cases, resources will need to be identified in order to implement a particular strategy. Progress can be reported through the use of this Implementation Action Plan.

This strategic plan should be updated annually by the staff and Board. When SBCCOG budgets are prepared or whenever an annual work plan is established, the strategic plan should be reviewed to determine whether changes are warranted.

Steps that may help SBCCOG keep on track with the plan include:

- Providing quarterly progress reports on the strategic plan.
- Conducting an annual review and update of the strategic plan that includes a review of progress toward goals and revising elements of the plan as appropriate to meet changing conditions.
- Keeping the Board, city managers and SBCCOG staff apprised of status toward achievement of strategic plan goals by sharing information regularly, and referencing the goals and strategies in reports to the Board, including recommended actions.
- Making the new SBCCOG strategic mission, vision, guiding principles, goals and strategies highly visible to staff and others, including the SBCCOG Board, city managers, staff, the state, the county, and other intergovernmental organizations.

Attachment A – Implementation Action Plan

The purpose of this Implementation Action Plan is to provide an easy means by which SBCCOG can manage and report the implementation of its goals and strategies. The following sections identify a timeline for each strategy, along with assigned responsibility and whether resources are available to complete each strategy.

Goal A: Environment, Transportation and Economic Development

Goal Statement: *Facilitate, implement and/or educate members and others about environmental, transportation and economic development programs that benefit the South Bay.*

Strategy	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Resources Available (Yes/No)
1. Continue to implement programs for energy efficiency for member agencies through partnerships with utilities that provide grant funds.	Grant through 2015	Executive Director Deputy Executive Director	Yes – SCE/SCE Grant through 2015
2. Promote sustainable communities and serve as a resource to member cities as we move forward to 2020 in response to AB 32.	Ongoing	Executive Director Deputy Executive Director Research Director	Yes - Dues/CAP Assessment
3. Seek funding to develop climate action plan strategies and work with cities to adopt and implement their climate action plans and strategies.	Ongoing	Executive Director Deputy Executive Director	Yes - CAP assessment and 3 year EECAP grant
4. Implement regional transportation strategies of benefit to the South Bay through Measure R funding and other regional, state and federal funds, and seek new funding to support the completion and adequate maintenance of the rail and highway South Bay networks.	Adhere to milestones in programs 2014 – 2039	Executive Director Transportation Director	Partially funded through Measure R
5. Seek new funding to support the Sustainable South Bay Land Use and Transportation strategy.	Pending new resources (Tentative: By December 31, 2014)	Executive Director Research Director	No; options include state or regional agency grants

Strategy	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Resources Available (Yes/No)
6. Facilitate and assist with implementation of city partnership for economic development such as bi-monthly meetings of economic development directors and annual shopping center conference exhibit.	Ongoing 2014 – 2015	Executive Director	Yes – Dues and self assessments for conference
7. Strengthen relationships with diverse communities within our member jurisdictions to enable them to better access our programs.	Ongoing Create specific methods by January 1, 2015	Executive Director Deputy Executive Director	Partially funded with Partnership Funds

Goal B: Regional Advocacy

Goal Statement: *Advocate for the interests of the South Bay.*

Strategy	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Resources Available (Yes/No)
1. Continue the leadership role of SBCCOG and its members within the wider region and state.	Ongoing	Senior Staff Board	Yes - Dues
2. Engage members in providing leadership to advocate for regional policy issues and collaborate with other regional agencies to benefit the South Bay.	Ongoing	Executive Director Board	Yes - Dues
3. Maintain and continue to nurture effective relationships with regional, state and federal representatives and other policy and regulatory bodies to advocate for interests of the South Bay and to protect against mandates, programs and initiatives that would have a negative effect on the sub-region.	Ongoing	Senior Staff	Yes - Dues
4. Collaborate with the agencies that are in the lead on issues that are important to the sub-region (such as power reliability and water sustainability).	Ongoing	Executive Director Deputy Executive Director	Yes - Dues
5. Actively pursue opportunities for infrastructure funding for member agencies.	Ongoing	Executive Director Transportation Director	Yes - Measure R
6. Identify challenges and opportunities that transcend municipal boundaries and work with the cities for the SBCCOG to assume the leadership to address the threats and capture the opportunities.	Ongoing	Senior Staff	Yes - Dues

Goal C: Member Networking and Communications

Goal Statement: *Sustain and strengthen Board and member commitment to SBCCOG and its initiatives.*

