
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 28, 2021

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SCAG Honors 6 Innovative Projects with its 2021 Sustainability Awards

Los Angeles – Six exemplary and innovative planning projects have been announced as winners of the 2021 Sustainability Awards by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG).

Recipients of this year’s awards include municipalities, agencies and nonprofit organizations – all recognized for excellence in coordinating land use and transportation to improve mobility, livability, prosperity and sustainability. They will be formally honored at SCAG’s Regional Conference and General Assembly, which will be held virtually on May 6.

“We’re honored to present these awards, which recognize the best of the best when it comes to improving the quality of life of our communities and the region. As these projects illustrate, there is a tremendous amount of innovative work being done across our region when it comes to the integration of land use and transportation to improve health outcomes and address social, environmental and economic inequities,” said SCAG President Rex Richardson, Vice Mayor of Long Beach.

The 2021 honorees by category are:

Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability: The City of Santa Ana, for the Santa Ana Arts Collective (SAAC) Affordable Housing and Adaptive Reuse Community

SAAC is Santa Ana’s first successful adaptive reuse project, containing residential, commercial, live/work and community spaces in a renovated and re-imagined mid-century office building. The project provides permanent supportive housing to low-income artists and their families, as well as previously homeless residents within the city. It is located in a neighborhood just north of downtown that had been home to a burgeoning artists community that languished after the Great Recession. The SAAC was one of the first projects in Southern California that was funded through the State of California’s Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program. SAAC is located along a transit corridor and provides residents with walking access to jobs and amenities in the downtown area.

Active, Healthy and Safe Communities: The City of Palm Desert, for its San Pablo Avenue Streetscape Project

The San Pablo project reconfigures a previous five-lane roadway to better serve pedestrians and non-motorized uses along two low-to-moderate-income neighborhoods with low Healthy Places Index (HPI) scores. Among the improvements: A vehicle-travel lane was removed in each direction, sidewalks were expanded and seven themed community pocket parks were added. The two neighborhoods directly impacted by the project have performed poorly in HPI’s scoring for

education, active commuting, transportation, automobile access, clean environment and healthcare access.

Clean Cities – Alternative Fuels and Infrastructure: Sunline Transit Agency, for Driving the Future of Hydrogen

This comprehensive initiative built on Sunline’s legacy of serving the Coachella Valley and Riverside County with a clean-fuels fleet of vehicles. Sunline recently built the nation’s largest hydrogen fueling station dedicated to transit, using electricity and renewable energy to generate clean hydrogen. It also is the first agency to develop a comprehensive workforce training program in transportation technologies – the West Coast Center of Excellence in Zero Emission Technology and Renewable Energy.

Efficient and Sustainable Land Use: Kounkuey Design Initiative and the City of Los Angeles, for its Adopt-A-Lot Program

This pilot project helps community group “adopters” design and build temporary starter parks on vacant and neglected lots, then maintain them for up to 18 months. These parks can be created in a few months’ time, setting the stage for their development into permanent parks that support active, healthy and safe communities. Last year, Pacoima Beautiful created a community park and garden in North Hills, and in Watts, Brillante Watts created a pocket park with seating, a stage, planters and tables.

Housing Innovation: Clifford Beers Housing Inc., for its Isla de Los Angeles development

Isla de Los Angeles is an affordable housing project under development in the city. One of its more innovative features is a “living lung” – a green buffer that breaks down particulate matter and serves as an organic example for developing sites within close proximity to freeways. It also acts as Los Angeles’ first shared street – a lush path and public space surrounded by plants and trees with direct to light rail and bus line stops.

Green Region Initiative: The San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, for the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan

This plan provides a collaborative, integrated and fiscally sound approach to land use that preserves precious water resources, establishes a permanent nature reserve, reduces the carbon footprint and provides economic security by identifying disturbed land areas for mining and supporting \$36 million in annual payroll to economically disadvantaged communities. Partners included the cities of Highland and Redlands, the East Valley and San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water Districts, CEMEX and Robertson’s Ready Mix, the Inland Valley Development Agency, Endangered Habits League and various state and federal agencies.

Sustainability Award Honorable Mentions include:

- The Los Angeles Department of Transportation, for its Safe Routes to School/Little Street Redesign and Rapid Implementation Project (Active, Healthy and Safe Communities)
- StratosFuel and the City of San Bernardino, for the Inland Empire Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle Carshare Program (Clean Cities – Alternative Fuels and Infrastructure)
- The City of Alhambra, Los Angeles County Public Works and the County of Los Angeles, for the Los Angeles County Food Donation & Food Waste Recycling Initiative (Green Region Initiative)

- The City of Placentia, for its Health, Wellness and Environmental Justice Element (Efficient and Sustainable Land Use)
- Community Development Partners, for La Placita Cinco/Tiny Tim Plaza (Housing Innovation)

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About SCAG

SCAG is the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization, representing six counties, 191 cities and nearly 19 million residents. SCAG undertakes a variety of planning and policy initiatives to plan for a livable and sustainable Southern California now and in the future. For more information about SCAG's regional efforts, please visit www.scag.ca.gov.