

SPOTLIGHT

SCAG REGIONAL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



November 2, 2017

From: Hon. Judy Mitchell, Representing District 40

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ABOUT

The Regional Council is the governing board of the Southern California Association of Governments and consists of 86 elected officials representing 191 cities, six counties, county transportation commissions, transportation corridor agencies, tribal governments and air districts in Southern California.

AGENDA

For current and archived Regional Council meeting agendas and videos, visit: bit.ly/AgendaRC.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MEETING



Employee Recognition: Contracts Administrator Lori Tapp was recognized as Employee of the Quarter for her exemplary service. Lori is pictured here with, from left, Executive Director Hasan Ikhrata, Second Vice President Bill Jahn, President Margaret Finlay, Immediate Past President Michele Martinez and Chief Operating Officer Darin Chidsey.

ACTION

RC MOVES TO SUPPORT 'CALIFORNIA WATERFIX' PROJECT



SCAG adopted an official support position on the California WaterFix project today, after a vote of approval from both the Energy and Environment Committee and the Regional Council. The project, a bid to update the state's system for water conveyance and storage, proposes constructing three tunnels under the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that will ultimately carry diverted water over hundreds of miles through a canal system across the state. Governor Jerry Brown joined last month's Regional Council meeting to champion the California WaterFix, requesting the agency's support for the project. The estimated cost of the project is approximately \$16.7 billion, and upon approval it is scheduled to take up to 18 years to complete.

The California Waterfix project aligns with the agency's 2017 legislative priorities, adopted in January of this year, which includes support for administrative and legislative action to improve the state's water supply and infrastructure. The project will move forward once it secures sufficient financial commitments from the state's urban and agricultural water districts.

ACTION

RC ACTS TO PURSUE AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE CLIMATE TARGET



The Regional Council voted today to pursue an ambitious but achievable clean air target for the region by year 2035. Since Senate Bill 375 was passed in 2009, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has set and periodically updates targets at both the state and regional level for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. CARB has been working on an update to the target for the past year and most recently CARB staff recommended a 21 percent per capita reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the SCAG region by 2035. The recommendation that CARB put forth sets new goals to reduce the vehicle miles travelled for the region to achieve this 21 percent reduction.

Through its 2012 and 2016 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy plans, SCAG was able to use a wide range of strategies – including better integration of land use development and public transportation – to address the state's mandate. In fact, through these strategies, SCAG has been aggressively pushing to exceed CARB's previous GHG reduction targets for the region with as high as an 18 percent per capita GHG reduction by 2035. Despite this track record, SCAG staff today explained that CARB's new proposed target of 21 percent was a huge leap and that through internal testing and modeling, the agency could not see a path forward to meeting that goal. Such a goal to reduce total per capita vehicle miles travelled, would require additional resources and investments for infrastructure and public transportation. CARB is scheduled to discuss regional targets at its next board meeting on Nov. 16. SCAG is committed to collaborating with regional and state agencies to reach our statewide climate goals, and hopes to receive the state-level investment necessary to realize that aim.



NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SCAG WELCOMES NEW PLANNING DIRECTOR AND CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER



After two highly competitive recruitments, SCAG is pleased to announce the selection of Kome Ajise as Planning Director and Julie Loats as Chief Information Officer (CIO) at SCAG.

Mr. Ajise has 30 years of experience in regional planning and transportation, most recently as chief deputy director at the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). He will oversee the agency's newly formed Planning Division, which will more closely integrate the work of SCAG's previous Transportation Planning and Land Use and Environmental Planning divisions.

Ms. Loats comes to SCAG with over 20 years of experience in technology and administration. Most recently, Ms. Loats served as the Director of the University of

Kansas Center for Online and Distance Learning, and she has extensive experience in developing online curriculum, creating web development programs and providing technical support to various levels of staff. Ms. Loats will be working closely with Deputy Executive Director Debbie Dillon and current Chief Information Officer Catherine Kirschbaum during the agency's transition to the new building in the month of December.

SCAG JOINS STATE TRANSPORTATION LEADERS IN SUPPORT OF SB1



On Oct. 20, Executive Director Hasan Ikhata joined California Secretary of Transportation Brian Kelly, Senator Josh Newman and Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva, along with other state and local transportation leaders, at a press conference to commemorate the groundbreaking of the State Route 57 road improvement project. This project has been accelerated ahead of schedule due to SB 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, and will provide a smoother ride and safety improvements for drivers through the cities of Orange, Anaheim, Placentia and Fullerton. This is just one of many accelerated fix-it-first projects underway across the state to improve roadways this year, which will significantly benefit California's transportation infrastructure. In Ikhata's remarks, he emphasized that the need for transportation investment is urgent for everyone: there is nothing partisan about a road in good repair. SB 1 is going to be critical for realizing the transportation improvements laid out in our Regional Transportation Plan.

TICKETS SOLD OUT FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ECONOMIC SUMMIT



Tickets for the eighth annual Southern California Economic Summit have sold out. The Nov. 9 conference, hosted by SCAG in partnership with the Southern California Leadership Council, will foster an urgent conversation among the region's leaders about the current housing affordability crisis. The morning discussion will kick-off with an update on the local economies in the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura. A panel of business leaders and industry experts will discuss the impact of the housing affordability crisis on local, regional, and statewide economies and how an adequate housing supply can propel our region forward. A third panel discussion will evaluate the likely impacts of the Governor's Housing Package and identify opportunities to continue to address the housing crisis moving forward. Newly released forecasts have confirmed that housing prices in California will continue to rise in 2018, and are likely to keep increasing for the next three to five years. This prospect heightens the already serious need for critical analysis of the issue; the time for new strategies is now. More information and archived videos of the panels will be available at: www.scag.ca.gov/economicsummit.

SCAG TEAMS UP WITH REGIONAL AGENCIES TO PURSUE FEDERAL FUNDING



A coalition of Southern California agencies are working together to pursue federal funding for the region through the new INFRA grant program, which replaced the pre-existing FASTLANE grant program. Under the INFRA program, funding is granted on a competitive basis to transportation infrastructure projects that focus on highways and bridges. As we did during the prior FASTLANE grant process, SCAG is working in close partnership with Caltrans, Metro, OCTA and SBCTA to lead the effort to prepare a regional bundle of highway projects. The projects include the Los Angeles County SR-57/60 Confluence: Chokepoint Relief Program, the San Bernardino County I-10 Corridor Contract 1 Project, and the Orange County SR-57/Lambert Road Truck Climbing Lanes Phase I: SR-57 and Lambert Road Interchange Improvements. The joint application requests \$155 million in federal funding to leverage an investment of \$595 million in local and state funding, in order to realize the vision of a world-class goods movement system in Southern California. Applications are due Nov. 2.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

November

- 14th Audit Committee
- 16th Technical Working Group
- 28th Transportation Conformity Working Group

December

- 7th Regional Council & Policy Committee Meetings



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