

CONNECT SOCIAL UPDATE

SCAG recently completed the public comment and review period for the Draft Connect SoCal plan, the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy. The draft plan was released for public comment and review starting on Nov. 14. During the 10-week comment period, SCAG held three public hearings, a webinar and a tele-town hall, welcoming anyone to learn more and provide comments regarding the draft plan. SCAG also hosted a series of 21 briefings for local elected officials throughout the region. These meetings were designed to inform elected officials, stakeholders and interested citizens on the key investments and strategies in the draft plan and solicit feedback.

Upon closing the comment period on Jan. 24, SCAG had received more than 1,000 comments on the draft plan. The public review and comment period caps off more than three years of dialogue and consultation on with residents and stakeholders from throughout the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura sharing their comments and questions. A report summarizing the entirety of comments will be presented to the Regional Council at their March meeting and a document summarizing all comments and staff responses will be available online shortly thereafter. Consideration of a Proposed Final Connect SoCal plan is anticipated in April. For more information and updates on the Connect SoCal plan, the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and related documents, visit connectsocial.org.

REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

On Jan. 13, the California Department of Housing and Community Development sent a letter to SCAG indicating that HCD had completed its review of the proposed Draft Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Methodology submitted by SCAG, finding that it was in compliance with state law by furthering the five statutory objectives of RHNA. With HCD's acceptance of the methodology, staff will recommend that the RHNA Subcommittee recommend that the Community, Environment and Human Development recommend that the Regional Council adopt the Draft RHNA Methodology as the Final RHNA Methodology at its meeting on March 5. After the Final RHNA Methodology is adopted by the Regional Council, SCAG will distribute each jurisdiction's RHNA allocation and begin the appeals process in April 2020.

With the number of changes since the prior RHNA cycle to the appeals process, SCAG staff held a workshop on Feb. 3 to provide an overview of the changes to the appeals process and information on how to appeal a jurisdiction's draft allocation. A Draft RHNA Appeals Procedures document is available online at <http://www.scag.ca.gov/programs/Documents/RHNA/RHNA-Draft-Appeals-Procedures.pdf>. Staff will consider any comments on the Draft RHNA Appeals Procedures up until Feb. 10. Staff will subsequently submit its recommended RHNA Appeals Procedures for approval at the next RHNA Subcommittee meeting on Feb. 24.

SCAG DELEGATION STUDIES ROAD USER CHARGING IN NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA

SCAG collaborated in January with the Ministry of Transport in New Zealand and the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities in Australia on a study tour focused on sharing information about the use of road user charges (RUC) to fund system development and operational performance. The cost of using New Zealand's roads is recovered from road users either via gasoline taxes or through road user charges (RUC), which pertain to certain types of vehicles such as light- and heavy-duty diesel powered vehicles that require RUC credits (in 1,000 kilometer increments) in order to operate on roadways. New Zealand has over 40 years of experience with road user charging systems and is recognized internationally as a successful test case in road funding. The Australian Government is embarking on a large scale pilot that models and analyzes the impact of alternative charging approaches for heavy vehicles. The study tour, which was led by SCAG President Bill Jahn and also included First Vice President Rex Richardson and Transportation Committee Chair Cheryl Viegas-Walker, yielded important insights related to privacy, equity, operational efficiency, enforcement and public support that will be shared with the Transportation Committee in March 2020. The replacement of the fuel excise tax with a mileage-based user fee is a key policy objective of the Draft Connect SoCal plan and has been an essential component of the financial plan for SCAG's regional transportation plans since 2012.

SCAG MEETS WITH ASSEMBLYMEMBER RICHARD BLOOM

On Dec. 16, 2019, SCAG President Bill Jahn, Executive Director Kome Ajise, Chief Operating Officer Darin Chidsey, and Legislation department staff met with California State Assemblymember Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica) to discuss the second half of the legislative session in Sacramento and share some preliminary priorities for the year around affordable housing. Other topics of discussion included the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) and the adoption of Connect SoCal. Assemblymember Bloom is a member of the Appropriations, Budget, Business and Professions, Higher Education, and Local Government committees and also chairs Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Natural Resources and Transportation. He represents the communities of Agoura Hills, Bel Air, Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Hollywood, Malibu, Pacific Palisades, Santa Monica, Topanga, West Hollywood, and West Los Angeles.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR THE 2020 SCAG SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

