
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 2, 2020

Contact: Steve Lambert, The 20/20 Network
(909) 841-7527/ steve@the2020network.com



SCAG Regional Council declares racism a public health crisis, will provide \$1 million to promote equitable economic and housing strategies

Los Angeles – The Regional Council of Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) adopted a resolution Thursday declaring racism a public health crisis and vowing to work in partnership with others to meaningfully advance justice, equity, diversity and inclusion.

In a parallel move, the nation’s largest metropolitan planning organization approved a partnership with the California Community Foundation and other nonprofits, and will provide \$1 million in funding to promote community-driven equitable economic recovery and housing strategies throughout the six-county region.

“SCAG stands in solidarity with those working toward a fair and just society, and with those calling for systemic change to eliminate all barriers that reduce opportunity and undermine Southern California’s shared values and ability to thrive,” the resolution states.

Approved overwhelmingly by the Regional Council, the measure creates an ad hoc Special Committee “to further develop SCAG’s response to advancing social justice throughout the agency’s activities.”

“In Southern California, we celebrate diversity, but we need to champion inclusion and equity,” said Rex Richardson, SCAG President and a Long Beach City Councilmember. “When we have a population experiencing shortened life expectancy because of poverty, health, and environmental factors, cities need to step in. When faced with urgent calls to safely reopen our economy and restore jobs while balancing the need to protect the public’s health, cities need to step in to ensure communities of color have the same opportunities for economic recovery. When individuals of color can no longer afford to live near where they work, cities, and our region, need to step in to ensure that our housing and transportation policies don’t continue to perpetuate the racial gap.”

SCAG’s action comes as cities are navigating three crises simultaneously: a pandemic, a fiscal emergency due to historic job loss, and an uprising in response to the brutal killing of George Floyd – underscoring the impacts of structural racism, Richardson said.

“If cities are not intentional about equity in housing and economic recovery, our region risks severe setbacks in minority and low-income communities,” Richardson said.

As part of the Call for Collaboration program, SCAG will help fund projects that promote partnerships with community-based organizations, nonprofit institutions and local government agencies, with an emphasis on elevating local conversations on racial equity and justice.

“The events of recent months have revealed uncomfortable truths about the systemic racism in our society. As a regional planning organization, understanding the disparities that result from geography and the built environment are central to our work to plan for a more racially just, equitable future,” said Kome Ajise, SCAG Executive Director.

###

About SCAG

SCAG is the nation’s largest metropolitan planning organization, representing six counties, 191 cities and nearly 19 million residents. SCAG undertakes a variety of planning and policy initiatives to plan for a livable and sustainable Southern California now and in the future. For more information about SCAG’s regional efforts, please visit www.scag.ca.gov.