SCAG REGIONAL DATA PLATFORM (RDP)

Frequently Asked Questions

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General Questions

This section outlines general Regional Data Platform questions received from member agencies.

What is the Regional Data Platform?

- The Regional Data Platform (RDP) is a system for collaborative data sharing and planning designed to facilitate better planning at all levels. It will provide all local jurisdictions with long-range planning tools and resources aimed at supporting local planning activities such as General Plan updates while streamlining the process for two-way data sharing with SCAG.

What are the goals of the RDP?

- Provide access to data, modern tools, and best practices that support stronger planning and information-based decision making at all levels.
- Streamline the exchange of data with jurisdictions and partners across the region while establishing procedures and standards for geospatial data consistency.
- Establish a community of planners, GIS professionals, and practitioners to foster collaboration and collective learning, as well as guide the long-term growth and evolution of the RDP.

Who is the RDP intended for?

- The RDP provides tools and resources for a wide range of users: residents, local jurisdiction planners, consultants, developers, elected officials, academia, and more.

What was the origin of the SCAG RDP?

- Like other major metropolitan areas of the world, Southern California is facing complex social, economic, and environmental challenges stemming from population growth, climate change, lack of affordable housing, social equity concerns, rapidly evolving technologies, and changing mobility needs. Creating opportunities for improved coordination of local and regional planning

throughout the SCAG region is essential for helping to ensure a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous future.

- The RDP seeks to facilitate this vision of improved inter-agency coordination. Effective and sustainable planning requires close collaboration, strong communication, and robust data sharing among local jurisdictions throughout the SCAG region.
- The RDP provides a state-of-the-art technical platform to support local planning activities and promote data sharing among local agencies across the region, fostering a more sustainable, prosperous, and equitable future for Southern California.

How will the RDP lead to better fact-based decision-making in the SCAG region?

- The RDP uses a data-driven approach to inform the development and analysis of local and regional planning scenarios and for validating planning assumptions.
- The RDP is a signature element of SCAG's Future Communities Initiative – a work program adopted to accelerate SCAG's leadership in the application of GIS technology and big/open data resources to promote a smarter and more connected region. As one of SCAG's largest and most transformative projects to date, the RDP focuses on maximizing the use of data and information to help resolve many of our most urgent regional challenges.
- The RDP will standardize regionally significant datasets, provide opportunities for local partners to update their data in real-time, and draw insights from emergent local and regional trends. More specifically, the RDP will provide online tools for SCAG and our local jurisdictions to access the datasets necessary for local general plan development and to support general decision making through the monitoring of local and regional transportation, land use, housing, economic growth, sustainability conditions and trends.
- The platform will also feature a data-driven collaboration hub for local jurisdictions to engage with stakeholders regarding individual projects, such as local and regional land use planning, active transportation planning, greenhouse gas reduction strategies, general plan updates, and development impact assessments.

How will the RDP assist in developing and communicating the Connect SoCal 2024 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)?

- The RDP will be equipped with a web-based dashboard element that will provide on-going performance information relative to the identified goals and objectives of the 2024 RTP/SCS.
- The planned web-based 'Regional Performance Dashboard' application will allow users, including local agencies and other regional stakeholders, the opportunity to review current and historic performance data at a user-specified geographic level for a wide variety of variables related to RTP/SCS performance.
- The RDP's Local Data Exchange tools ensure that SCAG can gather the data it needs from member agencies in a more continuous and less burdensome way to keep our regional database as up to date as possible for regional planning. It will also make that data available back to member agencies to use as contextual layers for their own local planning. This is part of the symbiotic cycle of data sharing that drives holistic planning for the region. Continuous data collection and exchange will ensure that Connect SoCal remains a dynamic and adaptable regional plan.

How will residents of the SCAG region benefit from the RDP? How will it facilitate communication between local jurisdictions and residents?

- Residents of the cities and counties of the SCAG region will be able to engage with the RDP through the platform's publicly available tools and applications. These SCAG-hosted applications are designed to allow members of the public to find important facts about their communities and learn about the local General Plan update process, contribute ideas, and provide feedback to jurisdictional planning staff.
- The RDP tools seek to democratize the planning process by enhancing transparency, promoting inclusiveness, and facilitating two-way communication between residents and their local government. The resources provided through the RDP will offer local jurisdictions the opportunity to create an engaging space to enhance communication with the public.
- In addition to improved local engagement, the RDP supports public involvement in planning at the regional level. Many of the most urgent planning priorities in the SCAG region extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries and the RDP will provide a forum for promoting public engagement in understanding and addressing critical regional issues.
- In summary, the RDP will serve to promote a better informed, data-supported local planning process.

Beyond being a state-of-the-art GIS technical platform, what other opportunities are provided through the RDP?

