

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ECONOMIC SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

More than 400 leaders in business, public policy, housing, and education joined us online for the 11th Annual Southern California Economic Summit. The program took a serious look at the strategies needed for building back a strong, inclusive Southern California economy and featured forecasts from the region's top economists.

U.S. Representative Karen Bass delivered an opening address that laid out an optimistic view about what is to come for Southern California. Bina Shrimali from the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco gave a [presentation on the importance of building a healthy and inclusive economy](#), one in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

Wallace Walrod, SCAG's Chief Economic Advisor, provided a [comprehensive overview of the region's economy](#), noting that much progress has been made in the recovery from the pandemic so far, but much work is left to do. The [Regional Briefing Book](#) on the Southern California economy was also released to provide the first step toward a more comprehensive framework for an inclusive economic recovery.

The panel session—moderated by Kate Gordon, Director of the Governor's Office of Planning & Research and featuring Costa Mesa City Manager, Lori Ann Farrell Harrison, Long Beach City Manager, Tom Modica and Cherian George of Fitch Ratings—led to a lively discussion about what cities need to be considering and why when it comes to planning for a resilient local economy and government. The panel was followed by breakout discussions about improving access to good jobs, led by Karthick Ramakrishnan and Michael Bates of UC Riverside; access to affordable housing, led by Cecilia Estolano of Estolano Advisors; and access to transportation, led by Evelyn Blumenberg of UCLA.

In the summit's keynote address, three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times columnist, Thomas Friedman made a case for reimagining the intersection of government, private industry, and other stakeholders to come together to create solutions. He stressed the need for "complex adaptive coalitions" as changes in climate, new technology and globalization further complicate the problems we all face. Like U.S. Representative Bass, Mr. Friedman ended his address on a hopeful note and noted that inclusivity is necessary for our cities, region, state, and country to thrive.

Sharing the important messages from the summit, we had news coverage from outlets such as the [Los Angeles Daily News](#), [KVCR](#), and [Spectrum News 1](#). Conference materials are available [on the event webpage](#).

REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

SCAG will be hearing all appeals filed by jurisdictions throughout the month of January. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Appeals Board will meet on January 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 19, and 22 to hear the 52 appeals filed on 48 jurisdictions. Based on the appeals decisions, the Appeals Board will meet in February to make a regional determination and develop a proposed Final RHNA Allocation. The Final RHNA Allocation is planned for adoption at the Regional Council meeting scheduled for March 4, 2021. Agendas for the appeals hearings, all filed appeals, and submitted comments can be viewed on the [RHNA webpage](#).

SCAG PROVIDES DATA-DRIVEN TOOLS FOR LOCAL JURISDICTIONS AND HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATES

SCAG's Regional Data Platform (RDP), currently in development, will provide a system of tools for SCAG and local jurisdictions to access data necessary for local general plan development and general decision-making by monitoring transportation, land development trends, housing and economic growth, and sustainability conditions. Recently, SCAG and Esri completed outreach interviews of ten representative jurisdictions to provide direction for the development of the RDP. Specifically, the interviews focused on: 1) Understanding current

workflows and challenges experienced by staff involved in General Plan updates; 2) Identifying specific technology features that could improve the General Plan update process; and 3) Identifying key datasets used in General Plan updates, and what data is desired to improve planning.

Based on this feedback, the RDP team prioritized the development of the Housing Element Parcel (HELPR) Tool, which will be the first in a suite of resources to be provided through RDP. Launched on Dec. 8, the [HELPR tool](#) is a web-mapping tool to help local jurisdictions and stakeholders understand local land use, site opportunities, and environmental sensitivities for aligning housing planning with the California Department of Housing and Community Development's 6th cycle housing element requirements. SCAG and Esri are continuing outreach and updates to HELPR are anticipated through Spring 2021 following receipt of additional feedback. A recording of the Toolbox Tuesday training session on the HELPR tool is [available here](#).

On Dec. 15, 2020, SCAG and Esri conducted a special briefing with all participants involved in the local outreach interviews to provide key findings, follow up on outstanding questions, and discuss the next steps in the RDP developmental process. The findings were categorized into three major focus areas, which are long-range planning workflows by phase, housing element, and data. For next steps, SCAG is communicating with the ten interviewed local jurisdictions to identify six pilot jurisdictions for the RDP Configuration and Testing phase.

