

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

MAY 2014

City Leaders Tour Bike-Friendly Districts in Long Beach to Support Active Transportation

Councilmember Michele Martinez, Santa Ana, organized a SCAG-sponsored bicycle tour and training in Long Beach. Representatives from Anaheim, Newport Beach, Santa Ana, San Juan Capistrano, San Clemente, and SCAG participated. Focused to engage elected officials, transportation planners and engineers, the tour showed how various bikeway treatments have increased bicycle ridership, reduced accidents (across all modes) and increased the economic activity of areas marked as Bicycle Friendly Districts. The tour was led by Charlie Gandy, one of the early leaders of the Long Beach bike program, and included discussion with city employees, advocates, and business community leaders that have been involved in the transformation of the city. The strategies that were highlighted are easily repeated in many SCAG jurisdictions and are good candidates for funding under the Active Transportation Program. If you are interested in having your city or county participate in one of these tours, please contact Sarah Jepson, Manager of Active Transportation and Special Programs at jepson@scag.ca.gov or 213.236.1955.

High Speed Rail Amicus Brief Granted

This past March, the Regional Council authorized SCAG to join with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) in filing an amicus brief in support of the California High Speed Rail Authority (Authority) and other state officials as they seek to have the State Appellate Court reverse two lower court rulings that have blocked the progress of the statewide High Speed Rail (HSR) project. Metro and SCAG filed its application and amicus brief on April 14, and the Appellate Court granted the filing of the amicus brief on April 21. The amicus brief explains how the lower court rulings would imperil the HSR project and other important regional connectivity projects dependent upon the Proposition 1B funding. The Authority staff anticipates a final decision on its writ petition by late spring/early summer.

CalEnviroScreen Update Released and Workshop at SCAG on May 12

SCAG cordially invites representatives from local jurisdictions and interested parties to attend a Workshop where Cal/EPA will present the updated draft CalEnviroScreen Tool, receive input, and respond to questions. The Workshop will be held on May 12, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., at SCAG's Los Angeles office. Videoconference will be available at all SCAG Regional offices (see www.scag.ca.gov/about/Pages/SCAGOffices.aspx). California Communities Environmental Health Screening (CalEnviroScreen) is a screening tool to identify California communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution and, pursuant to SB 535, is expected to be used in allocating the state's Cap-and-Trade auction proceeds in order to assist the most impacted communities. On April 21, Draft CalEnviroScreen Tool Version 2.0 was publicly released by Cal/EPA. Draft CalEnviroScreen Tool 2.0 uses the same overall methodology as Version 1.1 except for adding two indicators for drinking water quality and unemployment rate, and uses census tracts rather than ZIP codes as the geographic unit. The use of census tracts may allow for a more precise screening of pollution burdens and vulnerabilities in communities. In addition, Version 2.0 includes scoring refinement such as emphasizing hazards that are closer to where people live. Finally, many data sets have been updated with more recent data. Further information about the draft CalEnviroScreen Tool 2.0, including the Draft 2.0 Report and additional Workshops around the state, can be viewed at <http://oehha.ca.gov/ej/ces2.html>. Comments on CalEnviroScreen 2.0 (draft) are due May 23, and may be e-mailed to CalEnviroScreen@oehha.ca.gov.

Electronic Voting Update

As has been previously reported, SCAG is currently investigating electronic voting options. An RFP was released and a vendor was selected. During the April 3 Executive/Administrative Committee meeting, EAC members tested the selected system and successfully used the system to record all votes during the meeting. A special officer orientation was held prior to the EAC meeting. The results confirmed that the system meets SCAG requirements for usability and 100 % voting accuracy. SCAG will proceed with purchase of the system with an estimated implementation date of June 5 for the Regional Council.

SCAG Comments on AB 32 Scoping Plan Update

The Air Resources Board (ARB) is required to update the AB 32 Scoping Plan at least once every five years. The first draft Update, developed by ARB in collaboration with the State's Climate Action Team, defines ARB's climate change priorities for the next five years and sets the groundwork to reach long-term goals set forth in California Governor's Executive Orders S-3-05 and B-16-2012. The draft Update highlights California's progress toward meeting the "near-term" 2020 GHG emission reduction goals defined in the initial Scoping Plan, and evaluates how to align the State's "longer-term" GHG reduction strategies with other State policy priorities for water, waste, natural resources, clean energy, transportation, and land use. SCAG staff's main comments to ARB on the draft Update include: 1) the initial SB 375 regional GHG targets should be maintained through the second round of SCS development, and the process of updating SB 375 regional targets should not be affected by the potential for setting state-wide mid-term AB 32 targets; 2) any potential mid-term target should be fully informed by science, and any sector-specific targets should be carefully considered through a comprehensive, stakeholder driven process; 3) any effort to evaluate the feasibility of freight system metrics related to climate change goals should be a collaborative initiative, working with Caltrans and other public and private industry stakeholders to ensure integrated planning with mutually agreed upon objectives for an efficient freight transportation system; and 4) to achieve the State's vision for the land use and transportation infrastructure sector, significantly greater

