

2017 REGIONAL CONFERENCE & GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SCAG is excited to announce that the theme for our 52nd Annual Regional Conference and General Assembly will be “Innovating for a Better Tomorrow.” This theme, which was also adopted as SCAG’s official tagline in September, reflects the agency’s renewed strategic focus on facilitating innovation in the region. The two-day conference, which will take place on May 4-5 at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, will investigate how cities, counties and partners can be dynamic and proactive in their approach to resolving regional challenges.

Over 900 Southern California leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors will convene to address strategies for facilitating innovation and maximizing its benefits. State and local elected officials, CEOs, business and civic leaders, transportation and environment stakeholders and local government staff are encouraged to attend. The conference is free for elected officials and city managers in the region. A reduced rate is available for students. For all other attendees, a special early bird registration rate will be available until March 31. Register at: scag.ca.gov/ga2017. Stay tuned for program announcements, including keynote speakers and panel topics!

SCAG IN THE NEWS

In the wake of the large storm that recently hit California, I was recently interviewed by multiple news outlets on the state of Southern California’s transportation infrastructure and the urgent need for investment in maintenance. These include:

- The PRESS-ENTERPRISE article on weak spots in the region’s road network that were illuminated by the recent storm (visit: <http://bit.ly/2ITSd7B>)
- ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER story on survey of structurally deficient bridges (visit: <http://bit.ly/2m50t6R>)
- CBS segment covering a recent bridge report that aired on both CBS2 and KCAL9 (visit: <http://bit.ly/2mliF37>)
- KNX 1070 RADIO interview on the need for improving the state of the region’s roads and bridges (visit: <http://bit.ly/2mCgoYc>)
- DAILY BREEZE article on potholes in the South Bay (visit: <http://bit.ly/2m4YAac>)

SCAG DELEGATION VISITS D.C. TO ATTEND CONFERENCE AND MEET WITH FEDERAL LAWMAKERS

In mid-February, a delegation of SCAG board officers and executive staff traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the National Association of Regional Councils’ annual conference, where they shared knowledge with regional leaders from across the country. The delegation also met with several federal lawmakers on Capitol Hill, sharing updates on SCAG’s federal legislative priorities (adopted by the Regional Council in January). The delegation included SCAG President Michele Martinez, First Vice-President Margaret Finlay, Second Vice-President Alan Wapner, Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee Chair

and Past-President Pam O'Connor, Past-President Larry McCallon, Past-President Greg Pettis, Immediate Past-President Cheryl Viegas-Walker, Chief Operating Officer Darin Chidsey and Senior Legislative Analyst Jeffrey Dunn. In the delegation's meetings with Congressional representatives and U.S. Department of Transportation staff, they also solicited support for SCAG's recent application for FASTLANE grant funding for congestion-relieving highway projects throughout the region.

SCAG PREPARING FOR MOVE TO NEW DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES OFFICE

In November, the Regional Council approved SCAG's move to a new office. SCAG's main office has been in the same space in the same building in downtown Los Angeles for the past 27 years. The building was constructed in 1925, and as an older structure it has some limitations. Rather than continuing to upgrade piecemeal, we set out to find a more modern facility for our headquarters. SCAG selected 900 Wilshire Boulevard as its new location. Planning and design for the space are now underway, and SCAG is planning for a move that will occur by early 2018.

REGIONAL EARTHQUAKE INITIATIVE GIVES LOCAL LEADERS TOOLS FOR RESILIENCE

On Feb. 6, SCAG held its second Regional Earthquake Preparedness Initiative workshop to help local jurisdictions strengthen their infrastructure, safety codes and economic resilience. The workshop, which was held in Carson, was led by seismologist Dr. Lucy Jones and brought together over 70 local city and county leaders for a hands-on experience developing tools to assess, mitigate and prepare for the disruption of a large-scale earthquake. This is the second phase of SCAG's Regional Earthquake Preparedness Initiative, building on an initial series of informational seminars held in the Fall of 2016. To view the presentation and materials from the workshop, visit: <http://www.scag.ca.gov/programs/Pages/EarthquakeInitiative.aspx>.

