

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

## JANUARY 2014

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### **Federal Certification of SCAG MPO/TMA Status**

As a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/Transportation Management Agency (TMA), SCAG undergoes a certification process every four years. SCAG was last certified in April of 2010 and has been notified by the Federal Department of Transportation (FHWA and FTA) that the agency's 2014 quadrennial certification process has been initiated pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 1607. The certification review process encompasses all areas of SCAG's business including, but not limited to, SCAG's planning and programming processes, organization structure, policy board, planning boundary, contracts and procurement processes, public participation plan, etc. Typically, the certification process begins with SCAG receiving a written notice of the process initiation along with a series of written desk audit questions from FHWA and FTA. SCAG submits written responses to each of the desk audit questions within a specified time frame.

For the 2014 certification, written responses were due to FHWA/FTA by the end of December 2013. A second step in the process consists of interviews with a select number of Regional Councilmembers and representatives from transit operators by the federal DOT representatives, as well as a formal public listening session where members of the public, interested parties and SCAG's stakeholders are invited to comment on SCAG's processes and practices. The final step in the process is the reporting of the findings and issuance of certification jointly by FHWA and FTA, which will remain in effect for the next four years. Based on the current schedule, SCAG's 2014 certification is expected to be issued by April 2014.

### **SCAG Sustainability Planning Grant Program Update**

SCAG has begun the effort to initiate all 73 approved sustainability projects proposed by member jurisdictions under the most recent Sustainability Planning Grants call for proposals. All city/county applicants have been notified of their awards. Consultant Request-for-Proposals for Sustainability Planning Grant projects have been released for 14 projects and procurements are being prepared for the remaining projects for which funding is currently available. Planning work on Sustainability projects will begin in January 2014. All 73 projects procurements will be initiated by the end of 2014 (pending available funding for Phase 3 projects).

### **Cities/Counties 5th Cycle Housing Element Adoption Deadline**

The 5th cycle RHNA was adopted by the Regional Council in October 2012. Subsequently, local jurisdictions are required to adopt housing elements as part of their general plans, and submit draft and adopted elements to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review in compliance with State law. The adoption deadline for the corresponding 5th cycle housing elements by jurisdictions was October 15, 2013. The housing element must plan for projected household growth, or RHNA allocation, through a sites and zoning analysis for the October 2013-2021 planning period. I strongly encourage any jurisdiction that has not yet adopted their housing element to contact HCD (<http://www.hcd.ca.gov/contact.html>). Local governments on an 8-year Housing Element Planning Period that do not adopt the housing element within 120 calendar days of the due date must revise and adopt the housing element every four years until timely adopting at least two consecutive revisions by the applicable due date.

### **California Active Transportation Program**

On December 11, 2013, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) received a report on the Active Transportation Program Draft Guidelines and adopted the 2014 Fund Estimate. The fund estimate for the 2014 Active Transportation Program is approximately \$124.2 million, which is divided between the state (60%) and regions (40%). The SCAG region's share of the total is approximately \$25 million. SCAG submitted testimony during the meeting to encourage the CTC to program currently available FY 14 federal funds without any further delay, in order to demonstrate progress and preserve Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) during the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP 21) Reauthorization. SCAG is collaborating with the county transportation commissions to develop a joint-comment letter to provide feedback on the CTC Draft Guidelines. The CTC will have a hearing on the Draft Guidelines in Southern California on January 22 (10 AM-2 PM at LA Metro Boardroom). The joint-comment letter will be discussed during the January 2 SCAG Transportation Committee meeting and distributed to the Regional Council under separate cover. The comments will focus on modifications to increase the competitiveness of Southern California agencies for statewide funds, reduce administrative burden for SCAG and project sponsors, provide greatest possible flexibility for implementation of the regional competitions, ensure timelines are feasible, and support the state and region in demonstrating progress in advance of MAP 21 Reauthorization to preserve TAP funding.

## SCAG E-Voting System Update

Beginning January 1, all legislative bodies of local agencies in California, including Metropolitan Planning Organizations, must publicly report any action taken as well as the vote or abstention on that action of each member present. These new requirements are imposed by Senate Bill 751 ("SB 751"), signed by Governor Brown in September 2013, as an amendment to the Ralph M. Brown Act. The bill seeks to improve the ability of the public to monitor how members voted on a particular action. SCAG regularly reports in the minutes all Board actions including noes and abstentions. As I previously reported, SCAG will now need to record each member who is present and how they voted on each item, including the consent items.

Given SCAG Regional Council Board size (now 86 members); SCAG's Contracts team has initiated a competitive bid process for an electronic voting (e-voting) system to ensure compliance with these changes. An e-voting system will allow SCAG to maintain and provide accurate and detailed voting results. Bidder proposals were received in late December. The selected voting system will allow for a large number of voting members, unassigned seating, offsite usage (such as GA proceedings), high accuracy, ease of administration and voting verification by the participants. The selection, contract and system testing is expected to take at least two additional months. If a reasonable alternative is found and the negotiations and testing go smoothly, live voting will commence in March or April. Until the automated system is successfully implemented, SCAG staff will ensure that an accurate, individual vote count is manually taken and reported for all meetings to which the Brown Act applies.