Apart from the wide selections of tools that will be available through the RDP, complementary Esri software licenses—ArcGIS Online, Pro (Standard), Urban, Business Analyst, and Hub—are available for jurisdictions to provide additional technical assistance as part of the local information services. Please visit the [SCAG RDP information](#) page for more on the RDP and visit [SCAG's RDP Licensing Request page](#) to request Esri software licenses.

GO HUMAN UPDATE

SAFE, RESILIENT & LOCALLY GROWN: A TRAFFIC SAFETY SERIES

In November 2020, SCAG's *Go Human* campaign, along with the Automobile Club of Southern California (AAA), hosted a two-part virtual webinar series, *Safe, Resilient & Locally Grown: Community-Based Traffic Safety Solutions During a Pandemic*. With over 175 participants, the panelists and attendees explored innovative, resiliency-focused strategies for improving traffic safety conditions while reducing COVID-19 transmission. Moderators included LA Walks and Public Matters and panelists included AAA, Safe Transportation Research & Education Center, City Fabrick, 3 Revolutions Future Mobility Program, the City of Costa Mesa, FastLinkDTLA, California Transportation Commission, and Central City Neighborhood Partners.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AWARDEES

In 2017, SCAG's *Go Human* campaign initiated a strategy to grow its campaign and support the production of housing by initiating partnerships with Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC) applicants. During the application development process, *Go Human* encouraged applicants to strengthen their proposals by including an active transportation safety and encouragement element using *Go Human* artwork files. In December 2020, *Go Human* identified 12 AHSC projects from the program's five funding rounds that included a *Go Human* element. Awardees will expand the reach of *Go Human* with outdoor and digital advertisements placed strategically near new housing developments. These 12 AHSC awards, made more competitive with the inclusion of leveraged *Go Human* resources, bring more than \$280 million of funding for housing to the region, with the majority invested in disadvantaged communities.

SCAG SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM UPDATE

The Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) is SCAG's technical assistance program providing planning resources to local agencies to support multimodal transportation, housing, and sustainable land use planning. To date, two separate calls for applications have been released and an additional call for applications will be released next month. Information about each respective call for applications is provided below:

- **Active Transportation & Safety (AT&S):** SCAG released the AT&S call for applications in September 2020 and extended the deadline through Dec. 11, 2020, in response to staff constraints due to COVID-19. SCAG conducted 30 one-on-one coaching sessions to support local agencies in developing applications and received 40 applications. Staff will present the project list for approval at the May 2021 Regional Council meeting.

- **Housing & Sustainable Development (HSD):** SCAG opened the HSD call for applications in November 2020 and extended the deadline to apply through Jan. 29, 2021. Staff held an Application Webinar on Dec. 2, 2020, with more than 110 participants and has held eight one-on-one coaching sessions to support application development.
- **Smart Cities & Mobility Innovations (SCMI):** SCAG will release the third call for applications in February 2021. SCAG held a Listening Session on Dec. 7, 2020, with more than 25 participants for stakeholders to provide input on project types and program guidelines. The feedback was incorporated into the program guidelines and staff will seek approval for this call for applications at the February 2021 Regional Council meeting.

More details about the overall program can be found on the [SCP webpage](#), including links to the online applications, program guidelines and fact sheets, and other resources for applicants.

2020 SOCIAL CLIMATE ADAPTATION FRAMEWORK OUTREACH CONCLUDES

Over Summer and Fall 2020, SCAG conducted a series of Southern California Climate Adaptation Framework (CAF) presentations, sharing adaptation planning tools and resources ready for use by jurisdictions across the SCAG region. Resources include a [library of general plan model policies](#) to assist jurisdictions with updates to General Plan Element updates, [outreach strategies and templates](#) to help with climate change messaging, and the [SoCal Climate Adaptation Planning Guide](#), which will help jurisdictions through the adaptation planning process from beginning to end. The 2020 outreach for the CAF concluded with a joint *Climate Adaptation Framework & Housing Element Parcel Tool* Toolbox Tuesday session on Dec. 8, 2020, and a *Joint Meeting of the Public Health, Sustainable Communities, and Climate Adaptation Working Groups* on Dec. 17, 2020. Both gatherings provided an opportunity for SCAG to highlight the intersection of CAF adaptation planning resources and scenario modeling analyses with other SCAG efforts, such as assistance with General Plan Safety, Environmental, and Housing Element updates; inclusion of regionally environmentally sensitive areas into the HELPR tool; research on the impacts of climate change and extreme heat on public health; and upcoming funding opportunities through the Sustainable Communities Program. Please visit the [CAF webpage](#) for more information and the suite of adaptation planning resources. Materials from the *Climate Adaptation Framework & Housing Element Parcel Tool* training can be found on the [Toolbox Tuesday page](#). Materials from the *Joint Meeting of the Public Health, Sustainable Communities, and Climate Adaptation Working Groups* can be found on the [Regional Planning Working Groups past agendas page](#).