resources (e.g., funding, data, analytical tools, regulatory modernization etc.) are necessary. SCAG staff kept our partners informed in the process of drafting the comment letter. The comment letter is included in the Regional Council's Information Packet. The ARB is scheduled to consider the final Update at its May 22 Board Hearing. Further information on the Scoping Plan and draft Update can be found at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/scopingplan.htm>.

Inaugural Los Angeles County Jobs & Labor Summit

SCAG, in partnership with the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO, held the Inaugural Los Angeles County Jobs & Labor Summit on April 21, at the Sheraton Los Angeles Downtown Hotel. The one-day Summit was a working session of nearly 50 civic and labor leaders from throughout Los Angeles County with a focus on commercial and municipal transportation, goods movement, and construction to discuss State and Federal transportation funding, the impact of transportation infrastructure on the economy, and the role the labor movement plays in the continuing economic recovery. The agenda included a Los Angeles County economic update from Dr. Wallace Walrod, Chief Economic Advisor at the Orange County Business Council, a presentation on the benefits of accelerating RTP/SCS projects from Hasan Ikhtrata, SCAG Executive Director, and lunch remarks from Art Leahy, Chief Executive Officer of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). Regional Council Members in attendance included Hon. Greg Pettis, SCAG President (Cathedral City), Hon. Pam O'Connor (Santa Monica), Hon. Larry McCallon (Highland), Hon. Gene Daniels (Paramount), and Hon. Jess Talamantes (Burbank).

SCAQMD Proposes Amendments to "Rideshare" Rule

As part of the effort to attain state and federal air quality standards for the South Coast region, the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) Rule 2202 (adopted 1995) requires any employer with 250 or more employees at a work site to develop and implement an emission reduction program to reduce emissions related to employee commute. To comply with the rule, employers can elect to implement an Emissions Reductions Strategy; participate in the Air Quality Investment Program (AQIP); or implement an Employee Commute Reduction Program or rideshare program. The main proposed amendments to Rule 2202 and associated AQIP rule are: 1) no future transfers of stationary source emission reduction credits (ERCs) to Rule 2202; 2) annual discounting of ERCs to reflect vehicle fleet turnover rather than one-time 10% discount; and 3) reducing the annual AQIP investment fee from \$60 to \$45 per employee. The proposed amendments do not alter the existing three compliance options and will have no impact on the existing Rule 2202 emission reduction targets. The amendments are scheduled to be set for Public Hearing at the May 2 SCAQMD Governing Board meeting, and considered for adoption on June 6. Staff will monitor the Rule 2202 amendment process and report back as appropriate. For more information on the proposed amendments, see <http://www.aqmd.gov/rules/proposed.html#2202>.

SCAG/University Partnership

Following the Regional Council's direction to expand collaboration with local universities, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Cal Poly Pomona and SCAG are supporting a two-quarter transportation planning studio class through SCAG's University Partnership framework. The class teaches students how to coordinate land use and transportation as part of the RTP/SCS development process. On April 16, Dr. Richard W. Wilson, Chair of the Urban and Regional Planning Department of Cal Poly Pomona, and Michael Woo, Dean of the College of Environmental Design, hosted a reception with 60 faculty and students from the College of Environmental Design and the Civil Engineering Department to celebrate the University Partnership. I had an informative discussion about SCAG's role, regional planning, and the future direction of SCAG's collaboration with Cal Poly Pomona with the reception attendees.

SCAG Member Agencies GIS Services Program Update

Through SCAG's GIS Services Program, staff released a request for proposals for Imperial County Aerial Imagery. SCAG is partnering with several organizations, including Imperial County, the cities of Brawley, Calipatria, Calexico, El Centro, Holtville, Imperial, and Westmorland, the Imperial Irrigation District, Heber Public Utility, Caltrans, and three federal agencies. Proposals are due April 30 and interviews will be conducted in early May. Also in April, GIS Services staff presented a poster board and workshop at the CALGIS conference in Monterey, California, where a poverty index was derived to identify distressed neighborhoods in Los Angeles County. Finally, we are also pleased to announce that SCAG's GIS Services Program will be accepting the city of Agoura Hills and is anticipating applications from the cities of Colton, Huntington Park, and Grand Terrace. Total participants are now at nearly 100 local jurisdictions.

