

Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Program Update – July 2021

BACKGROUND:

Under the California 2019-20 Budget Act, SCAG was eligible for \$47 million in REAP funding to support local governments and stakeholders with housing planning activities that accelerate housing production and meet the region's goals for producing 1.3 million new units of housing by 2029, as determined by the 6th Cycle RHNA.

SCAG has framed the REAP funding into three umbrella categories:

- Partnerships and Outreach
- Regional Housing Policy Solutions
- Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) Integration

PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

1) Subregional Partnership Program

SCAG set aside approximately \$23 million of its REAP housing funding for the Subregional Partnership Program (SRP) to fund subregional partnership planning activities that will accelerate housing production and facilitate compliance in implementing a jurisdiction's 6th cycle RHNA. All applications have been approved and SCAG staff have focused activities on finalizing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the subregional partners, ensuring that their procurement policies meet the flow down requirements of the grant funds, and supporting their efforts to implement the grant funded activities. Those partners with completed MOUs are in the process of doing work directly through their staff as well as procuring consultants.

2) Call for Collaboration

In July 2020, the Regional Council voted to approve \$1 million of the early application REAP grant funding to establish the Call for Collaboration partnership program. SCAG partnered with the California Community Foundation (CCF), joined by the Irvine Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, and other funding partners for this program. The program was designed to fund community-based organizations and non-profit led activities that result in action-oriented planning policies and programs demonstrating a nexus to accelerating housing production.

The grant program was oversubscribed by four (4) times, and fifteen (15) awards were made totaling \$1.25 million. These awards were made to a range of non-profit and community-based organizations covering five of SCAG's six counties. Through its partner, CCF, awardees are now entering into grant agreements and kicking off their grant-funded work. The period of performance is 18-months from execution of the grant agreement.

3) Local Housing Leadership Academy

SCAG will seek a consultant team to develop and lead a housing leadership academy that aims to convene, educate, and engage elected officials, local leaders and influential stakeholders on housing issues related to production and preservation of housing. SCAG intends to curate cohorts of up to 40 participants specific to each Southern California county to offer concurrent training sessions. In

Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Program Update – July 2021

addition to the trainings, the leadership academy process will include 4 region-wide convenings on core housing topics.

SCAG staff issued a procurement to the consultants newly approved through the On Call Services contracts, and participated in a kick off with the selected consultant. There is also potential to hold the first convening in Fall 2021.

4) Pro-Housing Campaign

SCAG designated funding for the development of a community outreach and advertising campaign with the goals of creating positive associations with housing development and housing-supportive land use policies. This effort will be modelled on the success of SCAG's Go Human campaign, a community outreach and advertising campaign with the goals of reducing traffic collisions in Southern California and encouraging people to walk and bike more. Staff began to research several similar, active efforts, and found that the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) has been working with a marketing and branding firm on a market segmentation analysis, identifying core values associated with housing development. CZI is currently testing various slogans developed based on the outcomes of the market research. Staff is proposing to coordinate with CZI and other partners to use these market-tested slogans and develop and launch the campaign materials.

REGIONAL HOUSING POLICY SOLUTIONS

1) RHNA Methodology/Allocation

SCAG implemented an extensive process for development of the 6th Cycle RHNA. The final RHNA methodology was developed involving outreach by SCAG's Environmental Justice Working Group to maximize outreach to lower income, minority and other disadvantaged populations, and considered a wide range of nearly 250 stakeholder comments. The appeals process concluded with adoption of the Final RHNA in February 2021.

SCAG will use lessons learned from the 6th cycle process to inform its recommendations to the California Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD) for revamping the RHNA process to be provided pursuant to Health and Safety Code 50515.05

2) Data Tools and Technical Support for Housing Element Updates

In partnership with HCD, SCAG has provided several data and technical assistance tools to local jurisdictions. These resources will help member jurisdictions reduce costs associated with developing 6th cycle housing element updates as well as streamline the review process.

This work has included:

- August 2020: A two-part webinar series focused on providing local governments and other stakeholders in the SCAG region with information and resources to support their 6th cycle housing element updates
- July 2020: Publishing housing element needs and affordability data sets for each local jurisdiction, pre-certified by HCD for use in housing element updates.

Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Program Update – July 2021

- Release of a Regional Accessory Dwelling Unit Affordability Analysis to support cities in determining assumptions for ADU affordability that can be used to assign ADUs to income categories to be included in 6th cycle housing elements.
- December 2020: Launch of the SCAG Housing Element Parcel Tool (HELPR), a web-mapping tool developed to help local jurisdictions and stakeholders understand local land use and site opportunities for aligning housing planning with the state’s 6th cycle housing element updates and related guidelines. The modified version HELPR 2.0, was launched in June 2021

3) Housing Policy Solutions Research

Building upon prior internal research efforts which focus on housing policies and fiscal innovations, this work item envisions a set of collaboratively funded university studies (“university partnerships”) or other studies that provide research and recommendations on best practices that accelerate housing production, as well as additional small-ticket consultant items as needed, and staff time. The key deliverables would consist of policy briefs and periodic white papers on timely topics and best practices. Three efforts are underway for this program:

Other to Residential: SCAG staff has researched the topic of “other to residential,” focused on identifying land uses that could be re-purposed and/or rezoned for residential use (for example brownfields, golf courses and underutilized strip malls). Staff is working on a scope of work to procure a consultant for initial feasibility studies and data collection and is also seeking a university partner that can coordinate a studio workshop to produce additional data analysis and a visioning approach to the identified sites.

Housing Development Streamlining: In early June, staff released a procurement to the OCS for the development of guidance materials, presentations/workshops and website content focused on streamlining development projects.

City of Cerritos: In collaboration with the Future Communities Pilot Program (FCPP), SCAG staff continues to support and monitor the implementation on an online permitting portal platform with the City of Cerritos. The platform will accelerate housing production and streamline approval processes by moving external and internal application efforts into an interactive online system and significantly reducing staff time needed to process applications.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGIES INTEGRATION

1) 2020 Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) – Housing and Sustainable Development (HSD)

This HSD-SCP program was designed to provide resources and direct technical assistance to jurisdictions to complete local planning efforts that both accelerate housing production as well as enable implementation of the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) of Connect SoCal. There are three eligible categories for this program including: (1) implementing ADU programs; (2) Housing Sustainability Districts, Workforce Housing Opportunity Zones, and Housing Supportive Tax Increment Financing Districts; and (3) streamlining housing permitting, parking reduction strategies, housing-related specific plans and other pro-housing policies.

Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Program Update – July 2021

At the April 2021 CEHD and Regional Council meetings, all 26 applications were approved for funding. Staff is now working to develop “bundles” of scopes of work, to procure consultant teams that will work with cities across similar project types. The first procurements will be released in early summer, continuing through Fall 2021.

2) Transit Oriented Development Work Program

LA Metro Partnership: SCAG and Metro will enter into a Transit Oriented Development/Transit Oriented Communities (TOD/TOC) partnership via an MOU to fund a variety of programs and studies that promote housing production near transit stations. SCAG and Metro will enter into a Transit Oriented Development/Transit Oriented Communities (TOD/TOC) partnership via an MOU to fund a variety of programs and studies that promote housing production near transit stations, including studies to evaluate station area parking strategies, station access, joint development strategies, housing supportive community outreach, and a housing innovation “lab”. The goal of the partnership is to strategically plan for nearly 10,000 units of housing on transit-adjacent properties.

SCRRA (Metrolink): SCAG and SCRRA will enter into a partnership through an MOU to identify and encourage transit-oriented housing production opportunities throughout Metrolink’s network and around its stations. Particular emphasis will be made to support and add value to the Metrolink Southern California Optimized Rail Expansion (SCORE) capital improvement and service enhancement program. Local cities and CTCs will also be included as needed to maximize coordination on issues such as alignment of land development policies and regulations, land ownership and site control opportunities of transit station areas and supporting facilities.

3. Priority Growth Area (PGA) Analysis and Data Tools

Partnerships: SCAG will pursue partnerships to further next steps on housing supportive land use analysis and strategy development in PGAs. Staff has focused on identifying partnerships with existing programs and efforts, with an emphasis on the State-funded Transformative Climate Communities areas.

Planning and Policy Research: SCAG will partner with academic institutions as well as other stakeholder groups and industry associations to identify best practices to unlock new housing development potential, remove barriers to housing development, reduce the cost of development, and decrease development timelines. These efforts will focus on various community typologies and housing types, consistent with the SCS and will also build on SCAG’s CEQA streamlining efforts