

2016 RTP/SCS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

At this month's Special Joint Meeting, staff will provide the members of the Transportation; Community, Economic and Human Development; and Energy and Environment committees with details on the major components of the proposed Draft 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS), as well as the framework for the plan's Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). Over the last several months, SCAG staff has been engaged in informing the Regional Council and Policy Committees about the various key issues, analyses and policy considerations for the development of the 2016 RTP/SCS and its associated PEIR. The Policy Committees have reviewed and taken action on several of the plan's major components, including finding near-term transitional strategies and long-term initiatives to pay for the region's transportation system; developing first/last mile solutions to increase transit usage; integrating public health into the planning process; and a regional natural/farm lands conservation strategy, among others. This Special Joint Meeting builds upon these past actions and provides additional information so that the Policy Committees can collectively recommend to the Regional Council to release the Draft 2016 RTP/SCS and PEIR for public review and comment at its Dec. 3 meeting. The staff report on the major components of the Draft 2016 RTP/SCS and PEIR is included in the agenda for the November Special Joint Meeting.

CAP-AND-TRADE FUNDING UPDATE

In October, the Strategic Growth Council accepted public comments on the draft guidelines for the second year of the Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities (AHSC) competitive grant program. SCAG submitted a joint comment letter in partnership with the American Lung Association, Move LA, National Resources Defense Council, Environmental Council of Sacramento, Sacramento Area Council of Governments and the California Association of Councils of Governments. A copy of the letter is included in the board information packet. An estimated \$400 million will be available in this new round of the AHSC program, which will go towards transportation and housing projects that reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. Final guidelines are anticipated to be approved in mid-December, with a formal Notice of Funding Availability scheduled for release in January 2016.

To take advantage of the AHSC and other cap-and-trade funding opportunities, SCAG is offering members two upcoming workshops in the region. On Nov. 18, SCAG is partnering with the Southern California Gas Company for a workshop on how to access state cap-and-trade grant funding. The workshop will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at the SoCalGas Energy Resource Center in Downey. Cities and counties interested in applying for cap-and-trade funds are invited to attend. For more information, please contact Sarita Figueroa at (213) 244-3621. To empower and better prepare potential applicants for the new cycle of AHSC grants, SCAG and its regional partners will hold another California Gold workshop on Dec. 8. The workshop, titled "California Gold," will focus on providing technical assistance to potential AHSC grant applicants. For more information, please visit SCAG's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund page or contact Kristen Pawling at pawling@scag.ca.gov.

DRAFT UPDATE TO STATE GENERAL PLAN GUIDELINES RELEASED

On Oct. 12, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) released a draft update to the General Plan Guidelines. This update seeks to serve as a guidance document to assist local jurisdictions in updating their respective General Plans. The draft update is categorized into sections such as visioning, community engagement, economic development, social equity and climate change, along with helpful resources and links. The guidelines website will also be updated to provide an easily navigable interface to assist jurisdictions preparing their General Plans. The last major update to the guidelines was in 2003.

OPR is welcoming public comments on the draft update until Dec. 18. OPR will also hold two public workshops during the comment period in the SCAG region, one on Nov. 30 at SCAG's headquarters in Los Angeles and the second at the SANBAG office in San Bernardino on Dec. 1. A copy of the draft update, along with workshop registration information, can be found online at: www.opr.ca.gov.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE CALIFORNIA FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The California Freight Advisory Committee (CFAC) met on Oct. 20, at SCAG's Los Angeles office. The meeting included discussions focused on the Governor's Executive Order B-32-15, issued on July 16, calling for an integrated California Sustainable Freight Strategy (SFS) with clear targets to improve freight efficiency, transition to zero-emission technologies, and increase the competitiveness of California's freight system. The Executive Order also calls for initiating corridor-level pilot projects. Targets discussed include "freight efficiency by 25 percent by 2030; deploy 100,000 + freight vehicles and equipment capable of zero emission operation by 2030; and evaluate costs as a part of broader analysis to address competitiveness concerns." Continuing discussions about targets and metrics for freight efficiency, environmental sustainability and competitiveness considerations are anticipated. Idea summaries for corridor-level pilot projects were also solicited for submittal by Nov. 30. All idea summaries will be reviewed by the state and a list of preliminary pilot projects for consideration will be presented for public comment at regional workshops planned for January 2016.

