

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

## SEPTEMBER 2014

---

### **SCAG Region Receives More Than \$115M in Active Transportation Funding**

On Aug. 20, the California Transportation Commission approved 68 bicycle and pedestrian projects in the region for funding in the first round of its Active Transportation Program (ATP). In all, the SCAG region received \$115.2 million, or 63 percent of the total available funding in the Statewide and Small Urban and Rural categories. SCAG was one of the awardees, receiving \$2.3 million to collaborate with partner agencies and stakeholders on a region-wide campaign to promote walking and biking and reduce the number of injuries and fatalities among pedestrians and bicyclists.

Those projects that applied to the Statewide ATP competition but were not selected have been automatically entered into the Regional ATP component. The Regional ATP component, which will fund up to \$78 million in projects, will be considered for adoption by the Regional Council on Oct. 2, and for approval by the California Transportation Commission on Nov. 12. For further information, see <http://www.catc.ca.gov/programs/ATP.htm>

### **Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Opportunity**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has issued a call for applications for its Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant program, with \$8.3 million in funding for fiscal year 2015-2016 projects in the Sustainable Communities category. The Sustainable Communities grants offer assistance to projects that identify and address mobility deficiencies in the multimodal transportation system, encourage stakeholder collaboration, involve active public engagement, integrate Smart Mobility 2010 concepts, ultimately result in programmed system improvements, and achieve the Caltrans mission and overarching objectives. Caltrans will be hosting a webinar on Sept. 25, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, to provide more information on the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant program. For more information, see <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/grants.html>.

### **USDOT Issues Final Certification Report for SCAG**

Concluding a seven-month-long review, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued a final certification report for SCAG's transportation planning processes in August, commending SCAG for its public outreach engagements and strong collaboration with regional partner agencies. Conducted every four years by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the certification review involved an evaluation of SCAG's transportation planning, decision making, public involvement, and administrative processes based on written materials provided by SCAG staff in response to specific questions posed by FHWA and FTA; plus interviews with key staff, elected officials as well as transit operators and transportation partners. The federal certification will remain valid for the next four years through August 2018.

### **Cap-and-Trade Expenditure Plan to Support Local Sustainable Communities Strategies**

Last month, the Strategic Growth Council concluded a series of workshops on the development of guidelines for its Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program. This is a new funding opportunity created by the California Cap-and-Trade Expenditure Plan, with \$130 million being allocated to this program in the State Budget for FY 2014-15, and an ongoing commitment of 20 percent of future Cap-and-Trade auction proceeds. The AHSC Program is intended to further the regulatory purposes of AB 32 and SB 375 by investing in projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions by implementing the SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategies. On your behalf, SCAG staff is working closely with state agencies and other MPOs on developing the grant guidelines and ensuring that we receive our fair share of the revenue generated from Cap-and-Trade auction proceeds. A staff report on this item is included in the Sept. 11 Regional Council and Policy Committees agenda packets. For more information on the AHSC Program and workshops, please visit: [http://sgc.ca.gov/s\\_affordablehousingandsustainablecommunitiesprogram.php](http://sgc.ca.gov/s_affordablehousingandsustainablecommunitiesprogram.php).

### **SB 375 Regional Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Targets Update Workshop Sept. 18**

This month, the California Air Resources Board is hosting a series of workshops to seek public input before the ARB updates the SB 375 targets for Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The final workshop will be held at SCAG's main headquarters in downtown Los Angeles on Sept. 18, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. ARB staff have released a Preliminary Draft Staff Report on the SB 375 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Target Update Process (posted at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/sb375/sb375.htm>) that identifies issues to be considered. At the workshops, ARB staff will present background information on the target update process and will seek public input on the issues outlined in the preliminary draft staff report. ARB staff will consider all input received at these workshops

before preparing a revised staff report with recommendations for target updates. The revised staff report and recommendations will be presented to the Board in October 2014. For more information about the workshop, please download the notice: [http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/sb375/meetings/target\\_update\\_workshop\\_notice.2.pdf](http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/sb375/meetings/target_update_workshop_notice.2.pdf)

