

2016 RTP/SCS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The 60-day public review and comment period for the Draft 2016 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS) and the plan's Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) ended on Feb. 1. SCAG received a total of 158 verbal and written comment submissions on the Draft 2016 RTP/SCS and 81 comment submissions on the Draft PEIR. Comments included both support and opposition for specific transportation projects as well as concerns on environmental factors and housing affordability in the region, among others. SCAG staff will present a summary report on the public comments received, including an approach to addressing comments in the plan, at the Joint Regional Council and Policy Committee meeting on Thursday, March 3.

REGISTER FOR SCAG'S 2016 REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN LA QUINTA

Join SCAG for the 51st Annual Regional Conference and General Assembly, May 5-6, at the La Quinta Resort & Club. This year's event theme, "Power of the Past, Force of the Future," builds upon the release of the 2016 RTP/SCS as well as last year's celebration of the agency's 50-year anniversary. This exciting and dynamic event brings together state and local elected officials, CEOs, business and civic leaders, transportation and environmental stakeholders, local government staff and others. Early bird registration and sponsorship information is available on the conference website: <http://www.scag.ca.gov/ga2016>

SCAG PREPARES REGION FOR AHSC GRANTS

On Feb. 8 – 9, the Strategic Growth Council conducted two well-attended informational workshops for the competitive Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grant program in Riverside and Los Angeles, respectively. SCAG hosted the Los Angeles workshop at its headquarters and provided staff at both locations to assist interested applicants. Workshop participants included parties interested in learning more about the program and those planning to submit applications in this current funding cycle. The AHSC program is intended to fund projects that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through more compact infill development patterns, integrating affordable housing, encouraging active transportation and mass transit usage and protecting agricultural land from sprawl development. SCAG sees this program as an important funding source to implement its Sustainable Communities Strategy and has created a Cap-and-Trade Technical Assistance Team to help position the region for future funding. For more information, please contact Kristen Pawling at pawling@scag.ca.gov.

RANDALL LEWIS HEALTH POLICY FELLOWSHIP FORUM ON APRIL 28

Join Partners in Better Health and SCAG in recognizing healthy communities' efforts throughout the Southern California region at the annual Randall Lewis Health Policy Fellowship Forum, April 28, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at the Ontario Convention Center. The Randall Lewis Health Policy Fellowship is an internship program for graduate students in public health, urban planning and public policy. Ten Southern California universities currently participate in the program and fellows work for one academic year with local governments on health policy and policy implementation which supports the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy. This year's program includes an opportunity to interact with the 20 current fellows who are working in cities and government associations throughout the region on local health policy and policy implementation. The event is free, but RSVP is required at <http://bit.ly/1L3QR4t>. For additional information, please contact Rye Baerg at baerg@scag.ca.gov.

STATE HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY RELEASES DRAFT 2016 BUSINESS PLAN

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) recently released its Draft 2016 Business Plan for a 60-day public review and comment period, ending on April 18, 2016. The Draft includes a significant change to the initial operating segment. Whereas previously the initial operating segment was proposed to connect Merced to the San Fernando Valley by 2022, it is now proposed to connect San Jose to north of Bakersfield by 2025. High-speed rail service would therefore not reach the SCAG region until completion of the full Phase 1 system in 2029. However, the Draft 2016 Business Plan proposes an additional \$2.1 billion to enhance the segment from Los Angeles Union Station to Anaheim to allow direct high-speed rail service to Anaheim (one-seat ride), which was not assumed in the previous business plan. These enhancements incorporate commitments from the Memorandum of Understanding with CHSRA and Southern California transportation agencies approved by the Regional Council in 2012, which provides for \$1 billion in early investments in the SCAG region. The intention is to put in place much of the infrastructure required for high-speed train service, including tracks and grade separations, which would have independent utility and provide near-term benefits to commuter, passenger and freight rail in the corridor. According to the Draft 2016 Business Plan, additional details on specific investments will be identified as the CHSRA completes the environmental documents for this section by December 2017. SCAG staff will present draft comments to the Transportation Committee for approval at its next meeting on April 7, 2016.

SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING GRANTS UPDATE

SCAG is pleased to update that the agency has successfully contracted 70 of the 75 total Sustainability Planning Grants approved by the Regional Council in 2013 and 2014. At present, 69 grant projects have had Requests for Proposals (RFPs) released, have selected consultants and have had contracts executed (this includes contracts resulting from Memoranda of Understanding between SCAG and four member cities). Five grant projects have decided to not proceed. Thirty-two grant projects have been completed, 31 projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2016 and the remaining 7 grant projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of FY 2016-2017.

TOOLBOX TUESDAY INTRODUCES NEW REVISION SOFTWARE

On Feb. 2, SCAG held a Toolbox Tuesday training session on REVISION, a new free web application developed by SCAG and the UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies. REVISION is a regional mapping and analysis application that integrates public and private data for sustainable communities planning and trend visualization. With a range of metrics related to accessibility, livability, employment and health, REVISION helps both professional planners and stakeholders without a technical background monitor the progress of the SCAG's Sustainable Communities Strategy. For more information about REVISION and future training sessions, visit <http://revision.lewis.ucla.edu>. Toolbox Tuesdays provide free classes for staff of SCAG-member local governments and other partners and offer a range of practical skills and knowledge on timely planning issues. For more information about future Toolbox Tuesdays workshops, please visit: <http://sustain.scag.ca.gov/Pages/ToolboxTuesdayTraining.aspx>.

SCAG'S CLEAN CITIES COALITION RECEIVES RENEWED DESIGNATION

On Jan. 29, the SCAG Clean Cities Coalition, a program that supports locally-based and government partnership efforts to expand the use of alternative fuel vehicles in the region, was re-designated by the U.S. Department of Energy for another three-year cycle. SCAG staff gave a presentation on the Clean Cities Coalition's recent achievements and goals for the next cycle to the co-directors of the national program and other Department of Energy staff. EEC Vice-Chair Mayor Pro Tem Carmen Ramirez from the City of Oxnard and EEC member Councilwoman Sandra Genis from the City of Costa Mesa also participated, representing SCAG policy makers. They joined diverse stakeholders including representatives from South Coast Air Quality Management District, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), the City of Los Angeles Department of Water & Power and the California Fuel Cell Partnership. The Clean Cities program leadership commented that they were impressed with the commitment demonstrated by the attendees in a fuel-neutral approach to increasing the penetration of alternative fuel vehicle technologies. They were also impressed by the extensive area and diverse fleets covered by the coalition.

U.S. CENSUS WORKSHOP HELD ON BLOCK BOUNDARIES

On Feb. 18, SCAG hosted a training workshop for the 2020 Census Block Boundary Suggestion Project, presented by the U.S. Census Bureau and the UC Berkeley Statewide Database. The Block Boundary Suggestion Project is an important part of the geographic preparations for the 2020 Census and allows counties the opportunity to provide input about the features that will be designated as boundaries for census tabulation blocks. It also allows counties to suggest block boundary changes that may be of use in the post-2020 Census redistricting process or for other data tabulation purposes. Approximately 50 practitioners participated in the workshop.

SCAG GIS SERVICES PROGRAM UPDATE

As a service to its member jurisdictions, SCAG distributes laptops, ArcGIS software, spatial data and training through the agency's GIS Services Program. The cities of Avalon and Signal Hill will receive these GIS resources in March, bringing the total for the GIS roll-out to 20 jurisdictions this year. In addition, SCAG recently provided GIS training to staff from Apple Valley, Cudahy, Huntington Park, Loma Linda and South Gate. In the coming months, staff will be holding various GIS trainings throughout the region with venues in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. For more information on SCAG's GIS Rollout Program, please contact Javier Aguilar at aguilar@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG STAFF PRESENTS AT WESTERN REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION MEETING

In mid-February, SCAG staff was invited to present at the 2016 Western Regional Science Association (WRSA) 55th Annual Meeting on the Island of Hawaii. Founded in 1961, the Western Regional Science Association is an international multidisciplinary group of university scholars, government and private-sector practitioners dedicated to the scientific analysis of regions. This year's meeting brought more than 300 professionals with 200 papers from around the world and SCAG staff made two paper presentations: The Influence of the Built Environment on Asthma Hotspots (Simon Choi) and Analyzing the Impact of Transit Oriented Development on Gentrification and Displacement—Incorporating Margins of Error of the American Community Survey (John Cho).