SCAG

2027 Regional Conference & General Assembly

Sustainability Awards

Guidelines

Submissions Due: Dec. 18, 2026

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Awards Summary

For more than 15 years, SCAG has highlighted excellence in sustainable planning and projects across Southern California through the annual Sustainability Awards. The SCAG Sustainability Awards recognize projects for outstanding contributions to the goals and policies of Connect SoCal, SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, and for progressing toward a more mobile, sustainable, and prosperous region.

To better reflect the region's evolving priorities and the diversity of Southern California, SCAG has revamped the award categories to recognize excellence in sustainability in every county in the SCAG region.

SCAG will present eight Sustainability Awards, including six County Sustainability Awards, one for each county of the SCAG region, the best project demonstrating equity, and the best overall project. Every nomination will also be considered for the Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability Award. No separate application is required for the outstanding achievement award. The winners will be recognized at the 2027 Regional Council Conference and General Assembly at the JW Marriott Resort & Spa in Palm Desert on May 6, 2027.

The SCAG Sustainability Awards are open to governmental agencies. Non-governmental agencies such as community-based organizations, nonprofits, and universities can apply in partnership with governmental agencies.

Awards Timeline

General timeline for the 2027 Sustainability Awards

- Nov. 5: Call for nominations opens.
- Dec. 18: Call for nominations closes.
- January 2027: Jury evaluation begins.
- February 2027: Jury evaluation ends and notification of winners begins.
- February 2027 through April 2027: Winners participate in a video production of awarded projects.
- April 2027: Awardees will register for the 2027 Regional Conference and General Assembly.
- May 6, 2027: Media embargo lifts and Sustainability Awards Luncheon held at the 2027 Regional Conference and General Assembly.

Award Categories

SCAG will present eight 2027 Sustainability Awards: six County Sustainability Awards, the Carmen Ramirez Award for Equity, and the Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability Award. Every nomination is considered for its respective County Sustainability Award, as well as the Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability Award and the Carmen Ramirez Award for Equity. No separate application is required for the outstanding achievement and equity awards.

Award Type	Award	Number of Awards	Selection Basis
Category	Carmen Ramirez Award for Equity	1	Best project demonstrating equity, regardless of geography
	Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability Award	1	Best overall project, regardless of geography
County	County Sustainability Awards: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura	6	Selected project in each county of the SCAG region
	Total	8	

County Sustainability Awards

Each application for a County Sustainability Award should describe how the project, program, or policy aligns with Connect SoCal goals and objectives and one or more of the four Connect SoCal pillars. Possible examples are included under each pillar below. Applications will be reviewed for how strongly they align with the evaluation criteria and do not need to align with multiple pillars to be successful.

MOBILITY

Project, program, plan, or policy that improves mobility, accessibility, connectivity, or safety while advancing sustainable transportation choices. Examples may include active transportation, clean mobility, transportation demand management), systems and technology innovation, multimodal access, and other strategies that reduce emissions and expand equitable transportation options.

COMMUNITIES

Project, program, plan, or policy that creates vibrant, complete, and inclusive communities through housing, placemaking, community development, or public space improvements. Examples may include efforts that support affordability, livability, walkability, resilience, equitable access to opportunity, and stronger connections between land use, transportation, and community amenities.

ENVIRONMENT

Project, program, plan, or policy that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, strengthens climate resilience, protects natural resources, or advances environmental sustainability. Examples may include climate action or adaptation, clean energy, green infrastructure, conservation, carbon reduction, public health, and other strategies that help communities respond to environmental challenges.

ECONOMY

Project, program, plan, or policy that promotes economic vitality, resilience, and opportunity through investment, innovation, workforce development, business support, or strategic partnerships. Examples may include funding and financing initiatives, job creation, regional competitiveness, and other efforts that align economic growth with sustainability and equity goals.

Equity Award

CARMEN RAMIREZ AWARD FOR EQUITY

Honors a project, program, plan, policy, or collaboration that advances equity and fosters healthy, livable, sustainable, and economically resilient communities. Efforts may include removing systemic barriers, supporting meaningful community engagement, expanding access to opportunity, improving outcomes for traditionally marginalized, vulnerable, or underrepresented populations, and advancing environmental and social justice through inclusive and collaborative approaches.