### **Regional Council Urges Cities to Participate in Water Affordability Survey**

The Regional Council adopted a recommendation during their August meeting urging cities within the region to participate in a water costs survey that would assist in informing Congress on the costs to cities of operating and maintaining the nation's critical utility systems. The survey was designed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors in reaction to high fees associated with implementing a new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Municipal Separate Sanitary Storm Sewer permit. Cities are encouraged to access the survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/watercosts> and provide information on the average annual household costs of providing drinking water, sanitary sewers, combined storm and sanitary sewers and flood control systems in their jurisdictions.

### **Federal Approval of Ozone Portions of 2012 South Coast Air Quality Management Plan**

On Sept. 3, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published in the Federal Register two final rules to approve portions of the 2012 South Coast Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) that address the ozone national ambient air quality standards. These include: 1) the new air plan for attainment of the federal 1-hour ozone standard in the South Coast; 2) the update of the approved control strategy for the federal 1997 8-hour ozone standard; and 3) the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) offset demonstrations, where sufficient transportation control strategies and transportation control measures have been identified to offset growth in emissions due to VMT growth, for the 1-hour and 1997 8-hour ozone standards. The final rules will become effective on Oct. 3. I am pleased to report that air quality has been steadily improving in the South Coast and there have been 95% fewer exceedances of the 1-hour ozone standard since 1985. In addition, the highway sanction clocks associated with EPA's prior disapproval of the VMT offset demonstrations will be permanently terminated on the effective date of EPA's final approval. We very much appreciate the close collaborative effort among the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the California Air Resources Board and the U.S. EPA, which led to the termination of the sanction clocks. For further information, see: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-09-03/pdf/2014-20790.pdf> (ozone attainment demonstration) and <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-09-03/pdf/2014-20791.pdf> (VMT offset).

### **Proposed Determination of Attainment of the Federal 1-Hour Ozone Standard in Southeast Desert Nonattainment Area**

Due to a decrease in upwind emissions of ozone precursors, the Southeast Desert nonattainment area saw improved air quality in recent years and exceeded the 1-hour ozone standard no more than once per year during 2011-2013. As a result, the U.S. EPA is proposing to determine that the Southeast Desert nonattainment area has attained the 1-hour ozone standard. The Southeast Desert is composed of parts of the Antelope Valley, Mojave Desert and South Coast Air Quality Management Districts and includes portions of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Despite attaining the 1-hour ozone standard, the area remains in "nonattainment" with the more stringent 8-hour ozone standard set in 2008. EPA is accepting comments on the proposed rule through Sept. 24. For further information, including how to comment, see: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-08-25/pdf/2014-20220.pdf>.

### **Three-Foot Rule for Motorists Begins Sept. 16**

I would like to remind everyone that AB 1371 (Steven Bradford, Gardena) goes into effect on Sept. 16, requiring motorists to provide at least three feet separation when passing bicyclists. If drivers cannot safely provide three feet, they must slow down and pass only when it is reasonable and prudent, and no danger is present to the bicyclist. Fines are \$35 for an infraction and \$220 for a case where a collision resulting in injury occurs. Case-by-case enforcement will be up to local police departments. The overall aim is to remind drivers and bicyclists that they have a responsibility to behave safely on the road.

### **Walk To School Day is Oct. 8**

Wednesday, Oct. 8, is International Walk to School Day, a global event that encourages communities from more than 40 countries to walk and bike to school. Started in 1997, Walk to School Day has become the signature event used by communities to jump-start their year-round Safe Routes to School programs. Today, thousands of schools across America celebrate walking to school every October. In 2013, 539 Walk to School Day events were registered in California alone. Many schools in the SCAG region participate in the event and participation continues to grow each year. To register a school in your community for this year's Walk to School Day, please visit: <http://walkbiketoschool.org/>.