Strategy	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Resources Available (Yes/No)
<p>1. Establish a method for the board to determine whether SBCCOG should pursue a new area of emphasis and, if the decision is to do so, how SBCCOG will proceed. This will involve determining whether the new policy or program meets SBCCOG’s vision and is consistent with board priorities as well as determining the expected outcome, how members will be engaged with the discussion, and the expected measures of success specific to the program or project.</p>	<p>By July 1, 2014</p>	<p>Executive Director Steering Committee</p>	<p>Yes – partially funded through current dues</p>
<p>2. Devote sufficient time at one board meeting annually to review, validate and/or revise policy direction, identify the top issues of interest to cities, and set priorities for the year as well as reporting on the success of meeting program goals.</p>	<p>April 24, 2014</p>	<p>Executive Director Board Chair Steering Committee</p>	<p>Yes - Dues/Grants</p>
<p>3. City managers attend and participate in the Annual Work Program meeting of the Board where there is a discussion of the prior year’s accomplishments and the plans for the coming year.</p>	<p>April 24, 2014</p>	<p>City Managers</p>	<p>Yes - Dues/Grants</p>
<p>4. City Managers strengthen dialogue and communication with SBCCOG, and specifically the Executive Director, by effectively using the time set aside for discussing SBCCOG issues at the monthly City Manager meetings or some other regular meeting dedicated to SBCCOG, and by active participation of at least a majority of cities at the City Manager meetings at which there is a discussion of SBCCOG issues.</p>	<p>At each monthly city managers’ meeting</p>	<p>Executive Director City Managers</p>	<p>Yes - Dues</p>

Strategy	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Resources Available (Yes/No)
5. Strengthen relationships between staff of SBCCOG and staff in member cities to increase collaboration between SBCCOG and cities.	Ongoing	Executive Director and Staff	Yes - Dues
6. Facilitate sharing of information between cities about their successful approaches to service delivery and projects, and ways of sharing services.	Ongoing	Senior Staff, Board City Managers IWG, Livable Communities	Yes - Partner Programs and Measure R (Only)
7. Improve communication of information in the following manner: (a) focus the information provided to members on what is most important; (b) inform City Managers at the same time as elected officials; (c) provide enough time to allow for internal city discussions of major decisions to come before the Board; and, (d) solicit input on effective methods and formats for communicating with member agencies.	By July 1, 2014	Senior Staff	Yes
8. Regularly communicate the value and accomplishments of SBCCOG to its members and the general public. Make use of social media tools.	Pending new resources	Executive Director Deputy Executive Director	No; options include dues
9. Implement formal and informal methods of obtaining feedback from member agencies, including Board members and staff from those agencies, about their satisfaction with SBCCOG programs.	By July 1, 2014	Executive Director Board Chair Steering Committee	Yes
10. Board members brief their city managers and city councils on SBCCOG actions, programs and opportunities.	Quarterly	Board Delegates and Alternates	Yes

Goal D: Organizational Stability

Goal Statement: *Be a high performing organization with a clear path to long-term financial health, staffing continuity and sustained board commitment.*

Strategy	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Resources Available (Yes/No)
1. Create a structure to enable SBCCOG to have stability through leadership transitions of staff and board members. Clarify the relationship between contractors and staff.	Research other COGS and identify structure options; discuss with Steering Committee by July 1, 2014	Executive Director Steering Committee	Yes
2. Provide interesting programs that encourage elected officials to participate and an environment that supports high-achieving public sector entrepreneurialism.	Ongoing	Executive Director Steering Committee	Yes
3. Review the relationship between, and branding of, the Environmental Service Center (SBESC) and SBCCOG with the goal of clarifying that SBESC is a program of SBCCOG in such a way that the reputation of both the SBCCOG and SBESC is assured or enhanced.	Pending new resources (tentative: by December 1, 2014)	Senior Staff Board	No; options include dues increase or spending reserves for consultant assistance
4. Enhance orientation methods for new board members so that they have a clear understanding of their role and can determine how they will most effectively contribute. Include a discussion of the bylaws in the orientation.	By April Elections, 2014	Executive Director	Yes
5. Review the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee as outlined in the bylaws and clarify with Steering Committee members,	By May, 2014	Executive Director Steering Committee	Yes - Dues

Strategy	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Resources Available (Yes/No)
<p>if necessary, so the Committee can be most effective in providing leadership and assisting the Board in carrying out its roles. Consider changing the name to Executive Steering Committee.</p>		Board	
<p>6. Streamline board meetings to make them most productive for members and staff. Create agendas that sustain interest and stay on schedule but with sufficient time to discuss, debate, disagree and develop consensus when required.</p>	Ongoing	Executive Director Board Chair	Yes - Dues
<p>7. Create a long-range financial plan to assure the future viability of SBCCOG.</p>	Budget workshop by July 1, 2014 Long term plan by July 1, 2015	Executive Director Accounting Manager Steering Committee Board	Yes, for initial discussions Will need more resources through dues increase to ensure long term financial viability