SCAG PARTNERS ON AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE DEMONSTRATION AND ROUNDTABLE

Early in February, SCAG partnered with some of the region's foremost mobility innovators to host the Los Angeles leg of the Autonomous Vehicle Road Trip, which included self-driving vehicle test rides, a technology showcase and an interactive workshop to show participants how they could bring autonomous vehicle pilot projects into their cities. Local leaders, media and the general public gathered at the La Kretz Innovation Campus in Los Angeles' Downtown Arts District to take turns riding in a fully autonomous shuttle bus (no steering wheel, pedals or driver). I participated in a leadership roundtable, where I stressed the importance of public-private sector partnership and the development of innovative mobility solutions. The roundtable addressed the importance of using new transportation technologies that can help address one of our region's most critical issues—traffic—while prioritizing safety and overall quality of life. SCAG was proud to collaborate with the Alliance for Transportation Innovation (ATI21), Transdev, EasyMile, Splunk, HDR and the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator for this event.

DRAFT 2017 LOCAL PROFILES OF MEMBER JURISDICTIONS PRESENTED FOR REVIEW

SCAG staff recently shared its Draft 2017 Local Profiles to local planning directors and staff for review. Every two years, SCAG prepares these "Local Profile" reports, which provide current data on topics including population, housing, transportation and employment figures for each of the 188 member cities, 6 counties and 6 unincorporated county areas in the SCAG region. Local Profiles are intended to provide jurisdictions with updated data and analysis to support community planning and outreach efforts. They are also useful resources for the business and academic communities, as well as the general public. Local jurisdictions have three weeks to offer comments and feedback on the draft reports. The new reports will be released at the upcoming Regional Conference & General Assembly. To learn more about SCAG's Local Profiles and read past reports, visit the SCAG website: <http://www.scag.ca.gov/dataandtools/pages/localprofiles.aspx>.

SCAG COLLABORATING WITH STATE ON IDENTIFYING UNFUNDED TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) is developing a Draft Report on Unfunded Transportation Investment Priorities, which is intended as an alternative to the Statewide Transportation System Needs Assessment. This report describes the state's transportation system and needs and why the system is so important to California's economy and quality of life. The report also looks at the state's super-regions, identifying the condition of their transportation systems, the consequences of funding shortfalls and unfunded investment priorities. The primary purpose of this document is to inform and educate state legislators on what the state needs to sustain a reasonably well-functioning transportation system. The SCAG region has been identified as one of the 'Super Regions' that will be highlighted in the statewide report and SCAG staff has been leading the effort to develop the content, drawing from adopted plans and programs and collaborating with county transportation commissions. CTC staff is expected to roll out this discussion with their board over the next several months, leading up to its adoption in the fall of this year. The final report will serve as input as part of the comprehensive update to the 2011 Statewide Transportation System Needs Assessment which will be initiated later this year.

NORWALK GREEN LINE EXTENSION STUDY UPDATE

SCAG, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and the Cities of Norwalk and Santa Fe Springs, is conducting a planning study to identify and evaluate feasible alternatives for extending the Metro Green Line east from the Norwalk station to connect to the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Metrolink station. SCAG held two community meetings, on Jan. 7 and 11 at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex. The 79 total participants provided their input on the project's purpose and needs, addressing how the Green Line should best fit in with the community, what land uses and amenities should be considered, what evaluation criteria are most important and other project-related issues and concerns. The study's next steps include the development of technically feasible alternatives that address local and regional needs. The alternatives evaluation, including land use and station planning, will occur during the spring and summer of 2017. The study is expected to conclude in winter 2017/2018. For additional information and to view materials presented at the open house meetings, visit www.scag.ca.gov/norwalkgreenlinestudy.