REGIONAL AGENCY COMMENTS TO THE CALIFORNIA ROAD CHARGE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SCAG, along with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Sacramento Area Council of Governments and San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) recently submitted a joint comment letter to the California Road Charge Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) requesting consideration of several issues pertinent to the design and subsequent implementation of the Road Charge Pilot Program. Joint comments focused on allowing for local options to align the road charge with state policies and goals; testing a broad range of vehicle types and geographic locations; and ensuring that a road charge system is adaptable with emerging technologies. As the Road Charge TAC deliberations conclude in December, recommendations are currently being finalized to launch a statewide pilot program in 2016.

LOS ANGELES-SAN BERNARDINO INTER-COUNTY TRANSIT AND RAIL CONNECTIVITY STUDY

In cooperation with Metro and SANBAG, SCAG has initiated the Los Angeles-San Bernardino Inter-County Transit and Rail Connectivity Study. The Inter-County Study will focus on the transit corridor that includes the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Phases 2B and 2C and the Metrolink San Bernardino Line. The study will assess the market for transit and rail travel in the corridor; estimate potential ridership, benefits and costs associated with alternative strategies; and recommend a path forward for cost-effective transit and rail improvements that best serve communities along the corridor, including travel to/from Ontario International Airport. With consultant assistance provided by AECOM, SCAG will coordinate closely with Metro, SANBAG, transit operators and local jurisdictions in the corridor. The Inter-County Study will include a stakeholder and public participation effort and will feature community meetings and a Technical Advisory Committee. The study is expected to conclude by June 2017 and will identify a recommended strategy for approval by the Regional Council.

PROPOSED EPA RULE APPROVES 2012 AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN, PROPOSES RECLASSIFICATION

On Oct. 20, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published in the Federal Register a proposed rule to approve the 2012 South Coast Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) and the subsequent Supplement to the air plan. As reported previously, the 2012 South Coast AQMP addresses the Clean Air Act requirements for the 2006 fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) national ambient air quality standards; and the air plan includes SCAG's Regional Transportation Strategy and Control Measures, which are based on the adopted 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2012-2035 RTP/SCS). In the proposed rule, the U.S. EPA is also proposing to reclassify the South Coast Air Basin from a moderate to a serious PM_{2.5} nonattainment area because the South Coast cannot practically attain the standard by the applicable moderate area attainment date of Dec. 31, 2015. If finalized as proposed, the South Coast region will be subject to more stringent air quality planning requirements; and a new air plan will be required to be jointly prepared by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the California Air Resources Board and SCAG to demonstrate attainment with the 2006 PM_{2.5} national standards by Dec. 31, 2019. In addition, the new air plan will include new PM_{2.5} transportation conformity budgets that will be required to be used in SCAG's future RTP/SCS and Federal Transportation Improvement Program, once approved by the U.S. EPA. Comments on the proposed rule must be received by Nov. 19, 2015. For details and how to comment, visit <http://1.usa.gov/20ryJ8X>.

PROPOSED MOBILE SOURCE STRATEGY RELEASED FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

Mobile sources—cars, trucks and a myriad of off-road equipment—and the fossil fuels that power them are the largest contributors to the formation of ozone, PM 2.5, diesel particulate matter and GHG emissions in California. On Oct. 2, the California Air Resources Board released a proposed integrated strategy to address mobile source emissions and attain federal air quality standards, achieve state GHG reduction targets, reduce petroleum consumption and decrease health risk from transportation over the next 15 years. The Discussion Draft includes specific measure concepts to be included in the upcoming 2016 South Coast Air Quality Management Plan to achieve the mobile source sector's equal share of the overall reductions needed to attain federal ozone standards. The Air Resources Board is one of the three agencies responsible for preparing the South Coast air plan, along with the South Coast Air Quality Management District and SCAG.

The proposed strategy is a key element to demonstrate attainment with federal ozone standards for the South Coast, which would ensure federal approval of the air plan. Without an approvable air plan, the region would face stationary and highways sanctions, as well as conformity lapse. The proposed actions in the Discussion Draft will also provide the framework for development of the upcoming Scoping Plan Update and the California Sustainable Freight Action Plan. However, details and additional actions will be developed through the respective planning work. A public workshop on the Discussion Draft was held on Oct. 16, followed by a public hearing by the Air Resources Board on Oct. 22. Following board direction, Air Resources Board staff will work with stakeholders, air districts and other state agencies to develop detailed measures and strategy concepts into the related planning efforts. For details about the Discussion Draft document, visit <http://bit.ly/1XMSnK6>.

