

Sustainability Planning Grant Program Update

In September 2013, the Regional Council approved 73 Sustainability Planning Grant projects and directed staff to proceed with funding projects with available funds for Phase I and Phase II. To date, 27 scopes of work have been developed in partnership with the cities, 18 consultant RFPs have been released and five cities have selected consultants. Phase III projects will proceed as additional funds become available in FY 2015. I will be reporting on implementation progress to each Policy committee and the Board every month (see agenda for expanded update).

SCAG Hosted State SGC and OPR Workshops on Planning Grant and General Plan Guidelines Update

On January 30 SCAG hosted two state workshops to provide grant resources and general plan update information to local jurisdictions and interested parties. All of the member cities were invited to send representatives. The first workshop was conducted by the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) staff on the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Application due February 28. The SGC Workshop was intended to facilitate the development of grant applications by interested parties. The second workshop was conducted by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) staff on the upcoming General Plan Guidelines Update. The OPR Workshop was intended to seek input from local governments about how the General Plan Guidelines can be more useful in updating general plans.

Bottom-Up City/County Local Input Process for the 2016 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)

A critical component to the success of the 2016 RTP/SCS will be the participation and cooperation of all 197 local government partners within the SCAG region. To this end, SCAG staff is working hard to ensure that all local governments are fully informed of the planning process and have clear and adequate opportunities to provide input, thereby emphasizing local control and enabling regional collaboration. SCAG staff is currently coordinating with each subregion to arrange individual meetings with local jurisdictions to answer questions on the Bottom-Up Local Input Process and solicit input on the base data that will feed into the creation of the 2016 RTP/SCS. During the months of December and January, SCAG staff met with 17% of the region's 197 local jurisdictions and made presentations at seven of SCAG's 15 subregions. Additional meetings will be held in February and March, with second meetings available (as requested) during the months of April and May. Staff looks forward to working with all SCAG local jurisdictions and stakeholders to ensure the success of the bottom-up input and review process for the development of 2016 RTP/SCS.

Notice of Funding Availability for the Low or No Emission (LoNo) Vehicle Deployment Program

Last month, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the availability of \$24.9 million of Fiscal Year 2013 funds for their Low or No Emission (LoNo) Vehicle Deployment Program. The main purpose of the LoNo Program, which aims to deploy the cleanest and most energy efficient U.S.-made transit buses that have been largely proven in testing and demonstrations but are not yet widely deployed in transit fleets. The LoNo Program provides funding for transit agencies for capital acquisitions and leases of zero emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities such as recharging, refueling, and maintenance facilities. Most of the available funding, \$21.6 million is available for buses and \$3.3 million is available for supporting facilities and related equipment. These are discretionary funds and the Designated Recipient for the area/urbanized area (UZA) must be the direct/lead applicant. The following is a list of the UZAs in which SCAG is the Designated Recipient:

- Indio/Cathedral City
- Los Angeles/Long Beach/Anaheim
- Riverside/San Bernardino
- Murrieta/Temecula
- Lancaster/Palmdale
- Santa Clarita

In order for recipients to receive LoNo funds, SCAG is required to submit an application as the Lead Applicant. If awarded, SCAG would be responsible for applying directly for the funds via FTA's Transportation Electronic Award Management (TEAM) system.

Additional grant program info is available at: http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13077_15782.html.

SCAG will be issuing a call for applications the week of February 3-7. Applications must be for a minimum of five vehicles and for a non-attainment area. Applications must be submitted to SCAG March 3, after which SCAG must complete its submission to FTA by March 10.

SB 375 Implementation Status Update to the California Air Resources Board

California Air Resources Board (ARB) staff presented an informational update to ARB at its January 23rd meeting on the status of implementation of SB 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008. The update included ARB staff's evaluation of Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) adopted by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to date, progress in implementing currently adopted SCSs, ongoing development of data and tools for future planning activities and next steps in implementing SB 375. Following the ARB staff briefing, I joined my counterparts at SANDAG, MTC and SACOG in a joint presentation to the ARB. Our presentation highlighted the implementation progress and next steps in our respective regions, emphasized the need for resources and time to implement our Plans, and requested that our regional greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets not be revised until eight years after the last target setting to allow time for implementation and to observe progress on Plan strategies from first SCS cycle. Per SB 375, the ARB shall update the regional GHG reduction targets every eight years, but may revise the targets every four years. ARB staff is scheduled to present its recommendation on updating the next set of regional GHG reduction targets to the ARB in fall 2014.

