

SCAG Energy and Environment Committee meeting, Sept. 1, 2022
Report by Britt Huff

Action Items

#1 The EEC Committee voted to recommend that the Regional Council approve the transportation conformity determinations of the proposed Final 2023 FTIP and the proposed Final 2020 Connect SoCal Amendment #2; and directed staff to submit to the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration for approvals at its October 6, 2022 meeting

#2 The EEC committee received a report on the **SCAG Water Action Resolution** and voted adoption of the Water Action Resolution of the Southern California Association of Governments that affirms a drought and water shortage emergency in the SCAG Region and calls on local and regional partners to join together to reduce water use; improve water conservation, reuse, and efficiency; and enhance water systems health and resilience.

Information Items

Equity Analysis Update (formerly Environmental Justice Analysis) - Performance Measures: Staff are evaluating the following tools: • Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool⁴ supports federal agencies in identifying communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. The current version is still undergoing refinement, but provides socioeconomic, environmental, and climate information to inform decisions that may affect these communities. • Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool⁵ provides a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and demographic indicators that highlight areas where vulnerable populations may be disproportionately impacted by pollution. • Caltrans Transportation Equity Index⁶ is a forthcoming tool that staff anticipate reviewing later this year. The index aims to identify communities that are underserved and/or burdened by transportation using environmental, accessibility, and socioeconomic indicators.

• Public Health Alliance of Southern California's Healthy Places Index (HPI)⁷ explores community conditions that impact life expectancy in California, such as access to healthcare, housing, education, and more. More than 100 government agencies, health care institutions, and community groups have used the HPI to make more equitable decisions around transportation planning, climate vulnerability, philanthropic grantmaking, and health care needs assessments. • California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's CalEnviroScreen is a mapping tool that helps identify SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities (DAC)⁸, which are census tracts receiving the highest 25 percent of overall scores based on pollution burdens and socioeconomic disadvantages. SCAG's prior EJ Analysis already considered DACs. • California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC)/Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Opportunity Map⁹ identifies areas in every region of the state whose characteristics have been shown by research to support positive economic, educational, and health outcomes for low-income families—particularly long-term outcomes for children. TCAC adopted this map into its regulations to support policies related to increasing access to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, and HCD uses it to inform their Multifamily Housing Program and the California Debt Limit Allocation Committee's regulations for 4% LIHTCs.

To the extent that it is possible, SCAG's approach for Connect SoCal 2024 will be aligned with these tools as well as best practices from extensive research and continued communication with many stakeholders.

Green Region Resource Areas Methodology for SCAG's Local Data Exchange

As the region faces unprecedented challenges in balancing housing and employment growth with resource conservation, it is important to coordinate regional land use and transportation strategies and seize opportunities to improve resilience, protect the SCAG region's natural assets, and reduce future risks from climate change. The Green Region Resource Areas (GRRAs), derive from SB 375 statute and Connect SoCal 2020 strategies, depict the region's natural assets, risks from climate change, and highlight areas where future growth could result in negative environmental impacts if left unaddressed. GRRAs consist of ten (10) topic areas, including flood areas; coastal inundation (sea level rise); wildfire risk; open space and parks; endangered species and plants; sensitive habitat areas; natural community and habitat conservation plans; tribal lands; military installations; and farmlands.

A set of performance measures help SCAG evaluate how future changes in the region will impact the most vulnerable. These performance measures help SCAG respond to some key questions, including:

- Will our economy function well for all, particularly people of color and low-income households? (focus: economy)
- Will we grow in ways that encourage livability among prioritized equity populations? (focus: communities)
- Will our region become more connected and accessible for everyone, regardless of race/ethnicity, age, gender, disability, income, etc.? (focus: mobility)
- Will people and our environments, particularly areas that have historic and current public health risks, become healthier?