

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

## AUGUST 2013

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### **SCAG Receives Key Federal Approvals**

I am pleased to report that SCAG has received federal concurrence of the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS and 2013 FTIP conformity re-determination for the new 8-hour ozone standard. SCAG has also received federal concurrence on the conformity determinations for the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS and 2013 FTIP Amendments to allow implementation of the new transportation projects and changes to some of the critical transportation improvement projects in the Amendments. Federal review and concurrence of these items are required pursuant to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's transportation conformity regulations and the U.S. Department of Transportation's metropolitan planning regulations. Receiving federal concurrence is essential for transportation projects to move forward.

### **Sustainability Program Call for Proposals Update**

The 2013 Sustainability Program consolidated Call for Proposals was released on April 4 to the cities and counties, with an application deadline of May 31. The Sustainability Program builds on the success of the Compass Blueprint effort to provide services for communities and partners with two new components: Active Transportation and the Green Region Initiative. As reported to the Policy Committees and Regional Council at the June 6 meetings, SCAG received a total of 76 proposals, with total funding requests slightly exceeding \$10 million.

A review committee has completed a ranking of proposals. Staff is recommending funding of all eligible project applications in three phases over the 2014 and 2015 fiscal years, allowing time to process the grants and develop additional funding for applications in phases 2 and 3. A report will be provided to each policy committee in August.

### **State and Federal Funding Opportunities**

HUD is offering the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Program. This grant seeks to support the implementation of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans. Eligible applicants are Public Housing Authorities, local governments, tribal entities, non-profits and for-profit developers that apply jointly with a public entity. A total of \$30 million is available. The deadline to apply is September 10. For more information visit: [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/ph/cn](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn).

The California Coastal Conservancy is offering the Climate Ready Grant Program. This grant seeks to support the Conservancy's Climate Ready Programmatic Priorities. Projects must be located along the coast and coastal watersheds of California. Ventura, Los Angeles and Orange are eligible SCAG counties. \$1,500,000 is available. The deadline to apply is August 28. For more information, visit: <http://scc.ca.gov/2013/04/24/grant-opportunities>.

### **Imperial City Managers Meeting**

On July 10, several members of SCAG's Executive Team and I met with Imperial County's City Managers representing eight of their nine jurisdictions to discuss items of mutual interest. The meeting included a briefing by Economist Michael Bracken on the economic outlook for the county, the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS update schedule, a legislative update and a discussion on potential grant opportunities. I announced that SCAG will host a "Border Infrastructure Tour" this fall to give interested RC Members a glimpse of the current state of our Ports of Entry in Calexico to better understand the impact of wait times on our regional economy. I'd like to thank SCAG 2nd Vice President Cheryl Viegas-Walker, Imperial County Supervisor Jack Terrazas, Calexico Mayor Bill Hodge and Brawley Councilmember Don Campbell for participating in the meeting and being such gracious hosts. During the upcoming months, I will be meeting with the City Managers throughout the region to discuss similar topics.

### **Financial Award**

SCAG's FY2011/12 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report has been awarded the Government Finance Officer Association's (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This is the tenth year in a row that we have earned the award.

The GFOA established the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program (CAFR Program) in 1945 to encourage and assist state and local governments to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare comprehensive annual financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure and then to recognize individual governments that succeed in achieving that goal.

### **SCAG Membership Update**

In September 2011, in accordance with Government Code Section 65584.1, the Regional Council authorized SCAG to charge non-member jurisdictions a Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) fee of \$6,055, which represents the cost of preparing the 5th Cycle RHNA,

divided equally among the six counties and 191 cities in the SCAG region. The RC's action also authorized SCAG to waive the RHNA fee for non-member jurisdictions that join SCAG. This authorization was established in the interest of fairness to current SCAG member jurisdictions, whose dues are used to pay for the RHNA process. Invoices for the 5th Cycle of SCAG's RHNA were sent to non-member jurisdictions in March of this year. Please join me in welcoming the cities of Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, Jurupa Valley and Rancho Santa Margarita. By joining SCAG, the RHNA fee was waived for these jurisdictions. The City of Orange elected not to join SCAG and has paid SCAG's 5th Cycle RHNA fee.

