



Sustainability Awards

Call for Nominations

Submissions Due: Dec. 19, 2025

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Awards Summary

For more than 15 years, SCAG has highlighted excellence in sustainable planning and projects across Southern California through the annual Sustainability Awards. The [SCAG Sustainability Awards](#) recognize projects for outstanding contributions to the goals and policies of Connect SoCal, SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, and for progressing toward a more mobile, sustainable, and prosperous region.

To better reflect the region's evolving priorities and the comprehensive vision of [Connect SoCal](#), SCAG has revamped the award categories to highlight a broader range of sustainability achievements. Each year, SCAG honors projects that exemplify the core principles of sustainability with awards presented at the Regional Conference & General Assembly.

SCAG presents Sustainability Awards in nine categories. Applicants may submit project nominations in only one category. Each year, SCAG selects the most deserving project among all nominations to receive the Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability Award. The winners will be recognized at the [2026 Regional Council Conference and General Assembly](#) at the JW Marriott Resort & Spa in Palm Desert on May 7.

SCAG extends its gratitude to the many organizations that have submitted applications over the years, as well as to the jurors from across the region who have contributed their expertise in planning, sustainability, and community development disciplines.

Awards Timeline

General timeline for the 2026 Sustainability Awards

- 11/17/25: Call for nominations opens
- 12/19/25: Call for nominations closes
- 12/22/25: Jury evaluation begins
- 1/30/26: Jury evaluation ends
- 2/2/26: Notification of winners begins
- 2/2/26-5/1/26: Winners will be asked to collaborate on content to highlight their project at the Regional Conference & General Assembly
- 4/7/26: Awardees will register for the 2026 Regional Conference and General Assembly.
- 5/7/26: Embargo lifts and Sustainability Awards Luncheon held at the 2026 Regional Conference and General Assembly

Award Categories

SCAG accepts Sustainability Awards submissions in nine categories. Applicants can submit their nominations under only one category. Each year, SCAG selects a standout project from all nominations to receive the Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability Award.

Mobility

ACTIVE AND CLEAN MOBILITY

Honors a project, program, plan, or policy that expands opportunities for biking, walking, rolling, and other clean or micro-mobility modes, including electric vehicles. Projects should illustrate how they improve safety, connectivity, and access while encouraging a shift toward active and zero-emission transportation for a more sustainable and connected region. This category recognizes efforts that reduce vehicle miles traveled, support first- and last-mile connections, and integrate active and clean mobility options into broader community and transportation networks. Projects may also demonstrate collaboration across agencies, jurisdictions, or sectors to advance multimodal mobility and equitable access to transportation choices.

TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION

Honors a project, program, plan, or policy that applies creative or technology-driven solutions to enhance mobility, reduce emissions, and improve safety. Projects should demonstrate innovative approaches such as transportation demand management (TDM), systems integration, data-informed decision making, or new infrastructure and mobility strategies that advance a smarter and more efficient transportation network. This category highlights efforts that use innovation to optimize transportation systems, improve user experience, and deliver measurable sustainability benefits. Projects may also showcase collaboration across agencies, private partners, or technology providers to pilot new solutions, scale successful practices, or reimagine how people and goods move throughout the region.

Communities

GREAT PLACES

Honors a project, program, plan, or policy that creates or supports vibrant, complete communities and sustainable public spaces. The award recognizes efforts that enhance the public realm, promote placemaking, and strengthen local identity through thoughtful design, community engagement, and equitable access. Projects should demonstrate how they improve livability, walkability, and connectivity while fostering social interaction and environmental stewardship. This category highlights transformative public spaces (e.g. plazas, corridors, parks, and mobility hubs) that integrate transportation, housing, and open space to create enduring and inclusive community destinations. Projects may also showcase innovative design, adaptive reuse, or collaborative partnerships that contribute to a more connected and resilient region.

HOUSING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Honors a project, program, plan, or policy that advances sustainable and equitable housing through increased production, affordability, or access. The award recognizes efforts that support transit-oriented development, streamlined approvals, enhanced housing resilience, inclusive growth in high-opportunity areas, and other related initiatives. Projects should demonstrate how housing strategies contribute to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved access to jobs and other key destinations, and more complete, connected communities. This category highlights innovative approaches that

integrate housing with transportation and land use planning, promote resource-efficient building practices, and foster long-term affordability and climate resilience. Projects may also showcase partnerships between jurisdictions, developers, and community organizations to deliver equitable, sustainable housing solutions across the region.

Environment

ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

Honors a project, program, plan, or policy that strengthens community resilience and prepares the region for climate-related hazards such as drought, wildfire, flooding, sea level rise, or extreme heat. The award recognizes proactive approaches that reduce risk, protect lives and livelihoods, and safeguard critical infrastructure, natural resources, and ecosystems. Projects should demonstrate how adaptation strategies enhance long-term sustainability, equity, and public health while supporting regional coordination and community capacity-building. This category highlights innovative and collaborative solutions (e.g. resilient infrastructure, nature-based strategies, and community-driven planning) that help Southern California adapt to a changing climate and thrive amid future challenges.

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

Honors a project, program, plan, or policy that demonstrates exceptional leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions or sequestering carbon through clean energy, efficient buildings, low-carbon land use, green infrastructure, or zero-emission transportation. The award recognizes efforts that advance regional climate goals and contribute toward carbon neutrality while promoting community resilience and environmental stewardship. Projects should illustrate progress in emissions reduction, energy efficiency, or adaptation, and demonstrate collaboration across sectors to address the challenges of reducing emissions. This category highlights forward-thinking approaches that integrate innovation, equity, and sustainability to build a cleaner, healthier, and more climate resilience in Southern California.

