

SCAG WELCOMES NEW PLANNING DIRECTOR AND CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

After two highly competitive recruitments, I am 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 our transition to the new building in the month of December.

SCAG JOINS SEC. KELLY AND STATE TRANSPORTATION LEADERS IN SUPPORT OF SB1

On Oct. 20, I 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 my remarks, I 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.

PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR LOCAL INPUT PROCESS ON RHNA AND 2020 RTP/SCS

SCAG is gearing up for its year-long Local Input and Envisioning Process, working with cities to obtain and verify critical data that will inform both the next Regional Housing Needs Assessment and the 2020 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2020 RTP/SCS). SCAG kicked off this effort with a workshop/webinar on Oct. 31 to introduce the Local Input and Envisioning Process, provide an overview of what data will be collected, resource support as well as other ways SCAG is collecting data that will influence plan development. This training was aimed at staff from local jurisdictions and over the next few months, SCAG staff will follow up with one-on-one meetings to answer any questions and verify data. SCAG staff is also available to make presentations to city staff who were unable to attend the Oct. 31 workshop. For more information, please email: RTPLocalInput@scag.ca.gov.

NEW WEBSITE READIES SOCAL FOR STATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING

For the past two years, SCAG has been providing technical assistance to local governments, transit agencies and developers in our six-county region to build capacity and develop more competitive applications for the statewide Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grant program. As part of that effort, SCAG recently launched the “AHSC Success for Southern California” webpage at ahsc.scag.ca.gov to further support applicants and increase the region's share of successful funding applications. The AHSC program awards funding for affordable housing projects that increase transportation options and choices, and is one of the few state funding sources that helps implement SCAG's 2016 RTP/SCS. The AHSC Success for Southern California website includes tools and information to help potential applicants assess their readiness and competitiveness, and highlights case studies of past successful projects in our region. A total of \$255 million is available in this round of funding. Applications are due Jan. 16, 2018.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: INFILL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity for \$50 million through the Infill Infrastructure Grant program to encourage development projects on vacant or underutilized lots in existing developed areas. This program provides grants for qualifying capital improvement projects statewide. Nonprofit and private developers are eligible to apply, and may apply in a joint application with a local jurisdiction or public housing authority. Applications must be received by HCD no later than Jan. 16, 2018. Additional materials and information can be found on HCD's website at: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/active-funding/iigp.shtml>.

REGIONAL EARTHQUAKE INITIATIVE CONTINUES TO BUILD RESILIENCE FOR LOCAL CITIES

SCAG, in partnership with The Dr. Lucy Jones Center for Science and Society, continues its work with local jurisdictions to address specific earthquake concerns and risks. In order to encourage municipalities to partner and team-up on resiliency strategies, SCAG has divided the region into four cohorts (Ventura County, Inland Empire, Coastal Cities and Central Los Angeles). These cohorts meet once a month and share individual progress reports, as well as receive support from SCAG and Dr. Lucy Jones. The cohorts will continue to meet throughout the fiscal year with the goal of developing custom city ordinances that better prepare and protect residents from disaster. Additionally, SCAG and Dr. Lucy Jones are working on related needs, including scenario modeling for cities, meeting with utility companies and building capacity for state legislation.

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.

SCAG COLLABORATES WITH IMPERIAL COUNTY AIR DISTRICT ON NEW AIR PLAN

On Oct. 26, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) approved the 2017 Imperial County State Implementation Plan for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard. The adoption of this plan, and its ultimate approval by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, will help the county comply with national air quality standards set out by the Clean Air Act. This new air plan, developed by the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD), demonstrates that Imperial County will attain the Clean Air Act's health-based air quality standards by 2018. The air plan includes budgets for motor vehicle emissions, which set limits on ozone emissions for on-road transportation. SCAG staff worked closely with ICAPCD and CARB staff to set the air plan's transportation conformity budgets, which impact regional transportation planning. For more information about the Imperial County air plan, visit https://www.arb.ca.gov/planning/sip/planarea/imperial/2017O3sip_final.pdf.

