

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

## SEPTEMBER 2012

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### **New Member Orientation**

On September 11, 2012 from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., SCAG will host a new member orientation in the Board Room at SCAG's Los Angeles Office. If you are a new or recent member of the Regional Council or Policy Committees, this is a great opportunity to join SCAG President Glen Becerra and other Board Officers to learn more about your important role as a Regional Council and Policy Committee Member. Additionally, staff will provide an overview of the agency's accomplishments, mission, history and organizational structure. For more information, or to RSVP, please, contact Linda Jones at [jonesl@scag.ca.gov](mailto:jonesl@scag.ca.gov) or (213) 236-1912.

### **Southern California Economic Recovery & Job Creation Strategy Update**

In June 2012, after review and recommendations from the Global Land Use & Economic Council, the Regional Council authorized SCAG staff to begin development of Phase II of the Southern California Economic Recovery & Job Creation Strategy. This information has been added to the SCAG home webpage. To highlight the importance of getting Southern California's economy back on track, the Regional Council unanimously moved on July 5, 2012 to encourage its 191 member cities and six counties to adopt a version of the California Film Commission's Model Film Ordinance and Best Practices, making a clear and explicit expression of support for the entertainment industry, which is one of Southern California's most important and touchstone industry clusters. On July 25, 2012, President Becerra sent a letter to all Mayors and Board of Supervisors Chairs—with a copy to city managers and county executive officers—identifying the regional and local economic benefits of the motion picture industry and encouraging cities and counties to adopt the Model Film Ordinance. SCAG is monitoring the actions on the ordinance and we will provide regular updates.

### **Imperial County Highway Sanctions Update**

As I have previously reported to you, highway federal funding sanctions began in Imperial County on August 9, 2012 potentially delaying two projects. The highway sanctions were triggered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) limited disapproval of certain Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) rules that regulate particulate matter emissions, and the legal challenge of EPA's action by ICAPCD and the California Department of Parks and Recreation in the United States Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. On July 27, 2012, the three parties reached a settlement agreement which remedies EPA's concerns with the ICAPCD's rules and describes a path to resolve the litigation. As a result, the highway sanctions are anticipated to last no more than six months. The proposed settlement agreement was published in the Federal Register on August 21, 2012, for a 30-day public comment period ending September 20, 2012. ICAPCD has scheduled public workshops for the proposed particulate matter rules on September 17 and September 20. (<http://www.co.imperial.ca.us/AirPollution/Web%20Pages/REGULATION%20VIII.htm>) The ICAPCD Board is scheduled to adopt the proposed rules on October 16, 2012.

The highway sanctions could have had a devastating impact on the Imperial County's recovering economy. Under the sanctions, funding restrictions are imposed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for highway construction projects whose funds were not awarded prior to August 9, 2012. However, due to the highly collaborative efforts by staff of EPA, FHWA, Caltrans, California Air Resources Board, Imperial County Transportation Commission, ICAPCD, and SCAG, the impact of the highway sanctions has been minimized to two projects. No job loss and no impact on transportation projects will occur if the funding restrictions are removed as anticipated by February 9, 2013.

SCAG staff will continue to work with affected agencies to ensure timely progress towards removing the sanctions, as well as implementing transportation projects in Imperial County.

### **Regional Housing Needs Assessment**

On August 24, 2012, the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Subcommittee reviewed the proposed Final RHNA Allocation Plan. The Allocation Plan quantifies projected housing needs for all income groups within each jurisdiction during the specified planning period. After reviewing the Final Allocation Plan, the RHNA Subcommittee recommended that the Community, Economic & Human Development (CEHD) Committee on September 6, 2012 review and recommend approval by the Regional Council. The Regional Council is scheduled to hold a public hearing to approve the Final Allocation Plan in conjunction with its October 4, 2012 meeting. I wish to thank the RHNA Subcommittee, along with the CEHD Committee and Regional Council, for their hard work on providing direction to staff and ensuring a fair and transparent RHNA process.