Economy

CARMEN RAMIREZ AWARD FOR EQUITY

Honors a project, program, plan, policy, or collaboration that advances equity and fosters the growth of healthy, livable, sustainable, and economically resilient communities. The award recognizes efforts that meaningfully improve outcomes for traditionally marginalized, vulnerable, or underrepresented populations. Projects should demonstrate how equity principles are embedded throughout planning, engagement, and implementation that ensure community voices help shape decisions and outcomes. This category highlights initiatives that remove systemic barriers, expand opportunity, and promote environmental and social justice through inclusive and collaborative approaches that strengthen the region's shared prosperity and sustainability.

COMMUNITY FUNDING AND FINANCE

Honors a project, program, plan, or policy that mobilizes funding or financing strategies to deliver community investments that support economic development and long-term sustainability. Investments may include transportation, housing, green infrastructure, utility systems, or natural and working lands. The award recognizes innovative financial tools, partnerships, and resource-alignment strategies that help communities implement transformative projects. Projects should demonstrate how funding approaches advance equitable growth, leverage diverse funding sources, and maximize the impact of public and private investment. This category highlights initiatives that strengthen local economic foundations while achieving lasting social, environmental, and fiscal benefits across the region.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Honors a project, program, plan, or policy that strengthens local and regional economies and promotes long-term prosperity. The award recognizes initiatives that diversify economic opportunities, build workforce capacity, support small businesses, and enhance the region's ability to adapt and thrive amid economic and environmental change. Projects should demonstrate strategies that foster inclusive growth, create quality jobs, and align economic development with sustainability and equity goals. This category highlights efforts that leverage innovation, partnerships, and community investment to build a more resilient, competitive, and equitable regional economy.

Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability

Honors a project, program, plan, or policy that exemplifies holistic sustainability by integrating goals across mobility, housing, environment, economy, and equity. This top honor recognizes visionary efforts that demonstrate cross-sector collaboration, innovation, and leadership in shaping a more resilient, inclusive, and prosperous Southern California. Projects should reflect exceptional outcomes that align with the goals of Connect SoCal and advance the region's long-term sustainability and livability. The award highlights initiatives that set up a regional example by bridging disciplines, strengthening partnerships, and inspiring transformative action toward a more sustainable future.

Project Requirements

The SCAG Sustainability Awards are open to governmental agencies. Non-governmental agencies such as community-based organizations, nonprofits, and universities can apply in partnership with governmental agencies. Applicants are also encouraged to submit a joint entry for projects that span multiple agencies, sectors, and geographies. **Submittals include projects completed or adopted between Jan. 1, 2022, and Dec. 31, 2025.**

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Criteria Description	Max Points
Direct Benefits and Outcomes	Extent to which the initiative demonstrates actual or projected targeted benefits in line with the award category (ex. GHG reductions, increased housing access, improved safety, economic resilience, stronger equity outcomes, etc.).	40
Innovation & Transferability	- Use of new, creative, and/or adaptive approaches that align with the category, and - Potential to be replicated or inform best practices in other communities.	20
Equity & Inclusion	- Extent to which the initiative advances equity, benefits underserved communities, and engages diverse stakeholders in planning and implementation, and - Extent to which it addresses historic disparities and builds long-term inclusion.	20
Co-benefits & Alignment	Extent to which the project generates additional co-benefits (economic, environment, mobility, and/or community) that align with Connect SoCal goals.	20
Total Max Points		100

Application Instructions

Applications must be submitted by Friday, Dec. 19, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.

The application can be found on the [SCAG Website](#).

Application Components

Complete applications will include the following:

PART 1: NOMINEE/PROJECT INFORMATION

- Title of Project
- Project Adoption, Construction, or Completion Date
- City/Agency/Jurisdiction
- Project Website (If Applicable)
- Primary Contact
- Secondary Contact
- Select Category that Best Fits Your Project

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF NOMINATION AND ALIGNMENT

- Please provide a brief summary of the nominated project, program, plan, or policy and describe how it supports Connect SoCal, sustainability, and aligns with the pillar and award category. (1,000 words max).

PART 3: KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Please describe specific key details on the plan, policy, program, or project, such as planned, targeted, or achieved outcomes, benefits and co-benefits, and any key collaborations/partnerships that have been crucial. (1,000 words max)

PART 4: VULNERABLE/DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Please list how the plan, policy, program, or project benefits and/or includes traditionally marginalized, vulnerable, or underrepresented communities (1,000 words max).

PART 5: PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS RECOGNITION (OPTIONAL)

- If you would like to, you have the option to identify key collaborators/partners that have played an important role in the initiative, such as other agencies, consultants, community-based organizations, etc. Should your application be awarded these key collaborators would be recognized. This is completely optional and does not affect application scoring since collaborations/partnerships are included in the Part 3 (Key Characteristics) response.

PART 6: UPLOADS

- A total of eight photos or supporting graphics in JPG format. The maximum size for each upload is 1 megabyte. Please include a brief one-sentence description for each image in the field below the file upload. Winning projects will be asked to provide higher resolution images and may be used to make a video to be presented at the

Awards Program and SCAG's Regional Conference and General Assembly, in print materials on SCAG's website, and in case studies.

- Letters of support (Optional): Submit no more than two letters of support from organizations and individuals involved in the project indicating why the project is worthy of an award. Letters of support must be on the supporting agency's letterhead and in PDF format.
- Any additional links (Optional) that may help the jury panel better understand the project. These can be promotional videos, project websites, etc. Please separate with line breaks.



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