Litigation Update

Several public agencies including SCAG, CALCOG, SACOG, MTC, CSAC, the League of California Cities, the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District and the Self-Help Counties Coalition joined together to file an amicus curiae brief to support SANDAG in its on-going litigation efforts related to its 2011 RTP/SCS. The purpose of the brief is to give the Appellate Court perspective regarding long-range planning objectives, how these objectives interrelate with the environmental review process required by CEQA, and explain how the effort often involves striking a balance between complex and sometimes competing goals. The amicus brief was filed by the Court on January 24. It is anticipated that a decision will be rendered in the fall of 2014.

Also on January 24, State officials asked the California Supreme Court for an expedited review and reversal of two lower court rulings that have blocked progress on the state's high-speed rail system. Last week, on January 29, while the State Supreme Court declined to put the rulings on hold, it did order that an appeals court undertake the fast-track review of the two rulings. Written arguments are to be completed by February 10, 2014 with a decision to occur shortly thereafter.

Electronic Board Meeting Voting Update

As reported at the January Regional Council meeting, SCAG is currently investigating electronic voting options. An RFP was released and staff is evaluating various proposals. Regardless of the vendor, rigorous testing of the recommended option will be required to ensure 100% accuracy of voting and ease of administration for Board members to use. Pending successful tests and contract negotiations, live electronic voting could commence as early as June 2014. To maintain the integrity of this active procurement process, staff may not divulge additional information. Vendor name and pricing will be made public after the Notice to Award is issued. Until the automated e-voting system is successfully implemented, SCAG staff continues to use a manual voting process to comply with recent changes in the Brown Act.

ICTC and SCAG Joint Work Program

On December 11, 2013, the Imperial County Transportation Commission (ICTC) adopted a resolution authorizing collaboration between ICTC and SCAG to implement the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainability Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The Joint Work program calls for developing First Mile/Last Mile strategies at planned Ports of entry between Mexico and Imperial County, working together for a Countywide Safe Routes to School Plan, as well as other strategies designed

to help implement regional strategies within Imperial County while continuing to strengthen the working relationship between the two agencies. The resolution will be presented to SCAG policy committees on February 6 and the Regional Council on March 6, 2014.

Update on 2014 Federal MPO/TMA Certification

SCAG submitted responses to the desk audit questions related to the 2014 MPO/TMA certification to FHWA/FTA on December 31, 2013. As the next step in the certification process, FHWA/FTA has scheduled a site visit to SCAG between February 4 and 7. The site visit will entail follow-up discussion with key SCAG staff members on various topic areas raised in the desk audit questions, one-on-one interview of key Regional Council members and representative transit operators, a public listening session where members of the public, interested parties and SCAG's stakeholders are invited to comment on SCAG's processes and practices, and reporting out of preliminary findings by FHWA/FTA to SCAG staff. Final step in the process is the reporting of the findings and issuance of certification jointly by FHWA and FTA, which will remain in effect for the next four years. SCAG's 2014 certification is anticipated to be issued by April 2014. Once the 2014 Certification report is finalized, FHWA/FTA staff will be available to present the findings to the Regional Council upon request.

California Active Transportation Program

I testified before the January 29th California Transportation Commission (CTC) meeting regarding successful implementation of the draft CTC guidelines as required under SB 99. SCAG staff continues to collaborate with the six County Transportation Commissions to ensure regional priorities are addressed in the Active Transportation Program (ATP) Guidelines, which the CTC is scheduled to adopt on March 20. The ATP Guidelines establish the framework for programming funds for both the state and MPO shares of the ATP. SCAG staff also hosted the first of several meetings with the six County Transportation Commissions and the California Transportation Commission to discuss the process for programming the MPO share of the ATP funds in the SCAG region. Specific criteria were established in SB 99 for SCAG in the development and ranking of federally and state funded active transportation projects under the ATP program. These criteria include geographic equity, coordination with counties in setting competitive criteria, prioritization of local/county plans and concurrence. The initial meeting focused on methods to meet the SCAG-specific criteria while still meeting state ATP Guidelines and Federal requirements.