STATE EMISSION REDUCTION SCOPING PLAN UPDATE

On Oct. 12, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) hosted a public workshop to discuss the latest changes to the 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan. Released by CARB earlier this year, the Scoping Plan includes the state's vision, goals and strategies for addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to meet targets through 2030, and charts a path for California to reduce emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Based on comments received and updates to legislation, CARB released a revised draft Scoping Plan Update on Oct. 27. They plan to hold public workshops and meetings in partnership with the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee. CARB is currently scheduled to present the Final Scoping Plan to the ARB board for consideration and approval on Dec. 14-15. To review the latest update to the Scoping Plan, please visit: <https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/scopingplan.htm>.

INTER-CITY PARTNERSHIPS FUEL 'GO HUMAN' ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION EVENT

On Oct. 21, SCAG's Go Human campaign co-hosted the active streets event "Redefine Hazard Avenue" with Orange County Public Works and the cities of Garden Grove, Santa Ana and Westminster. The family-friendly event included a demonstration of potential street improvements for Hazard Avenue, a thoroughfare that runs through all three cities. In place for the day were a neighborhood greenway and a protected bike lane, a temporarily converted lane separated from car traffic by a barrier of banners and planters. A short speaking program featured SCAG Immediate Past President Michele Martinez, Mayor pro Tem of Santa Ana, and Regional Council member Tri Ta, Mayor of Westminster. Mayor Ta emphasized the value of community feedback during demonstrations like "Redefine Hazard Avenue" and Immediate Past President Martinez highlighted the need for investment in making active transportation in the region safer. Orange County Supervisor Andrew Do also made remarks, praising the collaborative work between the cities, the county and SCAG. For more information on future events, visit our Go Human website at www.gohumansocal.org.

SCAG CONTINUES INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

Earlier this month, a delegation from SCAG traveled to South Korea and Japan to participate in a global conference and cultivate international partnership. President Margaret Finlay, Second Vice President Bill Jahn, Energy & Environment Committee Chair Carmen Ramirez and I participated in the International Conference on Urban Design for the Future City held by INU College of Urban Sciences, one of SCAG's partner institutions in South Korea. This was a great opportunity for our team to present SCAG's work and share our experiences, knowledge and ideas with other international leaders. We also visited partner agencies including the Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements, the Korea Transport Institute, Myongji University, Seoul Institute and Chung-Ang University to continue our international collaboration. The SCAG delegation then traveled to Japan, establishing a new partnership with Kyoto University for future collaboration, and also visited representatives in the cities of Osaka and Kobe. The SCAG delegation experienced Japan's efficient transportation system and visited the country's Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution to learn about how they prepare for emergency responses and earthquake resilience.

SCAG PRESENTS ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION BEST PRACTICES AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Earlier this month, SCAG staff joined Regional Council member Pam O'Connor in attending the annual Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations conference in Savannah, Georgia. The conference featured workshops, sessions and tours highlighting MPO best practices and emerging issues including automated vehicles and disaster preparedness. SCAG staff presented on the Go Human campaign and the many positive impacts of hosting pop-up demonstration projects, funding opportunities through the Sustainability Planning Grants program and the new Active Transportation Database currently under development. The conference provided a major platform for SCAG to share challenges and success stories, and to learn from other metropolitan planning organizations.

SCAG WELCOMES NEW CIVICSPARK FELLOWS

SCAG is a regional partner of the CivicSpark program, a statewide Governor's Initiative AmeriCorps program administered by California's Office of Planning and Research and the Local Government Commission. The program places 70 fellows in agencies and local governments around the state to build capacity for climate mitigation and adaptation, and SCAG has hosted CivicSpark fellows in our Sustainability Department for the past three years. For 2017, SCAG welcomes three new fellows: Savannah Rose, Chris Luu and Lorianne Esturas. They will continue work on the Green Region Initiative Sustainability Indicators project, which collects data and maps progress across 25 sustainability topics in every city and county in the SCAG region. The Green Region Initiative map is a resource for SCAG staff, local governments and the public to explore best practices in the region, facilitate collaboration, and advance sustainability planning and programming in Southern California.