REPORT

DATE: September 14, 2006

TO: Regional Council

FROM: Hon. Glen Becerra, Chair, Communication & Membership Subcommittee
Cheryl Collier, Communications Supervisor, 213 236-1942

SUBJECT: **Annual Update of SCAG's Communications Strategy**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
The Communication & Membership Subcommittee recommends approval of the annual update of SCAG's Communications Strategy.

BACKGROUND:
SCAG's Communication Strategy was developed in 2002 and since then has been updated annually under the guidance of the Communication & Membership Subcommittee. The Strategy sets forth the agency's communications goals, message, execution, target audiences, strategies and tactics. Attached for your review is a draft copy of the document. The final version will be printed in a reader-friendly booklet format.

FISCAL IMPACT:
There is no fiscal impact.

BD # 125350
8/17/06

Southern California Association of Governments

Communications Strategy 2006 – 2007

CONTENTS

COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

Message 1
Execution 2

TARGET AUDIENCES 3

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Members 4-6
Member Jurisdictions & Stakeholders 7-8
General Public 9
Community Organizations 10
Legislators 11
News Media 12-13
Crisis Communications 14

July 2006

COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

MESSAGE

- Establish and effectively communicate the importance of regional cooperation and planning and of employing regional solutions to Southern California's many policy challenges.
- Establish SCAG's responsibility and leadership in resolving regional challenges. Foster a uniform message of SCAG regional cooperation, consensus building, and problem solving.
- Reinforce SCAG's brand and image, and strategically position and brand specific SCAG initiatives and projects when such actions will enhance their understandability and recognition.
- Establish clarity and consistency in the delivery of policy and program issue messages.

1

COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

EXECUTION

- Improve communications with the Regional Council, Policy Committees, member local governments, subregions and other key stakeholder audiences.
- Enable members to effectively communicate the program and policy messages of SCAG to their elected colleagues and constituents by providing them with adequate information and training.
- Assure that multifaceted communications efforts are totally integrated, cost-effective, and consistent.
- Enhance SCAG's profile with the news media and others who influence and shape policies that affect the Southern California region.
- Increase the visibility of SCAG's policy experts, resources, services, and initiatives.
- Satisfy the public outreach and participation requirements of major SCAG planning efforts, including *Destination 2030* (the 2004 Regional Transporation Plan) and *Compass Blueprint.*
- Improve SCAG Web Site interface to encourage public education and feedback.

2

TARGET AUDIENCES

Members/Partners

Regional Council and Policy Committee members, Boards of Supervisors, City Councils, County Transportation Commissions, Tribal Governments, City Managers, County Administrators, Subregional Coordinators, Task Force members, state and regional agencies including Caltrans, FHWA and FTA , and other elected officials and staff from member jurisdictions and planning partners

Stakeholder Organizations

Environmental, academic and business groups

General Public

Local residents throughout the SCAG region

Community/Environmental Justice Audiences

Civic, community, minority, ethnic, labor, faith-based, environmental justice and others

Legislators

State Legislators, Members of Congress and key staff

Trade Associations/Affiliate Organizations

League of California Cities, CSAC, NARC, CALCOG

News Media

National and regional media outlets, including Washington, D.C and Sacramento bureaus and local ethnic press

3

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

WITH MEMBERS

Provide members with comprehensive information and training about SCAG's regional issues, priorities and goals so that they are better equipped to communicate the value of SCAG and its programs and planning efforts to other audiences.

■ Conduct New Member Briefings/ Orientations

Materials used to orient new members of the Regional Council include:

	Published
- "Your Guide to SCAG"	June
- SCAG Member Handbook	as needed
- SCAG Member Benefits Brochure	as needed
- Business Card CD	May
- Legislative Reference Guide	January
- SCAG Regional Pocket Guide	May
- Key Message Flash Cards	September
- Policy Fact Sheets	quarterly
- CD of major policy/initiative presentations	as needed

■ Subregional Policy & Issue Briefings

Program and schedule regular informational briefings in every subregion and solicit member views and opinions.

