



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS



A GUIDE TO THE FUTURE

## Strategic PLAN



# FROM THE PRESIDENT

**F**or more than 40 years the Southern California Association of Governments has provided long range planning for Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties. From the coast to the inland valleys, from aviation to housing, SCAG is all about strategic planning. Conducting long-range planning for our vast and dynamic Region is vital; however, it is essential that we apply our planning skills within the organization as well to sustain the long-term viability of this agency.

Since early 2008 our dedicated staff has worked collaboratively, with solid backing from the Regional Council and Executive Management, to develop SCAG's Strategic Plan. I believe this plan is an outstanding testament to our values, vision, mission and role. I believe this plan is strong enough and flexible enough to sustain this agency through whatever challenges await. It is my hope that this plan will be a "living" document that is referenced regularly as we conduct our day-to-day work for the Region.

I thank the Regional Council for supporting the Strategic Plan and the work it required. I especially thank those Regional Council Members who generously shared their time, guidance and expertise with the Strategic Plan task teams. I thank our talented and dedicated staff members who worked diligently on this plan while simultaneously performing their regular job duties. Their thoughtfulness and precision are evident throughout this plan. Finally, I offer a special thanks to the Honorable Jon Edney, SCAG's Second Vice President and Council Member from the City of El Centro, whose energy and dedication inspired all who worked on this Strategic Plan.



*Richard Dixon*

**Honorable Richard Dixon**  
SCAG President  
Council Member  
City of Lake Forest

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The last two years have been a critical time in the life of the agency. As I began my tenure as Executive Director, SCAG was presented with an opportunity to refocus its Mission and redefine the agency's value to the Region. In the last year, SCAG has made substantial progress towards capitalizing on these opportunities and positioning the agency to lead Southern California toward better mobility, improved air quality and obtaining substantial funding for infrastructure projects.

We have witnessed the reputation of the agency and its relevance to regional planning improve. SCAG's working relationship with its partners, at the federal, state, and local level is better than it has ever been and the Regional Council is taking more ownership of the agency and its Mission.

Nonetheless, there are still challenges ahead and more to be done if SCAG wishes to continue to build upon these recent successes.

In the coming years, the pressure will increase for SCAG to be more responsive to its members and partners. More than ever, SCAG needs to demonstrate its relevance, not through regulation but through collaboration and leadership. The Region is relying and depending on each and every SCAG employee to continue to work creatively, efficiently and cooperatively to improve the quality of life for Southern Californians.

It is said that success can be defined as the achievement of goals. This Strategic Plan was developed to ensure the progress of the last few years continues into the future. By refining the agency's Mission, Vision and Values and articulating the associated Goals, Objectives and Strategies, SCAG is taking the first and very important step to institutionalize the "New SCAG." This Strategic Plan is intended to provide a framework for the Agency's continued success. The goals identified will direct staff efforts to ensure that SCAG operates effectively and efficiently.

I am proud to present this Strategic Plan. I know that it will serve as SCAG's blueprint and foundation as we strive to be the nation's leading MPO, deliver forward thinking regional plans and serve our members, partners and the public.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hasan Ikhrata".

**Hasan Ikhrata**  
SCAG Executive Director

# SCAG PROFILE

*SCAG plans for Southern California's future. As a public agency, SCAG develops transportation and housing plans that transcend jurisdictional boundaries that affect the quality of life for Southern Californians.*

*Governed by a Regional Council of 83 local elected officials, SCAG is a membership organization that is funded by Federal and State resources as well as member dues. Founded in 1965, SCAG provides a forum for a collaborative process to address regional issues for 189 cities, Councils of Governments and County Transportation Commissions in the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura.*

*SCAG fulfills several Federal and State required roles, including a Metropolitan Planning Organization, Council of Governments, and Regional Transportation Planning Agency. All Cities, Counties, County Transportation Commissions and Federally-recognized Native American Tribes in the Region are eligible for membership in the Regional Council.*

# REGIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

## *2008-2009 Officers*

President: Richard Dixon, Lake Forest

First Vice President: Harry Baldwin, San Gabriel

Second Vice President: Jon Edney, El Centro

Immediate Past President: Gary Ovitt, San Bernardino County

Imperial County: Victor Carrillo, Imperial County • Jon Edney, El Centro

Los Angeles County: Mike Antonovich, Los Angeles County • Mark Ridley-Thomas, Los Angeles County • Richard Alarcón, Los Angeles • Barbara Calhoun, Compton • Tony Cardenas, Los Angeles • Stan Carroll, La Habra Heights • Margaret Clark, Rosemead • Gene Daniels, Paramount • Judy Dunlap, Inglewood • David Gafin, Downey • Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles • Wendy Greuel, Los Angeles • Frank Gurulé, Cudahy • Janice Hahn, Los Angeles • Keith W. Hanks, Azusa • Carol Herrera, City of Diamond Bar • José Huizar, Los Angeles • Tom LaBonge, Los Angeles • Paula Lantz, Pomona • Val Lerch, Long Beach • Nury Martinez, San Fernando • Barbara Messina, Alhambra • Larry Nelson, Artesia • Pam O'Connor, Santa Monica • Bernard Parks, Los Angeles • Jan Perry, Los Angeles • Frank Quintero, Glendale • Ed Reyes, Los Angeles • Susan Rhilinger, Torrance • Bill Rosendahl, Los Angeles • Greig Smith, Los Angeles • Mike Ten, South Pasadena • Tonia Reyes Uranga, Long Beach • Antonio Villaraigosa, Los Angeles • Dennis Washburn, Calabasas • Jack Weiss, Los Angeles • Herb J. Wesson, Jr., Los Angeles • Dennis Zine, Los Angeles

Orange County: Chris Norby, Orange County • John Beauman, Brea • Leslie Daigle, Newport Beach • Richard Dixon, Lake Forest • Paul Glaab, Laguna Niguel • Robert Hernandez, Anaheim • Beth Krom, Irvine • LeRoy Mills, Cypress • John Nielsen, Tustin • Sharon Quirk, Fullerton

Riverside County: Jeff Stone, Riverside County • Thomas Buckley, Lake Elsinore • Melanie Fesmire, Indio • Bonnie Flickinger, Moreno Valley • Ron Loveridge, Riverside • Greg Pettis, Cathedral City • Ron Roberts, Temecula

San Bernardino County: Gary Ovitt, San Bernardino County • Ginger Coleman, Apple Valley • Glenn Duncan, Chino • Paul Eaton, Montclair • Pat Gilbreath, Redlands • Bill Jahn, Big Bear Lake • Larry McCallon, Highland • Deborah Robertson, Rialto

Ventura County: Linda Parks, Ventura County • Glen Becerra, Simi Valley • Carl Morehouse, San Buenaventura

Tribal Government Representative: Mark Calac, Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians

Orange County Transportation Authority: Art Brown, Buena Park

Riverside County Transportation Commission: Robin Lowe, Hemet

San Bernardino Associated Governments: Kelly Chastain, Colton

Ventura County Transportation Commission: Keith Millhouse, Moorpark

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# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In early 2008, with a new Executive Director and a call for action to create a new SCAG, the organization undertook a strategic planning process. The goal was to produce a multi-year Strategic Plan for adoption at the May 2009 General Assembly that would focus SCAG's vision and priorities and improve the organization and its operations. From the beginning, this was an inclusive process that challenged and engaged staff from all levels of the organization who benefited from the insights of numerous Regional Council Members. In all, 41 staff members and 16 Regional Council Members were directly involved in the development of SCAG's Strategic Plan.

## *Organizational Survey*

The strategic planning process originated with a comprehensive assessment of the organization. In May 2008, this assessment began by way of an organizational survey. The survey posed a wide variety of questions to Regional Council Members and staff on various aspects of the agency. The results of this survey laid the foundation for this Strategic Plan.

## *Formation of Guidance Team*

In the summer of 2008, the Guidance Team was formed to manage and guide the development of this plan. Composed of a cross functional staff team from all levels of the organization, the Guidance Team's initial task was to analyze the organizational survey and identify issue and opportunity areas for further study. Expanding the effort with more staff and three Regional Council Members, an Advance Team was formed and participated in four off site mini-retreats throughout the summer of 2008. The Advance Team further explored the identified issues and opportunities and placed them into 14 categories. Additionally, the Advance Team developed a draft Mission, Vision and Values for

the organization and hosted workshops with other staff to discuss and further develop the Draft Mission, Vision and Values. They also identified the top three priority areas for further study. Three Task Teams continued this study, SCAG's Roles and Scope, Communications and Financial Management. In September 2008, an all staff retreat was held to further inspire staff participation in the planning process and to seek staff engagement in the Task Team process.

