

## REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

On March 22, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) approved SCAG's 6th Cycle Final Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Allocation Plan, which was adopted by the Regional Council at its meeting on March 5. After the April 1 Regional Council meeting, SCAG will update the Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) grant funding program available to subregional partners for their respective housing projects based on the adopted Final RHNA Allocation. The updated amounts are available in the [April Regional Council agenda packet](#). SCAG will also be meeting with HCD's Director, Gustavo Velasquez, in the coming month to discuss local challenges in preparing housing element updates and next steps as outlined in the resolution adopted by the Regional Council. Please visit the SCAG website for more information about SCAG's [Housing Program](#) and [RHNA](#).

## CALL FOR COLLABORATION GRANTEES SELECTED

In July 2020, the Regional Council voted to approve \$1 million of the early application REAP grant funding to establish the Call for Collaboration program in partnership with the California Community Foundation (CCF), Irvine Foundation, and Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. The program intends to seed and uplift diverse community-driven approaches and strategic coalitions that address the tremendous challenge in meeting housing needs while addressing historic racial inequities. After releasing a request for proposals, we had an overwhelming response of 45 applicants from across the six-county SCAG region. A review panel comprised of experienced staff from SCAG, CCF and other funding partners and experts selected 15 applicants to receive nearly \$1.3 million in funding available. Many of the grantee's projects will cover a range of activities related to housing policy and land use, including deeper community engagement with low-income and communities of color. For a full list of approved grantees visit the [CCF Call for Collaboration webpage](#).

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SCAG hosted a "virtual fly-in" on March 17 – 18, where SCAG's executive officers, several Regional Council members, and staff met with Representative Norma Torres (D-Pomona), member of the House Appropriations Committee and Rules Committee, and Representative Maxine Waters (D-Gardena), chair of the House Financial Services Committee. The delegation also met with key members of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) leadership, including Acting Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, Christopher Coes and USDOT Deputy Assistant Secretary of Intergovernmental Affairs, Charles Small. The focus was to develop relationships with SCAG's congressional delegation and incoming USDOT staff and to engage them on our legislative priorities for the upcoming infrastructure stimulus package and surface transportation reauthorization. Discussions have now started on a comprehensive infrastructure proposal that could make investments in broadband, housing, schools, water, and climate-related infrastructure. Simultaneously, Congress will be reauthorizing a new federal surface transportation bill. The current law, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, funds transportation programs through Sept. 30 of this year.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, Congresswoman Torres highlighted her numerous opportunities to influence and shape a potential infrastructure bill. She invited frequent communication as a proposed package is negotiated and passed through the legislative process. She is also focused on jobs, housing, and broadband, which are some of SCAG's top federal legislative priorities.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters reviewed the "Housing is Infrastructure Act," which she authored and provides \$100 billion for affordable housing. It was included in the Moving Forward Act (H.R. 2), which was last year's effort in the House to pass an infrastructure bill and will likely be included in this year's package. Congresswoman Waters talked at length about how the federal government is investing heavily in community development financial institutions and community banks, especially for the Paycheck Protection Program. Her interest is not just in rental housing, but in homeownership as well.

Officials from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) discussed the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program, which is focused on highway freight projects. The Biden administration released its revised version of the notice of funding opportunity for INFRA, emphasizing climate change and environmental justice impacts. Acting Assistant Secretary Coes invited feedback on the funding opportunity. He also discussed how projects should not just be shovel-ready, but "shovel-worthy."

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION: FY 2020-21 3RD QUARTER PROGRESS & PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Since 2005, SCAG's various sustainability planning grant programs (Compass Blueprint, Sustainability Planning Grants, Sustainable Communities Program) have provided resources and technical assistance to jurisdictions to complete important local planning efforts and enable implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, now known as Connect SoCal. Of the 195 projects funded since 2013 through SCAG's Local Implementation efforts, 109 projects have been completed as of Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20, totaling approximately \$15 million. Additionally, by the end of FY 2022-23, 86 projects are anticipated to be completed, totaling approximately \$15 million. Several projects are highlighted below, reflecting innovative, thoughtful, equity-centered, and creative approaches and outcomes:

### DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING INITIATIVE

Launched in 2019, the Disadvantaged Communities Planning Initiative makes the development and implementation of active transportation plans accessible to all jurisdictions within the SCAG region (and across the state). The project team worked with seven disadvantaged communities (Perris, Stanton, Highland, Santa Fe Springs, Saticoy, Adelanto, and Calipatria) to develop, pilot, and operationalize a toolkit that includes all materials needed to help under-resourced communities envision and develop their plans for walking and biking, including data-automation tools, a guidebook, equity best practices, and more. This process resulted in seven completed Active Transportation Plans from the seven pilot communities. The finalized toolkit is scheduled for public release in Summer 2021.