■ Provide Leadership Training

Conduct comprehensive leadership training for local elected officials with a focus on regional perspectives.

4

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

WITH MEMBERS

- **Utilize e-mail to distribute timely information:**

  - "eVision" electronic newsletter
  - Meeting agendas
  - "Save-the-Date" notices
  - Summaries of major actions taken by SCAG's Regional Council and Policy Committees
  - Distribute information from affiliate organizations

  Regularly update and expand distribution lists.

- **Distribute regional policy Fact Sheets**

  Provide regularly updated fact sheets and brochures on SCAG's responsibilities and achievements, program initiatives, and policy positions, including:

  - Overview of SCAG
  - Regional Transportation Plan
  - Transportation Finance
  - Aviation Planning
  - Goods Movement
  - COMPASS Blueprint
  - Housing Planning
  - California Maglev
  - Environmental Justice
  - RTP Environmental Impact Report
  - Regional Comprehensive Plan

5

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

WITH MEMBERS

■ Provide access to "Members Only" section of SCAG's Web Site

Provide "Value-Added" services and resources to SCAG members, accessible with a designated password.

■ Make presentations available

Provide visually rich, annotated, easy-to-deliver PowerPoint presentations on regional issues, priorities and goals, as well as SCAG's responsibilities and achievements:

- Overview of SCAG
- State of the Region
- *Destination 2030,* the 2004 RTP
- COMPASS Blueprint
- Goods Movement
- Transportation Finance
- Southwest Mega-Region

When possible, incorporate customized information to increase relevancy to individual regions and audiences.

■ Make speakers available

Identify speakers able and trained to make presentations on various topics. Invite Regional Council members to augment outreach efforts.

6

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

WITH MEMBER JURISDICTIONS & STAKEHOLDERS

Aggressively pursue presentation opportunities in each subregion. Develop materials in addition to those previously identified to assist in communicating with political, business, community and other stakeholder audiences, including:

Communications Materials

- **Information Services Brochure**

  A brochure detailing SCAG's various data, GIS mapping, forecasting, and other information services available from SCAG.

- **Transportation Financing Brochure**

  A brochure identifying the sources and channels for transportation financing in the SCAG region. A major section will be devoted to innovative public/private financing strategies.

Displays

Continue to improve the form and function of SCAG display materials for conferences, forums, workshops and other public events. Ensure they serve as cost-effective outreach vehicles providing concise and understandable messages about SCAG's mission, goals and initiatives.

7

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

WITH MEMBER JURISDICTIONS & STAKEHOLDERS

Conferences/Workshops

Increase stakeholder participation by following the guidelines and timelines presented in the " SCAG Event and Conference Planner" and:

- developing strong program content and concomitant participation.
- thematically and graphically presenting the event to attract stakeholder interest.
- utilizing regional venues and reaching out to local elected officials for support.
- conducting pre-event publicity, on-site media relations, and post-event media outreach.

Special Events

Events planned during the current fiscal year include:

- Southwest Compact Hearing – Fall & Spring
- State of the Region Press Conf. – December, 2006
- SCAG Regional Economic Forecast Conference – January 2007
- COMPASS Blueprint Conference – March 2007
- SCAG Regional Housing Summit – April 2007
- SCAG General Assembly – May 2007
- SCAG Regional Council Retreat – June 2007

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC

■ Participation & Interagency Consultation

Update and implement SCAG's Participation & Interagency Consultation Plan. Require a minimum public comment period of 45 days before the plan is adopted.

■ Public Comments

Invite the public to address the Regional Council and Policy Committees at the beginning of every monthly meeting as well as any open, public meeting.

■ Citizen Review and Feedback

Continue to circulate the Overall Work Program, Regional Transportation Plan, Regional Transportation Improvement Program and other regional initiatives for extensive public review and feedback.

