

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Al Adam, Mayor  
Bob Engler, Councilmember

**DATE:** May 21, 2024

**SUBJECT:** 2024 Southern California Association of Governments General Assembly - Update

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Receive report.
2. Find that receiving said report is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.

**LEVINE ACT ITEM: No**

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

**No Additional Funding Requested.** Direct and indirect costs for attendance at the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) conference and General Assembly are included in Adopted FY 2023-24 General Fund Budget.

**BACKGROUND:**

Founded in 1965, SCAG is a Joint Powers Authority under California state law, established as an association of local governments and agencies that voluntarily convene as a forum to address regional issues. Under federal law, SCAG is designated as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and under state law as a Regional Transportation Planning Agency and a Council of Governments.

The SCAG region encompasses six counties (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura) and 191 cities in an area covering more than 38,000 square miles.

SCAG develops long-range regional transportation plans including sustainable communities strategy and growth forecast components, regional transportation improvement programs, regional housing needs allocations, and a portion of the South Coast Air Quality management plans. In 1992, SCAG expanded its governing body, the Executive Committee, to a 70-member Regional Council to

help accommodate new responsibilities mandated by the federal and state governments, as well as to provide more broad-based representation of Southern California's cities and counties. With its expanded membership structure, SCAG created regional districts to provide for more diverse representation. The districts were formed with the intent to serve equal populations and communities of interest. Currently, the Regional Council consists of 86 members.

On May 2-3, 2024, more than 900 local leaders from throughout Southern California convened for SCAG's 2024 annual Regional Conference and General Assembly at the JW Marriott in Palm Desert, CA, which included presentations and panel discussions on the new technologies to enhance mobility, economic opportunity, and quality of life in the Southern California region. Mayor Al Adam, Councilmember Bob Engler, and Legislative Affairs Manager Mina Layba attended the general assembly. Mayor Adam was appointed as the City's voting delegate and Councilmember Engler as the alternate.

**DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

This SCAG Conference and General Assembly consists of two-day proceedings as follows:

**I. REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**

a. Public Comments- no public comments

b. Scholarship Committee Report - This is the 14th year of the scholarship program. The Committee awarded nine students with scholarships. Recipients were selected from Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties. Two additional scholarships sponsored by the California Transportation Foundation were awarded to students from the Cities of Arroyo Grande and Santa Fe Springs.

c. Adopt Resolution No. 24-665-1 approving the FY 2024-25 Final Comprehensive Budget, subject to approval of the General Fund Budget and Membership Dues Assessment by the SCAG General Assembly. – Approved, with resolution adopted.

d. Approve Contract No. 24-027-C01 in a not to exceed amount of \$1,898,460 with EcoInteractive, LLC, to provide and upgrade the current Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) Software as a Service application that will continue to serve and support the County Transportation Commissions (CTCs) and users at SCAG for the purpose of programming existing and new projects generating queried reports, conducting basic analytics, and maintaining draft and approved amendment organization. – Approved.

e. Consent Calendar – Approved.

f. Business Representative Report - Lucy Dunn, CEO Orange County Business Council provided an update on the economy.

g. President's Report- President Art Brown recognized outgoing Regional Council Members and thanked them for their service. The next Regional Council meeting is June 2nd.

h. Executive Director Report - Executive Director Kome Ajise shared that the Connect So Cal plan was submitted. The plan outlines a vision for a more resilient and equitable future, with investment, policies and strategies for achieving the region's shared goals through 2050.

## II. GENERAL ASSEMBLY/BUSINESS MEETING

a. Welcome: President Brown welcomed delegates. Andrew Masiel, Regional Tribal Council provided a welcome from the Quia tribal nation and introduced the bird singers from the Agua Caliente Band of Coahuila Indians.

Riverside Supervisor Manuel Perez acknowledged leaders from the region. He thanked delegates for their participation and encouraged continued partnership and he conducted a trivia game on Riverside County.

b. Acknowledgement from SCAG Sponsors:

Larry Chung, Southern California Edison (SCE) shared a brief video of the organization and resilient energy pursuits. SCE published a white paper on electric vehicles investments, clean energy, and wind energy. SCE is a partner in renewable energy toward a carbon neutral future. The investments they make benefit the economy and create jobs.

Megan McKernan, Automobile Club of Southern California shared a brief video on the auto research center that helps to measure emissions, vehicle testing on accidents, and fuel economy. She shared recent information on research such as the range of electric vehicles during extreme temperatures and driver assistance systems. They use this research to inform the auto industry and legislators to support greater safety.

Randon Lane, Athens Services, as a former Councilmember he shared the importance of being involved in SCAG. Athens Services is proud to sponsor and support the organization.

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c. Executive Director Report - Director Kome Ajise welcomed delegates and stressed the importance of collaboration in the Southern CA Region. On April 4th, the Regional Council approved the Connect So Cal 2024 plan which was adopted by both the federal and state governments. This plan sets the vision for the region. It contains 22 planning policies and requires all agencies to participate.

d. Public Comments: None

e. Adoption of Resolutions: Adopt the FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget and Membership Assessment Schedule – Approved

f. Consent Calendar: Approved

g. Ratification of Board Officers

h. The General Assembly ratified the following FY 2024-25 Officers:

- President: Curt Harman, San Bernardino County
- First Vice President: Cindy Allen, Long Beach
- Second Vice President: Roy Marquez, Chino Hills

i. Presidents Report: President Brown's accomplishments were detailed in a FY 2023-24 video montage. Under the President's leadership, the following projects were completed:

- Connect SoCal 2024, The Regional Transportation Plan
- REAP 2.0
- Go Human
- Legislative Advocacy
- Complete Streets

j. Recognition of Outgoing President and Remarks by New President: The Executive Director expressed his appreciation of outgoing President Brown on meeting key priorities and was presented with awards and mementos. President Brown thanked SCAG staff and members for supporting his service this past year.