### ARROW HIGHWAY MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR PLAN & GO HUMAN DEMONSTRATION

A partnership with the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, the [Arrow Highway Multimodal Corridor Plan](#) is focused on multi-jurisdictional collaboration with five cities (Pomona, San Dimas, La Verne, Claremont, and Glendora) to set a vision for a multimodal corridor to provide a safe, connected active transportation network in the East San Gabriel Valley. Public engagement included a *Go Human* temporary safety demonstration project in the City of Glendora, drawing participation from across the San Gabriel Valley and providing opportunities for public feedback on the plan. The plan includes communities defined as a "community of concern," SB 535 disadvantaged areas, and environmental justice areas. The plan was completed in February 2021, with plans for adoption by the city councils in each jurisdiction this spring.

### CITY OF BEAUMONT PARKING MANAGEMENT MASTER PLAN

The Beaumont Parking Management Master Plan assessed current parking problems in the city's downtown core. The downtown core is located within a SCAG-defined environmental justice area and SB535 disadvantaged area. The project produced a unique approach to community outreach during a global pandemic. The overall master plan provided a refined parking "lens" for the community of Beaumont that prioritizes sustainable practices, smart parking solutions, and innovative circulation approaches for an area outside of Southern California's urban core.

### CITY OF OJAI MARICOPA HIGHWAY QUICK BUILD TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

The first quick build project implemented on Caltrans right of way in Southern California, [Maricopa Highway Quick Build Transformation Project](#), located in the City of Ojai, included deep public engagement around the benefits of the project before permanent construction in FY 2022-23. The project was implemented in December 2020 with plans to complete by June 2021. Of the 600 community surveys collected, the majority of respondents indicated support for permanent safety improvements. Additionally, through the demonstration, bicycle and pedestrian activity along the corridor increased by as much as 86 percent in some areas. The city plans to incorporate public feedback and refine the final design before moving forward with permanent construction. The first of many quick build projects funded by SCAG, this method represents an innovative way to support active transportation and safety projects and provide robust engagement and evaluation opportunities while expanding ways for the public to experience safety improvements for a longer duration.

### CITY OF SANTA ANA GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

The [City of Santa Ana's General Plan Update](#) identified and vetted key nodes for economically viable and environmentally sustainable infill development. The project, part of a larger city effort, determined land use capacity and growth opportunities along key transit corridors.

This study evaluated green retrofit opportunities and presented concept-level visual simulations for each land use alternative to ensure that efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas rates are embraced by residents as part of a complete community. SCAG funding allowed the city to broaden its engagement efforts and improve communication through well-designed public materials. This project was completed in FY 2020-21.

### **GO HUMAN DEMONSTRATION IN WILDOMAR**

SCAG partnered with the City of Wildomar to host Go Active Wildomar March 12 – 14. The exhibition featured active transportation safety improvements that make it safer and more enjoyable for people to walk, bike, and utilize other forms of active transportation. More than 100 participants experienced safety demonstrations over three days, including a protected bike lane, creative crosswalk, pedestrian refuge island, curb extension, and a parklet. The exhibition demonstration potential improvements from the city's ongoing [Mobility Plan](#) and provided educational opportunities for local community members to learn about the plan.

### **SCAG HOSTS SERIES OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION PERMITTING WEBINARS**

The SCAG Clean Cities Coalition, in partnership with Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GoBiz), hosted a series of virtual training sessions on permit streamlining for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations from January to March 2021. These trainings increase adoption of EVs by helping to fulfill a state directive to streamline the EV station permitting process set by AB 1236 and achieve the Accelerated Electrification goals of [Connect SoCal](#). The training series also covered guidance and best permitting practices for hydrogen fueling station development. More than ten jurisdictions across Riverside and San Bernardino Counties attended one of the three trainings held in February and March. These small group trainings support peer-to-peer learning and spur local process improvements for electric vehicle charging station permit streamlining. SCAG will continue hosting webinars to assist local jurisdictions in Imperial, Los Angeles, and Ventura Counties with streamlining their EV permitting processes. For more information, [please contact the SCAG Clean Cities Coalition staff](#).

### **TOOLBOX TUESDAY TRAINING FOCUSES ON ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

On March 30, SCAG hosted a training webinar focused on the Disadvantaged Communities Active Transportation Planning Toolkit, which helps communities in the SCAG region prepare their active transportation plans. Speakers shared lessons from piloting the toolkit with seven communities and how jurisdictions can use it throughout the SCAG region—and the state—to achieve their active transportation goals. The session included multiple perspectives and insight from elected officials, city and community-based organization staff, and consultants. Please visit the [Toolbox Tuesday Online Training Materials page](#) for a recording of the webinar and other downloads of this training, as well as to access prior trainings and materials.