GRANTS NOW AVAILABLE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROJECTS

The California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) is now accepting applications from eligible community-based nonprofit groups and federally recognized tribal governments to support environmental justice-related projects across California. More than \$1 million is available for this program. Applicants should address a variety of environmental and public health objectives, including reducing diesel emissions, ensuring safe drinking water and participation in the environmental

decision-making processes at the state and local levels. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis and applications must be received by CalEPA by Jan. 22, 2016. Awards will be announced in May 2016. For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/1P7YN4Z>.

TOOLBOX TUESDAY: BEYOND THE DROUGHT

On Oct. 13, SCAG hosted the Toolbox Tuesday session “Beyond the Drought: Innovative Practices for Water Conservation and Stormwater Management.” Practitioners from public, private and non-profit sectors gave presentations on best practices, new technologies and policy strategies for meeting the state’s water conservation mandates. Presentations were especially focused on methods that communities can adopt to conserve water during the drought and efficiently manage stormwater in the upcoming forecasted rainy season. Topics included best practices from Australia’s response to the Millennium Drought, improving policies for greywater recycling and stormwater catchment methods. Toolbox Tuesdays provide free classes for staff of SCAG-member local governments and other partners and offer a range of practical skills and knowledge on timely planning issues. Future Toolbox Tuesdays on other exciting topics will be announced on the SCAG Sustainability Program website at <http://bit.ly/1kpOCf2>.

SCAG CONTINUES INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In late October, Hon. Larry McCallon and Hon. Steven S. Choi represented SCAG at two international conferences on sustainable development in Incheon, South Korea. Both conferences were attended by over 200 participants, sharing international best practices on planning for sustainable growth. The SCAG delegation gave a presentation on the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS and SCS implementation examples in the City of Irvine. SCAG’s delegation also visited Myongji University, where Hon. Steven S. Choi gave a special lecture.

Also in October, SCAG hosted two international delegations from China – one from the Ningxia Autonomous Regional Government and another from the Ningbo Municipal Bureau of National Land and Resources. SCAG staff gave the Chinese delegates an introduction on SCAG’s governance structure and key programs, as well as integrated transportation planning with land use for the 2016 RTP/SCS. Chinese visitors expressed their interest on SCAG’s bottom-up collaborative planning process and GIS data-oriented policy assessment and impact analysis.

SCAG COLLABORATES WITH U.S. FOREST SERVICE ON SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS NATIONAL MONUMENT

On Oct. 10, President Barack Obama designated an area in the San Gabriel Mountains as a National Monument by executive order under the Antiquities Act of 1906. Under the proclamation, the San Gabriel National Monument will be managed by the U.S. Forest Service. This action by the President not only conserves land for present and future generations, but also recognizes park access as a social justice issue. SCAG staff has offered assistance to the U.S. Forest Service in the development of the transportation element of the San Gabriel National Monument Plan and has met with Forest Service staff to coordinate planning efforts. In early 2016, SCAG will assist the Forest Service in convening transportation agencies and other stakeholders in a day-long workshop that will help inform the San Gabriel National Monument transportation plan.



SCAG GIS ROLLOUT PROGRAM UPDATE

SCAG is continuing to share valuable GIS resources to 24 SCAG member cities. The GIS Rollout program gives participating jurisdictions a laptop computer, docking station, ArcGIS software, spatial data and GIS training, at no cost, as part of the program. The program's goal is to provide participants GIS resources to share and update their land use data, as well as to assist with other day-to-day activities. Since July, SCAG has implemented 11 GIS rollouts to the cities of Aliso Viejo, Bell, Beaumont, Bradbury, Colton, Cudahy, Eastvale Jurupa Valley, Lawndale, Maywood and Upland. In the next few weeks, GIS rollouts are anticipated for the cities of Huntington Park, Loma Linda, South Gate and Wildomar. For more information on the SCAG GIS Rollout program, please contact Javier Aguilar at aguilar@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG STAFF PARTICIPATES IN ASSOCIATION OF THE COLLEGIATE SCHOOLS OF PLANNING CONFERENCE

In late October, SCAG staff members presented at the 55th annual Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning conference in Houston, Texas. This year's conference theme was "Justice and The City: (re)Examining the Past to Create the Future." The conference had more than 900 accepted abstracts as well as poster presentations and roundtables from many domestic and international universities. SCAG poster presentations included "Monitoring Gentrification in Transit-Oriented Communities Using Performance Indicators," by John Cho and "Exploration of Influential Factors on Multiple Severity Levels of Traffic Collisions in Southern California" by Tom Vo. Both Frank Wen and Simon Choi participated in the development of the research as well as the posters.