## *Task Team Formation*

From November 2008 through February 2009, the three Task Teams studied their respective issues areas and produced recommendations to the Guidance Team and Executive Management on possible improvements. Concurrently, with the work of the Task Teams, SCAG Management began drafting high level agency goals. In February 2009, the Task Teams' recommendations were integrated with the Goals and the subsequent plan began to take shape. The Plan's Mission, Vision and Values were approved by the Regional Council on February 5, 2009 and the Goals and Objectives were approved on March 5, 2009.



# STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENTS

## *Vision Statement*

*An international and regional planning forum trusted for its leadership and inclusiveness in developing plans and policies for a sustainable Southern California.*

## *Mission Statement*

*Under the guidance of the Regional Council and in collaboration with our partners, our mission is to facilitate a forum to develop and foster the realization of regional plans that improve the quality of life for Southern Californians.*

## CORE VALUES

### *Collaboration*

*We foster collaboration through open communication, cooperation and a commitment to teamwork*

### *Service*

*Our commitment to service and leadership is second to none*

### *Trust*

*The hallmark of our organization is trust and is accomplished through a professional staff, transparency in decision making and objectivity and accuracy in our day-to-day work*

### *Revolutionary*

*We are revolutionary in our thinking to achieve a cutting edge work program that is emulated by others*

### *Sustainability*

*We work with our partners and local governments to achieve a quality of life that provides resources for today's generation while preserving an improved quality of life for future generations*

### *Empowering*

*The empowering of staff occurs to reward initiative, confidence and creativity while promoting inclusionary decision-making*

### *Rewarding*

*We promote a work environment that allows for professional and personal growth, recognizes astounding achievement, and makes a positive difference in the lives of the staff and the community*



# GOAL #1

## *Improve Regional Decision Making by Providing Leadership and Consensus Building on Key Plans and Policies*

Objectives	Strategies
<p>Create and facilitate a collaborative and cooperative environment to produce forward thinking regional plans</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Produce high quality planning documents and reports which are approved by the Regional Council and which constitute the basis for regional policy leadership.</li> <li>2. Build a strong communications network, effectively utilizing state-of-the-art technology and promoting information sharing.</li> <li>3. Establish initiatives which bolster the ability and skills of the Regional Council and SCAG staff to understand, articulate and utilize emerging ideas, policies and trends.</li> <li>4. Maintain transparency in all aspects of Agency's regional planning work.</li> <li>5. Conduct public participation outreach to general public, stakeholders and other interested parties regarding agency programs and initiatives, and to meet federal and state statutory requirements.</li> </ol>
<p>Develop external communications and media strategy to promote partnerships, build consensus and foster inclusiveness in the decision making process</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a comprehensive procedure for coordinating and disseminating information to external audiences and agency stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Ensure that all agency stakeholders can clearly articulate SCAG's purpose, role and responsibilities.</li> <li>3. Assess effectiveness of communications strategies and tactics annually.</li> <li>4. Establish and support a cadre of subject matter experts, including elected officials and SCAG staff, who will serve as spokespersons for transportation, housing and environmental subjects.</li> </ol>
<p>Provide practical solutions for moving new ideas forward</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff will provide objective implementation options to fully assess pros and cons of policy implementation.</li> <li>2. Seek input from stakeholders and experts during the formulation and development of planning documents and reports.</li> </ol>

## GOAL #2

### *Obtain Regional Transportation Infrastructure Funding and Promote Legislative Solutions for Regional Planning Priorities*

