

SCAG ECONOMIC SUMMIT ENGAGED REGIONAL LEADERS ON HOUSING SOLUTIONS

More than 450 of Southern California's civic and business leaders convened in downtown Los Angeles on Nov. 9 to attend the Eighth Annual Southern California Economic Summit, "The Cost of Not Housing," co-hosted by SCAG and the Southern California Leadership Council. The program opened with remarks from Assemblymember Richard Bloom, Assemblymember Dante Acosta, and former Governor Pete Wilson will be available on our website shortly as well. SCAG's team of economists then detailed economic projections for the region while emphasizing the importance of ensuring access to affordable housing. Industry experts warned that high unaffordability could cause an exodus of new businesses and top talent to other regions. Speakers unanimously agreed that the key to improving affordability is to grow housing stock, rallying city representatives in attendance to start in their own communities. Housing leaders at the state, city and community level identified opportunities for coalition-building, emphasizing that local governments should be empowered to initiate solutions rather than waiting for the state to act on their behalf. Media coverage in the [Pasadena Star News](#), [Fontana Herald News](#), [Press-Telegram](#) and [Los Angeles Business Journal](#) shared SCAG's economic projections and highlighted that improving housing affordability must be prioritized in order to maintain economic success. Full economic reports, event presentations, archival videos and a photo gallery are available at the [Economic Summit website](#).

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES RAISE TAX PLAN CONCERNS

SCAG and a coalition of Southern California transportation agencies issued a joint letter to congressional leadership on Nov. 29, expressing concern with how the current tax reform bills making their way through Congress may threaten Southern California's transportation system and economic health.

The letter, co-signed by Imperial County Transportation Commission, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Metrolink, Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside County Transportation Commission, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, San Diego Association of Governments and Ventura County Transportation Commission, outlines several specific ways the tax plan stands to hurt Southern California, including changes to existing tax exemptions and financing tools that would increase project costs. If these provisions remain unchanged, passage of the tax legislation would deal a blow to Southern California's infrastructure plans, and could signal a setback to transportation projects nationwide. The letter and an accompanying press release are [available online](#).

AIR BOARD POSTPONES VOTE ON UPDATED CLIMATE TARGETS

In early November, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) moved to delay its planned Nov. 16-17 vote on proposed updates to state and regional climate targets. The move came a few days after SCAG's Regional Council voted to support continued dialogue with CARB on a new greenhouse gas reduction (GHG) target for Southern California.

Since Senate Bill 375 was passed in 2009, CARB has set and periodically updated 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 put forth a proposal for an ambitious new target that SCAG, having conducted rigorous internal testing and modeling, could not see a path forward to meeting.

A new regional GHG reduction target needs to allow for viable alternatives that could effectively reduce total vehicle miles travelled per person. In a region where over 76 percent of commuters drive solo to work, and in a time when unemployment is at a near-record low, to dramatically lower vehicle miles traveled will require major investments in infrastructure and public transportation. SCAG is committed to working with regional and state agencies to ensure that Southern California has the right tools and resources to achieve its target. Since mid-November, CARB has been engaging SCAG in a collaborative discussion about the new targets, and will provide an update at their next board meeting on Dec. 14.

SCAG AWARDED \$2M TO LAUNCH GRANT PROGRAM SUPPORTING INNOVATION

On Nov. 17, SCAG was awarded \$2 million from the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC), for a new grant program funding local pilot projects for reducing vehicle miles traveled. The governing board of the South Coast Air Quality Management District approved the proposal for MSRC to partner with SCAG on Dec. 1.

This new initiative, called the Future Communities Grant Program, originated from the work and leadership of SCAG's [SCAG's Open Data, Big Data Smart Connected SCAG Region Committee](#). The committee identified significant opportunities, but a lack of capacity, for local governments to institute new technological solutions in support of regional mobility and sustainability goals. The grant program is meant to foster innovation in local government solutions for transportation demand management and service delivery. Eligible projects will deploy smart technologies and enhanced data analytics to improve access and increase the efficiency of municipal services.