- The RDP will serve a critical function as a public engagement resource for local jurisdictions to enhance communication regarding local planning and decision-making processes.
- The RDP will ultimately provide an important platform for communicating and reporting local and regionally significant information related to RTP/SCS performance through use of a user-friendly dashboard application which will allow users to define data and geographic parameters.
- To support local jurisdiction staff in using the RDP, LDX tools, and other available tools and resources, SCAG has established the Local Information Services Team (LIST), which to provides technical assistance and information services to local jurisdictions on a wide range of topics. Contact LIST at list@scag.ca.gov.

How will the RDP be integrated with local jurisdiction planning and GIS systems?

- The RDP delivers powerful data and tools which facilitate flexible integration with the existing ArcGIS platforms of our member agencies.
- The various analytical tools and expansive regional datasets provided through the RDP will enhance the capacity of cities and counties in the SCAG region to conduct analysis, assess land use policy options, and more effectively collaborate throughout the planning and project design process.
- The datasets that are made available through the RDP can be used in many ways both within the ArcGIS suite of tools, through flexible download formats like .csv and .shp that allow for more advanced analysis, or via the dataset REST endpoints.
- The LDX tools specifically are intended to allow local jurisdiction staff to share data in a way that aligns with how they currently manage their existing planning datasets, for example uploading a complete GIS data file or editing regional data for their jurisdiction.
- Through its map-based planning platform, the RDP will provide opportunities for enhanced transparency and collaboration between member cities as well as with SCAG.

Beyond housing and General Plans, what other local planning activities can the RDP help with?

- Through the RDP and member agency GIS collaboration, cities and counties will be able to see beyond city boundaries and be offered improved opportunities to work together to address major regional issues such as racial equity, homelessness, and the climate crisis.
- The RDP provides an integrated platform designed to facilitate inter-agency collaboration for resolving both local and regional challenges.

What other datasets will be available through the RDP? Will the RDP also provide time series data?

- The RDP is a revolutionary system for inter-agency collaborative data sharing and planning. The system is designed to facilitate better planning and data sharing at all geographic levels, from cities and counties up to the entire region.
- SCAG created the Regional Hub to provide one-stop access to a wide variety of data sets, as well as to provide a platform for two-way engagement.
- The features and capabilities of the Regional Hub include:
    - Rich content library with nearly 150 datasets, maps, apps, policy resources, and more.
    - Planner's Corner' full of planning-specific resources.
    - Focused, data-driven web applications to support planning workflows utilizing data made available through the content library.
    - Ability to request one-on-one technical assistance through the LIST.
- Additionally, member agencies have access to SoCal Atlas, a web-based application allowing local jurisdictions, regional stakeholders, and the public to explore data, statistics, and maps across various topics and geographies.
- The RDP will be equipped to provide historically referenced information for any selected location in the SCAG region through its capacity to maintain historic datasets. This capability will allow the RDP to also report and map trends information in addition to current conditions.
- The RDP is an ever-expanding space with upcoming plans to include features such as a Big Data Platform utilizing location-based services data as well as a collaboration workspace for regional programs and initiatives.

What analytical capacities are provided by the RDP to communicate local trends?

- Member agencies will have access to the 'Local General Plan Update Site' which provides a ready-to-use template for web-based General Plans to enable local agencies to communicate and engage with residents regarding General Plan updates.
- The SoCal Atlas application includes a collection of interactive maps and statistical infographics that can be used to quickly explore and identify data for the selected jurisdiction.

How may the RDP be used to visualize opportunities for innovation?

- The RDP will enable streamlining of the data sharing process which will improve opportunities for collaboration throughout the SCAG region.
- The RDP enables local jurisdictions to share their data-driven planning and engagement applications with others in the region through the member and partner showcase section of the Planner's Corner to inspire other local jurisdictions as to how they can use more interactive tools to communicate planning information with the public.

Once implemented, how will the RDP be sustainable into the future?

- The RDP is supported by a mix of planning specialists who continually improve and expand the existing and future services of the platform. The objective is to create a continually updating and improving system of systems which can serve as a one stop shop for all regional data needs.
- The RDP provides for the integration of a spatial and data-driven approach for local and regional planning. This ability to visualize trends, identify relationships, and quantify various types of spatially referenced community impacts is greatly facilitated through the RDP.

What are the features of the RDP collaboration component?

- The RDP is a collaborative data sharing and planning system designed to facilitate better planning for all cities and counties across the SCAG region. The LDX tools built on top of the RDP allow for web-based data editing and contribution directly from local jurisdiction planning staff promoting transparency and collaboration in local and regional planning and ultimately driving a more democratic and sustainable planning process.

What support is available when using the RDP?

- To support local jurisdiction staff in using the RDP, LDX tools, and other available tools and resources, SCAG has established the Local Information Services Team (LIST), which to provides technical assistance and information services to local jurisdictions on a wide range of topics. Contact LIST at list@scag.ca.gov.

