

SAVE THE DATE: 53RD ANNUAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Mark your calendars: SCAG's premier annual event is fast approaching. The 53rd Regional Conference and General Assembly will convene on May 3-4 at the Renaissance Esmeralda Indian Wells Resort & Spa in Indian Wells, CA. This conference will bring together Southern California's most influential leaders, innovators and policymakers for collaborative, solution-oriented discussions on the region's greatest challenges. Registration for the 2018 Regional Conference will be available shortly. The event is free for elected officials and city managers in the region. For information about sponsorship opportunities, contact Communications Manager Jeff Liu at liuj@scag.ca.gov.

DEVELOPMENT BEGINS ON SCAG'S RHNA AND 2020 RTP/SCS

In December, SCAG began the initial groundwork to develop the next Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) and the 2020 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (2020 RTP/SCS). SCAG staff have been meeting one-on-one with councils of governments and local cities to outline the process for both, as well as what city data will be needed. SCAG relies on local land use data and anticipated growth trends in order to establish a clear picture of local conditions and how the region is meeting its greenhouse gas reduction goals. More details about SCAG's bottom-up local input and envisioning process is available on the [RTP/SCS website](#).

SCAG/UCLA STUDY REVEALS CAUSES OF FALLING TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

SCAG and the UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies released a report yesterday identifying the causes of transit ridership declines in the region. The research effort found that on a per capita basis, regional transit ridership has been falling since 2007. This decline has affected both bus and rail routes in the region's urban core, which is one of the strongest transit service areas. The overwhelming cause for the ridership decline is a dramatic increase in private automobile ownership in Southern California, with 2.1 million additional vehicles from 2000 to 2015. Vehicle ownership grew disproportionately among those that are most likely to take transit. Correspondingly, our region is once again experiencing dramatic increases in congestion. The millions of new vehicles also presents a major challenge to properly maintain our infrastructure, one that is put at even greater risk given the effort to repeal SB 1. The findings from this study sets the stage for vital policy discussions as we develop the 2020 RTP/SCS. The new study is available in [SCAG's Document Library](#).

SPECIAL WEBINAR ON ASSESSING RISKS FOR MUDSLIDES

To better prepare our member jurisdictions, SCAG is partnering with the Dr. Lucy Jones Center for Science and Society for a special webinar on Monday, Feb. 5 – "Rain after the Fire: Mudslides and Debris Flows." Dr. Lucy Jones, weather forecasters and landslide scientists will provide detailed information and analysis on how hillsides move, especially when it rains after a fire. Whether your city has experienced a recent wildfire or has the potential for one, this special presentation will benefit emergency managers, public works directors and other city officials who plan for and respond to the threat of mudslides and debris flows. For more information or to RSVP for this event, please email Joseph Briglio at briglio@scag.ca.gov.

UPCOMING WORKSHOP ON STATE EMISSION TARGET UPDATES

On Feb. 5, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) will host a public workshop on the SB 375 Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection program, outlining proposed updates to emissions reduction targets for the state's metropolitan planning organizations. The workshop will feature a briefing from CARB staff about proposed changes to the region's goals and strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles, including evaluation methodology. CARB staff will seek public input both on next steps for the target update and on metrics for reporting in an upcoming SB 375 program performance report. The workshop will take place on Monday, Feb. 5, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Caltrans District 7 offices, 100 South Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

SCAG HELPS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS PREPARE FOR UPDATED ENVIRONMENTAL RULES

In November, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research proposed a comprehensive update to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This is the first comprehensive update in many years to this policy, which dictates how environmental impacts are measured and affects virtually all planning and development projects in the state. In order to help ready cities and counties in the region for navigating these new guidelines, SCAG hosted a workshop for local government leaders on Jan. 31 at the Caltrans District 7 Offices.

The workshop featured staff from the Office of Planning and Research, who briefed attendees on the proposed changes and address any questions they might have. The program gave particular attention to one of the most significant changes in the proposed update: the introduction of a new measure for determining the significance of transportation impacts, establishing vehicle miles travelled, or VMT, as the most appropriate metric for assessing land use projects. More information on the proposed update is available [online](#).