In Spring 2018, SCAG will engage regional experts to develop program guidelines for the pilot project selection process while conducting a study of emerging tech-based strategies. A call for proposals is expected to be released by Fall 2018. More information will be provided in a report to the Regional Council in February

GO HUMAN CATALYZES ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS ACROSS THE REGION

Go Human, in partnership with the City of La Quinta, hosted Village Make on Saturday, Nov. 18. The community event drew hundreds of participants to La Quinta Village to experience planned and potential safety designs improving access throughout the Village. Temporary improvements included buffered bike lanes, a traffic circle, and a pedestrian walkway. Residents and visitors had the opportunity to provide feedback on the features through surveys and through interactive programming. Regional Councilmember Jan Harnik from the City of Palm Desert represented SCAG at the event, highlighting the success of Palm Desert's Go Human demonstration project and how feedback from Village Make could foster similar lasting change and long-term benefits. Read more about the event in this [article](#).

Village Make marks SCAG's 19th Go Human temporary demonstration project to date. [Seventeen more events](#) are planned in partnership with cities and counties across the region. To date, approximately one-third of all previously held events have resulted in local action to permanently implement active transportation improvements, including the City of Westminster, where the city was recently awarded a \$2,324,140 grant from the California Urban Greening Grant Program to construct the Mendez Historical Trail and Green Street Bikeway Project along Hoover Street. To learn more about Go Human and opportunities to collaborate with SCAG on events to promote safe walking and biking, please contact Julia Lippe-Klein at Lippe-Klein@scag.ca.gov.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: CORRIDOR-BASED FREIGHT GRANTS

The California Transportation Commission (CTC), in adopting [Final Guidelines](#) for the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program, has announced availability of approximately \$1.3 billion in federal and state funds for corridor-based freight projects. As noted in the guidelines, project applications for the 2018 Trade Corridor Enhancement Program are due to the CTC by Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018. SCAG, in our role as a metropolitan planning organization, is responsible for compiling project nominations from eligible agencies in the region and confirming that the projects are consistent with the 2016 Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy. Further information on the application process for project nominations is available in the 2018 [TCEP nomination form](#).

CEQA GUIDELINES UPDATE

On Nov. 27, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) sent the California Natural Resources Agency a set of final proposed amendments to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Updates to the guidelines are intended to create a smoother, more predictable process for agencies, project applicants and the public to analyze environmental impacts. The package of proposed updates promotes use of existing regulatory standards in the CEQA process; proposes to update the environmental checklist that most agencies use; includes changes to make existing programmatic environmental review easier to use for later projects; and enhances several exemptions.

The update package also includes a proposed new section on 'Determining the Significance of Transportation Impacts'. After more than two years of outreach and collaboration with statewide stakeholders, OPR has established vehicle miles travelled (VMT) as the most appropriate metric for

assessing land use projects, while lead agencies have discretion in choosing which metric to use to evaluate roadway capacity projects. It also clarifies that projects that reduce VMT, such as pedestrian, bicycle and transit projects, should be presumed to have less than significant impacts. The Natural Resources Agency will soon begin their review of the proposal, which will include an additional opportunity for public review. More details are available at OPR's [CEQA Guidelines Update website](#).

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: 2018 SCAG SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

SCAG is now accepting nominations for the 2018 SCAG Sustainability Awards. Each year, SCAG recognizes outstanding sustainable planning efforts and development projects in Southern California. Nominations are open to projects that coordinate land use and transportation actions and that improve the mobility, livability, prosperity and sustainability of our region. Eligible submittals include plans, projects and programs completed or adopted after Jan. 1, 2014 and prior to Dec. 20, 2017. Award nominations are open to all parties, including local governments, non-profits and private developers. Winners will be recognized at the 2018 Regional Conference and General Assembly at the Renaissance Esmeralda Indian Wells Resort & Spa on May 3-4. Please visit the [SCAG Sustainability site](#) for more information and to download the nomination packet. Nomination packets must be submitted no later than Jan. 18, at 2:00 p.m. If you have questions, please contact India Brookover at brookover@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG EXECUTIVES HONORED FOR REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

