

SCAG Energy and Environment Committee, Oct. 7, 2021

There were two action items on the agenda:

1. A **Connect SoCal CEQA Addendum** No. 2 to Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse #2019011061). The EEC recommended that the Regional Council adopt draft Resolution to approve the Addendum #2 to the Connect SoCal Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)
2. **Transportation Conformity Determination** of Proposed Final Connect SoCal Amendment #1 and 2021 FTIP Consistency Amendment. The EEC recommended that the Regional Council adopt the transportation conformity determination of the Connect SoCal Amendment #1 and the 2021 Federal Transportation Improvement Program Consistency Amendment #21-05 at its November 4, 2021, meeting; and thereafter direct staff to submit it to the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration for approval.

Information items:

1. **SoCal Greenprint:** SCAG is in the process of developing the SoCal Greenprint tool as an optional, flexible, and open regional conservation-focused data and mapping tool for the six counties in the SCAG region. The SoCal Greenprint provides information to support integrated planning to advance Connect SoCal's housing, transportation and conservation goals; its development is also a program-wide mitigation measure in the Connect SoCal PEIR. It identifies landscape features that are important to residents and communities.

On July 1st, 2021, the Regional Council voted to pause implementation of the SoCal Greenprint for at least 30 days and to hold a public hearing for further discussion, thus permitting staff to engage in additional outreach with stakeholders to understand their concerns with implementing the tool. The October 7, 2021 Regional Council meeting included a noticed public hearing, which along with the public hearing conducted on August 24th, 2021, ensures that SCAG staff meets and exceeds the direction from Regional Council. The additional outreach pursued since July 1 (including a data survey, public hearing and one-on one meetings with various stakeholders and stakeholder groups) has focused on better understanding concerns related to the data shared through the tool and the tool's operability. Data is divided into six themes: Agriculture & Working Lands, Biodiversity & Habitat, Built Environment, Environmental Justice, Equity and Inclusion, Vulnerabilities and Ecological Resilience, and Water Resources, with specific data sets identified within each theme to address the information needs of developers, local planners, infrastructure agencies, community-based organizations, and conservation professionals. The feedback on the data layers themselves, while largely supportive, has also included specific concern relating to data types and data sources that has helped SCAG identify several data sets to remove or for reconsideration to ensure alignment with the goals of the project. However, the majority of the input received has been general in nature, either in support or opposition to the project. Staff is recommending the pause be lifted (along with those other actions contained in the recommendation) to allow for the completion of the Greenprint tool to support integrated planning and project delivery that advances Connect SoCal's housing, transportation and conservation goals, while also meeting the program-wide mitigation measure requirements in the Connect SoCal PEIR.

2. The **Regional Early Action Planning Grant Program** for 2021 (REAP 2021) was established as a part of AB 140 for the FY 21-22 budget to support transformative and innovative projects that implement a region's sustainable communities strategy and help achieve goals of more housing and transportation options that reduce reliance on cars. REAP 2021 will provide grants to regional entities, primarily metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), through a combination of formula and competitive-based programs. The SCAG region's formula share is estimated to be \$246 million. In preparation for the release of the Notice of Funding Availability in January 2022, SCAG staff has prepared a Draft REAP 2021 Program Development Framework to seek early feedback from the Policy Committees and stakeholders on funding priorities. The Draft Framework includes a set of core objectives that are aligned with the REAP 2021 priorities, the Connect SoCal Implementation Strategy and the EAC Strategic Work Plan. The framework outlines three (3) main programmatic areas to advance these core objectives. The REAP 2021 Program Framework, when finalized with clearer guidance from the State on program guidelines, will guide the funding application staff brings forward for Regional Council approval in early 2022. SCAG staff provided status report on this program. Staff is recommending that Regional Council remove the pause on Greenprint implementation. Staff will then return to the Regional Council and Energy & Environment Committee once prospective user testing is complete to demonstrate the tool and seek feedback prior to public launch. Thereafter, regular updates will be provided to the Energy and Environment Committee.
3. **Environmental Justice/ Communities of Concern** Update. In July 2020 SCAG's Regional Council adopted Resolution No. 20-623-2, affirming its commitment to advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout Southern California. The Regional Council subsequently adopted the Racial Equity Early Action Plan (EAP) in May 2021 outlining goals, strategies, and actions to advance its commitments. SCAG's Environmental Justice (EJ) Program, which is guided by the policy direction of the Energy & Environment Committee, plays a central role in advancing two of the primary goals of the EAP which are to: 1) center racial equity in regional policy and planning and bring equity into SCAG's regional planning functions, and 2) encourage racial equity in local planning practices by promoting racial equity in efforts involving local elected officials and planning professionals. The staff report and presentation were intended to lay the foundation for future policy discussions on advancing the EAP goals through enhancement of SCAG's EJ policies, analysis and programs as part of the development of the 2024 Connect SoCal—SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy, its Environmental Justice Technical Report, and other related efforts.

As an MPO that receives federal funding, SCAG is required to conduct early and meaningful outreach with EJ communities and an EJ analysis for its regional transportation plans. In addition to federal requirements, SCAG must also comply with California Government Code Section 111354 which mandates fair treatment of all individuals for all state-funded programs and activities. To comply with the federal and state regulations, SCAG has conducted extensive outreach and robust EJ analyses on various populations using a plethora of performance indicators to ensure that if disproportionately adverse environmental impacts on vulnerable, or EJ populations are identified, SCAG proposes mitigation measures or considers alternative approaches.

It is worth noting that while across the SCAG region as a whole, approximately 15% of households report incomes below the poverty rate, in Communities of Concern more than 24% of households live in poverty. People of color are far more likely to live in Communities of Concern, where on average 92% of the population are minorities. Additionally, these communities experience higher rates of exposure to a wide range of environmental hazards

than the region as a whole, including PM 2.5 concentrations in air, elevated levels of drinking water contaminants, higher traffic density, elevated diesel particulate matter emissions, increase groundwater threats, prevalence of toxic cleanup sites, impaired water bodies, locations of hazardous waste facilities and generators, and ozone concentrations.

4. **The Mobility Innovations and Pricing (MIP) initiative:** An Initiative to Elevate Equity in Planning, focuses on the potential equity implications of road pricing and other innovative transportation policies in the six-county Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region. The MIP initiative combines stakeholder engagement, technical analyses, and communications strategies to elevate equity considerations as a key touchstone in planning for road pricing. The MIP initiative aims to surface the priorities of historically marginalized populations that disproportionately bear the negative economic, environmental, personal safety, and public health impacts of our transportation system. SCAG led this effort to support local agency decisions through dialogue with community stakeholder organizations and technical experts. The project is intended to increase understanding of critical equity issues that may arise with congestion pricing and low emission zones—most critically leading with the concerns of underrepresented communities. Staff will present an overview of the project, highlighting key findings and lessons learned. The MIP project is part of the Go Zones strategy featured in Connect SoCal and is a part of the upcoming Key Connections Workplan focused on Go Zones, Smart Cities and Shared Mobility. The MIP project is an initial step towards understanding the equity implications of these strategies and increasing community participation in the policymaking process on these issues.

Based on community feedback, SCAG developed a methodology to quantify transportation-related inequities and identify communities most impacted across the SCAG region, which are referred to as Transportation Equity Zones (TEZs). SCAG examined the travel patterns and mode choice of people living in TEZs within the SCAG region. Understanding these travel patterns will help planning and implementing agencies place equity at the forefront of any future potential mobility innovations, such as road pricing. SCAG staff provided a presentation on Mobility Innovations and Pricing Findings and Outcomes to the Energy & Environment Committee.