## **Draft HCD Housing Element Update Guidance Available for Comments**

Upon approval of the Final RHNA Allocation Plan by the Regional Council, local jurisdictions are required to revise their housing elements pursuant to approval and submit them to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). For the current RHNA cycle, the deadline for SCAG jurisdictions is October 15, 2013. HCD has recently released, and is seeking comment on, a Draft Housing Element Update Guidance. The Update Guidance is intended to assist local governments and stakeholders with streamlined updates and HCD review for the fifth cycles of the housing element. Comments on the Draft Guidance Update are due September 17, 2012.

The Draft Guidance document can be accessed at: [http://www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/aug\\_17\\_public\\_draft.pdf](http://www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/aug_17_public_draft.pdf).

## **Metro Countywide Sustainability Planning Policy and SCAG/Metro Resolution**

Both SCAG and Metro have been working on sustainability policies, projects, and programs for the past several years. Close cooperation has continued between SCAG and Metro regarding implementation of the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS. Metro staff has (1) developed a set of policy recommendations on a Countywide Sustainability Planning for consideration by the Metro Board, and (2) together with SCAG staff developed a joint work program/Resolution to better coordinate the activities of the two agencies. A major goal of these two efforts is to facilitate implementation of the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS through Metro's Call for Projects. The Sustainability Policy and joint work program are described in detail in a staff report to the Energy and Environment Committee (EEC) and CEHD for September.

## **Draft 2012 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) Update**

On July 19, 2012, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) released the Draft 2012 AQMP for public review and comment. The Plan includes the required regional transportation strategy and control measures prepared by SCAG. The Draft 2012 AQMP represents an updated blueprint for reaching federally mandated, health-based clean air goals in the South Coast Air Basin. On October 4, 2012, Barry Wallerstein, AQMD Executive Director, is scheduled to give a presentation on the 2012 AQMP to the Regional Council.

Comments on the current draft were suggested to be submitted by August 31, 2012 and AQMD plans to release the socioeconomic impact analysis report, the revised draft AQMP, and the CEQA program EIR by September 7, 2012. AQMD will continue to accept comments on a revised Draft until the final hearing by the AQMD Governing Board scheduled for November 2, 2012. The PM2.5 State Implementation Plan component of the 2012 AQMP, which is inclusive of components prepared by the AQMD, SCAG, and ARB, must be submitted to the U.S. EPA by December 14, 2012.

## **SCAG Presents Papers at GIS Conference**

From July 23-27, 2012, ESRI conducted their annual International Users Conference in San Diego, California. More than 15,000 GIS users from around the globe immersed themselves in the latest GIS technology through demonstrations, presentations and general networking opportunities. SCAG was selected to present 5 papers on a wide-ranging set of topics including our GIS Services Program, Sustainability Planning, and Correcting of Errors in the 2010 Census data. These presentations were well received as evidenced by the large number of questions that the SCAG staff received from conference participants.

## **SCAG International Conference Participation**

I was invited by the State of Sao Paulo, Brazil, to participate in a two-day workshop from August 9-10, 2012 on development challenges and policy responses in metropolitan regions. I gave a presentation, entitled "Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Transportation: New Planning Process and Modeling Practice in Southern California." The presentation was well-received by the workshop participants.

Additionally, at the invitation from the Institute of Policy and Management (IPM) within the Chinese Academy of Science, SCAG staff attended the International Economic, Environmental, and Energy Discussion conference held in Beijing, China from July 16-18, 2012. The goal of the conference was to bridge and incorporate global knowledge in economic development and data management, and to exchange experiences in greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies through local policies on sustainable transportation and land use planning and environmental preservation. SCAG staff made three presentations at the event and is exploring potential MOUs between SCAG and IPM to further enhance research collaboration and exchange of planning experiences for various issues and challenges facing metropolitan development.