2014 Imperial County PM2.5 State Implementation Plan

Pursuant to the Federal Clean Air Act, the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) and the California Air Resources Board (ARB) are developing the 2014 Imperial County PM2.5 State Implementation Plan (SIP) to demonstrate attainment with the 2006 24-hour PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The Draft SIP is tentatively scheduled to be released for public review in April with subsequent adoption by the ICAPCD Governing Board in May. The ARB is tentatively scheduled to adopt the SIP in June and then submit to U.S. EPA. The Imperial County SIP will include new motor vehicle PM2.5 emissions budgets (i.e., the upper limit of PM2.5 emissions that on-road transportation activities are permitted to emit for a given milestone year). The new emission budgets, once adopted in the final SIP, will become the functioning emissions budgets that SCAG is required to use when demonstrating transportation conformity for future Regional Transportation Plans, Federal Improvement Programs and their amendments. SCAG staff is working closely with ARB staff and ICAPCD staff to establish appropriate PM2.5 emission budgets.

California Energy Commission Electric Vehicle Grant Applications

SCAG staff is wrapping up work on two complementary grants from the US Department of Energy and the California Energy Commission (CEC). This work resulted in the Regional Plug-in Electric Vehicle (PEV) Readiness and Plan, and two subregional PEV Deployment Plans for the Western Riverside Council of Governments and the South Bay Cities Council of Governments. Staff are seeking additional funding from the CEC to fund continuing work addressing gaps in planning for and encouraging workplace and multi-family housing EV charging. In addition, SCAG staff have partnered with the LA Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) to educate and encourage eligible public agencies and private enterprises to apply for separate CEC grant funding to install charging stations. SCAG and LAEDC hosted two webinars and have been bringing eligible properties and vendors together to apply for the grants.

SCAG Member Agencies GIS Services Program Update

In the month of January, the SCAG GIS Services team welcomed our newest participant, the City of Banning. SCAG held a kick-off meeting with City staff and agreed to provide GIS assistance in updating their parcel-level land use datasets. This brings the number of member agencies participating in SCAG's GIS Services Program to nearly 110 local jurisdictions.

International Collaboration with the Myongji University of South Korea

On January 21, SCAG hosted a delegation from the Myongji University of South Korea. Myongji University is our partner University in South Korea. Representing SCAG were Hon. Greg Pettis, SCAG President, Hon. Pam O'Connor, SCAG Immediate Past President Hon. Larry McCallon, Former SCAG President. Also in attendance was the President of Myongji University, Byong-Jin You. Local and regional issues and initiatives were discussed, including SCAG's 2012 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). Both organizations agreed to promote cooperation to enhance research efforts and engage in an exchange of planning experience. Myongji University proposed to implement an internship program as part of this collaborative effort. The Myongji University delegation also toured the City of Santa Monica with Mayor O'Connor and visited with Mayor Steven Choi of the City of Irvine.

2014 Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting

In January, the Transportation Research Board (TRB) held its 93rd Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. The TRB meeting attracted nearly 12,000 transportation professionals from around the world, including policy makers, administrators, practitioners, researchers, and representatives of government, industry, and academic institutions. The conference program covered all transportation modes, including more than 4,500 presentations in nearly 800 sessions and workshops addressing topics of interest to all attendees. SCAG was asked by TRB to present five papers on several research areas:

- [Alison Linder, Senior Regional Planner](#) – “Explaining Participation in Voluntary Vessel Emission Reduction Programs at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach”
- [Bayarmaa Aleksandr, Transportation Modeler II](#) – “Work Schedules and Workplace Types: Submodel Development of Activity-Based Model System in Southern California”
- [Simon Choi, Chief of Research and Forecasting](#) – “Longitudinal Analysis of the Influence of Socio-Demographic and Land Use Features on Transit Ridership”
- [Jonathan Nadler, Manager, Compliance and Performance Monitoring](#) – “Methods to Assess Relationships Between Development Options and Air Quality Impacts”
- [Yongping Zhang, Transportation Modeler III](#) – “Herding Tigers: Lessons Learned from California Household Travel Survey”