CONNECT SOCIAL STAKEHOLDER DEBRIEF MEETING

On Dec. 17, 2020, SCAG held a meeting with technical stakeholders that participated in the development process of Connect SoCal to discuss lessons learned. With more than 50 participants, the insights and recommendations will be used by SCAG staff to inform the early planning for the development cycle for the 2024 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.

SCAG'S DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING INITIATIVE

As part of its \$1.3 million Disadvantaged Communities Active Transportation Planning Initiative, SCAG has created a template for low-resourced and disadvantaged communities to develop active transportation plans. SCAG has been working with seven disadvantaged communities across the region to inform and operationalize the template and to make it available across the region and the state. Last month, three of the jurisdictions—the Cities of Perris, Adelanto, and Calipatria—adopted their Active Transportation Plans. Plan adoption for the remaining four jurisdictions is anticipated in January 2021.

SCAG TO COMPLETE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION STUDY

On Dec. 9, 2020, SCAG kicked off an Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station Study that will help 18 cities in the region deploy more EV charging. The project will benefit the entire SCAG region with a region-wide site suitability analysis for EV charging that will help identify the best locations for EV charging stations. The 18 cities included in the project will additionally benefit from detailed site analyses to help prepare specific locations in the cities for EV charging stations so they can take advantage of grant funding opportunities and work with EV charging providers. The project will also help tackle policy barriers to EV charging and include an education campaign and charging for owners of multi-family dwellings, city staff, and the general public. This work is one of the first programs implementing SCAG's Accelerated Electrification strategy from the Connect SoCal regional plan.

SETTING SAFE SPEED LIMITS ON URBAN STREETS

Last month, SCAG partnered with the National Association of City Transportation Professionals (NACTO) to hold a workshop on recently-released [guidance](#) from NACTO that gives practitioners a detailed, context-sensitive method to set safe speed limits on urban streets. The workshop provided more than 70 participants with an understanding of the safe systems approach and a consistent, rational, scalable approach to urban speed limit setting, from citywide strategies to corridor-by-corridor methods, based on easy-to-study street characteristics.

SCAG RECEIVES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION FOR SAFETY TARGET SETTING

In late November 2020, SCAG secured technical assistance from the Federal Highway Administration to develop a data-driven safety target setting methodology and safety planning models. SCAG anticipates the safety models will consider a variety of inputs, including land uses, population growth, vehicle miles traveled, growth, roadway types, and the density of intersections. Currently, there is very little guidance for data-driven target setting, particularly at the metropolitan level. By developing a methodology for safety target setting and testing emerging research in safety planning, SCAG hopes to develop a transferable safety planning approach that could benefit other metropolitan planning organizations in California and across the country. The technical work is anticipated to be completed before the end of fiscal year 2020-21.

SCAG PARTICIPATES IN CALTRANS INNOVATION EXPO

SCAG Mobility Planning and Management staff participated in the inaugural Caltrans Innovation Expo in collaboration with staff from the Caltrans Active Transportation Resource Center to share information about the existing SCAG Active Transportation Database as well as planned improvements and statewide expansion as part of the next phase partnership. The Statewide Active Transportation Database will streamline bicycle and pedestrian counting efforts and provide a valuable resource for planners, engineers, and researchers to analyze active transportation trends. It will also serve as a one-stop-shop for active transportation count data by setting statewide methodologies for counting and storing volumes of active transportation users, establishing statewide consistencies for data collection and reporting, and encouraging all metropolitan planning organizations and local agencies in the state to utilize these methods and tools established to streamline the ongoing and future data collection efforts across California. A recording of the panel session is [available here](#).