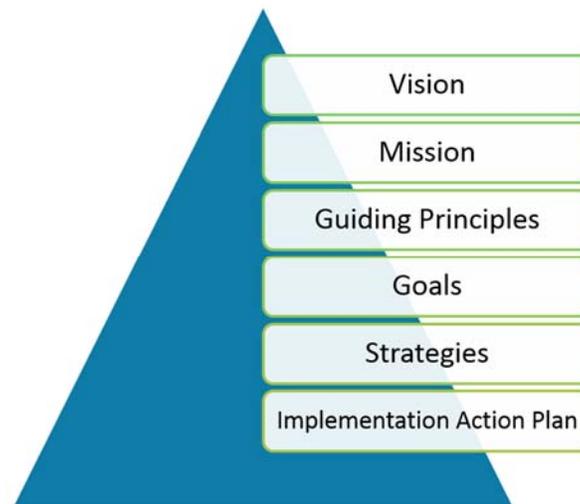
Attachment B - Project Approach and Key Themes from Outreach

The South Bay Cities Council of Governments engaged Management Partners in the fall of 2013 to facilitate a strategic planning process and develop goals and strategies aligned with its mission, vision and guiding principles.

Outreach was conducted through three focus groups and an online survey of SBCCOG members and city managers.

Strategic Planning Framework

Strategic planning involves establishing a clear mission for the organization, a vision for the future, articulating the organization's values or guiding principles, establishing goals, identifying priority strategies, and creating implementation action plans. The following graphic shows the components of a strategic plan.



Vision. Establishing a vision of where the organization wants to be in the future is a fundamental part of the strategic planning process. Where the mission states the purpose of the organization, the vision states the future.

Mission. A mission statement provides the purpose of the organization. The mission statement gives a rationale for programs that are carried out by the organization, and guides the prioritization of opportunities. It defines what the organization stands for and what it will do.

Guiding Principles. The values or guiding principles of an organization drive both the goals and strategies created and the process of implementing the strategic plan.

Goals. Goals for achievement over several years are set as part of the process. Goals state the direction the organization will move and the desired outcomes that will be achieved. Goals

provide the “why” of the specific actions the agency takes. Typically a strategic plan has four to six goals.

Strategies. Strategies to achieve each of the goals will be set. Objectives are measurable, with specific resources assigned, timeframes allocated, and responsibilities determined. Typically two to four objectives are established for each goal.

Success Measures. Success indicators to identify how the staff and SBCCOG board will evaluate successful achievement of the goals.

Implementation Action Plan. Implementation action plan to ensure accountability for accomplishing the goals and strategies. The action plan includes key tasks, timetables, lead staff, and resources required to carry out the strategies.

Outreach and Member Participation

A variety of methods were used to gather information and to engage SBCCOG members, Steering Committee, city managers and SBCCOG staff. Their input was the basis of the goals and strategies created for the strategic plan, and for the refinement of the mission, vision and guiding principles.



Focus Groups

Management Partners facilitated three focus groups, which included two with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and one with SBCCOG staff and contractors. The focus groups were held on November 12 and December 9, 2013.

In the focus groups, Management Partners asked participants to identify SBCCOG's strengths, limitations/weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as an organization. We asked members of the Steering Committee to also state how they would measure success five years from now, identify possible goals and share their opinions about clarifications needed in Board, Steering Committee and SBCCOG staff roles. Staff members were given an opportunity to offer suggestions in written form as well as in the focus group. A comprehensive summary of all focus group and written staff comments was provided to SBCCOG in a separate document.

Strategic Planning Questionnaire

As part of the strategic planning process for the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG), an online survey was designed to seek input from elected officials (members and nonmembers of the board) and city managers from member cities. Questions were asked about strengths, limitations/weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the organization. Questions were also asked about goals for the organization; mission, vision and guiding principles; and roles and responsibilities of the board, Steering Committee and staff.

Approximately 85 elected officials and 16 city managers were sent the online questionnaire. A total of 30 people responded to the strategic planning questionnaire, which opened on November 4, 2013 and closed on December 2, 2013. Twenty-one individuals identified themselves as elected officials, seven identified themselves as city managers, and two did not identify their position. Approximately 24.7% of the elected officials who were sent the questionnaire responded, and 43.8% of the city managers who were sent the questionnaire responded. A complete, verbatim report of the questionnaire responses was provided to SBCCOG in a separate document.