Objectives	Strategies
Identify new infrastructure funding opportunities with state, federal and private partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop, monitor or support state legislation that promotes increased investment in transportation programs in Southern California.</li><li>2. Work with stakeholders to seek increased investment in transportation programs.</li><li>3. Develop, monitor or support federal legislation that promotes increased investment in transportation programs in Southern California.</li><li>4. Work with stakeholders to secure increased federal participation in unfunded programs.</li><li>5. Work with DOT and Congressional members to support proposed funding initiatives.</li></ol>
Identify and support legislative initiatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Work with Legislators and other affected stakeholders to support legislative initiatives.</li></ol>
Maximize use of existing funding by working with state and federal regulators to streamline project delivery requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Document examples of project delivery delays and related costs impacts applied to implementation of RTP.</li><li>2. Work with Federal DOT on potential ideas for further delegating authority for better and more flexible planning practices.</li><li>3. Working with other impacted agencies, seek potential legislative clarification to maximize available funding by providing more delegated authority in the project delivery approval process.</li></ol>

# GOAL #3

## *Enhance the Agency's Long Term Financial Stability and Fiscal Management*

Objectives	Strategies
Maximize available resources and funds to the fullest extent possible	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify new funding opportunities.</li> <li>2. Improve the flexibility of using Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) funds.</li> </ol>
Maintain adequate working capital to support Planning and Operations in accordance with SCAG's Investment Policy guidelines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage monthly cash requirements to minimize operating account balance and maximize funds available for investment.</li> <li>2. Increase agency reserves.</li> </ol>
Implement agency-wide and user defined budget variance and financial performance reporting system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install new FMIS System.</li> <li>2. Enhance agency wide budget development process.</li> <li>3. Update existing and implement new financial administrative procedures.</li> <li>4. Develop agency-wide budget variance reports.</li> <li>5. Issue financial performance statistics.</li> </ol>
Optimize Procurement Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop multi-year procurement plan.</li> <li>2. Develop procurement management plans.</li> <li>3. Ensure communication and training meets end users needs.</li> <li>4. Develop procurement process performance measurement statistics.</li> </ol>

# GOAL #4

## *Develop, Maintain and Promote the Utilization of State of the Art Models, Information Systems and Communication Technologies*

Objectives	Strategies
Develop and maintain planning models that support regional planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop, maintain, and optimize planning models that meet regulatory requirements.</li> <li>2. Research and develop state of the art planning models to address current and emerging planning issues including climate change, land use and transportation interactions, micro-level transportation behaviors, etc.</li> <li>3. Develop and maintain “Top of the Class” modeling capabilities at SCAG.</li> </ol>
Develop, maintain and enhance data and information to support planning and decision making in a timely and effective manner	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify data/information needs internally as well as for SCAG members and stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Develop data/information policies on inventory, acquisition, quality, and information and cost sharing.</li> <li>3. Use advanced technology to maintain, process and integrate data, to improve data accessibility, utilization and visualization.</li> <li>4. Develop data and information to support planning, modeling and assessment programs and initiatives.</li> </ol>
Maintain a leadership role in the modeling and planning data/GIS communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be an active participant in setting national, state and regional modeling and planning data/GIS direction and policy.</li> <li>2. By enhancing technical capability, provide timely and quality service to SCAG members and the Southern California modeling and planning data/GIS community.</li> <li>3. Improve the Region’s modeling practice by coordinating national, state, regional and local modeling and planning data/GIS programs.</li> </ol>
Integrate advanced information and communication technologies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide easy-to-use web systems and high-performance databases that increase efficiency and foster regional communication.</li> <li>2. Equip headquarters and regional offices with modern technology, including videoconferencing and webcasting, to improve governance and collaboration among SCAG staff and partners.</li> <li>3. Provide highly effective program management, financial and human resources systems to generate actionable data for decision-makers and meet all funding and accounting requirements.</li> <li>4. Adopt green computing technologies that minimize environmental impacts.</li> <li>5. Provide communication systems that promote “anywhere computing” to reduce travel among staff, members, partners and consultants.</li> <li>6. Continuously evaluate system effectiveness and when warranted, adopt emerging technologies to enable improvement of SCAG planning, operations and management.</li> </ol>