Outstanding Award

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN SUSTAINABILITY

Honors a project, program, plan, or policy that exemplifies holistic sustainability by advancing goals across mobility, communities, environment, economy, and equity. Efforts may include cross-sector collaboration, innovative and integrated solutions, strong partnerships, and exemplary leadership that advance Connect SoCal's vision for a more resilient, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable Southern California. All nominations are automatically considered for this award.

Project Requirements

The SCAG Sustainability Awards are open to governmental agencies. Non-governmental agencies such as community-based organizations, nonprofits, and universities can apply in partnership with governmental agencies. Applicants are also encouraged to submit a joint entry for projects that span multiple agencies, sectors, and geographies. **Submittals include projects completed or adopted between Jan. 1, 2023, and March 1, 2027.**

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Criteria Description	Max Points
Direct Benefits and Outcomes	Extent to which the initiative demonstrates actual or projected targeted benefits in line with one or more of the four Connect SoCal pillars (e.g., GHG reductions, increased housing access, improved safety, economic resilience, stronger equity outcomes, etc.).	40
Innovation & Transferability	Use of new, creative, and/or adaptive approaches that align with one or more of the four Connect SoCal pillars, and Potential to be replicated or inform best practices in other communities.	20
Equity & Inclusion	Extent to which the initiative advances equity, benefits underserved communities, and engages diverse stakeholders in planning and implementation, and Extent to which it addresses historic disparities and builds long-term inclusion.	20
Co-benefits & Alignment	Extent to which the project generates additional co-benefits (economic, environment, mobility, and/or community) that align with Connect SoCal goals.	20
Total Max Points		100

Application Instructions

Applications must be submitted by Dec. 18 at 11:59 p.m.

The application can be found on the SCAG website.

All nominations will be considered for the County Sustainability Award for the project's primary county, the Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability Award, and the Carmen Ramirez Award for Equity.

Application Components

Complete applications will include the following:

PART 1: NOMINEE/PROJECT INFORMATION

- Title of project
- Project adoption, construction, or completion date
- City/agency/jurisdiction
- Primary county where project is located (select one, even if the project spans multiple counties)
- Project website (if applicable)
- Primary contact
- Secondary contact
- Indicate if the nomination is for the County Sustainability Awards or the Carmen Ramirez Equity Award
- If you indicated the nomination is for the County Sustainability Awards
    - Select the pillar that best fits your project
    - Select any additional pillars relevant to your project

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF NOMINATION AND ALIGNMENT

- Please provide a brief summary of the nominated project, program, plan, or policy and describe how it supports Connect SoCal, sustainability, and aligns with your selected pillar(s), or the Equity Award. If the project, program, plan, or policy has received SCAG funding, please indicate that in the summary (1,000 words max).

PART 3: KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Please describe specific key details on the project, program, plan, or policy, such as planned, targeted, or achieved outcomes, benefits and co-benefits, and any key collaborations/partnerships that have been crucial (1,000 words max).

PART 4: VULNERABLE/DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Please list how the project, program, plan, or policy benefits and/or includes traditionally marginalized, vulnerable, or underrepresented communities (1,000 words max).

PART 5: PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS RECOGNITION (OPTIONAL)

- If you would like to, you have the option to identify key collaborators/partners that have played an important role in the initiative, such as other agencies, consultants, community-based organizations, etc. Should your application be awarded, these key collaborators would also be recognized. This is completely optional and does not affect application scoring since collaborations/partnerships are included in the Part 3 (Key Characteristics) response.

PART 6: UPLOADS

- A total of eight photos or supporting graphics in JPG format. The maximum size for each upload is one megabyte. Please include a brief one-sentence description for each image in the field below the file upload. Winning projects will be asked to provide higher resolution images and may be used to make a video to be presented at the awards program and SCAG's Regional Conference and General Assembly, in print materials on SCAG's website, and in case studies.
- Letters of support (optional): Submit no more than two letters of support from organizations and individuals involved in the project indicating why the project is worthy of an award. Letters of support must be on the supporting agency's letterhead and in PDF format.
- Any additional links (optional) that may help the jury panel better understand the project. These can be promotional videos, project websites, etc. Please separate with line breaks.



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AJ1 27-426-STNBLT-0145-2026.10.29