Both Chief Operating Officer Darin Chidsey and I have recently received recognition from leading regional organizations in the region. Darin was honored at the Southern California Leadership Network's (SCLN) Visionaries Awards gala on Nov. 30 at the Ace Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. SCLN celebrated their 30th anniversary by recognizing 30 outstanding alumni of their prestigious programs. Sharing the stage with Darin were such civic and community leaders as U.S. Representative Pete Aguilar; Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas; Maria Contreras-Sweet, former administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration; Juan Devis, chief creative officer for KCET; and Danielle Brazell, general manager for the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Darin is a dual SCLN alumnus, having completed the Leadership Southern California fellowship in 2008 and the California Connections fellowship in 2012.

I have the honor of receiving recognition at two upcoming events on Thursday, Dec. 7. I will be presented with the Honorable Ray LaHood "Man of the Year" Award by the Orange County chapter of the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS), and will also be recognized by the Building Industry Association (BIA) Baldy View Chapter with their annual President's Award. WTS and BIA are organizations for which I have tremendous respect, and their leadership helps all of Southern California work collaboratively to solve the region's greatest challenges. More information about the WTS 2017 Recognition Awards is available [here](#). More information about BIA's awards gala is available [here](#).

SCAG JOINS TRANSPORTATION INNOVATORS AT LA COMOTION EVENT

On Nov. 15-19, SCAG staff joined more than 1,000 transportation innovators and influential global policymakers to address the future of mobility at the LA CoMotion conference and expo in downtown Los Angeles. SCAG was a proud sponsor of the event. In addition to a speaking program that was kicked off by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, the event featured a "street of the future," which populated a nearby road with a wide range of mobility devices. Attendees had the opportunity to take test rides on electric bicycles, electric scooters and a fully automated shuttle from Transdev and EZMile.

SCAG partnered with Transport for London and the Natural Resources Defense Council to convene a workshop with regional leaders and global innovators to investigate the concept of a "Go Zone," or a group of transportation solutions deployed in one traffic hotspot. This idea, explored by SCAG's "100 Hours" campaign earlier this year, has been successfully employed in Helsinki and London. LA CoMotion also hosted the final meeting of the Open Data/Big Data Smart and Connected SCAG Region Committee, where members convened to finalize the recommendations they will share with the Regional Council.

SCAG SHARES DATA ANALYSIS KNOWLEDGE AT TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE

In November, SCAG staff shared research with the planning community at the 2017 Applying Census Data for Transportation Conference. The event was hosted by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the Transportation Research Board. The program centers on the presentation of four commissioned papers, which each address key topics in census planning.

SCAG was selected from a competitive field of research institutes, academics and practitioners to be one of the four presenting researchers, thanks to our reputation for expertise in data analysis. SCAG staff presented a paper and presentation titled "Census Transportation Planning Products Workplace Data for Transportation Planning: A Systematic Review."

SCAG PROVIDES PROFESSIONAL MENTORSHIP TO CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

In early November, SCAG staff joined the 23rd Annual Transportation Education Symposium to provide professional mentorship to university students. The California Transportation Foundation (CTF) holds this event each year to create career development opportunities for the state's future transportation leaders. The symposium drew 42 students from many California universities to learn from industry leaders and define their professional paths. CTF, a prominent charitable organization in the state, was established more than two decades ago to support California's transportation community.

SCAG STAFF PRESENTS RESEARCH TO NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL SCIENCE COUNCIL

In mid-November, SCAG staff attended the 65th Annual Meeting of the North American Regional Science Council (NARSC) to present new research. NARSC is an international scholarly group that focuses on regional analysis, ranging from urban and spatial economic theories to applied problems and public policies in regional planning. The multidisciplinary group includes university researchers, government employees and private-sector practitioners. This year's meeting brought together approximately 1,000 professionals in Vancouver, Canada. The paper SCAG staff presented, "The Impact of Transit Oriented Development on Gentrification and Displacement," was one of over 600 featured research papers from around the world.