## MAP-21 Implementation: FTA State of Good Repair and Bus and Bus Facilities Formula Grants

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act ("MAP-21"; P.L. 112-141) made significant changes to Federal Transit Agency (FTA) programs that impact Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) programming and FTA grant approval processes for grantees in the SCAG region. Under MAP-21, SCAG is the Designated Recipient for two new FTA grant programs:

- **State of Good Repair Grants, 49 U.S.C. 5337.** This program provides funding for capital assistance projects for the replacement and rehabilitation of existing fixed guide-way and high intensity motorbus systems. As the Designated Recipient, SCAG entered into agreements with the respective county transportation commissions in late December and provided notifications of Section 5337 funding allocations. The total amount apportioned for Fiscal Year 2012/13 is \$108,119,739 for large urbanized areas in which SCAG is the Designated Recipient.
- **Bus and Bus Facilities Formula Grants, 49 U.S.C. 5339.** This program replaces the Bus and Bus Facilities Discretionary Program and provides funding for capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment as well as to construct bus-related facilities. As the Designated Recipient, SCAG entered into agreements with the respective county transportation commissions, and provided notifications of Section 5339 funding allocations. Due to grant program requirements, SCAG must apply directly for the funds and reimburse sub-recipients. SCAG staff anticipates issuing a Call for Applications in early 2014. The total amount apportioned to SCAG for Fiscal Year 2012/13 is \$31,997,738.

For both new programs, all the grant amounts are pass-through funds to other agencies. While neither of the two programs provide SCAG with grant administration funds and as result SCAG will use local funds to recover related program costs for each grant, these are important and beneficial programs for the region.

## Bottom-Up City/County Local Input Process for the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)

A critical component to the success of the 2016 RTP/SCS will be the participation and cooperation of all 197 local government partners within the SCAG Region. To this end, SCAG will ensure that all local governments are fully informed of the planning process and have clear and adequate opportunities to provide input, thereby emphasizing local control and enabling regional collaboration. In December and early January, SCAG completed sending out its draft socioeconomic projections (population, household, and employment for years 2012, 2020, 2035, and 2040) at both the jurisdictional and transportation analysis zone (TAZ) levels for local review. This information was provided as a subsection of SCAG's revised Data/Map Books, which have been prepared for each local jurisdiction and represent the product of local input received thus far. We ask that local jurisdictions review this material and submit any changes by May. Also included in this package is a Local Implementation Survey which requests information on local policies that have been adopted or are in process to be adopted that contribute to achieving the goals of the 2012 RTP/SCS. Additional sections also seek details on recently adopted sustainability plans and local open space plans, policies and approaches. To further facilitate this process, SCAG staff will coordinate with each subregion to meet individually with local jurisdictions in the months of January, February and March to solicit input and answer questions as needed.

## **SCAG Member Agencies GIS Services Program Update**

In December 2013, the SCAG GIS Services team welcomed our newest participant, the City of Beaumont. Our team also extends gratitude to the cities of Indio and Baldwin Park for entrusting us to bring more service to their constituents in the coming months. December marked the end of SCAG's GIS trainings for the 2013 calendar year with the trainings serving over 50 participants for the month. Since late August 2013, SCAG staff has conducted 21 trainings in the cities of Alhambra, Camarillo, El Centro, Indio, Los Angeles, Palmdale, Riverside and Victorville. Details on SCAG GIS Services are available at <http://gisdata.scag.ca.gov>.

## **Draft Primary National Freight Network Designation**

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) includes the development of a National Freight Strategic Plan (NFSP) in consultation with states and other stakeholders, as well as the establishment of a national freight network (NFN) to assist states in strategically directing resources toward improved system performance. On November 19, 2013, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) released the draft Primary Freight Network (PFN) as part of the NFN designation process. The statutory language in MAP-21 limits the designation to highways only and caps total mileage at 27,000 centerline miles of existing roadways, resulting in an incomplete network nationally. Out of the 27,000 miles initial draft PFN designations, California's share of designation totals about 2,789 miles while the SCAG region totals about 1,310 centerline miles. Recognizing statutory constraints and limitations of the 27,000 mile PFN, U.S. DOT staff employed a designation methodology resulting in a more comprehensive network of approximately 41,000 centerline miles to fill in some of the gaps. SCAG staff is currently commenting on the draft PFN before the DOT comment deadline, working in coordination with regional partners and the California Department of Transportation. A more detailed report on this subject will be discussed at the January 2nd Transportation Committee meeting.

## **International Collaboration with delegation from the Department of Housing and Urban Development of the Hubei Provincial Government in China**

On December 3, 2013 SCAG hosted a delegation from the Department of Housing and Urban Development of the Hubei Provincial Government in China. SCAG staff presented on the agency's governance structure, cooperation and integrated regional planning programs. The groups also discussed Southern California's urban and suburban growth, land use, transportation, air quality and SCAG's geographic/socioeconomic data resources and our modeling programs.

## **International Collaboration with the Presidential Committee on Regional Development (PCRD) of South Korea**

On December 19, 2013 SCAG hosted a delegation from the Presidential Committee on Regional Development (PCRD) of South Korea and presented on regional and local collaboration in the Southern California Region. PCRD of South Korea advises the President of South Korea on major policies for an effective promotion of regional development. PCRD promotes harmonized territorial development and use, and balanced development among regions.