How do I share ideas about the RDP?

- If you have ideas on how to improve the RDP, datasets you would like to see, or other feedback please email the LIST at list@scag.ca.gov.

Local Data Exchange (LDX) Questions

This section outlines general Local Data Exchange (LDX) questions received from member agencies.

What is LDX?

- LDX provides a secured platform for local jurisdictions to review and edit select regional datasets in their local context and request technical assistance from SCAG. SCAG's long-range regional planning must meet a set of community, transportation, and environmental targets using up-to-date data from many sources. LDX data can also be contributed to, reviewed by, and used by local jurisdictions.

Who can use LDX?

- LDX is only available for planning or GIS staff or designated representatives from SCAG local jurisdictions. An account is required to access the LDX systems. Learn more about accessing the LDX system or request an account on the LDX page of the Regional Hub.

Can the Private Sector or Non-Profits Request an LDX Account

- LDX jurisdictions or independent organization contracted by jurisdictions.

When is LDX available?

- The LDX tools launched in March of 2022 in a soft launch capacity and the complete launch was in May of 2022.

- The LDX tools were a critical component of engaging local jurisdiction staff from March through December 2022 in support of Connect SoCal. Beyond Connect SoCal, the LDX tools are expected to remain available allowing local jurisdiction staff to continue to review and provide input on datasets on a more ongoing basis. The LDX tools were updated in February 2023 to provide additional capabilities for reviewing and editing SED/Growth data.
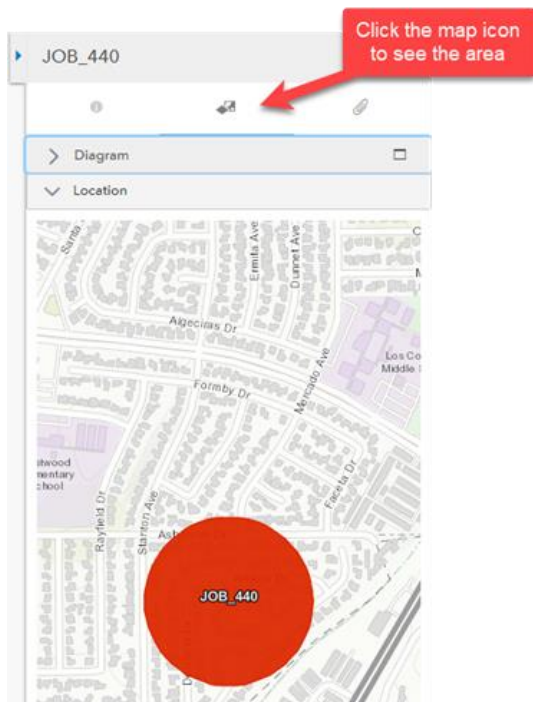
How do I access LDX?

- The LDX system can be accessed from the LDX page of the Regional Hub. An account is required to login to the secured LDX tools and can be accessed from the page under "request and account."

What are a local contributor and local reviewer?

- A local contributor is a user who is authorized to contribute data on behalf of their jurisdiction. Additional review and approval by a local reviewer are required before submitting to SCAG.
- A local reviewer is a user who is authorized to both contribute data on behalf of their jurisdiction and review/approve contributions from any user in their jurisdiction to be sent to SCAG. **Each jurisdiction using the LDX system must have at least one local reviewer.**
- All LDX contributions follow a standard process. First a local jurisdiction staff (either a local contributor or reviewer) makes a data contribution using one of the LDX tools. Next, the local reviewer receives an automated email notification and must review and approve or deny the contribution. If approved, SCAG receives an email notification and will take additional action to incorporate the contribution into the regional dataset.

How do I see my edits?

- For Feedback job types, the user is able to see the feedback notes and the map area this feedback was provided for (example for this job below):

- It is not currently possible to see the layer and the feedback area/feedback notes at the same time. If the user needs to see the layer information at the same time, they would need to open LDX Editor and select the right layer, then use the search functionality to find the area the feedback was provided for then go back to Workflow Manager to approve.
- Once approved, edits are not currently viewable by a local jurisdiction.
- All contributions are tracked in a single system so if there are questions about the status of your data, please reach out to the LIST at: list@scag.ca.gov.

What happens with my data?

- Once approved by the local reviewer SCAG staff will work to incorporate the contribution into the regional dataset. Once complete, these changes will be reflected in the LDX system.
- Where possible, datasets that participate in the LDX process (meaning local jurisdiction staff can contribute edits) will be shared back with local jurisdictions so that stakeholders throughout the region can utilize up-to-date versions of regionally significant data.
- Sensitive datasets, such as growth/SED data will remain in the secure LDX system meaning only authorized users can see this data, and in many cases, only for their jurisdiction.

If I have an issue with logging into the RDP who can assist me?

- Please reach out to the SCAG LIST team directly at: list@scag.ca.gov