California Freight Mobility Plan Meeting on March 19

The California Freight Advisory Committee (CFAC) reconvened on March 19 in San Bernardino to discuss key draft components of the California Freight Mobility Plan (the State Plan). The meeting opened with remarks from Ray Wolfe, Executive Director of the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), highlighting the importance of the logistics industry in San Bernardino to the local economy while also recognizing associated congestion and air quality challenges. Also, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) provided an overview of the Sustainable Freight Strategy—a one-year effort, intended to serve as a high-level framework for the environment and the freight system. The delivery schedule for the Draft State Freight Plan is noted below:

- March 19 – April 3: preliminary draft review by CFAC
- May 2: administrative draft posted for CFAC review

- May 14: CFAC meeting
- May 29: administrative draft comments due
- June 16: public review draft posted
- June 16 – July 31: public comment period & workshops (8 workshops)
- July 31: public review draft comments due
- August 28: final CFMP circulated for signatures
- December 31: CFMP finalized by this date per AB14

National Freight Advisory Committee (NFAC) Meeting on March 25 and 26

The NFAC reconvened on March 25 and 26 to review and discuss subcommittee recommendations for submittal to U.S. DOT in developing the National Freight Strategic Plan. A total of 91 recommendations were submitted by the subcommittees for consideration and discussion at the full NFAC meeting. Further, FHWA staff explained that they are on target to get a DRAFT framework of the National Strategic Freight Plan out by September of this year, recognizing that due to the statutory process, they need to finalize the DRAFT plan early to accommodate several rounds of internal reviews, including discussion by the NFAC. See latest schedule below:

- Develop Draft Framework Plan – Spring 2014
- Finalize Draft Framework Plan – Summer 2014
- Public Draft Release – Fall 2014

NAFTANEXT Summit, April 22 – 25

SCAG's leadership participated in the NAFTANEXT Summit from April 22 – 25 in Chicago, a gathering of industry and government leaders to discuss the challenges and opportunities created by increased trade and our need to address freight mobility, energy and sustainability as a trading continent. The NAFTANEXT Summit was convened by the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) with numerous Summit partners including SCAG.

One-on-One Meetings with Local Jurisdictions for the 2016 – 2040 RTP/SCS

As discussed at Regional Council and Policy Committee meetings and other forums, a critical component to the success of the 2016 RTP/SCS will be the participation of all 197 local government partners within the SCAG Region. As previously reported, a significant amount of SCAG staff resources are being expended to ensure all local governments are fully informed of the planning process and have clear and adequate opportunities to provide input, thereby emphasizing a bottom-up process and enabling regional collaboration. SCAG staff is continuing to arrange individual meetings with local jurisdictions to answer questions, offer assistance, and solicit input on the base data that will feed into the 2016 RTP/SCS. Although we have currently met with 78% of all jurisdictions over the last five months, staff continues to reach out to the remaining jurisdictions to ensure the local accuracy and relevance of our data. The deadline for providing input is May 31. We look forward to continued collaboration with all SCAG local jurisdictions and stakeholders to ensure the success of the bottom-up input and review process for the development of 2016 RTP/SCS. For more information, please contact Frank Wen at (213) 236-1854 or at wen@scag.ca.gov.

Comments Requested for Programmatic Approaches to Environmental Reviews under NEPA

FHWA and FTA are currently seeking comments regarding the use of programmatic approaches that are consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to conduct environmental reviews for transportation projects pursuant to Section 1305 of MAP-21. During a webinar held on April 23 in which SCAG staff participated, FHWA and FTA explained that they are seeking input in three areas: 1) general use and scope of programmatic approaches; 2) how to leverage existing programmatic approaches; and 3) how to allow for new programmatic approaches. Examples of existing federal programmatic approaches under NEPA include streamlined processes for addressing endangered species under the Endangered Species Act and historic resources under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Stakeholders interested in providing input can submit their comments and ideas by May 16 on the National Online Dialogue, available at <http://programmatics.ideascale.com/>. Comments received will help inform subsequent federal rulemaking on the subject matter.

Proposed Rule to Amend Federal Clean Water Act

In response to several cases brought before the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published a proposed rule in the Federal Register (April 21) intended to further define the scope of waters protected under the Clean Water Act. The agencies are seeking input by July 21 that is technical and scientific in nature, to identify sub-categories of "other waters" that have a significant nexus to traditional waters regulated under Clean Water Act. The proposed rule could expand the water bodies protected under the Clean Water Act. Staff will monitor the rulemaking and work with partner agencies to explore and better understand any potential ramifications of the proposed rule to the SCAG region. For more information, see <https://federalregister.gov/a/2014-07142>.