

REGISTER NOW FOR THE 2019 SCAG REGIONAL CONFERENCE & GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Tickets for SCAG's premier regional leadership event are now available – register today! The 54th SCAG Regional Conference and General Assembly will convene on May 1-3 at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, CA. This year's theme, "Beyond Boundaries," is about transcending the jurisdictional boundaries of individual cities and counties to plan for the whole region. The event's panel topics will lay the foundation for Connect SoCal – SCAG's 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy and will explore what it means to truly connect a region of 191 cities, identify paths to strengthening leadership and community-building around traffic safety, and provide tangible strategies for harnessing new technologies to benefit everyone.

Nearly 1,000 of Southern California's most influential leaders and innovators are expected to attend, including local elected officials, CEOs, business and civic leaders, transportation and environmental stakeholders, local government staff and others. This event is free for elected officials and city managers in the SCAG region. For other attendees, a special early bird registration rate of \$250 will be available until April 5. Register now!

CONNECT SOCIAL UPDATE

Beginning last month, SCAG began setting the stage for policy discussions at the board level on the Connect SoCal plan — the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. Staff and invited experts will present at a series of joint and individual policy committee meetings to provide members with a greater understanding of emerging regional issues. February's meeting centered on one fundamental question: *Who are we planning for?* A presentation from SCAG staff covered the region's declining birth rates, coming shifts in age structure, dwindling middle-income jobs and outmigration caused by high housing costs. The staff update was followed by guest remarks from USC Price Professor Antonio Bento, who underlined the importance of thoughtful consideration of residents' housing and mobility preferences. A recap of the Joint Policy Committee presentation, along with subsequent focused discussions at the policy committee meetings is available on the [Connect SoCal website](#). Meetings in March and April will center around two other important questions: "Where will we grow?" and "How will we connect?" Feedback from these meetings will inform the policies, strategies and investments included in Connect SoCal.

Topic-specific working groups, which bring together regional stakeholders to discuss the development of Connect SoCal and provide technical expertise, also continue to meet on a regular basis. On Feb. 21, the Sustainable Communities working group and the Natural & Farm Lands Conservation working group both held meetings, drawing staff from local jurisdictions and transit agencies as well as representatives from non-profit organizations and private companies. At the Sustainable Communities meeting, guest speaker Michael Bohn from Studio One Eleven shared his experience revitalizing retail areas in cities throughout the region. The group also discussed potential strategies to implement the future Connect SoCal plan. The Natural & Farm Lands Conservation Working Group featured an update on Connect SoCal Conservation Scenarios and other relevant regional projects. More information about our regional planning working groups, including details on upcoming meetings, is available on the [SCAG website](#). For the latest details on the plan's development, visit connectsocial.org.

SCAG IN SACRAMENTO: DELEGATION ADVOCATES FOR THE REGION

A SCAG delegation of Southern California leaders traveled to the state Capitol Feb. 12-13 for the annual SCAG Legislative Summit to advocate on behalf of the region. The SCAG delegation, joined by leaders from the Southern California Leadership Council and other regional partners, met with a bipartisan group of state lawmakers to discuss issues areas related to the state's intractable housing crisis, advocating for modernization of the California Environmental Quality Act, use of redevelopment/tax increment financing and increased funding for housing programs in the region. The delegation met directly with 27 state legislators and staff representatives of seven others, including many members of the Budget, Transportation and Housing Committees of both chambers, as well as many newly-elected Southern California legislators.

The delegation engaged with Senator Scott Weiner, Chair of the Senate Housing Committee, on housing solutions. An additional highlight of the Summit included an update of the Newsom Administration's recently released budget proposal from Keely Bosler, Director of the Department of Finance, and a discussion of regional equity considerations with regard to state funding sources with Assemblymember Sydney Kamlager-Dove, convener of the 41-member Los Angeles County Legislative Caucus. SCAG is committed to continuing to work with Southern California's elected representatives in Sacramento to advance the region.

SCAG INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING PILOT PROGRAM RECEIVES APPROVAL FROM PLACENTIA

On Feb. 19, the Placentia City Council voted unanimously to approve a resolution supporting the establishment of an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFD), which will help finance much-needed transit supportive infrastructure improvements directly to the north and south of the upcoming Metrolink Station along State Route 91, one of the busiest and most congested transportation corridors in Southern California. SCAG has been working with the City of Placentia and other communities to bring EIFDs – and their tax-increment financing model – to the six-county region. The Financing Districts were approved by the Legislature in 2014 as a successor to the former redevelopment agencies. These separate and independent government entities work with local agencies to finance a variety of public infrastructure and economic development projects through the value-capture mechanism known as tax increment financing. The Orange County Board of Supervisors is expected to vote on a similar resolution on April 9. SCAG is happy to partner with the City of Placentia and the County of Orange on this effort, which would be one of four EIFDs in California, and the first EIFD to involve both a city and county partnership statewide.

APPLICATIONS DUE APRIL 26 FOR 2019 SCAG SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, SCAG offers financial support and professional development to a select number of the region's high school and community college students. This year, seven scholarships of \$4,000 will be awarded to eligible students across the six-county SCAG region. The program is designed to help students develop long-term career goals and winners will be provided a two-week internship with a local planning agency or council of governments, getting the opportunity to meet with elected officials and practicing planners to learn more about careers in public service. Community college students or high school juniors and seniors who live in the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino or Ventura are eligible to apply. Application materials and additional details are [available online here](#). If you have questions, please contact Houston Laney at laney@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG HOSTS EVENT TO HELP CITIES IMPLEMENT NEW STATE GUIDELINES

On March 1, SCAG hosted a full-day educational program to help local and regional planners understand the implications of recent changes to state environmental policy. Prompted by Senate Bill (SB) 743, transportation impact analyses, which have previously focused on maintaining a certain "level of service," will now prioritize reducing "vehicle miles traveled" (VMT), which is the amount of automobile travel attributable to a project. The workshop, "[Shifting from Maintaining LOS to Reducing VMT: Case Studies of Analysis and Mitigation for SB 743 Implementation](#)," was organized by Portland State University's Urban Sustainability Accelerator program and hosted at SCAG's main office in downtown Los Angeles.

The program was attended in person by approximately 45 registered attendees, with an additional 120 webinar participants. They represented a wide spectrum of stakeholders including land use, transportation, and environmental planning practitioners, legal professionals and academics. Discussion topics included: methods and strategies for project-based VMT impact analysis, including a review of various statewide case studies; the determination of VMT significance thresholds; and an assessment of various types of project-based and programmatic VMT mitigation strategies, including regional VMT banking and transaction exchange programs. The event provided a forum for discussion of how these new policies will impact local and regional transportation and land use planning, helping lay a foundation for successful implementation of the new requirements, which will take effect statewide next year.

SCAG WEBINAR ADDRESSED URBAN HEAT ISLAND REDUCTION

On Feb. 20, SCAG hosted a Toolbox Training webinar featuring presentations on strategies cities and counties can use to reduce the Urban Heat Island Effect, the phenomenon of metropolitan areas experiencing much warmer temperatures than surrounding rural areas due to human activities. Speakers included Elizabeth Skrzat who gave a presentation on [developing an urban forest management plan for the City of Los Angeles](#), Jessica Sotorus, who spoke about the City of Colton's [Urban Forest Management Master Plan](#) and Greg Spotts on the City of Los Angeles' [Cool Pavement Pilot Project](#). To access a recording of the webinar and downloads of the presentations, please visit <http://sustain.scag.ca.gov/Pages/Online-Training-Materials.aspx>.