PROGRESS UPDATE ON VOLKSWAGEN'S ELECTRIFY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

As part of a settlement between Volkswagen and the California Air Resources Board, the auto manufacturer has committed to making significant investments to support zero-emission vehicles in the state. Through a new company, called "Electrify America," \$800 million will be invested in California's electric vehicle infrastructure over a ten-year period. Electrify America is currently soliciting proposals, recommendations and comments for the second cycle of their [Zero Emission Vehicle Investment Plans](#). SCAG will continue to work with our partners to advocate for investments in our region.

Electrify America will also host a series of brand-neutral "Drive and Learn" events featuring battery-powered electric vehicles, charging station demonstrations and information about electric vehicle incentives available to Southern Californians. SCAG region events will take place on Feb. 16-18 in the City of Carson and on Feb. 21-23 in the City of Mission Viejo. Please contact Clean Cities Coordinator Marco Anderson at anderson@scag.ca.gov if you have further questions.

CONGRATULATIONS TO TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE COMMUNITIES GRANT RECIPIENTS

On Jan. 29, the Strategic Growth Council approved awards of \$35 million to the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and \$35 million to the City of Ontario to fund the implementation of multiple, coordinated projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and benefit disadvantaged communities. Several other applicants in the SCAG region have received planning grants to undertake land use planning and related activities including: Los Angeles County (East Los Angeles), Riverside County (City of Riverside); Coachella Valley Association of Governments (multiple cities); City of Moreno Valley, and Gateway Cities Council of Governments (multiple cities).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCE PILOTS

The Federal Highway Authority (FHWA) is soliciting proposals for the Resilience and Durability Pilots Program, which is designed to develop solutions for reducing the impacts of natural disasters and extreme weather on transportation systems. This FHWA program will award up to eight projects from around the country with grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$250,000 to support the adoption of plans and practices that will improve the resilience of transportation infrastructure and assets. Previous funding cycles have distributed a majority of awards to state Departments of Transportation and regional planning agencies. Letters of Interest for the pilot program are due to FHWA by Feb. 9. More information is available [here](#).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES: FORESTRY AND URBAN GREENING

Two statewide grant opportunities for forestry and urban greening projects were recently announced by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the Natural Resources Agency. This includes \$17,500,000 to promote expansion and better management of California's urban forests. Local government projects that feature urban tree and vegetation planting, tree inventories and urban forestry management planning are eligible to apply. Proposals are due Feb. 26. More information is available [here](#). The Natural Resources Agency announced a call for proposals for their Urban Greening Grant Program last week, seeking to fund the expansion or establishment of urban green spaces, non-motorized urban trails and other activities like urban heat island mitigation. Local governments are eligible to apply, and proposals are due by April 11. More information is available [here](#).

SHARING REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE AT SUBREGIONAL EVENTS

In January I had the privilege of presenting at two major regional events: The Regional Transportation Summit, hosted by WRCOG's Clean Cities Coalition and the City of Moreno Valley on Jan. 18; and UCLA Extension's 32nd Annual Land Use Law and Planning Conference on Jan. 19. At the Land Use Conference, I joined a panel on "Transportation Infrastructure: Mobility, Choice, and VMT" where I spoke about regional solutions for meeting state climate and mobility goals. The Transportation Summit featured panel discussions with experts and industry professionals sharing best practices and how cities can prepare for transportation's high-tech future. I gave a keynote speech at the Summit which was streamed on [Facebook](#).

SCAG STAFF PRESENTS RESEARCH AT NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE

Several SCAG staff attended the 2018 Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. in early January to share knowledge and present on recent projects to the global transportation community. The 2018 meeting, organized around the theme "Transportation: Moving the Economy of the Future," convened more than 13,000 transportation professionals from around the world and featured more than 5,000 presentations in approximately 800 sessions and workshops. SCAG staff presented a study evaluating traffic collisions in Southern California by time series, as part of a collaborative research project with Cal Poly Pomona's Civil Engineering Department. Project abstracts and more information on the program are available [online](#).