### **RCTC to Move Forward with Perris Valley Line (PVL) Project**

On July 9, the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) executed a settlement agreement with the Friends of Riverside's Hills which fully resolves the Perris Valley Line CEQA litigation. As a result of the settlement, RCTC dismissed its pending appeal and obtained a signed order from the trial court on July 22, confirming that the Writ of Mandate against RCTC issued last May is no longer in effect. To help resolve the litigation, RCTC agreed to provide approximately \$1 million for the installation of sound windows or other sound insulation and the planting of trees to mitigate noise impacts; the placement of appropriate signage to mitigate pedestrian safety impacts; and the provision of \$900,000 and \$650,000, respectively, for the establishment of trails and wildlife conservation lands as well as funding for bicycle/pedestrian trails within the Project area to mitigate open space impacts. SCAG congratulates RCTC on its settlement which allows the PVL project, a critical transit project for the region, to now move forward.

### **SCAG hosts Workshop on Draft Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Guidelines**

On July 23, SCAG hosted a Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Workshop on Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Guidelines. The Grant Guideline update will affect the next cycle of the Planning Grant applications scheduled to begin in November with approximately \$16 million available. Eligible applicants include cities, counties, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs), Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), Councils of Governments (COGs), or combinations thereof. Major updates include lowering the maximum grant amount from \$1 million to \$500,000 except for joint proposals, and new provisions for Environmental Justice set-aside and collaborative community planning in preparation for High Speed Rail. For the July 23 Workshop, SCAG provided videoconferencing to all eight regional offices/videoconference sites, and assisted SGC in providing a webcast for interested parties. During the month of July, SGC conducted three other grant guidelines workshops across the state. Revised Draft Grant Guidelines will be released for public review in the fall and the Final Grant Guidelines are scheduled to be considered by SGC at its November 5 public meeting. For more information, the Draft Grant Guidelines are available at: <http://sgc.ca.gov/docs/funding/workshop-draft-guidelines-july2013.pdf>.

### **The Map Book – 2016-2040 RTP/SCS Bottom-Up Process**

SCAG staff has completed a Map Book for each of the 191 cities and six counties, which contains the existing land use and zoning information overlaying socio-economic data. The Map Books are the foundation to the bottom-up process for the development of the 2016 RTP/SCS. In addition, SCAG staff has worked with local jurisdictions to update its land use database in preparation for the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS. This database comprises over 5,000,000 parcels and contains local land use information in a digitized GIS format for every jurisdiction in the SCAG region. When complete, this information will be made available as an electronic dataset or as hardcopy map books. With the collaborative support of local jurisdictions, staff completed land use updates for 106 cities as of June 30. Staff will continue to reach out to local jurisdictions to collect the updated land use input and to confirm SCAG staff's preliminary land use database.

### **SCAG GIS Services Program**

SCAG's GIS Services Program provides assistance to local jurisdictions in terms of data development, software training and information sharing. SCAG recently welcomed two additional cities to its GIS Services Program, the City of San Dimas and the City of Bradbury. Over the next several months, over 20 additional jurisdictions will join the program. With these additions, SCAG's GIS Services program will grow to nearly 100 member agencies. SCAG's GIS Services Program has provided additional value to our member jurisdictions in their local planning and policy formulation.

### **Final Approval of South Coast 2009 PM10 Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan**

On June 26, EPA published a final rule in the Federal Register to redesignate the South Coast Air Basin to attainment for the 24-hour PM10 standard and also to approve the South Coast PM10 maintenance plan and the associated PM10 motor vehicle emissions budgets. The new emissions budgets will be required to be used by SCAG for future regional transportation conformity determinations for the South Coast Air Basin. South Coast has not violated the 1987 PM10 NAAQS since 2008 and the maintenance plan is the roadmap to maintaining the 24-hour PM10 standard for the next ten years.