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.

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,
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.