Newly elected President Curt Hagman shared his enthusiasm for his new position and thanked the General Assembly for their support. The next General Assembly will take place on May 2, 2025, at the JW Marriott in Palm Desert.

### III. CONFERENCE PROGRAM

#### a. Sustainability Awards Program

The following agencies were recognized:

- Outstanding Achievement in Sustainability: City of Los Angeles- Universal Basic Mobility Pilot
- Active, Healthy, and Safe Communities: City of Buena Park- Silverado Trail
- Carmen Ramirez Award for Equity: Inland Equity Community Land Trust- Plan Adelanto
- Clean Cities: Alternate Fuels and Infrastructure- Port of Long Beach- Clean Truck Fund Program
- Green Region Initiative: Climate Action and Resource Conservation- City of Oxnard- Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
- Housing Innovation: City of Moreno Valley- Courtyard at Cottonwood
- Plan, Policy, and Programs: Riverside Community College- Sustainability and Action

#### b. Breakout Session - Creating Complete Communities

Consultants from Brookfield Properties; Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill; Kosmont Companies, and City of Pomona shared their perspectives on the concept of complete communities. Connected or complete communities support quality of life with convenient access to economic centers and reduced travel time. It features more compact development and promotes walking and biking options.

Brookfield Properties notes that complete communities that feature the right mix of densities help increase socioeconomic diversity, and mobility options with schools, open space, employment centers, pocket parks, and community gathering centers. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill defined complete communities as a 20-minute suburb that feature amenities and services. In their perspective, priority should be given to the disadvantaged communities to make their commute more nuanced with improved connectivity. Kosmont Companies emphasized that the economy has shifted. Cities should consider directing tighter investments for developing activities that provide an experience, not just entertainment. Create housing where they can walk/bike to their activities. Lastly, the City of Pomona shared examples of developments which emphasize economic development, such as Wi-Fi access, and public safety. Pomona updated its zoning code to create a new urban design and introduced Accessory Commercial Units to promote neighborhood businesses.

#### c. Breakout Session - Investing in Economic Resilience: As the State economy is growing, interest rates rising and unemployment is still high, speakers from the City of Ontario, Ventura County, and the biotech industry shared ways they are

promoting economic growth. The City of Ontario reviewed their capital improvement projects: Ontario Airport, top-selling master-planned community and sports arenas. They are working on an entertainment district, expanding the convention center, and minor league softball stadium to drive tourism. Ventura County Economic Development Collaborative is looking for ways to provide sustainable living and health insurance for 45 percent of the families in the county who are struggling. There is a need to improve career pathways and partner with local colleges to help employees gain more skills. They are leveraging the biotech industry and the naval base to fill employee needs. BioCom California, an 1800-member organization, shared ways they are supporting the industry in gaining access to capital, workforce development, and connections to state and local government for growing their industry. The State of California graduates more PhDs in the country. With the level of education produced in the state, harnessing innovation and local talent will create economic growth.

d. Address by Congresswoman Norma Torres - 35th District: The congresswoman shared the number of federal grant opportunities available to meet local needs. She helped secure \$3 Billion for the Brightline project which will create a 2-hour train ride from Rancho Cucamonga and Las Vegas. She is working with San Bernardo to establish a Transit Oriented Development pilot program to assist with building affordable housing by transit lines to encourage public transit use. The City of Fontana received an award for a Safe Streets project and the West Valley Connector to increase mobility between Pomona to Ontario Airport. She encourages cities and counties to work together to apply for grants to bring more federal funding to the State.

e. Student Showcase Awards: College students were honored for their projects. Top honors and scholarships went to:

- Story Map Jury Prize - Michael Sutedjo, UC Irvine
- Story Map Audience Award - Anna Eichelberger, UC Irvine
- Poster Project Jury Award - Carolina Carlos, CSU San Bernardino
- Poster Project Audience Award - Andrea Perez, CSU Long Beach

f. Keynote Speaker: Sarita Maybin

In her presentation, "Collaborating for Success," the speaker shared the positive and effective ways to communicate. Her favorite phrase is, "Say what you mean, mean what you say...and don't say it mean." She shared several tips:

During difficult conversations use the following do's and don'ts:

- Don't blame; Do take ownership.
- Don't demand; Do make requests.
- Don't dictate; Do seek solutions.

She provided a handout and reviewed the “Top 10 Positive Communication Phrases.”

**g. Plenary Session - Thriving Regions: How Planning Together Enables Local Successes**

Panelists representing the Chicago Agency for Planning, Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization, San Diego Association of Governments, and Metropolitan Transportation Commission of the Bay Area discussed commonalities and differences in regional planning. Some unique variations in regional planning are tribal regions, tax structure, international borders, and toll bridges. A common concern is affordable/workforce housing, transportation, and climate change. The challenge these metropolitan planning organizations face implementing long-term goals is many staff members retiring, or board members are terming. This leads to a loss of institutional knowledge and leadership. Another common issue is engaging more diverse communities in the planning process. All regions agree to work with the private sector and universities in supporting the planning process.

**COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:**

Meets the following City Council goal:

B. Provide municipal government leadership which is open and responsive to residents, and is characterized by ethical behavior, stability, promoting public trust, transparency, confidence in the future, and cooperative interaction among civic leaders, residents, business representatives, and staff, while recognizing and respecting legitimate differences of opinion on critical issues facing the City.

**PREPARED BY:** Mina Layba, Legislative Affairs Manager