# GOAL #5

## *Optimize Organizational Efficiency and Cultivate an Engaged Workforce*

Objectives	Strategies
Define the process by which the Strategic Plan is integrated into SCAG's day-to-day operations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create annual business/operations plan following adoption of Strategic Plan.</li> <li>2. Incorporate Strategic Plan goals and objectives into Regional Council decision-making and communication processes.</li> <li>3. Incorporate Performance Agreements throughout organization that link at all levels.</li> <li>4. Actively monitor strategic plan implementation.</li> </ol>
Identify and advocate methods to increase the free flow of information between staff, RC and Policy Committee Members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff and RC/Policy Committee members will receive appropriate information, in a timely fashion, necessary to be effective in their roles.</li> <li>2. Develop and implement a communication strategy between Management and Staff that facilitates trust and mutual respect.</li> <li>3. Develop and implement a communication strategy between RC/Policy Committee members and Staff that facilitates trust and mutual respect and fosters increased engagement in regional planning.</li> </ol>
Identify and advocate informal methods to share information that improve team building, camaraderie and relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold brown bag lunch presentations to periodically discuss regional issues and other related topics.</li> <li>2. Hold periodic staff events to increase informal communications and information sharing through extracurricular events.</li> <li>3. Develop a "buddy system" for new employees.</li> <li>4. Develop a mentor program for less experienced employees to support more formalized succession planning.</li> </ol>
Define the roles and responsibilities at all levels of the organization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct thorough study of current roles and responsibilities of Departments, Divisions and staff, and related practices.</li> <li>2. Identify areas to increase efficiency and foster collaboration and implement necessary changes.</li> </ol>
Invest in employee development process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide tools, resources and support for effective employee development across the agency.</li> <li>2. Train managers to actively encourage external relations activities for presentations, articles, papers, etc. for staff.</li> </ol>
Enhance Project Management Practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Document SCAG's standardized project management practices.</li> <li>2. Provide all project managers with applicable training and skill development opportunities.</li> <li>3. Improve project management practices as needed and communicate changes as they occur.</li> <li>4. Improve progress reporting including percent complete calculations on a monthly basis.</li> </ol>

# STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

**T**his Strategic Plan will be SCAG's compass for the next three to five years while keeping the agency's energy and resources focused on what is important and what we have set out to accomplish. The Plan will align our policy decisions and actions with our resource utilization. We will use this plan to communicate our identity, workflow and goals. This plan will be integrated into our organizational and individual performance, management and reward system.

The work performed in completing the Vision, Mission, Values, Goals, Objectives and Strategies reflects a commitment to the future and to developing new concepts that will position SCAG for long-term high performance. However, actualizing success hinges on successful implementation.

Following the General Assembly's adoption of the plan in May 2009, Executive Management will work collaboratively with staff to develop Action Steps and Key Performance Indicators for implementation in Fiscal Year 2009/2010. A Business Plan will be developed by August 2009 that will align the agency's fiscal resources with the Strategic Plan. This Business Plan will be updated annually. The Strategic Plan will be periodically reviewed to ensure that any future needs are addressed in a timely manner. Further, the agency's performance, management and reward system will be periodically reviewed and aligned with the Strategic Plan and the Business Plan.

Developed by	Strategy
Guidance Team Advance Team Agency Wide Workshops	Vision Mission Core Values
Approved by	
Executive Management Regional Council	



Developed by	Strategy
Management Guidance Team Task Teams	Goals Objectives Strategies
Approved by	
Regional Council	



Developed by	Strategy
SCAG Management and Staff	Actions Key Performance Indicators
Approved by	
SCAG Management	



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**Financial Management:** Ranjini Zucker, Chair; Frank Wen, Co-Chair  
Joann Africa, Mike Ainsworth, Naresh Amatya, Peter Brandenburg, Debbie Dillon, Ted Dorjee, Pablo Gutierrez, Jacob Lieb, Huasha Liu, Javier Minjares, Sharon Neely, Judy Owens, Basil Panas, Alex Yu

**Regional Council Advisors:** Hon. Glen Duncan, Hon. Melanie Fesmire

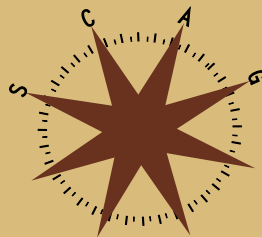
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A GUIDE TO THE FUTURE

# Strategic

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## PLAN



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
**ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS**  
*Resolving Regional Challenges*