

Draft 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)

The Regional Council approved releasing the Draft 2012-2035 RTP/SCS for public review and comment on December 5, 2011. Accordingly, staff released the Draft 2012-2035 RTP/SCS and associated technical appendices on December 20, 2011 for a 55-day public review and comment period. The Draft 2012-235 RTP/SCS and all of the associated technical appendices are now available online for download.

To improve the opportunity for public comment, SCAG is unveiling a highly interactive version of the Draft 2012-2035 RTP/SCS called the iRTP, which allows the public and the stakeholders to participate in the process in an unprecedented way. The iRTP can be accessed at www.scagrtip.net.

Over the months of January and February, staff will conduct public workshops required by SB 375 for elected officials in each of our six counties. In addition, staff will also hold public hearings in each of the counties as required under the federal statute. The public comment period will end on February 14, 2012.

The associated 2011 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) Amendment #11-24 was also released for public review on December 20, 2011.

Draft Program Environmental Impact Report Released

SCAG has prepared a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act for the 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy. The Draft PEIR is available on SCAG's website at www.scag.ca.gov/peir. Hard copies will be available for review at SCAG's office in downtown Los Angeles and at major public libraries in the region (contact SCAG for specific locations). A limited number of CD copies are available upon request. The review period for the Draft 2012-2035 PEIR began on December 30, 2011 and ends at 5:00 p.m. on February 14, 2012.

Redevelopment Agencies

On December 29, 2011, the California Supreme Court rendered its decision in the California Redevelopment Association et al. v. Matosantos et al. case. The court upheld Assembly Bill 1X 26, affirming the state's right to dissolve redevelopment agencies, and invalidated Assembly Bill 1X 27, the legislation conditioning further redevelopment agency operations on making additional payments to state funds benefiting schools and special districts. Additionally, regarding future implementation of AB 1X 26, the court extended certain statutory deadlines arising before May 1, 2012, by four months. SCAG staff intends to provide more information regarding the decision as part of the January 5, 2012 Regional Council meeting and request that the SCAG Legislative/Communications & Membership Committee report back with a recommendation at the February 2, 2012 Regional Council meeting on SCAG's role (if any) as state legislation proceeds on this matter.

International Cooperation

On December 13, 2011, SCAG welcomed members of a visiting delegation from Gyeongsangnam-do Province, the second largest regional government in South Korea. The delegation, comprised of over 30 government officials, visited SCAG to learn more about the role of metropolitan planning organizations in the United States, SCAG's plans and programs, as well as how SCAG conducts public participation.

2012 SCAG Scholarship Program

Applications are now available for the 2012 SCAG Scholarship Program. The SCAG Scholarship, in its third year, is designed to provide seven high school and community college students a scholarship award of \$2,000 each and a two-week externship at a local government agency. Recipients will also have an opportunity to meet with their local government representatives and practicing planners to discuss the importance of urban planning and a future career in public service. A total of seven students (one student each from Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties, and two from Los Angeles County) will be recommended for the scholarship award to the Regional Council. Scholarship information has been sent to all of the high schools and community colleges in the SCAG region. Applications for the SCAG Scholarship Program must be postmarked by March 9, 2012.

GIS Services and Training for Local Jurisdictions

In order to better meet the needs of SCAG's members, SCAG is offering free GIS software and computer hardware to local jurisdictions. Twenty-one local jurisdictions were selected based on their needs for software and hardware to support both their local planning activities and SCAG's regional planning activities. As part of the program, SCAG will help the members set up their GIS system and provide them with customized GIS training and free GIS data, such as parcel-based existing land use, general plan, and 2010 Census data. The GIS software and computers are expected to be delivered to the jurisdictions by the end of January 2012.

In November and December 2011, SCAG offered six GIS training courses (three Introduction, two Intermediate, and one Advanced) in Palm Desert, El Centro, and Los Angeles. The trainings were well attended by over 60 GIS and planning professionals.

Green Region Call-for Projects

In January 2012, SCAG will roll out its first Green Region Initiative (GRI) "call-for-projects." The Green Region Initiative is a grant call-for-projects program to assist local jurisdictions in funding sustainability planning or studies. The goal of this grant program is to provide a member service for communities and partners in the area of sustainability including climate action plans, energy, water, open-space, and other environmental resource and transportation issues. Assistance to local jurisdictions will be small for this round of funding, with a total program budget of \$150,000 with the intention of increasing funding to the program in the future. The Green Region Initiative is an important part of SCAG's Sustainability Program, in that it is a regional, collaborative initiative for voluntarily promoting the sustainability of communities in the SCAG region.

Sixth Annual Compass Blueprint Recognition Awards

SCAG is now accepting nominations for its Sixth Annual Compass Blueprint Recognition Awards. Last year's Recognition Awards Program was well received and we hope to build on this momentum and enjoy another memorable program this year. The Compass Blueprint Recognition Awards are presented annually in recognition of projects that demonstrate excellence and achievement in the four key elements of Compass Blueprint planning: Livability, Mobility, Prosperity, and Sustainability. Last year's prestigious President's Excellence Award went to the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority for the Sustainable Transit Communities Program, and the America Fast Forward, 30/10 Plan.

This year's Compass Blueprint Recognition Awards Program will be held April 4, 2012 in conjunction with the SCAG Regional Conference & General Assembly at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites in Los Angeles, CA. This will be an excellent opportunity to showcase an innovative project at SCAG's General Assembly in front of an audience of over 700 members and interested stakeholders, including state and local elected officials, public and private sector CEOs, partner agency representatives, city managers, planning directors, and business, labor, community and environmental leaders.

EPA Action on Imperial County PM10 SIP

On November 28, 2011, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initiated an inter-agency consultation process to begin preparation for the highway sanctions that are likely to be imposed in Imperial County starting August 9, 2012. EPA had finalized a limited disapproval of rule revisions to the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) portion of the California PM10 State Implementation Plan under the Clean Air Act (effective August 9, 2010). The EPA action triggers two sanction clocks in Imperial County: (1) stationary source sanctions start February 9, 2012; and (2) highway sanctions start August 9, 2012. Transportation spending will be limited in Imperial County by the highway sanctions.

Under highway sanctions, certain types of transportation projects such as safety, environmentally-beneficial, transit, and planning and research activities are exempt, however, projects that expand highway capacity cannot be approved or funded. ICAPCD and the California Department of Parks and Recreation sued the EPA in the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit regarding disapproval of the rules and the lawsuit is pending. The California Air Resources Board and South Coast Air Quality Management District have filed an amicus brief respectively in support of the lawsuit. Staff has been actively participating in the inter-agency consultation process to (1) seek clarifications/guidance from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and EPA on how the highway sanctions will be implemented, and (2) start preparation for the implementation of highway sanctions with the Imperial County Transportation Commission and Caltrans to minimize the impact on the RTP, FTIP, and transportation projects in the SCAG region. Staff is also attempting to work with ICAPCD and EPA management to resolve issues leading to the EPA action in order to avert the highway sanctions.