■ On-Line Public Access

Continually update SCAG's web site to acurately represent all planning initiatives, meeting schedules and events.

■ Regional Representation

Modify SCAG's policy-making structure and process as warrented to accurately reflect and accomodate Southern California's changing landscape and diversity.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

WITH COMMUNITY/ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AUDIENCES

- **Meetings and Presentations**

  Schedule a minimum of 100 presentations each year delivered by members and staff leadership to business groups, civic organizations, organizations that represent minorities, labor organizations, faith-based organizations, environmental groups, academic groups and local government agencies.

- **Public Participation**

  Provide both paper and web-based public feedback forms. Create and monitor an effective Internet interface to encourage public education and feedback on planning efforts. Review and update contact databases.

- **Scheduling and Documentation**

  Create a main log of outreach activities to document efforts and ensure the broadest level of outreach without overlapping efforts. Expand the current EJ database with the help of EJ Advisory Groups.

10

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

WITH LEGISLATORS

- **Regular Briefing Sessions**

  Schedule regular briefing sessions with regional members of Congress and the Legislature to increase understanding of the agency's mission and goals with lawmakers and their staffs. Priority will be given to members in leadership positions or who sit on key policy committees of importance to the agency. Both geography and legislative strategy will be considered.

- **Member Trips to Washington, D.C. and Sacramento**

  Schedule member trips to Washington, D.C. and Sacramento during legislative sessions.

- **Coalitions and non-member "Key Contacts"**

  Create a coalitions and non-member "Key Contacts" to communicate SCAG initiatives and positions to lawmakers.

- **Legislative Roundtable**

  Participate in the monthly Southern California Legislative Roundtable meetings.

11

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

- **News Releases/Advisories/Media Tip Sheets/ News Conferences**

  Work with the Communications & Membership Subcommittee and individual Regional Council members to identify the specific issues, initiatives and activities that should receive the attention of the news media. Use telephone, e-mail and faxed messages to increase and enhance positive coverage by the news media of SCAG events and meetings.

  Additionally, target weekly papers with op-ed articles on various SCAG initiatives.

- **Editorial Board Meetings**

  Schedule, at a minimum, six separate editorial board meetings with key print and broadcast organizations that cover the SCAG region. Prepare "talking points" for each meeting and arrange for the participation of Regional Council members residing in the media market.

- **Letters to the Editor**

  Compose and customize letters to be sent out by Regional Council members.

- **Trained Spokespersons**

  Identify and provide training to a minimum of 10 Regional Council members to serve as effective agency spokes-persons.

12

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

■ Member Communications with News Media

Provide members with current "sound-bite" commentary on topical news items via e-mail. Simultaneously, the "sound-bites" will be formatted, packaged and distributed via e-mail to the press. When posed with questions, members will be prepared to respond with the 2-3 sentence "sound-bites," and be recognized as knowledgeable and responsive spokespersons on the issues affecting Southern California.

■ Member On-Air Interviews and Talk Show Opportunities

Pursue and schedule, at a minimum, ten radio and/or television interviews for Regional Council members on various public affairs shows broadcast throughout the Southern California region. Programs to be targeted include:

- Life and Times (KCET-TV)
- Week in Review (Adelphia)
- Eye on LA (KABC-TV)
- Midday Sunday (KTTV-FOX11)
- Pacesetters (KTLA-TV)
- Which Way LA (KCRW-FM)
- Airtalk (KPCC-FM)
- The Michael Jackson Show (KRLA-AM)
- Community Bulletin (KWRM-AM)
- Community Forum (KUOR-FM)
- Community Spotlight (KGGI-FM)
- City Scope (KOST-FM)
- LA Speaks Out (KJLH-FM)

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

- **Formal Program**

  Develop and maintain a crisis communications program that includes and continuously updates:

  - Identification of potential crisis communications situations
  - Statements for external and internal use
  - Spokespersons and processes for transmitting messages
  - Training of key staff and Regional Council Members in crisis communications techniques

14