Strategic Planning Workshop

The next step the strategic planning process was a facilitated workshop designed to obtain input about the mission, vision and guiding principles, and to receive input about key goals, measures of success and strategies for achieving the goals. Approximately 30 individuals participated in the workshop.

Using information generated during the strategic planning workshop, a written strategic plan was drafted, which includes revised mission and vision statements, a revised set of guiding principles, and four organizational goals, along with their supporting strategies.

Key Themes from Outreach

Through comments from focus groups, Steering Committee meetings and the online questionnaire, a number of key themes were identified pertaining to strengths and accomplishments of SBCCOG as well as challenges facing the organization. These themes are summarized below.

Strengths and Accomplishments

- **Technical Expertise and Information.** The South Bay Cities Council of Governments is seen as a valuable resource through which elected officials and city managers are kept up to date on regional policy issues. There is general agreement that the executive director and staff are well qualified and knowledgeable. The new website was mentioned as user-friendly and helpful.
- **Policy and Implementation Assistance.** The SBCCOG is appreciated for its work in supplementing member agencies' staff and knowledge base. Examples cited are the development of climate action plans, conducting an electric vehicle infrastructure study, and navigating the South Bay Measure R Highway Program (SBHP).
- **Forum for Inter-City Dialogue.** The standing meetings and general assembly provide an opportunity for elected officials, city managers and other public agency staff to network and exchange ideas with their peers throughout the region.
- **Regional Advocacy and Coordination.** As a unifying force with regard to policy issues, SBCCOG can influence policy makers to enact legislation favorable to the sub-region and member cities. SBCCOG is viewed as the collective voice of its members. Additionally, SBCCOG provides a mechanism for sub-regional coordination, allowing smaller cities to develop and fund projects they would be unable to initiate themselves.
- **Quality Programs.** SBCCOG's environmental sustainability and transportation programs were cited as key strengths. Energy efficiency training sessions for residents were cited by a number of people.
- **Securing Grant Funding.** Securing and allocating grant funds for member cities for projects was widely cited as an added value of SBCCOG (such as Measure R Highway Program funds).

Challenges

- ***Sustaining Interest from Member Cities.*** Many respondents noted that SBCCOG's role in the sub-region is not clear. Marketing and communications to elected officials, city managers, and city staff could be improved. Respondents noted that SBCCOG has good programs, but the value of those programs must be better communicated.
- ***Retaining Institutional Knowledge.*** Outreach participants expressed concern over SBCCOG's ability to retain institutional knowledge in the event that the Executive Director and other key staff members leave the organization, as well as with changes on the board.
- ***Allocating Time for Policy Discussions.*** Comments were made that the Board often does not have sufficient time to discuss the key policy issues that are of interest to the region, such as transportation, climate action planning, environmental sustainability and economic development.
- ***Dissimilar and Sometimes Contradictory Member Interests.*** Respondents noted that member cities are diverse and have a wide variety of interests and sometimes contradictory goals. This makes it a challenge to have consistency of purpose for SBCCOG.
- ***Range of Programs.*** Different opinions were expressed about the benefits and drawbacks of the current range of SBCCOG programs. Some people indicated that the program focus is too narrow while others believe the range of programs should be more limited.
- ***Mission and Vision.*** Some noted a disconnect between the expressed mission and vision of SBCCOG and its organizational priorities. Additionally, some individuals said there is confusion within some city councils as to whether actions of SBCCOG are binding on cities. Comments were also made that the mission and vision need to be better understood.
- ***Long-Term Financial Viability.*** Concerns were expressed about what happens to SBCCOG programs when grants disappear, given that the majority of funding comes from grants. Moreover, because staff work hours are charged to specific projects, some individuals expressed concern that there is insufficient time available to research alternative funding sources. Some respondents expressed concern about the degree to

which SBCCOG is dependent on revenue generated by the Environmental Service Center.

- ***Confusing Organizational Structure.*** Concerns were expressed about the overall organizational structure and what seems to be an unclear dividing line between staff and contractors, along with lack of clarity about their individual roles.
- ***Confusing Organizational Relationships of SBCCOG and the Environmental Service Center.*** Many outreach participants expressed opinions that SBCCOG and the Environmental Service Center should be consolidated.
- ***Board Meeting Effectiveness.*** Comments were offered about the length of board meetings, that they were unnecessarily long and too dependent on oral reports. Additionally, respondents said they sometimes are not given advance notice of important issues that will be voted on at board meetings.
- ***Distinguishing Itself from Similar Organizations.*** Some survey respondents noted that the value of SBCCOG, as distinguished from that provided by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), is not clear. A challenge is how to establish a more widely understood and supported SBCCOG as a voice of the sub-region in the region.