SCAG ASSISTS VENTURA COUNTY AIR DISTRICT ON NEW AIR PLAN

On Feb. 14, the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District adopted the 2016 Ventura County Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). The AQMP is Ventura County's blueprint for achieving health-based air quality standards and includes strategies for reaching federal Clean Air Act targets by 2020. The 2016 Ventura County AQMP includes motor vehicle emissions budgets, which set limits on ozone emissions for on-road transportation and impact regional transportation planning and federal transportation conformity requirements. These new emission budgets, once federally approved, will be used in future Regional Transportation Plans and Federal Transportation Improvement Programs. SCAG staff worked closely with Ventura County and state staff to set the air plan's new transportation conformity budgets. The 2016 Ventura County AQMP is scheduled to be considered by the California Air Resources Board (ARB) in March for approval and inclusion the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Upon approval by the ARB, the plans will be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval. For more information about the 2016 Ventura County AQMP, visit <http://www.vcapcd.org/AQMP-2016.htm>.

STATEWIDE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN AVAILABLE FOR COMMENTS THROUGH MARCH 10

In February, the California Department of Transportation released its first ever statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan. SCAG staff reviewed the document and found that it complements the active transportation component of SCAG's 2016 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. SCAG staff concluded that complementary strategies at the state and

local level can increase implementation of active transportation projects across the state and this plan will help to both spur active transportation investments and increase safety for all roadway users. The draft plan, "Towards an Active California," is available for public review and comment through March 10. Caltrans is also holding a series of meetings and webinars to gather public input. For more information, visit http://www.cabikepedplan.org/app_pages/view/159.

SCAG PRESENTS SCENARIO PLANNING MODEL TO STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL

In early February, staff from the Sustainability and Active Transportation departments were invited to present SCAG's Scenario Planning Model (SPM) to the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC). The presentation demonstrated how deployment of the SPM can facilitate more informed planning by practitioners, public agencies and other stakeholders in Southern California. Used as a common platform to share, review and update a range of local and regional datasets, the SPM proved very useful in developing regional-level growth scenarios for the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, helping to emphasize the benefits of infill development, transit investments, active transportation and conservation of land, energy and water. SCAG anticipates rolling out a web-based, user-friendly SPM data management system later in 2017. Making SPM's scenario feature available to cities and other member jurisdictions will allow them to effectively evaluate future growth options at the local level.

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE TO HOST URBAN MARKETPLACE EVENT APRIL 12

On Wednesday, April 12, ULI Los Angeles will host their annual Urban Marketplace event at the Reef in downtown Los Angeles. Each year, this event convenes senior city staff, elected officials and developers for a series of roundtable discussions of development strategies and real estate investment opportunities for L.A. County's low-income and high-poverty neighborhoods. An exclusive keynote panel will address the theme, "Development Without Displacement- Can LA Grow Up Without Pushing People Out?" For more information or to register, visit <http://la.uli.org/event/urban-marketplace-2017/>.

SCAG STAFF PRESENTS RESEARCH TO WESTERN REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

In mid-February, SCAG staff attended the 2017 Western Regional Science Association 56th Annual Meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico and presented new research. The Western Regional Science Association is an international multidisciplinary group of university scholars, government and private-sector practitioners dedicated to the scientific analysis of regions. This year's meeting convened more than 150 professionals with 130 papers from around the world. SCAG staff presented two papers: "Agglomeration in Los Angeles" and "Built Environment and Air Pollution Exposure as Determinants of Asthma Disparities in Los Angeles County."

SCAG CONTINUES INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

As part of an international partnership with Incheon National University (INU) in South Korea, SCAG hosted two volunteer interns, Soobin Choi and Yeonhwa Lee, from December 2016 to February 2017. These students learned how SCAG collaborates with key stakeholders to develop plans and policy options to address diverse urban and regional planning issues. They also acquired practical planning skills through field study and guided research. Yeonhwa conducted research on the transit systems of Los Angeles and Incheon City and Soobin conducted and presented research about the aging population and public health facilities in the City of Rancho Santa Margarita. Both interns presented their findings to SCAG staff.