SCAG is now accepting applications for its scholarship program through April 3. The scholarship program offers financial support and professional development to the region's high school and community college students. Scholarships of \$4,000 will be awarded to at least seven eligible students across the six-county SCAG region. Winners will also complete a two-week internship with a local planning agency or council of governments, getting the opportunity to meet with elected officials and practicing planners to learn more about careers in public service. Community college students or high school juniors and seniors who live in the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino or Ventura are eligible to apply. Application materials and additional details are available at: www.scag.ca.gov/scholarship. If you have questions, contact Scholarship Program Coordinator Jonathan Hughes at hughesj@scag.ca.gov.

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HONORS CIVIC SPARK WITH ZEVe AWARDS

SCAG's CivicSpark Climate Fellows—Natalie Arreaga, Amanda Caswell and Vannesa Reyes Salazar—were honored with ZEVe awards by the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) for their leadership and dedication to improving the zero emission vehicle (ZEV) infrastructure approval process. They have moved bureaucratic mountains to evaluate the electric vehicle charging station permitting status of every jurisdiction in the SCAG region, successfully tracking down the ordinances, checklists and all relevant information about charging station permitting. They directly contacted planners and building officials from throughout the region, leading to many enlightening conversations and sharing of resources including the GO-Biz [Electric Vehicle Charging Station Permitting Guidebook](#). Their work has been invaluable and will go a long way in ensuring Southern California is ready for the millions of ZEVs that are anticipated to be on the road in the coming years.

SCAG WORKSHOP AT THE ANNUAL CALIFORNIA GIS CONFERENCE IN LONG BEACH

As part of SCAG's Future Communities Initiative, there will be a special workshop for local jurisdictions on Feb. 10 at the California GIS Conference. This session will update stakeholders on SCAG's current data resources, future grant opportunities related to data and new technology, as well as several upcoming data initiatives for Local Jurisdictions in Southern California. Additional information is available at <https://calgis2020.sched.com>.

SCAG COMPLETES REGIONWIDE INVENTORY OF PUBLIC-OWNED LANDS

SCAG staff conducted a regionwide inventory of public-owned lands and produced the preliminary regional geospatial dataset of public-owned lands information at parcel-level. The public-owned lands database provides the public with information that could help put public properties to better use and spur innovative ideas that create new economic development, affordable and homeless housing, revenue generation and other opportunities to improve communities. The product of this project will help to identify potentially developable lands in the SCAG region, focusing on lands and properties owned by public entities, such as federal, state, county, city and other public agencies. The product will be useful sources for our elected leaders, local planners, community developers and those who are interested in opportunities for future land transformation, infill and redevelopment.

OZONE AIR PLANS FOR COACHELLA VALLEY AND VENTURA COUNTY ARE RECEIVING PROPOSED APPROVAL BY U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published in the Federal Register a proposed rule to approve the latest ozone state implementation plans (SIPs) for Coachella Valley and Ventura County on Dec. 20, 2019 and Jan. 17, 2020, respectively, to address the federal 2008 eight-hour ozone ambient air quality standards. SCAG staff had previously worked with the staff of the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, and the California Air Resources Board in developing the air plans especially the new ozone transportation conformity budgets in the air plans. If the rules are finalized as proposed, Coachella Valley and Ventura County would fulfill all air quality planning requirements with the exception of one element under conditional approval for the 2008 ozone national ambient air quality standards. Failure to meet the required federal air quality planning requirement could lead to serious consequences that impact regional transportation plan, program, and projects. In addition, upon final approval, the new ozone transportation conformity budgets in the ozone plans will apply to SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan, Federal Transportation Improvement Program, and their amendments. For additional information about the proposed rules, see the respective Federal Register Notices at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-01-17/pdf/2020-00538.pdf> (Coachella Valley) and <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-12-20/pdf/2019-27545.pdf> (Ventura County).

REGIONAL GREENPRINT TOOL IN DEVELOPMENT

On Jan. 22 and 23, SCAG held kick-off meetings to develop the Regional Greenprint, which is a planned strategic conservation tool and website to help users make better land use and transportation infrastructure decisions and support conservation investments based on the best available scientific data. The Greenprint development process is expected to last two years. The first year will entail extensive, targeted outreach to stakeholders to gain insight on the tool's uses, main themes, and the best datasets to include. The second year will focus on developing and testing the tool, and a launch campaign. Additionally, the Nature Conservancy will create a white paper advising SCAG on developing a Regional Advanced Mitigation Program, which is envisioned by the draft Connect SoCal Plan as establishing and/or supplementing regional conservation and mitigation banks and/or programs to address impacts for projects that support reduction of per-capita vehicle miles traveled.

REGIONAL INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS WORKSHOPS

SCAG recently updated its regional intelligent transportation systems (ITS) architecture in late 2019, marking the final stage of a years-long project to modernize and reintroduce this valuable planning tool. The multi-county architecture, which had not been updated since 2011, provides a framework or blueprint for cross-county transportation technology elements in Southern California, and is used by municipalities and counties to ensure that their transportation projects are adequately connected to each other so as to produce a cohesive experience for road, transit and active transportation users. SCAG has been holding workshops around the region to familiarize ITS stakeholders and users with the update, and provide a refresher on the basics of ITS. The Orange County, Los Angeles County/Ventura County, and Coachella Valley/Imperial County workshops have been completed, and the Inland Empire workshop will be held in [San Bernardino](#) on Feb. 11. A recording of the workshop will be posted online at the conclusion of the trainings.

LOS ANGELES UNION STATION/CIVIC CENTER TAX INCREMENT FINANCING PROJECT KICKOFF

On Jan. 28, the Los Angeles Union Station/Civic Center Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Study kicked off at Metro's headquarters. The project intends to study and evaluate potential TIF opportunities near Union Station to help support and fund active transportation projects and sustainable improvements in and around the transit hub. The year-long project will begin with community outreach that transitions into exploring TIF alternatives based off of land-uses and potential future growth and development.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION FRAMEWORK FINANCING SESSION

In December 2019, SCAG hosted a special workshop for regional stakeholders on how to fund resilient infrastructure in response to climate change. Several financing approaches from across the state were highlighted, including in-person guidance from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, as well as options for financing under tax increment financing and special assessment tools. A webinar from the workshop is available online at <https://youtu.be/IfwecdekMGQ>. Questions can be directed to SCAG staff at adaptation@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG SHARES KNOWLEDGE AT 2020 TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD ANNUAL MEETING

Early in January 2020, SCAG presented at the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) 99th Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. SCAG staff presented and exchanged knowledge on a poster presentation about transit usage analysis in the region titled, "What Happened to Our Transit Usage? (Part 2)—an Exploratory Investigation on the Impacts on Commuting Pattern, Built Environments, and Neighborhood Change on Transit Usage." This project continues to build upon the analysis done in 2019 by further investigating the factors influencing transit usage for those who live near transit stations; the second part of the project examines the commuting patterns and distance of these residents by different transportation modes and socioeconomic groups. The overall theme of this year's meeting was "A Century of Progress: Foundation for the Future." This annual conference brings more than 13,000 transportation professionals from around the world and its program includes over 5,000 presentations in nearly 800 sessions and workshops.

SCAG COLLABORATES WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF SEOUL

As a part of an international partnership with the University of Seoul in South Korea, SCAG hosted two volunteer interns, Na Youn Jung and Jae Min Lee, from December 2019 to February 2020. By the end of their internships, they had learned about how SCAG collaborates with key stakeholders to develop regional plans and policy options to address diverse urban and regional planning issues. Additionally, the students learned insightful regional planning knowledge through field study and guided research on a topic area of their interests. Na Young conducted a research on local park efficiency and Jae Min conducted a research on housing affordability as a comparison between the SCAG region and Seoul.

SCAG CONTINUES INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

On Jan. 21, SCAG hosted a delegation from the Research Institute of Coexistence and Collaboration in South Korea. The nine-member delegation, led by the director of the institute, visited SCAG to learn more about public participation and conflict resolution in Southern California. SCAG staff introduced SCAG's primary roles and responsibilities, programs, Connect SoCal outreach and public participation. The delegation shared some of their policy tools to prevent conflicts on the policy-making process in Seoul Metropolitan area.